



offers you **Dharma Friends**

**Dedicated to Sharing the Dharma, Healing Each Other,
All Sentient Beings, and Ourselves**

November 2010 issue # 166

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The Dhammapada
The teachings of the Buddha



From a Dhammapada translation offered by The Forrest Sangha

Verse 6– THE WISE

76 Only blessings can arise from seeking the company of wise and discerning persons, who skillfully offer both admonition and advice as if guiding one to hidden treasure.

77 Let the wise guide beings away from darkness, give direction and advice.
They will be treasured by the virtuous and dismissed by the foolish.

78 Do not seek the company of misguided friends; beware of degenerate companions.
Seek and enjoy the company of well-guided friends, those who support insight.

79 Surrendering oneself to Dhamma leads to serene being.
The wise perpetually delight in the truth taught by the Awakened One.

80 Those who build canals channel the flow of water.
Arrowsmiths make arrows.
Woodworkers craft wood.
The wise tame themselves.

81 As solid rock is unshaken by the wind, so are those with wisdom undisturbed whether by praise or blame.

82 On hearing true teachings, the hearts of those who are receptive, become serene – like a lake, deep, clear and still.

83 Virtuous beings are unattached.
They do not indulge in heedless speech about sensual pleasures.

They experience both joy and sorrow but are possessed by neither.

84 Neither for one's own sake nor on behalf of another does a wise person do harm – not for the sake of family, fortune or gain.

Such a one is rightly called just, virtuous and wise.

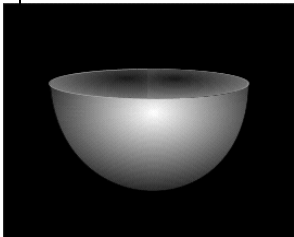
85 Few are those who reach the beyond.

Most pace endlessly back and forth, not daring to risk the journey.

86 Although it is difficult to cross over the storm-swept sea of passion, those who live in accord with the well-taught Way arrive at the beyond.

87 - 88 The wise abandon darkness and cherish light, leave petty security behind and seek freedom from attachment. To pursue such release is difficult and rare, yet the wise will seek it, detaching themselves from obstructions, purifying heart and mind.

89 Freeing themselves from longing, unhindered by habitual grasping, those who align themselves with the Way delight in non-attachment and, while still in the world, are radiant.



A few thoughts from anna on this Dhammapada verse, The Wise

*Let the wise guide beings away from darkness,
give direction and advice.*

*They will be treasured by the virtuous
and dismissed by the foolish.*

*Do not seek the company of misguided friends;
beware of degenerate companions.*

*Seek and enjoy the company of well-guided friends,
those who support beings.*

from the Dhammapada- The Wise

Last month's verse challenged us with THE FOOL. And now we get to look at our WISE self and choosing wise friends. At first glance, it looks like an easy and logical thing to just follow the **Dhammapada's** advice. It says wonderful things like - we should keep company with those that are *well-guided* and *who support others*. Our friends should be those who lead us away from darkness. To keep company with those who are fools or degenerates will hurt us. If we have a wise friend or teacher, it only makes sense that we should appreciate their advice and caring. Only fools would dismiss the chance to be their friend.

But - we Can't Seem to Escape that FOOL

In other issues, we have noticed that the **Dhammapada** teachings and the guiding principles of all spiritual traditions often tell us that we should commit to behaviors that we would readily agree are good things to do. Then we find ourselves inexplicably breaking all the rules. We have explored in past **Dharma Friends** how sometimes there are underlying ego dynamics that control our lives whether we want them to or not. From a psychodynamic perspective, we all have a storehouse of early influences that have a powerful sway over the choices we make, even when consciously we

want to do the right thing. We find ourselves almost compellingly doing something self destructive. We want to be WISE and to choose to follow the teachings but, for reasons we don't understand, we end up being THE FOOL.

Choosing a WISE FRIEND or TEACHER

Some of the lines in our verse focus on choosing wise friends or teachers. The pattern that I often see when meeting someone who is clearly wise is that at first we are compellingly drawn to them. We know intuitively that this person has capacities that are beyond those of ordinary beings. I hear people say that they felt inexpressible love or appreciation for their wise friend or teacher at first glance. Some say that they tingled all over when meeting them. We might hear someone say that they felt special just to be in their presence.

And yet, for many, the relationship pretty quickly becomes confusing. Most of us don't have a model for how to relate to people who transcend ordinary ways of being in the world. Some might put this very wise person up on a high pedestal and do not allow them to also be a human being. We are often disappointed when they do not meet our unrealistic expectations of being a perfect person. Or we may also make that person the most important being in our life. Our whole life revolves around them, we want them to give us our answers, and we no longer listen to our own inner wisdom voice. In all of these ways and many more, the relationship becomes so out of balance that it can't help but become unsustainable and crash. When we give someone outside of ourselves the power that controls and guides our own spiritual unfolding, we lose that internal fulcrum of balance.

Another danger is that when we put an inordinately strong projection on another as wise and perfect, we are just as likely, but even more unconsciously, projecting our negative energies onto them too. Deep down, we are lying in wait for those negative qualities that have always haunted us to appear. Little by little, we replay old relationship patterns as those positive and also those negative projections emerge.

We all do this to most of our important relationships anyway. We have our favorite themes. If we watch, we can see how sneakily we remake another person into our own image of them. When we have a wisdom friend or teacher who carries a lot of emotional energy, we are likely to do all that we usually do with our relationship dramas only more so.

Our relationships are a MIRROR

The wise person becomes a mirror of all of our own wise and good qualities. These are qualities that they probably do have in abundance BUT we want them to be our perfect, wise, and special friend. As we make them bigger than life, we should ask if we have disowned our own inner wisdom qualities as we project them onto our friend. That is the danger. We must not make them more important than our own inner wisdom guide (our self) although we can have them as our friend and teacher.

We also project on them our negative qualities. If they are truly wise, they probably have fewer negative qualities. But if we are creating a fantasy of who they are from our own unconscious needs, we may project on them exaggerated negative qualities so that we can replay our old relationship dramas. Why? Because we long to heal and hope that such a replay will finally bring a healing to our old wound. It won't.

When these unconscious dynamics take over, the dramas have begun! There is no real person before us anymore - just our own manufactured projection. We have the good fortune to have a wise friend but, do we listen to their wise advice? No. Do we accept their guidance or their corrections? No. In our verse, it even implies that sometimes the wise teacher offers scolding. Scoldings are hard to appreciate no matter who they come from. If the student or friend feels that they should only receive applause and praise, this may awaken that hidden judgment and negativity. When feelings of fear, despair and anger arise in us, the wise person does not look so wise anymore.

A battle may stir in our confused mind. Deep down, we are truly wise and we appreciate a wise friend to guide us. But in our pain, we become a foolish friend who starts to believe that our wise friend or teacher is a shyster. Far too often, I have seen the wonderful and wise teacher become the enemy of a student who feels betrayed and abandoned. Faith in their spiritual path is lost and they give up on their higher journey. This is the tragedy. All of those opportunities that a wise teacher might offer to us are ignored or are misunderstood.

On the other hand, hanging out with foolish friends might be tempting and seem easier. Especially if our student feels that among the fools, he is the smartest and can become the leader - of the fools. There, among fools, our fool feels that he is the wise one. Ego's needs arise as more important than our sacred journey. This chance to stroke ego is a tempting one.

But, even for the most foolish, hanging out in the world of fools can be pretty stultifying. And it can lead to a lot of troubles. That world of fools is complicated. Fools are not very skillful when it comes to personal relationships. In most 'foolish' relationships, projections abound and dramas play out always and everywhere. When we are fools watching our crazy friendships and our close partnerships cause pain and suffering, we may look again for a wise one to guide us.

Oh, there is a wise teacher to help me, we think once again

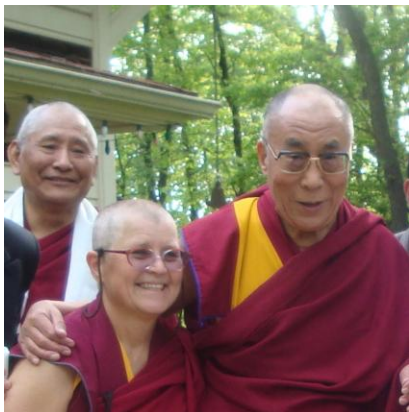
So what to do?

First of all, we must own our potential for projecting all of our own unfinished, disowned and wounded self onto others, no matter who they are and what our relationship with them might be. Everyone receives our projections to some degree and there is no one who gets to be their true self. We make EVERYONE into who we want and need them to be in order to fulfill our own needs. This is the ruin of most relationships. But also the loss of our own awareness of our true self.

There are some incredibly wise and true teachers out there. To recognize that we have come across one due to our good karma is like finding a great treasure. We can start by being grateful and appreciative of the good that they bring to us.

We must honestly assess if this wise person is who they present themselves to be. This may take many years of getting to know them. We must see them in many roles and see if we are able to keep a balance of power and respect. If we watch them in many life situations and see that they are always more wise, compassionate and kind than not, then we will rightfully learn to trust them. We should not give up our autonomy and control over our lives and decision making unless and until it seems that there is a good reason to accept their guidance that appears to be in our best interest. We should not become overly involved financially, sexually, or in a role of submission until we have clearly thought it out. Always, no matter how we might allow a teacher or friend to guide us, we continuously must make decisions about how much we allow them to influence our decisions.

At some point we may actually find that the wise friend is a suitable teacher. We ask and they may be willing to accept that role in our lives to various degrees. We have to then have a clear contract with them. We can discuss how to be open and honest and receive their teachings and guidance. Ego will still get in the middle and want to have its opinions, but if we remember that it is a spiritual contract, we hold this friend and ourselves to a different standard. Only when we feel



that our own inner guide is one with our teacher, can we surrender our spiritual path to them. Still, we keep the perspective that knows that they are the embodiment of our own wisdom. Our wise friend is the mirror of our own inner wisdom guide and is harmonious with and supportive of our own spiritual life journey. Then we have a friend or teacher that can guide us out of darkness.

Some of us are more adept at making wise friends than others. Here is our Dharma Friend, Ani Tendron, with her wonderful friend, the Dalai Lama. oh my....



A MEDITATION

In our commentary, we discussed seeing all those in our life as mirrors that display our inner self, often because we project that inner self on others. We explore these ideas as a way to understand the psychological unconscious. It is also a way to give ourselves some peeks at our far more subtle spiritual self. Just as the eye cannot see itself without the aid of a mirror, the subtle and 'invisible' aspects of our self cannot be seen either without a tool. So this tool that we employ is to call all that appears to unfold in life our every-ready mirror that we hold up to ourselves so that we can see the reflection of our inner self.

For some, it is a leap to play with the idea that the world we create around us is our inner self on display. But we do hear folks say - That chaos in your house is a reflection of the chaos of your mind! Hmm.

Or the reverse - the sweet and serene person has a home that is reflective of their peaceful and calm inner self.

And at psychological levels, we often consider the theory that the person we choose as a partner is our own undiscovered self. Or perhaps our own disowned dark side. Or perhaps our idealized self.

And we also hold out the psychological possibility that as parents, we often unconsciously teach our children to manifest our own inner wounds in our cry to heal.

These are all interesting thoughts to explore. They are likely helpful in various ways and well worth some examination.

So how can we apply these possibilities to a meditation on our spiritual life journey?

If the people we populate our life with are magnets for us because they reflect a disowned aspect of ourselves, or enhance some parts of our self, or are teachers for us in some way, is this perhaps even more true when it comes to those who turn up in a role as powerful as our spiritual friends?

Just to glean whatever we can from the mirror, let's say that that is a real possibility. This "mirror meditation" then is looking in the mirror of our spiritual friends and teachers at the reflection of our own inner spiritual self.

Contemplate on....



Who do we share our spiritual life journey with?

- Who are our 'spiritual friends' compared to our ordinary friends? ... and why??
- Do we have someone in our present life or somewhere in our life that serves as a teacher or guide???
- How do we relate to this person??...or image or thing?
- What has been our history with guides or teachers?... Do we embrace and stay dedicated to them?... Do we become easily disenchanted and find that they have feet of clay?... Do we make them beyond ordinary beings and godlike?... Do we try to challenge their knowledge or power to knock them down to size?.....
- Do we trust them to guide us?....

Now - let's reflect on our acceptance of and relationship to *our* inner spiritual essence - our inner wisdom guide. Take these same patterns of relationship we hold to the external friends and teachers that we have in our lives and consider whether we treat our inner self in these same ways. Ask the very same questions and see what answers come.

The meditation is to feel, see, know our inner spiritual guide within us.

Know that he/she or it is always within and always attentively guiding us on our path. They will never leave and never guide us wrong.

The real relationship is with them. Even with a true spiritual master, they are always a reflection of our internal pure essence that is one with the teacher.

Rest in this knowing and let yourself fill with the blessings, love and support of your true wise friend. No fools here at all!

Who would have thought that all things are the manifestation of the Essence of Mind! - The Sutra of Hui Neng

From Your Letters



Remember - if you have a meditation group that would like to receive our love, prayers and support, write and give us your group name, the name of your institution, and the participants' names if you wish. We will send your group a Compassion Works for All/Dharma Friends CERTIFICATE affirming that you are a part of our sangha too. We will be sending prayers out daily to all of you (of course we do that to all of you already...) Write for your group certificate and put *Attn. Linda - Meditation group* on the envelope. ☺

Have a Happy Thanksgiving!!!

"Our true nature is far more ancient and encompassing than the separate self defined by habit and society. We are as intrinsic to our living world as the rivers and trees, woven of the same intricate flows of matter/energy and mind. Having evolved us into self-reflexive consciousness, the world can now know itself through us, behold its own majesty, tell its own stories-and also respond to its own suffering." --Joanna Macy - see her wonderful books including World as Love, World as Self - and - Widening Circles



Jeff's Kids: Last month we asked that if you would like to share any thoughts or stories of your life's journey to prison that might benefit those kids that our friend Jeff sees at a juvenile detention facility for teens, to please write to him. The address is our CWFA address, PO Box 7708, Little Rock, Arkansas 72217-7708 and put JEFF'S KIDS on the envelope. We have received a number of excellent letters that are honest, poignant and very, very helpful. Jeff is reading them to the kids in group therapy sessions and they are profoundly touched. Keep those letters coming and for those who have written to these kids, thank you so much!

A drawing of Anna, Chelle and Kristopher by D.J.

From Myron Stebbins

Off the Hook

Off the hook
Poetry from behind the wall.
Heart is broken,
but my spirit still moves on.
Walking blindfolded,
“ye with lil faith” and hope the sea parts so I can make my
great escape.
Destruction of mankind secluded in this hell,
Given another chance, I pray I don’t fail.
Determine right from wrong,
what’s up is down.
Greatness through failure is how true success will be found.
Struggling with confusion of mind on its own,
hearing my momma scream “baby, please just come back
home.”
Holding hands with death.
Facing the ultimate test.
What’s next,
becoming a statistic like the rest?
My brother’s and sisters can we fight for peace
can we fight to keep our kids protected on our streets.
Can we teach unity to ours and all of mankind,

can we stop the killing and wars based on egos and lies?
We have our own problems throughout the states,
incarceration, poverty, gangs and hate.
Racism, discrimination, and stereotypes too.
Please don’t prejudge me and I won’t do it to you.
Suffering from insanity in this concrete jungle,
experimenting with medication just to ease my struggle.
Off the hook
from behind the wall,
this is my final call.
The convicted poet screaming,
Come one! Come all!
From behind the wall.
Off the hook,
the convicted poet,
I’ll be back in a moment.
Take a breath then exhale
as I then challenge you to a proper diagnosis of my psychosis.

"I had an experience I can't prove, I can't even explain it, but everything that I know as a human being, everything that I am tells me that it was real. It was part of something wonderful, something that changed me forever; a vision of the Universe that tells us undeniably how tiny, and insignificant, and how rare and precious we all are. A vision that tells us we belong to something that is greater than ourselves. That we are not, that none of us, are alone." Carl Sagan

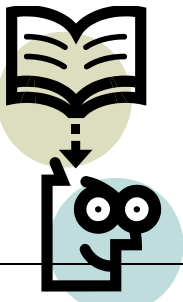
From JR - a profoundly unexpected and moving poem seen on the wall of a Scottish pub. It was written in the 1500's by Robert Southwell in the voice of Mary Queen of Scots, imprisoned for twenty years before being beheaded by Queen Elizabeth I

*Rue not my death
Rejoice at my repose
It was no death to me
But to my woes*

*The bud was opened
To let out the rose
The chain was loosed
To let the captive go*

A WM3 update: Our friends, Damien Echols, Jason Baldwin, and Jesse Misskelley. They are often known as the West Memphis Three in Arkansas. There is an around-the-world following of folks supporting their efforts to have a new trial because of concerns that they are three innocent men imprisoned seventeen years ago. Damien is on death row. The Arkansas Supreme Court has now granted them all a new evidentiary hearing which may be opening the door to new trials for each. We are sending you guys lots of support.

Book of Knowledge - Omar’s dream - READ THE CLASSICS. I know that many of you like adventuresome stories and love to get lost in novels. Many are there in your prison library and through them, we learn history as well. Look for **20,000 Leagues under the Sea** by Jules Verne, **Mutiny on the Bounty** by Robert Louis Stevenson, **Anna Kerinina** by Tolstoy, **Tom Sawyer** by Mark Twain, and a **Christmas Carol** by Charles Dickens. Enjoy!



And ASK TIM - write us with your questions. Tim will tackle almost anything - except how to file your legal paperwork. Questions about life, getting a job, which fork to use at the dinner table, anything you have also wanted to know but did not know who to ask.

Now try ASK TIM!

Write to our Compassion Works for All address and put ASK TIM on the envelope.

"Since Universe is Energy, part of the process of understanding, at least as I experience it, is to learn to 'see' flows of energy and specificities of energy. Both are necessary. Because, you see, Universe is both Whole and Specific. Western science is beginning to understand this through explorations about particle and wave. Both particle/particularity/specificity of Universe and the wave/flow of Universe were aspects I was encouraged as a child to apprehend and understand. I was asked to 'see' the dancing points of light and then to apprehend the shift from location to flow. Much of shamanic practice has to do with developing the ability to enter and use this shift."-- Paula Underwood Spensor, describing her childhood training in the Indigenous wisdom of the Oneida tradition.

The new TUCKER MAXIMUM SECURITY UNIT CHAPEL in Arkansas has finally been completed. It is beautiful and serene. I love it. Thank you to everyone who has worked together to make it happen, most especially our wonderful friend, Renie Rule, and all the help that she received from Chaplain McCown and the ADC. We had a fun dedication day with barbeque for everyone, lots of gospel singing, (just as much fun for those Buddhists among us!!) and some of you were able to attend the services. For those of you at Tucker Max that come to our group each month, we will see you in the chapel at our next meeting. You will be filled with joy. Thank you for making it a place of spiritual awakening for all with your prayers. love, a

From G.G.: I'd like everyone to know that the **Buddhist Peace Fellowship Project** has changed its name and address to:
Dharma Companions, PO Box 0762, Cotati, CA 94931-0762

and G.G. sends a quote from the "**Gems of Buddhist Wisdom**"

*We live and work and dream,
Each has his little scheme,
Sometimes we laugh,
Sometimes we cry,
And thus the days go by.*

From Gary Hallford: Please pardon the egotism, but the remarks of L.J.R., in Issue #144, were very refreshing. I have had the honor of being published in this and many other publications, on four continents (so far...). Whether it be a religious journal; political paper; or assorted other artistic media, the normal purpose is to bring "divergent opinions" to the forefront; thereby, allowing those who read the piece (and that of others), to make/create their own decision regarding the validity of the commentary. It seems simple enough, but commentary against racist practices within the gulags, ended up being banned by the Missouri DOC (in Cry Justice Now!, #35), and I'm 1500-2000 miles west of there!?!?

At any rate L.J.R., perhaps you took the Guerrilla Buddhism terminology "out of context". Guerrilla is more deeply defined by being "unconventional", and has absolutely no violence from which to work. The key point which you may not have contemplated fully: All Religious & Philosophical Ideologies MUST EVOLVE WITH THE SOCIETIES THEY ENCOMPASS. While certain specific situations transcend the ages, others are region and culture specific, and are impertinent in other places, times, and political divisions. Pick a religious text and you will immediately run into hundreds, if not thousands of years separating the PERCEIVED REALITY OF THE TIMES INVOLVED. Most of the core values remain intact, yet to "blindly" follow a dogma from another age (mistaken as the "absolute truth"), creates incredible confusion and contributes to the ongoing polarization of humanity into assorted arbitrary "camps". How many Christian sects are there? Buddhist? Jewish? Islamic? Hindu? Humanist? Atheist? It's absurdly to many...

The concept of "Guerrilla Buddhism" reaches beyond these divisions, seeking only to identify the things they hold in common. Consider the sangha at your prison: How many are more comfortable with Zen? Theravadan? Tibetan? Pure Land? Etc...? Each sect has significant differences and similarities. Should you argue/dismiss/counter each other's concept? Or, should you extend your knowledge to encompass the beliefs of your fellow parishioners? Then again, can you concentrate on your similar practices, and leave the differences for your sangha members to practice as they see fit?

L.J.R., I truly believe you are sincere in your practice, but I do not know what kind of facility you're held in (anything from "Community Corrections", to Death Row..), nor do I know the length of your "Buddhist Experience"; nor will I speculate. If you are lucky enough to have an active sangha that is allowed regular access to the chapel, and have adequate support from the "real world", you may have a rather polarized belief about your practice (that's only natural...). Likewise, if you have another prisoner who helps "organize" your sangha's activities, they may exclude certain teachings and favor others (I speak from experience as a "lay sangha leader"...). Please, I encourage not only you personally, but everyone on the planet, to eliminate the divisive sectarian ideologies and reach for the "brass ring" of acceptance. If the essay in DF #141 was sufficient to encourage you to write in, my point was brought about without too much difficulty, n'est-ce pas? We all need to find the Middle Path and rein in the profound absurdities of the current age... we can't do that if we're all arguing over esoteric minutia, rather than paying serious attention to the critical issue of today, tomorrow, and doing "damage control" from the past.

Suggested Reading: "On Pragmatism" by William James, "Huckleberry Finn" by Mark Twain, "Candide" by Voltaire, "The Castle" by Franz Kafka, "Nausea" by Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Possessed" by Fyodor Dostoyevski, "Journal of Prisoners of Prisons 5:2" by The University of Ottawa, and "Earth Abides" by George R Stewart,

Truth often exceeds any particular dogmatism or philosophy. The hardest part of "TRUTH" is in determining it's validity, bias, and contradictions (religion declares "Thou shalt not kill"; State Law forbids taking of human life; but, the State also can order you to Death?...) Please continue to explore the moral and ethical bear traps of civilization, and use your best judgment on what to believe and/or practice. We will probably not see eye-to-eye on everything, but we will find more similar beliefs than opposing ones... all we have to do is try.

May Peace Come Soon

P.S. - Anna and Kris - this may seem long, but I've trusted you for a long time. Do what you wish with this text. (Smile).

He who entirely cuts off his craving by drying up its fierce and rapid flow, --such a monk gives up the here and the beyond, just as a serpent sheds its worn-out skin. - Sutta Nipata

From Tim Lathrop: The Evolution of Self (part 1)

"Nosce Te Ipsum." The students charge to "know thy self" is, to my understanding, the primary goal, all others falling into place as we achieve this wisdom. Who are we? What are we? Why does it even really matter? These questions transcend time, space and culture for every sentient being has at one point asked these or similar questions of himself and others around him. Religion seems then a natural and even vital institution that we must create to answer and assure this driving desire to understand. Even the millennium long evolution and subversion of this vital tool for a healthy and stable cultural society into a manipulative, domineering and tyrannical monstrosity, is ultimately necessary – if only to help people grow and evolve themselves into that great mysterious "whatever," to engage our egos and make us question reality.

But it all starts with the self. This self identifying concept of "I" that we call ego is, I think, a very necessary step for us to master. Yet, what is "ego" and why do so many today think our ego is so bad and altruism so desirable? First, let's look at what the ego actually is, not so much what we "think" it to be. The best definition I've found was in an old philosophy dictionary. It defines ego two ways:

1. The experienced "I" not coextensive with either mind or body, but the center of organization of attitudes towards the body, the physical and social world, and all experience that determines identity and individuality. It is the personal point of reference, providing continuity and consistency in thinking, perceiving, planning, actions and relating past, present and future experiences through memory, imagination, and anticipation

(in Freudianism) The part of the psychic structure concerned with orientation in the world, balancing the dictates of impulse and instinct with the demands of conscience or "superego."

Through these definitions we see that, in fact, the ego is not itself good or bad, but merely a tool used by our conscience intellect.

How we chose to use this tool then dictates whether it becomes good or bad, which we tend to label "egoism vs altruism."

One of the largest growing problems we have today is that very few people actually stop and think about those things and ideas we accept, use and define our lives with. This is a prime example, if you go out and ask people around you, "Which is the more desirable trait for us to cultivate and utilize: egoism or altruism?" Most would probably pick "altruism" as in today's society we've come to think that egoism is bad and altruism is good. But given the definition of ego above, is this actually true? Going back to my Dictionary of Philosophy, I looked up "altruism and egoism," and here's what it says:

"As a philosophical term 'altruism' may most usefully be seen in opposition to (ethical) 'egoism.'

Egoism rests on the hypothesis that morality can be explained ultimately in terms of self-interest, albeit so called enlightened self-

interest. For the egoist, the apparent conflicts between the demands of morality and of personal gain are merely conflicts between different aspects of our self interest – indirect vs direct or long-term vs short-term. A general explanation of morality and interest might be stated thus: All our benefits come from the existence of a stable society; the observance of certain moral rules is a necessary condition of such a society; hence, we have an interest in maintaining moral order.” And goes on with:

“The altruist will point to the obvious weakness of such arguments in that they only prove that we have an interest in other people abiding by the moral rules, not that it is in our interest to abide by them. The central claim of altruism then is negative: that the explanation of morality cannot be reduced to self-interest. This can be restated more positively: that an interest in other people for their own sake is a necessary condition of morality. While this is no doubt true, it does not support the stronger claim that a desire to help others is a sufficient condition of morality.”

So, now which do you think is a more desirable trait for us to cultivate within us and a society as a whole? (to be continued in December)

"Gaia's main problems are not industrialization, ozone depletion, over-population, or resource depletion. Gaia's main problem is the lack of mutual understanding and mutual agreement ... about how to proceed with those problems. We cannot reign in industry if we cannot reach mutual understanding and mutual agreement based on a worldcentric moral perspective concerning the global commons. And we reach that worldcentric moral perspective through a difficult and laborious process of interior growth and transcendence." - Ken Wilber

From Steven Walmer: What does it take for people, all people, here in this prison to realize we all have a lot in common? Do we not want to be home with our children? How about being home with our parents? Do we not want to be successful and to live peacefully with our families? Then why is it we continue to breed hatred? To condone and push negative lifestyles? When will the group mind of negativity be reversed? When will it be cool to be compassionate? MEDITATE UPON THESE QUESTIONS. And to yourself answer them honestly. And maybe try to be the answers you come up with.

Linda's book has flown off the shelves and we do not have any more. Mindful Money might get republished and we will let you know if it is available again. Also, The Forrest Sangha has run out of their Dhammapada copies. If they get more, we will let you know if we know.

Subscription information: We have gladly been offering this newsletter free of charge to those in prisons. We are so happy to have a vehicle for those who have little dharma support to feel united with others who identify with their life situation. It is truly important to remember that we are all mirrors of each other. We are all one with each other. And we can recognize that samsara is suffering for us all whether behind the bars of a prison or behind the bars of our own ego structure. For anyone who is not in prison and who would like to subscribe to Dharma Friends, here is what to do. Sent us an email and you may have your monthly issue free. EMAIL dharmafriends@comcast.net. If you want a paper copy, the fee is \$30 for one year. Mail a check or money order made out to **Compassion Works for All:** and send to **Compassion Works for All, Dharma Friends subscriptions, PO Box 7708, Little Rock, AR. 72217-7708.** This amount covers the subscription for you and a partial subscription for a prisoner. I also want to acknowledge the enormous generosity of many of those in prisons who have sent stamps and letters of support and appreciation. Far more important than anything material are the letters and notes that say that you are benefiting from being part of this sangha of Dharma Friends. I think that many feel less alone on their journey because we are connected beyond all time and space to each other.

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOUR ADDRESS CHANGES.

SOME NEW OPTIONS: I shared in past issues of Dharma Friends that we are trying to be mindful of \$\$\$ in order to keep publishing our newsletter, as we scramble to get additional funding.

Here are some ways that you can help us.

- Keep us apprised of your address changes. Most of you have been very good at this and we hardly have any returned issues.
- If you are receiving Dharma Friends but do not read it or know someone else who does not read their issues, either donate them to your library, or write and tell us to take you off the Dharma Friends list. Now, some have written and said that others need them more than they do so take their name off. Don't be too generous!! **WE WANT YOU TO KEEP GETTING DHARMA FRIENDS IF IT IS HELPFUL TO YOU!**

If you have family or friends who might like to receive Dharma Friends as well, they can just let us know and we will put them on the list. It is important for us to keep those in prisons connected to society, and most especially to their families and friends. We greatly value the opportunity to bring a loving community of support to those who are connected to people in prison as they are often made to feel uncomfortable by society. If those you love receive Dharma Friends too, think of the common growth that you would share and the bond that could develop. So, you might suggest Dharma Friends as something your friends and family might like to donate to and receive via email.

Whatever attitudes we habitually use toward ourselves, we will use on others, and whatever attitudes we habitually use toward others, we will use on ourselves. The situation is comparable to our serving food to ourselves and to other people from the same bowl. Everyone ends up eating the same thing--we must examine carefully what we are dishing out.
- Bhante Henepola Gunaratana, "Eight Mindful Steps to Happiness"

Destiny - an excerpt from *Dharma Friend* Lawrence King's book, **What the Hell Were You Thinking**

As I stare out the window thinking about the world that we live in, I realize that everything is as it should be.

A flow of things happens in our life unless we choose a course and path of striving towards changing the natural flow of things.

Some people believe in destiny. Others believe you can create your own destiny.

I've gone against the natural flow of things, and I've gone with the natural flow of things.

You can't force things in life. If they are not meant to be, they will not come to pass.

Sometimes there is no explanation for what is happening right in front of you.

Things happen for a reason.

It's kind of like standing on the side of the road, hitchhiking. fifteen people pass you by. You have no control over this situation and all of a sudden someone stops and gives you a ride.

When things happen to you out of the blue - good or bad - you then try to examine what you did or did not do to make that which is happening or which is going to happen to you understandable.

When you set your goals and work, work, work to achieve those goals and finally your goals come to pass, then you ask yourself: Did I make create my own destiny by my own efforts or was this meant to be regardless.

Destiny is something we choose to believe in or not.

When all is said and done, all your efforts lead you to who knows what?

What to do in life, what not to do in life, to try or not to try, - that is the question.

If destiny or fate are going to take their own course anyway, then why bother with doing anything at all?

Is there some higher power controlling our thoughts and choices? Or are we in total control of our own thoughts and choices?

Where do we go when we die? Should we care if our life is already mapped out for us?

If we control our own destiny, then it would mean that your life definitely has meaning and purpose.

What is possible if we truly push ourselves to the outer limits of controlling our own destiny and fate?

There is no pleasure without some degree of pain. There is no pain without some amount of pleasure.
- Bhante Henepola Gunaratana, "Mindfulness in Plain English"



Compassion Works for All/ Dharma Friends
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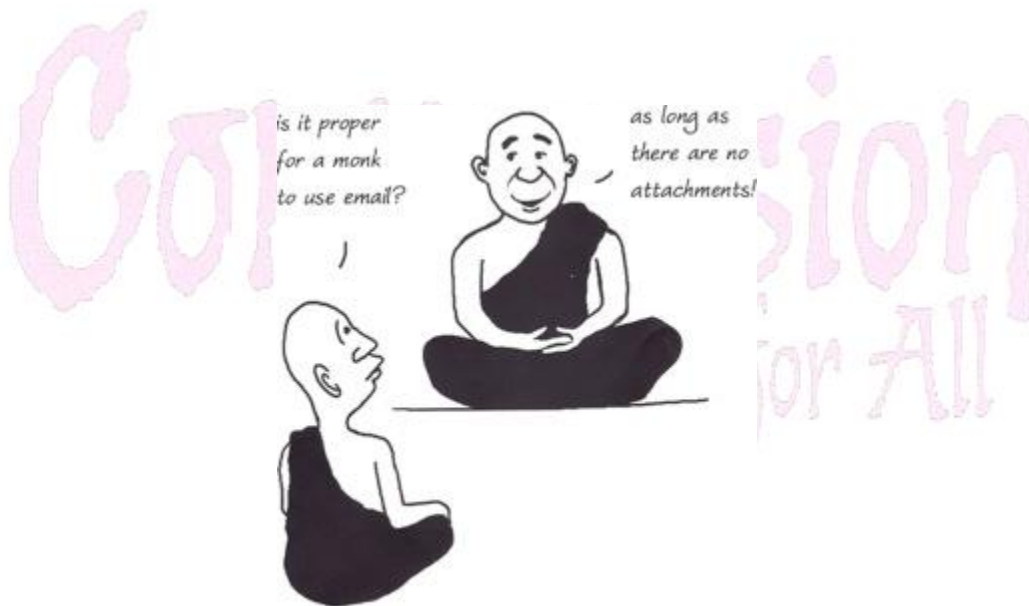
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"The problem in our world is that we draw our family circle too small." - Mother Teresa



Dharma Friends

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Additional Pages for EMAIL VERSION of Dharma Friends

"It has become increasingly clear that only Sacred Activism--the fusion of the deepest mystical knowledge, peace, strength, and stamina with calm, focused, and radical action in every arena of society, culture, economics, and politics--can be of help in our growing world crisis. Neither a purely "spiritual" nor simply "activist" approach can solve our enormous problems. The core teachings of all the major mystical paths make it clear that there is, within human beings, an enormous unused reservoir of pure divine power, the pure power of sacred wisdom consciousness, passion, and compassion--the power of what Jesus called the kingdom of heaven, and of what in Hinduism is known as bliss-consciousness. These core teachings also reveal that if we can learn how to use this power--or rather how to let it use us as its luminous instruments--we will harness the "energies of love" and discover for ourselves how a clear, focused, purified, divine passion devoted to transformative action on all levels can birth a new world."

- Andrew Harvey

Kristopher Davis was interviewed on Lawrence King's (not Larry King of CNN but lots more fun!) blog radio show out of Colorado on Thursday the 4th of November. He did a great job with many quotable words of wisdom and teachings on compassionate living and service. You will enjoy it. Here is the link:

Book Talk with Lawrence J. King and Kristopher ...

Book Talk with **Lawrence J. King** and **Kristopher Davis**. Date / Length: 11/2/2010 7:00 PM - 1 hr

<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/lawrence-j-king/2010/11/02/book...> cached

scroll down to the Kristopher Davis interview box on the left side

BUDDHISM AND COMPASSION

Another fun thing to do if you are in central Arkansas - our friend Cheryl Woodard will offer the Buddhist perspective for

a program called *Interfaith Forum On Compassion*

A Program That Will Examine What Compassion Means in Our Various Faiths and How We Practice It.

- How Compassion is Defined in Our Faiths
- The Significance Compassion Plays in Our Faiths
- How Compassion is Practiced or Demonstrated By Those of Our Faith

Monday, November 15

6 ~ 7:30 PM

Central Arkansas Library

100 S. Rock St.

East Meeting Room

Sponsored By Arkansas Ambassadors for Peace Association

*At Compassion Works for All - We have **BOOKS FOR SALE:***

Mara Leveritt's books!

The Boys on the Tracks: Death, Denial, and a Mother's Crusade to Bring Her Son's Killers to Justice

And

Devil's Knot: The True Story of the West Memphis Three

Email Linda (lbessette33@comcast.net) and she can give you more information about prices, mailing, etc. for all books.

**WATCH MARA's VIDEOS OF HER TALK AT LAMAN LIBRARY
on THE DEVIL's KNOT**

Go to <http://www.YouTube.com> and put Mara Leveritt in the SEARCH box

And anna's books –

Just As the Breeze Blows Through Moonlight, and Dharma Friends and the Healthy Living pamphlet are on our old Compassion Works for All web site – www.dharmafriendsprisonoutreachproject.com for a free download – but donations are always appreciated! Or you can order a hardcopy book for \$15 plus shipping (\$5) at my email address: anna@aristotle.net

Join us at www.JustUsFriends.org.

Check us out and help spread the news by emailing the site to your friends!

Along with informative and inspirational articles –

there are many videos in our video archive to lend a little support in difficult life issues.



PLAN WAYYYY AHEAD

anna will be doing another meditation retreat at Joy Fox's retreat center, Wattle Hollow in April 2011. We have always filled up quickly so now you can sign up early! Go to - www.wattlehollow.com

"There is an important link between deep change at the personal level and deep change at the organizational level. To make deep personal change is to develop a new paradigm, a new self, one that is more effectively aligned with today's realities. This can occur only if we are willing to journey into unknown territory and confront the wicked problems we encounter. This journey does not follow the assumptions of rational planning. The objective may not be clear and the path is not paved with familiar procedures. This tortuous journey requires that we leave our comfort zone and step outside our normal roles. In doing so, we learn the paradoxical lesson that we can change the world only by changing ourselves. This is not just a cute abstraction; it is an elusive key to effective performance in all aspects of life."

-- Robert Quinn in Deep Change



*If you would like to host a Compassion Works for All fundraising lunch,
Please let us know and we will plan details with you!!*

This is a friendly and informative way to raise money for our efforts.

*You invite those who you think would appreciate the philanthropic opportunity. We will supply the food and
I will gladly give a talk to your guests.*

You may forward any past Dharma Friends newsletters, or this newsletter, on to anyone who you believe would benefit from them. If someone has sent this Dharma Friends issue to you as a gift and you would like to join us each month, please email anna@aristotle.net for more information about Compassion Works for All, our Dharma Friends newsletter, and our prison outreach program. You may receive Dharma Friends by email for a \$30 tax-deductible donation. If you would prefer a hard copy, the subscription fee is also \$30, but unfortunately it is not tax deductible because you receive a paper publication for your donation.

