



offers you

# Dharma Friends

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

November 2011 issue # 177

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## The Dhammapada The teachings of the Buddha



### **Chapter 17 - Anger**

221- Relinquish anger. Let go of conceit. Release yourself from all that binds you.  
The pure-hearted who cling neither to body or mind do not fall prey to suffering.

222 - I say, those who contain their anger as a charioteer controls a speeding chariot, are fully in charge of their lives; others are merely keeping their hands on the reins.

223 - Transform anger with kindness and evil with good, meanness with generosity and deceit with integrity.

224-These three ways lead to the heavens: asserting the truth, not yielding to anger, and giving, even if you have only a little to share.

225-Awakened Ones do not cause harm.  
They are rightly restrained and they move to changelessness where they grieve no more.

226-All pollution is cleared from the minds of those who are always vigilant, training themselves day and night and whose lives are fully intent upon liberation.

227-Since ancient times it has been the case that those who speak too much are criticized, as are those who speak too little and those who don't speak at all.  
Everyone in this world is criticized.

228 -There never was nor will there be nor is there now anybody who is only blamed or wholly praised.

229-Those who live impeccably, who are discerning, intelligent and virtuous – they are continually praised by the wise.

230-Who would cast blame on those who in their being are like gold?  
Even the gods appreciate their luster.

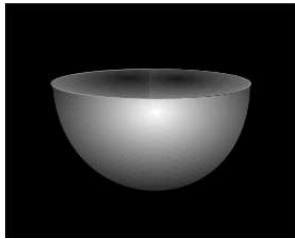
231-Beware of clumsy movement and be aware in your bodily conduct.  
Renounce all devious action and cultivate that which is wholesome.

232-Beware of contrived utterance and aware in all that you say.  
Renounce all cunning speech and cultivate that which is wholesome.

233-Beware of devious thinking and aware of all that you dwell upon.  
Renounce all unruly thought and cultivate that which is wholesome.

234-Ably self-restrained are the wise, in action, in thought and in speech.

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### **A few thoughts about this Dhammapada verse: Anger**

*Transform anger with kindness and evil with good, meanness with generosity and deceit with integrity*

Even His Holiness the Dalai Lama has told stories that as a youth, he had quite a temper and would often regret things he said and did in anger. Now, he teaches us that anger always hurts the one who is angry far more than anyone that we direct our anger towards. We read in every line of this Dhammapada verse of the benefit of transcending anger and living peacefully instead.

There is a great truth. Hatred and anger begets hatred and anger. If we have angry events happening in our life, chances are that it is because of OUR hatred and anger that they have appeared. If we have love and peace in our lives it is because we created those circumstances with our own love and peace. This is the law of karma.

This is hard to remember, to live ... and so hard to believe. Our verse tells us to let go of anger for many very compelling reasons - and we are convinced! We want to stop the cycle of anger. But how do we learn to do this? Even with our highest motivation, anger still arises again every day. Seething, angry thoughts explode into angry acts causing suffering to so many.

But we are not alone. We see this everywhere in our world. Clearly, the majority of those in the world do not have a clue what to do. We all must find a way to grow some space around anger so we can find compassion, forgiveness, and peace. We can learn to hold everyone in our hearts and leave no-one out.

***The roots of anger? Anger is a secondary emotion. First comes fear.***

We all have deeply held fears of survival. Without conscious thought or awareness, and with lightening fast biochemical responses, we have an adrenaline rush throughout our body when we feel the very primitive alerts that our life is threatened. But then, as we have evolved and expanded our survival mechanisms, that initial alert for many dangers is translated by our conscious thought and ego perception into a dramatic ego scenario that also helped us to survive our psychological dangers. Often we have a most familiar one learned long ago that spawned our narcissistic story line of self. These ego scenarios capture our early childhood pain and became embedded in our beliefs about us and the world. The theme was likely to explain our ego crushing fears when we were - deprived, bullied, dishonored, abused, disempowered, endangered, frustrated, longing, unloved, deeply threatened, in pain and more. But in all of these events, there was likely some *one* who caused our suffering. So our early adaptation to fear was to quickly figure out 'who is to blame'. We asked 'who and what is preventing us from feeling comfortable and safe?' We looked for a villain. We perceived our helplessness to get our needs met and so we adopted the position of a victim and we felt that we must make another person or thing the threat. At the time, it was highly likely we were the victim - and helpless to protect our self from the one who was hurting us. But as little kids, we probably could not openly blame that other person, even if we let ourselves know who we were afraid of. What could we do to return to a place of safety? Once we found an enemy to blame for our dilemma, real or not, we could transform fear into hatred and direct our anger there. Then we at least had the fantasy of being powerful and safe. Most kids take great fear and displace it onto other enemies and let our anger out on them. That theme, that narcissistic story line, that psychological drama, is often the root of anger for the rest of our lives.

***But what if it is absolutely clear that there is no villain – no one to be mad at?***

After the adrenaline rush, even for a kid, if there is no one to blame, there is no anger. It is just us and the obstacle that creates our pain. We may feel pain and frustration but not so much anger. An adrenaline response arises with danger but it does not become anger until we attach a victim/villain story to it.

***Remember the story of the row boat on the lake?***

A man is trying frantically to cross the lake in order to get home before a rumbling storm breaks. It is dark and windy, with periodic lightening flashing across the sky. In one such burst, the man sees another boat heading directly towards him. He is rowing as hard as he can. He is afraid that this other guy does not see him and will crash into him. He calls out again and again but the boat keeps coming. He gets angrier and angrier because this stupid guy is being so careless. Faster he goes and the other boat keeps coming right towards him. And then it crashes into him, filling his boat with water. He lets go with a tirade of curses towards this guy about how he should have seen him and heard him calling out and that he could have killed him!

Then it is clear that the boat is empty. There was no one rowing that other boat. And immediately the anger is gone.

***Letting go... We must find our dramas empty of villains.***

We all have to learn how to not carry angry dramas and how to not fuel our anger with victim scenarios.

We all can then learn how to find peace within us so we can act from love.

### **Here are a few steps.**

First - We must want to let go of anger. Many carry anger and angry dramas around because they are addicted to the adrenaline rush of the victim/villain drama energy as one might be to a drug. It becomes a part of who we are and we don't want to let go of anger. We have to recognize that it hurts us and others. We pay a big price.

Second - Meditate, meditate, meditate. Meditation gives us balance and space so that when anger arises we don't leap into action. We have the equanimity to hold a big picture. We have and appreciate inner peace and don't fuel ourselves with adrenaline rushes at every opportunity. We learn to be mindful of what arises without reacting and this includes not fueling anger. When any emotion arises, we just rest in the experience. You already know a lot about meditation and the benefit of creating space and equanimity around all that arises. When we have put in many hours (or long years) in meditation, we can allow whatever arises to do so without reacting. We can consider what our words and actions will be.

Third - Once we have that balance, space, a bigger picture, and mindfulness, we can purify anger. The most important step of purification is 'forgiveness'. When anger arises, meditate, and find the 'angry drama'. Watch for a while and see who we have made the villain in the story. No matter what and no matter how convincing it appears that they are the villain, decide that *to purify ourselves of anger at this profound level of healing*, we will forgive them. Don't worry if this step is too much to do in all situations that arise. We each have plenty of practice on little dramas without tackling those who appear to have caused us the greatest suffering in our lives. Start with the people or things that we can handle successfully so that we can grow our forgiveness capacity.

Forgive ourselves too. We may be 'the unforgiven' one in our families because of the pain and suffering we may have caused others. We likely know that being forgiven can be liberating and life-changing – far more so than self-righteous declarations of who is right or wrong. Not being a Bible scholar, I wonder as I read the story of Judas betraying Christ in Jerusalem what happened next to Judas. He turned Christ over to the authorities who he knew would likely kill him and thus, he became the great and mythic betrayer who is forever scorned - and unforgiven. I have not read any accounts of anyone hunting for Judas and asking him what happened. I haven't read of anyone telling him that he is forgiven. He is not welcomed back at the table of disciples after Jesus returns as the one who was the villain and then was forgiven. He is left to be hated. If you are Judas or Jesus in the story, forgiveness is essential in taking the next step to finding transcendent peace.

***Everyone comes back to our one human family and can be held in love.***

As we purify ourselves of anger, forgiving all those we blame, we can rest in love and allow those deep fears to arise. In compassion, we can be aware of those desperate attempts to escape the pain and fear of our early life threatening or ego-threatening events. Compassion goes first to ourselves as we tried so hard to find a way to assuage our fears with a drama of defense. Hold that drama and the early fears as the energy dissipates. See the anger, the pain, and the dramas float out of us and dissolve into space. You might even see such energies transforming into light as you understand that the true nature of all you have been holding onto was a little child trying to protect your precious life. Free that child from their life drama.

Fourth - Rest in the knowing that your true essence is vast and wise. Know your true name – maybe it is love, or compassion, or peace, or light. The more you know that you are that Self, a sacred essence, that is who will arise effortlessly when fear arises – rather than anger.

Fifth - ‘Pull anger up by the root’. With meditation, we walk the path to a deeper understanding of our self and the world we have created with our mind. We recognize that all we create is empty of existence. *All that Is* is sacred arising and not contaminated with emotions or story lines or even with ideas of the sacred or the unforgiven villains. No longer do we react with love or with anger to any arising. We know that the boats are all empty.



## A MEDITATION on Anger

This is a tough meditation.

The most important thing to say is that any and all meditations will eventually help with anger because they build space and mindfulness and allow us to be NOW. Anger lives in our thoughts of the past or is in the imagined stories of our future. If we are fully present NOW, all anger simply disappears. We are in touch with our true self and not focusing on thoughts of anger. Think for a minute of all of the good reasons to let go of anger. Consider how beneficial that would be for you.

### Meditate...

Since this meditation is a *healing process* in a meditative form, let's walk through it together with our *Dharma Friend*, Mack, (and of course, I changed his real name.) Then you can work your way up to the more difficult issues in your life.

*Here is Mack...* Mack sits down to do his daily meditation. He has made a resolution to try to let go of the high level of anger that controls his life. He is in prison and he sees clearly that his anger is a big part of what got him there. Since he came to prison, he has had frequent disciplinaries, so he can't get to do the job assignment that he wants. Instead, he is on hoe squad –which makes him pretty mad. His family doesn't write or visit since his victim was a family member. He has no friends from home that write either. That makes him really mad. Of course, since everyone has disowned him, he has no money on his books except for indigent money. He is mad and jealous of others who have support. He does go to church service and he receives Dharma Friends and says that both help him feel better about himself. He also thinks meditation helps him. After talking about it, he wants to meditate on anger and gain the ability to let it go before it gets him into more trouble. He says that he would like to feel he can be a loving person. Today, he had an angry incident with the chaplain and he wants to work with it in our meditation.

*The incident:* Going to church service is one of the few times Mack can be out of the barracks, around his friends, and where he actually feels a bit of peace. He likes the music and wants to sing in the choir. This morning he asked the chaplain if he could be in the choir and was told no. Mack was mad. He felt disrespected, felt it was unfair and that the chaplain would not even let him explain what he wanted.

When the chaplain said NO, Mack whirled around and left the office saying nothing. Steam was coming out of his ears and he knew that the chaplain knew it.

**The meditation:** Mack went back to his bunk and sat down to meditate. He spent some time just breathing in and out, but understandably, his thoughts were racing as he went over and over the incident with the chaplain. He would go off into his thoughts for minutes at a time before he would remember that he was supposed to be meditating. He decided to try to catch hold of the reins and did a counting meditation. With each in and out breath, he counted. One breath in and out – One. The second breath in and out – Two. The third breath in and out – Three. Then back to one. And two. And three. And back to one again. It took that much focus to start cutting through all the anger and stay focused.

Next, with his breathing a bit more mindful, he imagined letting go of the anger with each out-breath. He had a fantasy that as he breathed out, he could let go of anger in his muscles. All his thoughts and all his negative energies were releasing. He kept doing this meditation for a while until he was more relaxed and felt less angry. He imagined breathing in love and relaxation. He said to himself: You are ok. You are loved. All will be ok. He rested in the experience of filling himself with peace.

We had talked about purifying his anger with forgiveness. He imagined the chaplain in front of him. Even though anger was quick to arise, he considered that for *his own benefit of purifying anger*, he wanted to meditate on forgiving the chaplain. He focused on his breath. With each out-breath he imagined sending the chaplain compassion and forgiveness. He saw that the chaplain was generally a kind person and he was just doing what he thought was right in this situation. He did not care what his reasons were, he was going to send him compassion and let it go. Little by little, Mack could do this visualization and found that he felt more harmonious. It did not seem to be such a big deal anymore. He felt more compassionate over all and was not so focused on the incident. He was not so attached to singing in the choir either. He remembered times where he had acted out in church service. He could understand the chaplain for not trusting him and thought that that might be why he said no.

**True self emerges:** As Mack did his meditation, he allowed previous meditations on his true self to fill his heart again. The word that comes when he ponders his highest, true self is Healing Warrior. He often wants to help others. These energies of being a healer for himself and others are palpable when he opens his heart and lets his true self arise. Mack sat in his Healing Warrior energies for a while and visualized himself as a shaman offering healing to everyone he knew.

**Deeper work:** Now Mack wanted to try to find the root of the anger. He needed to feel stable in the Healing Warrior energy and its view. He asked: Why am I always so quick to see that someone will keep me from having something important and healing for me? Why is the pain and anger so enormous and blinding when that happens?

Mack sat in meditation while simply breathing and resting in awareness. He asked for healing memories or wisdom to lift the veils on his old pain. He asked for help from his deepest inner wisdom, the Healing Warrior, to find the roots of his pain.

As Mack sat there quietly, all of a sudden a scene appeared that had happened long ago. He had forgotten all about it. It surprised him and tears came to his eyes. He was only about 3 years old and he had been sitting on the back porch playing with his puppy, Ruff. They lived out in the country and there were no

other kids his age to be with, so his puppy was his only playmate. He really loved that dog. His older brother, John, came bursting out of the door and swore at him for no reason. This brother and his other brother were always angry and violent towards him. They hit on him and beat him with a belt. Mack tried to stay away from them because they frightened him. That day, Mack had thought his brother was at school and he felt safe, so it shocked him when his brother came out of the door. John grabbed his puppy, kicked it, and then put it in the pick-up and drove off. He never saw his puppy again. No one ever said anything to him about Ruff and he did not dare ask anyone or tell his mom what had happened.

Sitting there in his cell twenty-five years later, Mack started to cry for the first time about losing his puppy. A lot of pieces came together instantly. He realized that he lived in terror of his brothers when he was little and that puppy was his only solace. When his brothers hit him, he was comforted by his puppy. He was powerless up against his brothers' meanness and John had the power to take the puppy and any sense of comfort away from him. His mother would not protect him against his brothers' violence. He felt very alone, unable to have love or safety. Mack felt all the more vulnerable to danger without Ruff. He never got another dog. He never trusted that he could have anything to give him joy or security. He never trusted that anyone cared about him or would protect him. And he was very, very mad at everyone – even at all the other people in the world who DID have love and protection and puppies and who got what they wanted. He saw himself as a victim – and as a little boy he truly was the victim in his world. But as an adult, he never thought about the root of his anger so that he could develop a different world view. Mack knew that he had to come to terms with all that old anger, let go of it, and develop a view that assured him that it was him, and him alone, that could give him comfort, support, protection, and love at these deep levels. Mack has work to do, but he is now doing it.

***Dealing with anger in a new view:*** Mack does not always immediately remember this story when something makes him mad. But when he examines his anger, very often he finds that it goes directly back to the abuse that he suffered at the hands of his brothers and his mother's unwillingness to protect him from them. And, of course, now Mack understands that when he "accidentally" shot his brother while he was drunk, shot him while just "showing him the gun", that it might not have totally been an accident.

***And always:*** Breathe in and breathe out and let it all go. Let it all dissolve into space. Love oneself and let go.



## FROM YOUR LETTERS

a few thoughts to remind you....

### HOLIDAYS:

October 13 - 19: Judaism - Sukkot, a time of Thanksgiving

October 20: Baha'i - the birth of the Bab

October 26: Hinduism - Diwali - the festival of lights dedicated to Kali and Lakshmi

Jainism: Mahavira Nirvana - the day of enlightenment for the 24th Tirthankara

Sikhism: Bandhi Chhor Divas - "the day of prisoners release"

October 31: Jainism - Jnana Panchmi - day to celebrate transcendent wisdom

Wicca: Samhain-celebrates the Celtic New Year

**November 1: Christianity - All Saints Day**

**November 5: Islam - Day of Hajj**

**November 6: Islam - 'Id al-Adha - the Festival of Sacrifice- the concluding act of pilgrimage**

**November 10 - Sikhism - birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder of the Sikh faith**

**November 12 - Baha'i - birth of Baha'u'llah, founder of the Baha'i faith**

**November 15 - Christianity - Advent begins**

**and also....**

**#1 - We are trying to become a well-oiled machine here and you can help us!** Since we are growing so fast, I (Anna) have hardly any time to do more than keep up with writing the newsletters, our web site updates, and all of our other projects. As most of you know, Kristopher answers most of our letters with help from Chelle and Manal, even those addressed to me. He transcribes your letters that go into **Dharma Friends** and handles your book requests. Linda does the **Mindful Money** books and Chelle does the dictionaries. Linda gets the mail each day and sorts it out among everyone but can't read every letter **It would help Linda a lot if you would put on your envelopes if you are a subscriber who wants to change your address or if you are new and want to be put on the mailing list. Also write on the envelope if you want a book, a dictionary or a Mindful Money book, if you have an Ask Tim question, or if you are including a letter for Jeff's Kids.** Then she need not search through the letters for all that information and can send your letter on to the next person to take care of your request. Thank you so much.

**#2 -ASK TIM** got a bit lost in the shuffle. ***If you have a burning question - 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!**

**and new as of last month - Become a DICTIONARY DROP TEAM PLAYER!**

So many of you have asked for dictionaries through the years, we searched out a publisher who would help us in supplying dictionaries. But we have been so admiring of you for wanting dictionaries, we also wanted to support you with a fun program to encourage your interest in learning words, developing a larger vocabulary, and gaining skills that will serve you well when you are out and applying for jobs. Here are the game plays!!

If you want a dictionary, there are two plays.

#1-Drop a letter to us at CWFA/DF DICTIONARY drop and tell us how you will be helped by having a dictionary. We have English and Spanish/English dictionaries. Specify which you want.

#2- AND - get a new teammate! Give us the name of someone you know who would ALSO benefit from having a dictionary. Give us their name, number, and address, and tell us why you want to make this gift. (You might check this out with them first so they won't take it as an insult to their English skills!) You might see if they would also like to receive Dharma Friends and mention that to us too. We will send them a dictionary and a note that you have given them this gift - and Dharma Friends too.

**and then... If you want to play the game...** (you can get a dictionary and choose not to play, or if you already have a dictionary, you can use your own...)

#3 - In each Dharma Friends issue we will have a word drop - and ask you to research it and send us a note that explains your understanding of it and maybe even what it means to you in your life.

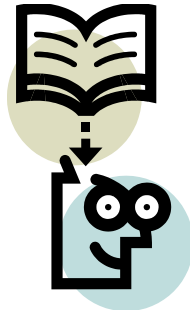
#4 - For those who are on the team and play the game, we will send you a CWFA/Dharma Friends Dictionary Drop Certificate after we receive twelve months' of letters successfully explaining the words we include.

Hooray - Your Team Wins!

\* **Jeff's Kids and your letters:** Jeff is our friend who counsels kids in a Juvenile Detention Center. He thought that sharing your thoughts or stories about your journey to prison might benefit kids that are in the same

situation that you might have been in once upon a time. Know how much your letters are all appreciated for your stories, your advice, and for being such a wonderful vehicle to reach broken hearts! The healing that is coming from these letters is extraordinary. **If you would like to write a letter to Jeff's Kids the address is CWFA, PO Box 7708, Little Rock, Arkansas 72217-7708 and put JEFF'S KIDS on the envelope. Keep those letters coming. For those who have written to Jeff's Kids, thank you so much!**

\* **Linda has reprinted her MINDFUL MONEY** book. If you would like a copy - just send a letter to CWFA and put on the envelope - MINDFUL MONEY BOOK please



### **Book of Knowledge - Omar's dream -**

*our friend Omar dreamed of a process of education so that all of us can become all that we can be..*

**The book - *Devil's Knot: The True Story of the West Memphis Three*  
by Mara Leveritt**

**Silly us!** We have never mentioned this book by our CWFA board president, Mara Leveritt. This book is about the excellent investigation that Mara did into the murders of 3 young West Memphis, Arkansas, boys. Those who were accused of the murders, Damien Echols, Jason Baldwin, and Jessie Misskelley, all went to prison - Damien to death row. Eighteen years later, and just last August, due to the incredible efforts of many, and most powerfully the information in Mara's book, there was the release of the men called The West Memphis 3. Those who knew them, and some of you, our readers, knew them and were serving time with them, felt without a doubt that they were innocent. The most remarkable thing about this book is to show that even if there is a wrongful conviction, it takes incredible work and perseverance to turn about a verdict. Freedom and justice is very hard to come by, even when the exonerating evidence is overwhelming. I know that there are some of you in this same situation. I expect that this book may give you hope or maybe, great despair. But it is remarkable reading.

***When you are deluded, you are used by your body. When you are enlightened, you use your body.- Bunan***

**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](mailto: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.***

***Kristopher says that he is getting many requests for back issues. Some of these are because of mail room errors but some are because we are behind on current addresses. If you change your address, please send a note to LINDA to give us your new address and she can send your next issue to your new location. That saves us money and you from having to write for your back issues. Thanks so much for your help!***

**SOME NEW OPTIONS:** We are always trying to be mindful of \$\$\$ in order to keep publishing our newsletter, as we are always in search of additional funding. **Here are some ways that you can help us.**

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.

*the Drop word for this issue: perseverance*

*If you wish to understand yourself, you must succeed in doing so in the midst of all kinds of confusions and upsets. Don't make the mistake of sitting dead in the cold ashes of a withered tree.- Emyo*



## **A Letter to send to your family or friends to invite them to share Dharma Friends with you...**

In our last meditation group at a maximum security prison, we were talking about the helpfulness of meditation in creating a calm space that arises when faced with chaos or stress so that one need not react to an event from primitive fear and anger. Instead, one can remember meditative equanimity and then make a peaceful decision about the best way to speak or act creating benefit. When we were all talking together in our group, we asked if those skills of healing and facilitating communication were taught to them as kids so that they would not make tense times more volatile. Most everyone agreed that no one in their family taught them such communication skills. When things were tough, everyone just reacted upon impulse - often violently! And - many said that it was this lack of skillfull, calm communication and lifestyle that brought about the life crisis that sent them to prison. They want their boys and girls and those that they love to grow new tools and to have a chance at a good life.

As *Compassion Works for All* offers meditation and healing in prisons in our meditation groups and through our *Dharma Friends* newsletters, one of our strong beliefs is in our '*drop and ripple*' theory! For all of the inmates and others who find a path and tools for healing, there are hundreds of thousands who have been left behind in their families and communities who still face the enormous obstacles and challenges to a successful life. Many of those left behind to find their way - children now alone without fathers and mothers - are the children of inmates who are left in even greater poverty. They are living in what are our own versions of war zones in America. They do not

have a clue about how to survive or how to transcend the life challenges they face. Many are our next generation of prisoners.

In our prison groups and in our **Dharma Friends** issues, we emphasize and try to empower those who are growing to become the mentors, guides, teachers, and loving parents and family members that can be the *drops* in the ocean that can start the ripples flowing to healing and new options. Chelle, one of our board members and a gung-ho volunteer had the thought of enclosing a letter in our **Welcome Packet** that goes to new **Dharma Friends** prisoner subscribers and to run in these **Dharma Friends** newsletters. The hope was to facilitate our prisoner participants in reaching out to their families. If family members and children can access our ***JustUsFriends.org*** options and videos, and are reading **Dharma Friends** as well, they will all have a foundation upon which they can build the shared experiences of new ideas and healing tools. Plus, as they visit and write, these shared tools can become a basis of conversation and those in prisons and back home can better parent their children together.

So here is the letter that you can send to your loved ones if you wish. Hopefully, this invitation will benefit your relationships and your families. It might be a drop starting off ripples and changing your family and maybe even dysfunctional communities. Be a drop....

*Dear*

*Here in prison, I receive a monthly newsletter from Compassion Works for All called Dharma Friends. It offers support from ancient wisdom with which we explore our spiritual path, no matter what tradition someone follows. We learn meditation teachings, psychological and emotional healing, and we build a community between those in prison and those out in the world through letters.*

*Compassion Works for All encourages communication and healing of old family patterns and relationship issues with those I have left behind - like you. If we are both reading Dharma Friends issues, one way to support such discussions between us is to use the issues as a basis for our discussions. I welcome this opportunity to share such healing and growth talks and letters with you and would like to ask you to go to [www.JustUsFriends.org](http://www.JustUsFriends.org) and sign up for the twice monthly emails that will bring you Dharma Friends newsletter and also the JustUsFriends web site updates. There are lots of healing videos on the web site as well, some especially for those with family members and friends who are in prison.*

*I greatly regret that we are spending this time apart and the challenges that it imposes on our relationship. I also look forward to being able to use all of these traumatic events as a way to grow beyond the issues of our past and find a stronger healing that will benefit not only me and you but all those that we love.*

*Thank you for considering sharing Dharma Friends and this part of my life with me. I hope it helps you as much as it has helped me.*

*Love,*



**Compassion Works for All/ Dharma Friends**  
PO Box 7708  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72217-7708

Webpage: [JustUsFriends.org](http://JustUsFriends.org)

**FREE RELIGIOUS MATERIAL**

**Permit NO. 160**  
**Non-Profit organization**  
**US Postage PAID**  
**Little Rock, AR.**



*The source of all good, evil, weal and harm lies with actions, speech and thoughts. Did you bring your actions, speech and thoughts with you today? Or have you left them at home? This is where you must look, right here. You don't have to look very far away. Look at your actions, speech and thoughts. - Ajahn Chah, "Living Dharma"*

**Redbear Drummonds-**



**Mountain Goats**



# Dharma Friends

November 2011 issue # 177  
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Additional Pages for EMAIL VERSION of Dharma Friends



**THE NEXT STEP ON YOUR SPIRITUAL PATH -  
a meditation retreat facilitated by Anna and Joy at Wattle Hollow**

Many of you have regularly attended the Wattle Hollow twice a year meditation retreats facilitated by Anna with Yoga by Joy Fox, at Joy's Fayetteville, Arkansas. fabulous and lovely retreat center.

We will meet soon -the weekend of October 28 - October 30. The retreat is full. If you would like to join us, please go to: [www.wattlehollow.com/schedule/](http://www.wattlehollow.com/schedule/) and see if there are any cancellations. You can sign up for the waiting list. We want you to come.

and p.s. - Joy has many other excellent events scheduled throughout the fall at Wattle Hollow.



# COMPASSION WORKS

Join us in our monthly **Compassion Works** sessions if you are in Arkansas.

- Compassion for You --- and Compassion for All.

Sessions are free, non-denominational and open to everyone.

We will add you to our email reminder list if you want information on times, dates and place, or you can go to [www.justusfriends.org/](http://www.justusfriends.org/) and print out the schedule.

**Compassion Works** sessions offer a quiet experience of compassion.

With a few gentle and guiding prompts, we will let go of the struggle, renew, heal, and send compassion into the world.

Then we head out again to live our question - How can I live compassion for myself and for all beings today?

(We also offer portions on videos and have this printout so that you can have an individual practice or you could start Compassion Works sessions in your locality)

**Our friend, the Rev. Susan Sims Smith is going to India and wants you to come along! Check this out.**

[http://www.justusfriends.org/contribution\\_view.asp?aid=246](http://www.justusfriends.org/contribution_view.asp?aid=246)

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

*We now have more of Linda Bessette's **Mindful Money** book – order here by emailing Linda. see address below...*

***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](mailto:lbessette33@comcast.net)) and she can give you more information about prices, mailing, etc. for all books.*

***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](http://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.***

***If you would like to host a Compassion Works for All fundraising coffee -***

***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 coffee and cookies 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](mailto: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.***

