



offers you **Dharma Friends**

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

May 2011 issue # 172

copyright 2011, a project of Compassion Works for All

**The Dhammapada**  
**The teachings of the Buddha**



**Verse 12: The Self**

From a Dhammapada translation offered by The Forrest Sangha

157. If we hold ourselves dear, then we maintain careful self-regard both day and night.
158. It is wise to set ourselves right before instructing others.
159. One's own self is the hardest to discipline. You should act as you teach: tame yourself before trying to tame others.
160. Truly it is ourselves that we depend upon; how could we really depend upon another? When we reach the state of self-reliance we find a rare refuge.
161. As a diamond can cut through the stone that once housed it, so your own evil can grind you down.
162. Committed evil doers behave toward themselves like their own worst enemies. They are like creepers that strangle the trees which support them.
163. It is easy to do that which is of no real benefit to oneself, but it is difficult indeed to do that which is truly beneficial and good.
164. Like the bamboo which destroys itself as it bears fruit, so fools harm themselves by holding to wrong views and deriding those worthy ones who live in harmony with the Way.
165. By ourselves we do evil and by ourselves we are made impure. By ourselves we avoid evil and by ourselves we are made pure. The great matter of purity is our own affair. No other can be responsible.
166. Knowing the Way for oneself, walk it thoroughly. Do not allow the needs of others, however demanding, to bring about distraction.



## A few thoughts about this Dhammapada verse: **The Self**

### **Oh, poor me! Poor self. Life is such suffering.**

I go through my letters and one writer will say - 'Your commentaries are so wonderful! They help me so much!!' And that makes me happy. Then the next letter says, 'Your commentaries are so wrong. You present the teachings wrong. You don't know what you are talking about. You are a disgrace!' Well, then I feel bad - I'm a disgrace. Suffering suffering suffering. All these other selves out there and each one has an opinion - opinions very freely given at that!

I could say to my self - How wonderful that this writer feels like I am saying everything wrong and that I am a disgrace. Now I have this great chance to revisit my attachments to what I say. I can practice letting go of my ideas and opinions. Whoot whoot Or, I could say - That writer is so very wrong - he just doesn't have a clue! I know I am right!! And then I could cite teachings and texts to show how I am right and they are wrong. Probably, it is a good bet that no matter what I - or any of us - offer out for consideration in such a forum as this, there will be many 'selves' with opinions as to whether we are right or wrong, good or bad, helpful or misleading. As many selves as there are out there, there are that many strongly held opinions. We could keep our mouths shut, we could accept that we will always meet with opposition, or we could go to battle over who is right and who is wrong. Our verse, **SELF**, helps us choose.

*It is important to have a healthy and well-understood ego self as our foundation and then to grow beyond it to recognize our Transcendent Self or 'no-self' that is our True Essence - One with All That Is.*

Let us start this discussion of **Self**, by remembering that all is sacred wisdom and all is total perfection. This takes us beyond the world of ego self. Ego self focuses on intellectual and dualistic concepts of self as good or bad or right or wrong. We even go beyond the dualism of thinking that the ego **self** is ordinary and not sacred, and all that is beyond ordinary self is sacred. We often get caught in all these levels of exploring the psychological ego self and all that we perceive as 'no-self' as our spiritual journey. In actuality, we never leave All That Is, whether we rest in great wisdom awareness or caught in ego self's emotional trauma or drama. It is all perfect wisdom. It is all vast and sacred emptiness.

But -- it is all 'unspeakable'. Once we leave any discussion of that limited view of ego's dualism and concepts, there are no words, much less any right or correct words, to describe all that is sacred and all that is beyond the ordinary view of concepts. So we often get caught here too trying to use concepts to express the inexpressible, and if we try, we will always miss the point. We read one person saying - *It must be said this way!* Even the great teachings have to invent words that merely give us clues so that we will know and recognize those profound states of awakened consciousness when we touch them. Our teachers always use many different words and even share their many great traditions to describe these indescribable states and some sound quite contradictory. But for all those teachers, and more so, for those of us unenlightened beings like me, everything that we say is short of the mark and very likely, misleading. We each must find the words to help us claim and anchor those experiences in our own awareness. In truth, every **self** is wrong and every **self** is right because they can only speak for their *own self*.

This is our multidimensional view all ways as we move from a limited, dualistic and conceptual view of self to awakened view. This is our task: when we enter these subtle states of experience ourselves, we must remember them and anchor them with our own words and feelings so we can find our way back. It does not matter what others might say.

*" Knowing the Way for oneself, walk it thoroughly. Do not allow the needs of others, however demanding, to bring about distraction."* Our verse talks about going beyond all those ways that self holds us back from realization. So the first step is to fully know that self so we can grow beyond those ego attachments and distractions.

The more our ego and physical life is harmonious and we rest in equanimity with our challenges, the more clarity we have overall. It is possible but a lot harder to follow our very subtle inner, spiritual path when we have enormous challenges

that keep throwing us out of balance and we are constantly reeling. As a psychotherapist, I know how important it is to have a healthy ego-self that lives in balance and harmony with others and allows us to succeed in our developmental life tasks. It is important to develop our intellectual mind, a healthy body, and our talents so that we have a good healthy appreciation of all that we are. It is good to have an adequate income and a stable life. It is important to have the relationship skills and ability to establish intimacy with others so that our deep needs for family are fulfilled. We need ego stability so that we can handle life stressors without turning to escape routes that make our internal emotional balance topsy-turvy. When life is calm, we can meditate and contemplate with greater ease. Of course, this focus on calm meditation allows us to handle life issues with greater clarity and success, and that allows us the equanimity to live in meditative mindfulness as we go through our days.

### **What are some of those optimal conditions that we need to grow a healthy ego self?**

There are some key ingredients that a 'self' needs in order to develop in healthy ways. In many ways, we are actually talking about having a healthy brain. And to learn more of what is 'healthy', we can read our verse, *The Self*. It is a good perspective to say that that self does not cause harm to oneself or others. We do what needs to be done for our survival but do not focus on self or cherish self to the degree that we harm others in order to fulfill our own desires.

From a developmental perspective of a healthy self, we need to start with an overall healthy fetal development that will lay in place the template for healthy brain development. We can't do much about the genetics that affects our brain's capacity. And also, beyond our control, we need a healthy mother who takes good care of herself while pregnant with her baby. It is beneficial to the child if she is not depressed, or under great stress, or using toxic substances. If mother offers good conditions for gestation, the baby will develop a healthier brain and body.

The same is true for an infant and toddler. We still rely a great deal on our mother, our other caregivers, and our environment. Our healthy brain and our healthy developing sense of self depends on receiving loving care, healthy food, intellectual stimulation but not chaos, and consistent bonding with our primary care-giver. If mother is stressed, depressed, inconsistent in her attention, or if anyone is abusive to the baby - including older siblings - that developing brain will be harmed. The roots of violent behaviors, personality disorders or other mental illness, deep feelings of shame or insecurity, can begin in these very early stages of life in the womb or infancy.

The young child must have a safe world to explore and people that will affirm him or her with acceptance and support. Throughout our life, we are subject to disease or accidents which take their toll. But many other factors affect us too. If neighborhoods, school, extended family, or the culture reflected by media and society say to a child that they are valued, this internalization of one's self image forms the basis of *self* for life. If this appreciation of self is wounded and we do not feel valued or loveable, it is very hard to repair this basic feeling of unlovability. We all treat others the way that we feel we are treated.

From these early years on, we may well live out our earliest physiological, emotional, and psychological script that has been laid down on our foundational brain and ego templates of fetal development and infancy. Most children do not have the insight to question their world or their place in it. If they live in a neighborhood or family that is violent, that is 'normal' and integrated into their beliefs of self and others without assessment as to whether it is good or bad. Most children love those around them, even if they are abusers. If poor, most children do not perceive their poverty because it is normal life for them. The world we are given is our security and if that world is a war zone, we find our way through it to survive. If that world is peaceful and loving, we assume that that is the world that others live in as well. Our *self* lives the rules, mores, and values that are present in our early world without question and these are deeply integrated into our being.

At some point, we may begin to realize that there are differences in our world and the worlds of others. Sometimes this can be shocking and sometimes shaming. It becomes clear that we are affirmed or rejected or ridiculed by a larger world. We may not be able to compete in school and we feel stupid. We may relate to others with behaviors that are typical in our home and other kids reject us. We may be from a minority race, religion, nationality, have a disability, or have some other feature that draws attention to us and we feel profoundly different. Depending on the *self*-esteem we integrated and our inner strength and resilience, we may react with shame, withdrawal, anger, or an increased and courageous reaching out to bridge these challenges and move ourselves confidently into the social groups that we want to be a part of.

If we have adults who can help us with these challenges and can affirm our developing sense of a positive self, we can grow stronger and expand our self view in positive ways. At the same time, we learn to use our own challenges to develop empathy and appreciation for the challenges of others. If no one helps us and we must rely on our own views to make sense of these challenges, we may find a path to ease our way along that is helpful or not. Some kids turn to substances or to anger or to great achievement in order to find security. Others drop out and disappear and live invisible lives, never developing to their true capacity or being all that they can be. If we get to adolescence with a somewhat intact ego self, we hope that that will carry us into adulthood so that we can continue to grow into healthy maturity - which is likely to keep most of us busy for the rest of our lives. It is a hard journey to learn to function successfully in the world and at some point, we hopefully liberate our self from the suffering of ordinary life and find that we are much, much more.

Few even in the "free world" have the luxury of living a peaceful lifestyle or have the ability to feel that they are truly ok with a strong *self*-image. Many cannot go beyond the struggles of ego to find their spiritual path. I say often, I don't know how so many of you that live in prisons have done it! I am deeply touched by your stories that share how you have found and traveled your paths that brought you through great suffering. I am most admiring of your courage and your amazing clarity that has come from practice during times of adversity. There is no one who escapes suffering but some of you have had far more than your share.

### **How does this relate to our verse, The Self, and learning to walk our path?**

*162. Committed evil doers behave toward themselves like their own worst enemies. They are like creepers that strangle the trees which support them.*

*163. It is easy to do that which is of no real benefit to oneself, but it is difficult indeed to do that which is truly beneficial and good.*

*164. Like the bamboo which destroys itself as it bears fruit, so fools harm themselves by holding to wrong views and deriding those worthy ones who live in harmony with the Way.*

This verse is offered to those of us already on a spiritual path who are motivated by these teachings to grow beyond the self-serving ego and become an awakened being. We are told: *Truly it is ourselves that we depend upon; how could we really depend upon another? When we reach the state of self-reliance we find a rare refuge.*

We must do this journey by ourselves and no-one else can do it for us. We must keep trying to be of benefit to ourselves and to others to maximize the opportunity to find inner peace and balance. All of you reading this are already on this path and many of you are well on your way to becoming beings of great wisdom and compassion. In our verse, we are differentiating between an unhealthy and stuck, self-centered and even self-destructive self and a healthy self that has the inner push to grow into a greater spiritual awareness. A child who has felt love and support to become successful, has a greater sense of inner peace. That child may listen to their inner self, a positive ego self, and can naturally feel a tug to grow into their next steps as they develop. At some point in their evolution, the healthy and loving child or adult feels a deeper sense of compassion for others and knows their essence as a spiritual being. Because they live in love and safety, they trust that they can honor and express this emerging Sacred 'no-Self'. Developing a sense of their spiritual journey is automatic and natural and full of joy. This may happen for a tiny child at 3, or an adolescent, or when one is an adult. When ready, that Sacred Self emerges with heartfelt passion and a sense of truth. This is the natural evolution of a spiritual path.

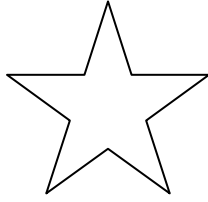
### **But most of us have less than this ideal evolution.**

The self that is stuck in grasping, pain, shame, or anger, is always creating suffering and sabotages our capacity to grow. If we are stuck in turbulence and chaos, we are far less likely to begin to discern a path out of self-focus to spiritual awakening. Wrapped up in lives where we are desperately trying to simply survive and never doing what is of benefit to ourselves and others, we can hardly find a path beyond our struggles.

**And yet - here is the question** - Given all those challenges that so many of us faced; given all those reasons for our broken brains and struggling egos; given the great suffering that so many of us have been through --- how did we make that flying leap of faith from chaos and destruction to knowing that an inner path awaited us beyond the struggle and then

taking those first steps? In spite of all those tugs from broken selves that barely survived, how did we know sacredness and oneness and vast SELF awaiting us if we would but open to it. Our stories are the teachings for healing the world.

*B.W. shares a quote from Ram Dass who offered the "Prison As Ashram Project.": Two men look through the prison bars, one sees the mud, the other sees the stars.*



## **A MEDITATION on The Self**

Begin the meditation by resting comfortably with your back straight. If you can sit, that is good, and if not, lie flat. Take a while just to breathe in an effortless way and let go of tension. Scan through your body. Feel the weight of your body on your chair or cushion or the full weight of your body as you lie down. Feel the space above you and the firmness or softness of what is below you. Feel the texture of any clothing on your skin or any places where skin touches skin. Hear the noises around you. Be aware of any smells. Feel the saliva in your mouth and the way that your teeth touch or your tongue rests in your mouth. Feel the air passing through your nostrils as you breathe and your belly rising and falling. Scan again for any tension that you are holding deep in your muscles. As you exhale, let go of the tension and dissolve it away. If there is pain anywhere in your body, you might adjust gently to ease it, and then imagine letting it go too. Every breath gives that pain more space and then breathe it out.

Remember your name and say it softly to yourself. Feel how it feels to say your name. Let it go. Feel the boundaries of your body. With your exhalation, imagine softening those boundaries to make them more transparent and dissolve your body into the space around you. Tell yourself it is ok to just let go and dissolve, like an ice cube dissolving into a cup of hot water. Softly and gently, just let go of all that you customarily call your *self*.

Rest in meditation as you continue to gently expand into simple awareness. No effort and no watching. Just resting in all that you are and all that you now dissolve into - just resting in space. No form, no boundaries, no *I AM* and no *I AM NOT*.

As you rest in awareness, arisings will occur - some from within what you ordinarily call your *self* and some from outside of what you ordinarily call your *self*. Just notice. No need to differentiate. Just let the arisings arise.

Say - This is sacred wisdom arising. No need to think or ponder or figure anything out.

Just rest in awareness and the arisings come - "Ah," you say: "Wisdom arising." Let it go. Let it dissolve into space.

And the next arising stirs into expression - maybe a thought about cookies - maybe a list of what you need to do - maybe you forget to watch arisings and you find you are planning your schedule for the day - and then you notice -- "Ah," you say. "Wisdom arising." And let it go.

That's all. That's your meditation.

End your time of practice with a prayer for self and SELF to benefit all beings and to practice kindness all ways.



## FROM YOUR LETTERS

**#1 – The Mindful Money Book – If you would like a free copy of Linda’s book, Mindful Money to help you get an excellent education in finances in this concise course, write to us (address on the back page) and put on your envelope- ATTN: Linda. For the **Money Book**.**

**#2 - 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.

**#3 - Jeff's Kids and your heartwarming 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!**

**#4 -From Chelle –** I want to extend a Big Thank You to those of you who have sent in your thoughts and ideas as we develop a post-release program. While this project is still in its very early stages, the letters I’ve received will serve as important building blocks in the future in developing this program. I want to encourage all of you to continue sharing with me about how you think such a program could work, and how you think a person or group could best help you upon release. When you write in, be sure to put on the envelope Chelle’s REACH project. Again, thank you so much for participating and being a part of developing this program.

**A few quotes from Chelle:** *"Volunteers are special people with a highly developed sense of responsibility. While pessimists and optimists argue whether a glass is half-empty or half-full, the volunteer sees a glass of water and starts looking for someone who might be thirsty" ~ anonymous*

*Never act until you have clearly answered the question: "What happens if I do nothing?" ~Robert Brault*

*"When you teach the inmates to meditate, the only people in the prison are the guards." Ram Dass*

**From Tony Thrash:** Dear Linda, . . . you are greatly appreciated for the many meaningful tasks that you, out of the goodness and kindness of your heart, perform on behalf of Compassion Works For All. May I also take this time to express how much I enjoyed your book “Mindful Money.” The simplicity of which you conveyed your message was very refreshing, allowing for a broader range of individuals to perceive, and thus apply, the principles that you prescribed as suggestions to follow. Good job – Good book !!! How blessed people are that you have made your book so readily available. Thank you, Linda, you are a jewel. Resting as ONE in the Dharma. Peace and Love !

by susannah





## Callused Hands By James Halbirt, CRT, A California Prisoner

Have you ever examined your hands? Ponder a minute, and think about them. Look at what you have. Have they served or hindered you throughout your life? Sure they have.

These hands, though wrinkled, shriveled and weak, have been my tools used all my life to reach out and grab life and sometimes to embrace. At other times, they have been my enemy to many.

On one hand, they have helped life; on the other, these hands have taken life. How sad! May I atone and be at-one with compassion for those I caused to suffer by my hands. Hands that were dualistic, not too sure of life's purpose.

As a young person, these hands caught my fall upon the floor. They put food in my mouth, sometimes all over the place. My mother taught me to fold them in prayer, but I learned to forget how, such an easy task. She wiped my tears when I fell from grace. She was there when I fell into hell.

They brawled and fought, become bloodied and scrapped. As well as, swollen and bent from over use and weary age. One wore the ring of a special loved one. They held and caressed a love one; not so clumsy then.

They have written many a letter, some words of wisdom, many to know I am here, apart, but my love still was warm. They trembled and shook when I buried my parents; they trembled with fear and shame when I took a life; stained when I knelt, my head buried within my hands.

They held my children, consoled my friends, and I shook my fist, when I didn't understand.

These hands are the mark of where I've been; the good and the bad of a rugged life, what I wished I was, but have never been.

They helped be look better, in my mind, than I ever was. They cleansed my body, but failed to cleanse my mind. How was I to know about my hands?

My hands gave respect with the hands that I shook, but gave harm to those who raised my ire. I didn't know what lurked within.

Today, I learned to use my hands with respect, in Gassho, and to atone, to always abide in the Buddha, the Dharma wisdom he taught and that I follow, and in the Sangha, I now use my hands out of respect, the wisdom that is within. I bow out of loyalty, to a Master Mind, hands together in Gassho. These hands have finally found many things worthy to be done. And so it is . . .

***So don't be in a hurry and try to push or rush your practice. Do your meditation gently and gradually step by step. In regard to peacefulness, if you become peaceful, then accept it; if you don't become peaceful, then accept that also. That's the nature of the mind. We must find our own practice and persistently keep at it. - Ajahn Chah, "Bodhinyana"***

### From Minister:

*"It's an individual thing' you can't generalize. It all comes down to personal understanding, personal experience. If your path is not providing solutions to your problems, answers to your questions, satisfaction to your mind, you must check up. Perhaps there's something wrong with your point of view, your understanding. You can't necessarily conclude that there's something wrong with your religion just because you tried it and it didn't work. Different individuals have their own ideas, views, and understanding of religion, and can make mistakes. Therefore, make sure that the way you understand your religion's ideas and methods is correct. If you make the right effort on the basis of right understanding, you will experience deep inner satisfaction. Thus, you'll prove to yourself that satisfaction does not depend on anything external. True satisfaction comes from the mind."*

*-From: Becoming Your Own Therapist - Lama Thubten Yeshe*

So many of the men here in this prison facility love to come sit and listen to me ramble on and on and on about a lot of stuff. I'm probably the strangest "Buddhist guy" they've seen - considering that the only Buddhists they can compare me to are the very stern, bald-headed chaps in the movies and all. Heavy hitting Kung Fu masters and all that. For the most part, it doesn't seem to matter to them about my bald head (I just like a bald noggin; nothing to do with Buddhism), my fighting abilities, or how "deep" I am. They come to feed inwardly. Mentally. Spiritually.

"I have nothing to give to you," I have told them occasionally. "What you're looking for can be **REALIZED** - - there is truly nothing lost that needs to be found."

For those who are Christians, I say to you: Love your neighbor as yourself. To Muslims: Remember: No man/woman truly believes until he wants for others what he wants for himself.

The Bible says that Jesus gave two Commandment recollections to a young man who wanted to know the Tao/way/salvation:

1. Love the Creator with all that you are.
2. Love your neighbor as yourself.

Newly arrived students to the Dharma, please, humble yourselves. It is unwise to cast aside all other religious teachings as non-beneficial. I promise you, there is so much about the religious practices you've decided to drop that you're missing out on where blessings are to be had. It is not good, nor bad that you've decided to change paths/practices – at the end of the day, however, please remember Lama Thubten Yeshe's words: “It's an individual thing.” Use your new realizations to help others who practice different religions. EXPAND THEIR HORIZONS. Mind that you not look down your noses at them.

*“Purify the heart, Avoid Evil, Do Good.” - Buddha*



drawing by David Lehl

### **Congratulations to Kalen**

Ode to a Teacher Deer by Z. L. King

It is GREAT and NOBLE  
When the STUDENT becomes the TEACHER  
Passing through the UNKNOWN to the KNOWN  
Helping PRISONERS to overcome their FEAR  
As we LEARN and PRACTICE  
The NOBLE BUDDHIST RELIGION  
KALEN was always QUICK to offer ENCOURAGEMENT  
To MEN and WOMEN in PRISON, like me  
Again and again she offered the HAND of FRIENDSHIP  
TO PRISONERS, like me, that were filled with FEAR  
KALEN pushed us to become BUDDHAS  
When most PEOPLE felt we were WORTHLESS  
And ROTTEN to the CORE  
It is GOOD to KNOW that KALEN

Has went from the STUDENT to TEACHER  
KALEN is a DEAR and SWEET TEACHER  
That SHOWERS TONS of LOVE  
To PRISONERS near and far away too  
She is a DEER of a PERSON  
That abounds with KINDNESS and METTA  
Each day LOVE EXUDES from her  
Working to establish the DHARMA  
Among PRISONERS filled with FEAR  
KINDNESS, CONSEL and CONSIDERATION  
This NOBLE WOMAN is QUICK to GIVE  
To PRISONERS all over the COUNTRY  
A FEW LINES for KALEN  
A NOBLE BUDDHIST PRIEST—YEAH !!!

*It is a defect in language that words suggest permanent realities and people do not see through this deception. But mere words cannot create reality. Thus people speak of a final goal and believe it is real, but it is a form of words and the goal as such is without substance. The one who realizes the emptiness of objects and concepts does not depend on words. Perfect wisdom is beyond definition, and pathlessness is the way to it. The wise one treads this path for the direct realization of impermanence and for the direct realization of understanding. This, then, is perfect wisdom. Such a one should tread this path knowing that attachment and attractions are neither good nor harmful, even enlightenment is neither good nor harmful, because perfect wisdom is not meant to promote good or harm for that person. However, even though there is no intention of good or harm, it does confer endless blessing. - Prajnaparamita*

**From W. L.:** Greetings Kristopher, I have a problem with money (at least I perceive it so sometimes!) so my letters will be very few. Many of our brothers and sisters are in deep sufferings and I felt I might help some. It is my most sincere wish to do so! I had the privilege once to hear a Dharma teaching from a teacher whose nose I've long since forgotten. He spoke on emptiness and our need to identify with our past in all its forms to give us our past,. Introductions are always made in stages with past stories to explain who we are, because we are empty. Empty of what? A self separate from our parts.

There's a sutra about the murderer Anguilimala in which the Buddha went to him. Anguilimala chased the Buddha for days and though the Buddha never ran, Anguilimala never caught him. He exclaimed to Buddha telling him to stop, the Buddha's reply was simply, “I already have. Now it's your turn.” On hearing this, Anguilimala shaved his head and took up the robes. Later, when

Anguilimala went into town, he was assaulted by the townsfolk. When he came back and told the Buddha this, he replied, "Accept this, it's what you created." This is all horribly paraphrased, but accurate in its message, I think. Once created, karma (any notion of the mind) will be met. Cause and effect in the less subtle form.

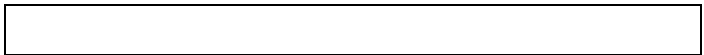
Zen master Dogan once wrote, "*Firewood is the perfect phenomenal expression of firewood, ash is the perfect phenomenal expression of ash. Ash is not the future of firewood nor is firewood the past of ash.*" These two are not in contradiction. They are accurate in their entirety. All things must arise together, "inter-be" as Thich Nhat Hahn says. If it is not, nothing is. If a speck of dust is, the cosmos are. "The thing is, because everything else is. It can be no other way. Nothing is perfect or "Perfect" if all else is not as well. It is just as the moon in the reflection. We deviate and cause ignorance, which causes suffering when we perceive duality or separateness. When we cling to a belief that "all is one" we suffer. That's why the Buddha taught the "Middle-way."

To those who are getting out, I've been told that some Buddhist Sanghas (monasteries) accept ex-felons in residency programs. If your truly serious about your practice, I suggest looking into it if you can. Remember that we all sit together. No one is ever left out of our efforts. In the spirit of the Bodhisattva Vows:

Sentient beings are numberless,  
We vow to liberate them all.  
Delusions are endless,  
We vow to cut through them all.

The teachings are infinite,  
We vow to learn them all.  
The Buddha way is inconceivable,  
We vow to attain it.

In peace, always,



**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.**

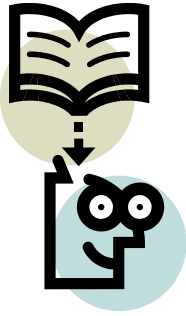
If you are receiving **Dharma Friends** but do not read it or know someone else who does not read their issues, either donate them to your library, or write and tell us to take you off the **Dharma Friends** list. Now, some have written and said that others need them more than they do so take their name 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.

*What thing is not attained when painstakingly sought? What thing comes of itself without being sought? What thing does not break under the blow of an iron hammer? What thing closes by night and opens by day? - Chih-men*

## Book of Knowledge - Omar's dream



here is a book SUGGESTED BY JARED BEEKMAN and he included the Amazon advertisement for it

**ENOUGH! A Buddhist Approach to Finding Release from Addictive Patterns** by Chönyi Taylor

**Enough!** is a hands-on guide to help put an end to the patterns that sabotage the potential for a true and satisfying happiness. All of us are caught up in addictions—big or small. Enough! presents a practical path that releases us from the grip of negative habits and addictions that block a full and meaningful life.

We can learn how to undo our habits and addictions, but to do this we have to first find their triggers. With the right techniques we can disarm them and learn more effective ways for dealing with the pain that so often underlies our problem-causing behaviors. Without the support of effective methods we are likely to return to our addictions when pain and painful issues arise. Chönyi Taylor helps us break through that cycle, reconnect with ourselves and others, and feel more centered in our spiritual awareness.

The meditations in this book are designed to develop familiarity with states of mind that can release us from addictive patterns. These meditations will be available in a recording by Chonyi Taylor, as a supplement to Enough! Currently the CD is not yet available and we do not have a date for its release at this time. As soon as we know when the audio recording will be available we will post it here on the website. The audio recording will be a supplement to the book and not a recording of the book itself.

Presenting the essence of Buddhism without the jargon, and fusing it with Western psychology, Chönyi Taylor engagingly combines practical exercises that were developed through her workshops with meditations and stories, and presents invaluable insights about how the mind works.

**Enough!** is intended for anyone who is looking for a powerful and effective way out of addiction, regardless of religious or secular background, and is suitable for self-study or as part of a guided program.

Chönyi Taylor (Dr. Diana Taylor) was ordained as a Buddhist nun by the Dalai Lama in 1995. Active in the worlds of both Buddhism and Western psychology, she teaches Buddhism from simple to advanced levels and participates in interfaith conferences and workshops for psychologists and health professionals. She is currently a lecturer and supervisor in the Graduate Diploma Program in Buddhism and Psychotherapy for the Australian Association of Buddhist Counselors and Psychotherapists and is an honorary lecturer in Psychological Medicine at Sydney University. PRICE: I see copies on Amazon that run from \$16.95 to \$24.95.

### – and we must share our Dharma Friend Kathleen Welton's Book too!

It is a newly released book of inspirational quotes that will remind us each day to focus on all that is truly important. The title is: **The Little Book of Gratitude Quotes**. It is a lovely book that has accomplished an almost impossible task - to search out the best and most enlightening quotes from the billions of words said through the centuries! Here is one that I love - "It's never too late to be what you might have been." by George Eliot. the price is \$9.99 on Amazon or have someone order for you from [www.littlequotebooks.com](http://www.littlequotebooks.com).



*All the wealth you've acquired from beginningless time until now has failed to fulfill all your desires. Cultivate therefore this wish-granting gem of moderation, O fortunate ones.*  
- Milarepa, "Drinking the Mountain Stream"

**From E.T.:** Dear CWFA and Kristopher, A deep bow to all of you! Thank you for keeping me on your list (3 yrs now!) and for keeping me and all of us in your thoughts and prayers. I felt compelled to write a response to issue # 166. I have a copy of the *Dhammapada* (1993 Narada text) which I use with the newsletters for comparison.

How easy it is to avoid "the Fools," hide in our pods, read Dharma books, and pretend we are wise for doing so! Perhaps we believe by not associating with others in prison, we will not be considered unwise and lessen our chances of falling into wrong actions. Hm . . .

We become very excited if someone from the outside puts money on our books or sends us a large package, but how much more fortunate would we feel if we viewed all living beings we encounter with compassion? We all suffer in some degree, but we can lessen our suffering by developing "Compassion For All!" All of our encounters with others serves to enhance and wizen our compassion, and in return it purifies us! This is the true, rare and precious treasure (you can't get that from Walkenhorst or Union Supply!)

And perhaps one day our mind will be so purified that impure objects and sensations will no longer matter – and then everything will be pure! Put your compassion into practice, otherwise it remains just a lot of empty words. Doing the Milarepa cave retreat is not the answer. You must make yourself available in order to learn how to cherish others to wish for their release from suffering.

Something else I've been wanting to say . . . I never try to express the myriad of tests and trials that I (as well as most of your readers) go through being in prison. It seems it is already expressed in the newsletters. I did relate to S.W. in issue # 164. I have never shirked from admitting my offense, even though most figure it out since I'm 1. white, 2. middle-aged, 3. professional, and 4. tattooed like some gang folk. And being an S.O. in prison, even on ANY side (because, let's face it: it's isn't very popular!) ostracizes you. And, like S.W., my parents are dead, my daughter died six years ago; my siblings don't write (not in 6 years) and I also will be out (?) in 2017. Not a whole lot of options there. Or here. Jobs become non-existent here at California's prisons when that S.O. Identity rears its head. I wish I had some helpful ideas for S.W. Just hang tough -

I close with my warmest love and my best wishes to you Kristopher, Anna, and gang. And I am starting a meditation group combining Hindu/Buddhist mantras and breathing exercises. Anna's suggestions are very helpful! Not quite ready for a name, but I will let you know.

As always, my friend Kristopher, thanks for being there for me all of these years. It's nice and comforting knowing someone out there understands a bit of my path. And as always, Be happy, well and at peace! Namaste,

*Worldly afflictions are as extensive as an ocean, noisy and clamorous; but they all arise from the thoughts in your own mind. When not a single thought is conceived, you are liberated from them all. - Ta-t*

**From Gary Hallford:** Greetings Kristopher, Received the February 2011 Dharma Friends today, and wanted to wish you a heartfelt congratulations for being “free” for a full ten years. Those who have not endured these abattoirs are not likely to understand the complex emotions involved in reflecting upon your time “inside”; however, you still have a “family” in here (wherever “here” may be . . .), and we applaud not only your courage and tenacity in staying out, but the humble kindness you shine back upon “us”. We are indebted to you . . .

Secondly, there was a letter which requires an answer and I hope you can publish this in short order: On the back page of Issue # 169, S.D. has “attempted” to write his/her “feelings and thoughts” for the first time, and seeks direction. S.D., my friend, you are quite clearly literate enough to express yourself. The only question is what to use as a “guide” . . .

Those who have read Dharma Friends for awhile will possibly recognize my name, because I have been published within its pages several times. Sometimes on inconsequential commentaries, other times on more political/social policies. Everything ever submitted was, is, and will be, a “First Draft” (not because of an innate eloquence, but due to poverty), and there have been many errors and/or omissions over the years. As this letter is being written, I am nearing my 49<sup>th</sup> birthday, and have been capable of reading and writing for 45 (+ or -) years.

The key is really very simple: **READ EVERYTHING !!!** You might not like the genre, but it will give you an insight into the thinking patterns of the author[s]. Most of my current reading is either legal, political, or religious, but I also make room for assorted fiction, non-fiction, poetry, plays and many other styles of writing. Some I deem to be complete crap, while other forgotten gems are priceless works of art. There are, among the odd collection I have, a collection of speeches by prominent figures (Aung San Suu Kyi; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; Barrack Obama; Mother Teresa; Thomas Jefferson; Justice Brandeis; etc . . .). You don't have to agree with the message, to respect the work[s] of the messenger[s].

Suggested reading? The Castle, by Franz Kafka; The Social Contract [Du Contrat Social], by Jean-Jacques Rousseau; For Whom the Bell Tolls, by Ernest Hemingway; On the Road, by Jack Kerouac; The Poisonwood Bible, by Barbara Kingsolver; Being Peace, by Thich Nhat Hanh; and naturally, anything I've written (smile). And, I can't leave out the best #@\$\*%+! book ever published in this country: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, by Mark Twain (truly a priceless example of the written arts . . .).

Also in the “suggestion box”, is to pick any topic which comes to mind, and write about it from different viewpoints. Perhaps the question is abortion . . ., then write about it from the point of view of the expectant mother (at 15, 25, 35, etc . . .): the child's father (16 year old kid; 40 year-old teacher; rapist; et al . . .) the medical staff's point of view; a politician's [suspected] point of view; and anyone else who comes into mind. Sounds easy, huh? Try it. Then do it in Spanish; maybe French; how about in German . . .; or, “cross pollinate” these languages until you find your own voice . . . S.D., I wish you well in your endeavors as well as in Court. The only way to do anything, is to “look inside yourself”, and your voice will come . . . May Peace Come Soon,

Compassion Works for All/ Dharma Friends

PO Box 7708

Little Rock, Arkansas 72217-7708

Webpage: JustUsFriends.org

FREE RELIGIOUS MATERIAL

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



\*\*\*\*\*

*If you students of the Way wish to become Buddhas, you need study no doctrines whatever, but learn only how to avoid seeking for and attaching yourselves to anything. - Huang Po, Zen Teaching of Huang Po*

**From Brian Farmer:** Consciousness stretching across exuberant landscapes, to the farthest edges of the sky. Cascades of pure energy replenishing, feeling the sacred heartbeat of Mother Earth, breathing life. We sing a gentle song, one we just made up, a wordless vibration of thanks. And slip into the light, like a drop of water into the ocean.



*Remember the clear light, the pure clear white light from which everything in the universe comes, to which everything in the universe returns; the original nature of your own mind. The natural state of the universe unmanifest. Let go into the clear light, trust it, merge with it. It is your own true nature, it is home. - Tibetan Book of the Dead*

# Dharma Friends

May 2011 issue # 172

copyright 2011, Compassion Works for All

Additional Pages for EMAIL VERSION of Dharma Friends

*The ultimate source of peace in the family, the country, and the world is altruism. - His Holiness the Dalai Lama, The Meaning of Life*

Don't forget Cheryl Woodard's class if you live in central Arkansas -

**Essential Concepts, Themes, & Practices on the Buddhist Path**  
May 2 - June 13  
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

go to [www.ebslr.org](http://www.ebslr.org) for more information

*You cannot find Buddha nature by vivisection. Reality cannot be caught by thinking or feeling mind. Moment after moment to watch your breathing, to watch your posture, is true nature. There is no secret beyond this point. - Shunryu Suzuki, "Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind"*

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.

**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](http://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](mailto: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 lunch or 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 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](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.***

