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Dharma Friends

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

October 2010 issue # 165

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The Dhammapada

The teachings of the Buddha



Verse 5– THE FOOLISH

60 The night is long for one who cannot sleep. A journey is long for one who is tired. Ignorant existence is long and tedious for those unaware of Truth.

61 Having found no companion who has travelled at least as far as ourselves, it is better to go alone than to accompany those who remain irresolute.

62 “This is my child, this is my wealth”: such thoughts are the preoccupations of fools. If we are unable to own even ourselves, why make such claims?

63 The fool who knows he is a fool is at least a little wise; the fool who thinks that he is wise is assuredly a fool.

64 Like spoons unable to taste the flavor of the soup, are the fools who cannot see truth, even though they live
all their lives among the wise.

65 Like the tongue that can appreciate the flavor of the soup, is one who can discern clearly the truth after only a brief association with the wise.

66 By heedlessly performing evil, the unwary fools produce their own bitter fruits. They behave like their worst enemy.

67 A deed is not well-done when upon reflection remorse arises: with tears of sorrow one harvests its fruit.

68 A deed is well-done when upon reflection no remorse arises: with joy one harvests its fruits.

69 Fools perceive evil acts to be sweet as honey until they have seen the consequences. When they behold their fruits, fools suffer indeed.

70 Even after months of rigid asceticism, subsisting on a frugal diet, a fool is not to be compared in value to the person who simply sees the truth.

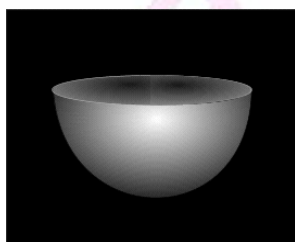
71 Fresh milk does not immediately turn into curd, and evil acts do not immediately show their fruits; however, fools do suffer from the consequences of their foolishness as they would be burned by standing on coals hidden in ashes.

72 Fools are those who use foolishly whatever gifts they have, destroying their accumulated good fortune.

73 -74 The conceit and craving of fools grows as they claim for themselves undue authority, recognition and reward: their falsity affects their longing, they wish to be seen as powerful and discerning.

75 The path that leads to worldly gain and the path that leads to Liberation are different paths. Seeing thus, the renunciate disciple avoids the distraction of worldly gain and success, to dwell in solitude.

This translation of the Dhammapada is offered on line by The Forrest Sangha with permission to share it.



Some of anna's thoughts about this *Dhammapada* Verse:

The Foolish

I think that this verse is talking about all of us as "the Foolish Ones", but maybe there are a few of you out there who have gone beyond manifesting as a fool! There are those that we watch on the news every night who are paraded by as society's examples of foolishness. As President Obama says, "We are in the silly season of politics", so there are many. Of course, we are all quick to point out "*that fool*" but often don't see when we ourselves are the fool. In our delusion, we like to think that we are the ones who are ok and it is all *those others* that are the fools. But - right there is the fool talking.

This is pretty tough stuff to confront honestly. It could make us paranoid! But it is also the path to our liberation from ego's self importance and self-serving. Let's examine this more fully - and without judgment.

First, we must recognize that there is a difference between what we usually see as social fools and the spiritual foolishness that most of us practice. Our question then is ***What Is A Fool*** according to this **Dhammapada** verse? Here are some of the lines that hint at our foolishness.

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75 The path that leads to worldly gain and the path that leads to Liberation are different paths. Seeing thus, the renunciate disciple avoids the distraction of worldly gain and success, to dwell in solitude.

We see now that we aren't talking about the ordinary social definitions of foolish. Instead, on a spiritual path, the fool is one who does not understand that there are consequences to all of our actions. The fool is one who does not realize the law of karma. Karma says that all of our actions continue to manifest as an energetic intention. Every action returns back to us carrying the same intention that we originally sent out. A positive action returns with positive energy and results. A negative action brings that same negative energy back to us. A negative action is one that causes harm. We all must continue to refine our appreciation of how we cause suffering to ever finer degrees as we practice our vows of kindness and always being of benefit. A fool is one, for example, who acts negatively expecting that this law of karma will not bring a negative result back to him. They may also think that in spite of their actions, they can hold onto and expect positive events no matter what. This is as foolish as not believing in the law of gravity and walking off a cliff. They expect that they can avoid falling to the ground far below. Oops.

About Karma

Here is a helpful reminder from the *Treasury of Precious Qualities* where we read the following:

“When the eagle soars up, high above the earth, its shadow for the while is nowhere to be seen; yet bird and shadow still are linked. So too our actions: When conditions come together, their effects are clearly seen. When a bird takes off and flies high up into the sky, its shadow seems to disappear. But that does not mean that the shadow no longer exists. Wherever the bird finally lands, there is its shadow again, just as dark and distinct as before. In the same way, even though our past good or bad actions may be invisible for the moment they cannot fail to come back to us in the end.”

It is true that the arriving consequences may be as subtle as a shadow and not really apparent until they manifest. Our ego is always in this shadow. When we are caught up in the throes of ego and all of its attachments, we are convinced of our invincibility. The fool wants what he wants, including immediate

gratification. The fool celebrates self and wants to be special. The fool appropriates what he or she wants for self and cares less about others getting what they need, even for survival. The fool secures their own goals even when it means that others will lose. The fool doesn't think of the consequences, especially when they appear to be a long time off. But then the consequences ALWAYS arrive. When they come, the foolish one feels betrayed or wronged by others who may be those who deliver the karmic results that the fool set up. The foolish one thinks that the results are the fault of another instead of himself.

When do we become a Fool?

No one would say that a two year old is a fool. We more often delight in their clumsiness in the world and their adorable self-focus. They certainly can't be held accountable for staying conscious of karmic laws because they do not yet have the capacity to assess whether their actions will cause harm or good. By teen years that process of self-focus is still pretty extreme. Developmentally, self-centeredness is normal behavior and often is even at maximum expression, although we all know many teens that are very responsible for their actions and have assumed great accountability. In early adulthood, most folks should be weighing their caring for others over their own self interest. If we are slow to grow beyond that compelling need to be special and self-absorbed in adulthood, the fool is emerging. I would also add that if someone is developmentally disabled due to physical, emotional, intellectual, or societal handicaps or injuries, it is extra hard for them to apply such esoteric teachings in their life. I would not call them A FOOL in this sense or even in the social definition of the word. What we are exploring is using this word as a spiritual tool: a spiritual sledgehammer!

The Fool's Journey from ordinary Ego self to Vast Self

On our spiritual life journey, the Fool is each of us, barely hidden from our own self-aggrandizing view. Here we use this challenging label not to be critical, but to cut through our attachment to those identities that hold us back from knowing our true self. The more we embrace ego's attachments to being someone more powerful than the laws of the universe, the more we become stuck in a limited view of self that is enthralled in dramas and an hubristic power that we must struggle to grow beyond. The more we hit ourselves with the sledgehammer of self-awareness, the more we prevent those untimely and disastrous leaps off the cliff.

Our spiritual evolution is a bit like a snake shedding its skin. As we grow from childhood to adolescence towards a vaster view of our true wisdom self, we must shed the old layers that inhibit our growth for the emergence of our next level of becoming. If a snake did not shed its skin it would not be able to grow longer and larger. It would actually die if trapped in a limiting and inflexible skin. What is that tight skin for us? Our Inflexible self view. The truth is, if we play with this analogy a little more, we recognize that many are dying emotionally and spiritually by clinging to an identity that is inflexible and does not allow an expanded view of self and the world.

In early life, a strong ego is imperative...

We all must go through developmental stages to discover who we are and how to thrive in the world. Ego develops naturally as an expression of brain development. We are always unconsciously assessing our security and a sense of place that comes in part from a primitive brain function. Thousands of years ago, our tribal ancestors had strong group attachments. Feelings of being special were biochemically built into

an assessment of their safety in the world. This biochemical component of brain function promotes harmony and loyalty to our small family groups and communities. Their view of intruding peoples was that they were superior and those others were a dangerous enemy, until they became friends and integrated with their group. Very few communities in primitive times welcomed unknown tribes with open arms. This sense of being special, superior, and feeling that we and our small group is superior is still a pretty functional aspect of human brain biochemistry. There is hardly a people or a cultural identity that does not believe they are above others. They may long for some things other cultures have, but inside, they still believe that they are the superior race, culture, religion or people. This very primitive group identity combines with the messages that we get as a baby from family. We identify with how mother and family relate to us. We decide our importance and safety by the way we are treated as a young child. Our family's role in the world, our community, and how we are perceived by society tells us a lot about us too. Altogether, we adopt a feeling of 'specialness', or not. If these early identities are beneficial, they allow us to have a solid foundation from which to feel generally good about ourselves. If this special identification does not happen easily in one's family or community, kids will gravitate to a group where they can embrace a new identity. If these various identities are troubled or the subject of prejudices or derision, this can be a huge obstacle to a child's sense of positive ego, and can hold them back from completing and growing a strong and healthy ego self. Eventually we want to live courageously in the world and offer out our purpose. We must have a strong ego to express such self-confidence in life.

With a strong ego, we can grow towards SELF which incorporates EGO and MUCH MORE of Who we are....

Overall, this road to a strong ego can be an easy one or a hard one but, eventually, we must grow beyond ego if we are to embark on our spiritual evolution . To reach a mature identity and grow into an autonomous adult, we must let go of identity after identify until we can become 'no one special'. Our focus gradually moves to a deeper and more subtle knowing that we are truly One with All Beings.

As this task naturally unfolds, our heart begins to open and we feel more and more compassion. We know more and more that our true self is linked with the benefit of all beings everywhere. We know that when one is 'special' it is always at the expense of others who are then felt to be less than the most special. This is a cause of suffering. When a people or culture or religion or race is 'special', it divides the people of the world into the special ones and the less than special ones. This is a cause of suffering . We know that we are perpetuating suffering because there can never be harmony and peace if we carry such divisions in our conceptualization of the one family of mankind. As we become more aware of our oneness with all beings, self-interest falls away and we embrace an energetic sense of our connectedness to others. Selfish or foolish views and experiences of our self and the world naturally dissolve. We know that peace can only happen when we All Win the Race to transcendent freedom from suffering; all together with no one left behind. As we feel an inner wisdom guidance and recognize the pain caused by intellectualized judgments, we know this true and inseparable oneness of all.

We are all still working with our foolishness throughout the journey, but a lot less so as we continue each step into vastness! This is the realization of a true spiritual journeyer. So all of us foolish ones, let's keep walking the path. We will get there too! But it helps to wear our name tag - THE FOOL - so we can look at it whenever ego believes that he or she can walk right off that cliff.



A MEDITATION --

I AM I (you are the "I" that we are exploring)

This meditation is adapted from teachings of Roberto Assagioli early in the 20th century.

Meditate quietly for a while until you feel balanced. Dedicate your meditation to benefit all beings everywhere. Then gently and slowly, read the meditation to yourself and take plenty of time to feel your experience.

I am I

I have a name. My name is: _____. People have called me by this name all my life and it has a lot of special and not-so-special memories for me. My earliest memories are of people calling me by my name. I have a name but I am not only my name. For, I am I. I am vast. I am sacred essence. I am radiant energy. I am All Wisdom knowing. I am I.

(Rest here in meditation for a while.)

I have roles. I am a son or daughter. I am a partner to _____ or a father or mother to _____. I have a job as _____ and a profession as _____. I have had power in my role as _____ and have felt insecure and nervous in my role as _____. Some of my roles give me a vehicle for success in the world and others are roles where I feel like a failure. I have roles but I am not my roles. Roles are mainly a way to express my talents and gifts in the world. I have roles but I am not my roles. For I am much more than my roles. I am I. I am vast. I am sacred essence. I am radiant energy. I am All Wisdom knowing. I am I.



(Rest in meditation for a while.)

I have dreams and plans and goals. I have a sense of what I would like to do and accomplish and how the world could see me. Some of these goals are those that I feel I am able to reach and others are plans that have been sabotaged and pulled out from under me. I have dreams and plans and goals but I am not my plans. I am far more than these dreams. They are just images that reflect all that is possible for me to offer. For I am I. I am vast. I am sacred essence. I am radiant energy. I am All Wisdom knowing. I am I.

(Rest here in meditation for a while.)

I have a life. Once I was young in this body and this life. Now I am older or even old. This body is not what it used to be. It is not as healthy as it might be. It is not always reflecting an image that I would like. My life is seen by others as the way I look or act. I may have a life and a body today but I know that some day - or maybe even today - this body will die. I might have an accident, grow old or sick and I will die. I have a life but I am not my life. For I am I. I am vast. I am sacred essence. I am radiant energy. I am All Wisdom knowing. I am I.

I am I. I am vast. I am sacred essence. I am radiant energy. I am All Wisdom knowing. I am I.

(Rest in meditation for a while to truly feel this vast and unlimited "I". Dedicate all you realize in your heart to benefit all.)



From Your Letters

Remember - if you have a meditation group that would like to receive our love, prayers and support, write and give us your group name, the name of your institution, the participants' names if you wish, and 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. 😊

A Message from Jeff – I work at a Youth Treatment/Incarceration Center for teens. Some of our clients are as young as ten years old. If anyone would like to write to any of these kids to offer inspiring ‘words of wisdom’ from someone who has been in their shoes, please write to **Dharma Friends** and note on the envelope: *A letter for Jeff’s kids*. I will read them your letters in our therapy group. If they could hear your story and what you would have done differently, I think that it would help them a lot! Thanks so much.

Message from Abhayoga Publishing - they tell us that they have mailed out the last of their free Dhammapada books. They have been wonderful to supply so many of you with books. Thank you, Abhayoga Publishing!

*This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.*

*He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.
Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.*

-Rumi

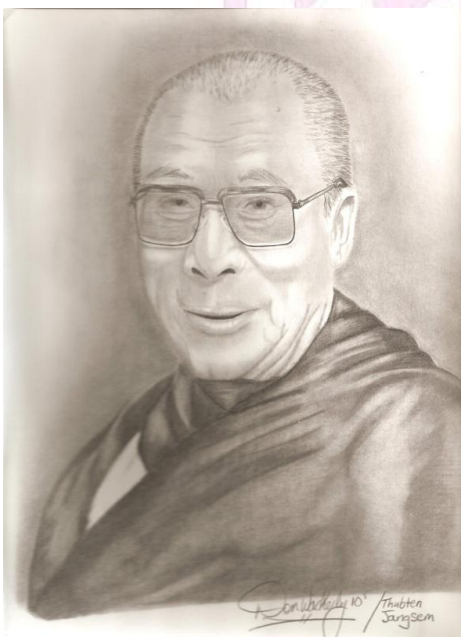
Executions in Oklahoma

A drawing of the Dalai Lama by Don Wackerly - Hope you are able to see this, Don! Thank you so much for sending it to us.

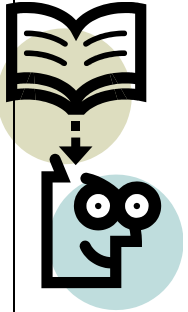
As I write this issue, we know that Don Wackerly and Jeff Mathews are both scheduled for execution in Oklahoma in October on the 12th and 14th. We are hoping that these dates change or are cancelled, but send them your prayers and loving thoughts.

Also put on your prayer list - our longtime **Dharma Friend** and frequent contributor who has been out of prison for a few years but still receives the newsletter via email, P.C. He was just diagnosed with lung cancer.

And we are hopeful that another **Dharma Friend**, D.R. in Arkansas, who has been championing over another hefty diagnosis continues to improve!



Dedication of the Tucker Max Chapel – on October 30 we will be joining many of you at the Tucker Maximum Security unit in Arkansas to dedicate the beautiful and serene little chapel that has been ten years in the making. Our wonderful friend, R.R., has been the one who has raised much of the funding and then worked part-time as the "construction boss" to make sure the work got done! She has brought this chapel into existence out of nothing. Of course, there has been lots of support from others, including our wonderful Chaplain McCown. We can't wait to have our meditations in such a lovely space and for you to enjoy it for all your services and events.



Book of Knowledge - Omar's dream --

A book recommendation "Destructive Emotions and How We Can Overcome Them". This is a dialogue between the Dalai Lama and a group of scientists about how meditative states can change brain chemistry and brain function. sorry - I separated the name of our Dharma Friends who sent in this suggestion but it is a good one.

Sakka asked: "What is the cause of self-interest?" The Buddha answered: "It is perception of the world as one's object." "How does one overcome this perception of the world as apart from oneself?" "By acting for the increase of goodness and happiness. It is in this way that the world ceases to be one's object."
- Digha Nikaya

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

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOUR ADDRESS CHANGES.

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

- Keep us apprised of your address changes. Most of you have been very good at this and we hardly have any returned issues.
- If you are receiving **Dharma Friends** but do not read it or know someone else who does not read their issues, either donate them to your library, or write and tell us to take you off the **Dharma Friends** list. Now, some have written and said that others need them more than they do so take their name off. Don't be too generous!! **WE WANT YOU TO KEEP GETTING DHARMA FRIENDS IF IT IS HELPFUL TO YOU!**
- If you have family or friends, tell them that you receive support from **Dharma Friends** and we would be very grateful for any donations that they might make. I know that most of you have very little money but we are enormously appreciative when some of you have made donations as well, and for the stamps many of you have sent.

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.

And now our new segment - ASK TIM -

A Report from Tim

In July we launched a new program through **Dharma Friends** called **ASK TIM**. This was our notice in the July issue: **ASK TIM - Another new plan** - along with sharing books you like and find educationally helpful, periodically we are going to have an **ASK TIM** information session. We are going to provide a supplement in our pages that answers your questions about tough and not-so-tough issues in the world. You can write and ask any question about any life issues and **TIM** will answer them in upcoming issues. No question is too basic. You can also ask on behalf of family. We will also try to mail the information on to the questioner if it can be easily printed from online. Some ideas - for those getting out on parole, you might need to know how do you pay taxes, how do you set up a budget, how do you find an apartment, or a job, or get loans to go to school, or handle a funeral arrangement, get medical insurance, get a GED -- yikes - there is so much that no one ever tells us how to do!! And even if you stay in prison for life, you might wonder how to keep your health sound, about things going on in the world, how to get courses, and all sorts of things just about life, science, history, math, or English grammar. Ask just about anything. We probably can't tackle your legal questions though. So - write to **ASK TIM, Dharma Friends**, PO Box 7708, Little Rock, AR. 72217-7708

We are happy to report that **ASK TIM** has been a great success so far. We have received many letters and have answered each individually, providing requested information and materials as we could. So, while we will continue to do that, we thought we would also write a general article for the newsletter about four times a year to keep our Dharma Friends family up to date on the latest information.

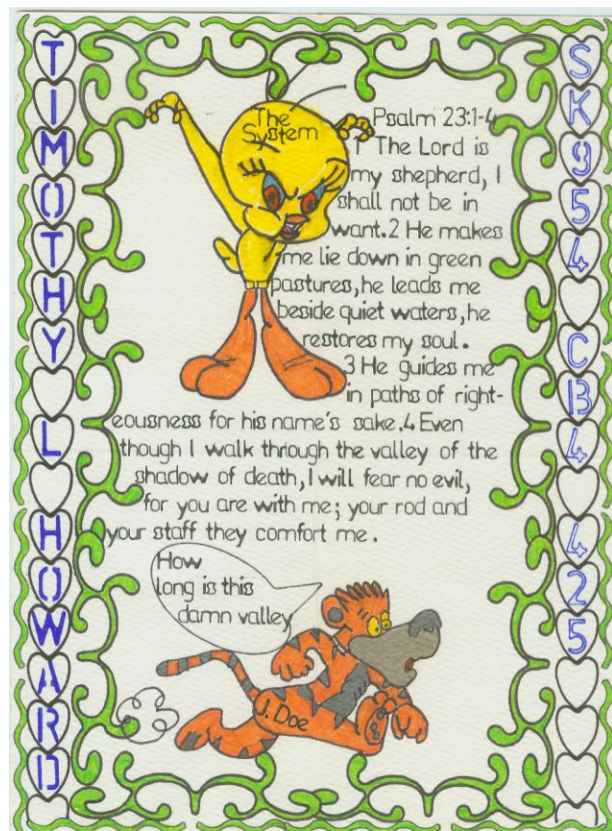
Some of the letters we have received have had very specific requests. "Dear Tim, could you look this up for me on the internet?" Or, "my family is having some trouble with Social Security - could you please tell me how this or that works?" We hope we have answered those adequately. But in general, many of you have asked a few critically important questions, the same questions, no matter where you live or what your circumstances. And these general questions, we thought we'd write about here and give you the **FACTS**, so your expectations can be realistic and you can feel grounded in your plans.

Most popular question # 1: "how can I find a job when I get released from prison?"

The facts right now in 2010 are not encouraging for anyone. The US economy and the world economy suffered a devastating crash in 2008. Banks failed, and are still failing, employed people lost their jobs, people who managed to stay working were often forced to go to part time becoming "underemployed," and thousands lost their homes to foreclosure. Without jobs or places to live and with reduced paychecks, it was impossible to buy anything except the necessities, and even then, it was difficult. As a result of no one being able to buy things, companies reduced production, laid off more workers, etc.... Unemployment and underemployment got as high as 18% at one point. The population of the US is approximately 308 million people. This means that more than 55 million were without a job.

As of this writing, unemployment is about 10% (30 million), so things have gotten a little bit better. But it is still not great out here, even for the person with the best work history and the most skills. For anyone about to be released, you are walking into a very difficult economy. Our inmate services director, Kristopher Davis, has been offering job advice and re-entry guidance for some time now and writing directly to him would be an excellent idea. In general, you will fare much better if you can re-establish connections with anyone you know who is working and who might be able to help get you on board or keep you in the loop if an opening occurs. It is best to be frank and truthful about your circumstances. For one thing, it is not difficult to access public records online so you really don't have a chance of keeping your past a secret. But truth is, right now the statistics are shocking in the US. One in every 30 people is under the control of the judicial/legal system, which means that it is very difficult to find someone who has not been in prison, does not have a family member in prison, or does not know of someone who knows someone who is or has been in prison. So, many employers who 30 years ago would not have even talked to you are very likely to give you a break today because their nephew just got arrested etc....

And bottom line for every employer is this: will I be able to work with this person or are they going to make my life difficult? It doesn't matter what your previous work history or prison history is, every employer is thinking that very thing while they are sitting



there asking you questions. Is this guy going to be a pain in the ass or is he going to do his job reliably and well and make my life easier? Assuring an employer that you are NOT the guy who will make his life miserable is the best thing you can do for yourself.

Also, dress appropriately. Appropriately does not mean put on a suit or buy clothes you can't afford. It means, find some other way to express your individuality besides your outfit. Show up looking clean, neat, and ordinary, like someone who won't scare away the customers. Don't worry about tattoos. More than 50% of all males and females under the age of 30 in the US have tattoos of some kind. If you've got a tattoo that is really offensive, cover it up, at least while you're looking for a job.

And don't lose hope. There is a job out there for you. Take advantage of every job agency suggestion and every free training that is offered. And don't be surprised and outraged when they don't recognize your genius and brilliance and hand you a brief case and a cell phone and tell you to take the CEO corner office. They are not stupid. You just ain't there yet.

Most popular question # 2:” how can I find a pen pal?”

This is a real tough one. If we look on the internet there are hundreds of websites devoted to prison pen pals. They ALL COST. These sites sprung up as a result of market forces. A captive audience in prison wants letters. People in the free world with a fascination for prisons and prisoners want to write. SO, let's make some money! So, these sites charge the prisoner anywhere from \$40 - \$60 a year to allow them to send the site a short biography of themselves and a picture. The site then posts it on their site. The free world people scan the site until they find a prisoner whose bio and face interests them. At that point, they must pay the website a similar amount, annually, to get the info to make contact with that prisoner.

Short of these types of sites, nothing exists. If you are seriously looking for a friend to write to you, then seriously find a friend. Start with people you know. Letter writing is actually extremely difficult for most people. They don't want to sit down and write a letter and they find it difficult to find the right words or to decide what to talk about. Many times, the absence of letters from family members or friends is really not personal – they just don't like to write. Period. We, here at Dharma Friends, do the best we can to respond to every letter that comes in – and we will continue to do that and continue to add to the number of people within our organization those who like to write letters, so hopefully, you may find something with us.

Most popular question # 3: “are there any correspondence courses that are free that I could sign up for?”

The short answer is NO. The correspondence courses that everyone used to be able to sign up for when the organization sent you stuff in the mail and you did the work and then sent it back through the mail are gone. The internet is everything now. There are numerous organizations on the internet that you can sign up for to learn everything imaginable, but it all requires a computer and it all costs money.

That said, we here at Dharma Friends have long noticed the need for learning tools to be sent free of charge to prisoners. We have and continue to send books on Buddhism, the Dharma, self-help, healing, and psychology.

I am happy to report that we have begun the discussion about education. As we have to walk before we can run, and money is always an issue for us, we are not ready to offer correspondence courses at this time, but we are close to a point where we can offer books on specific educational topics. For example, if you would like a book on drawing, or a book on horses, or math, or computers, or Denmark, or any educational topic that you feel will enhance your life and make you smarter at the end of the day than you were when you woke up, we will attempt to get it for you.

I'm warning you on the front end that it may take us some time to find a book on the topic you requested that we can afford to have sent to you. Your part of the bargain is that you request only what you feel will benefit you, that you tell us after you've had a chance to work through the book whether you give the book only 1 star, which means it really sucked, or 5 stars, which means you wished you'd had it 10 years ago because it has changed your life, or something in between, so we will know about that book for the future; and if you feel ready to get rid of the book, you pass it onto a friend or donate it to the prison library so some other student can take advantage of it.

So, we are accepting requests now. And we will do the best we can. Educate yourself.

"Great spirits have always found violent opposition from mediocrities. The latter cannot understand it when a man does not thoughtlessly submit to hereditary prejudices but honestly and courageously uses his intelligence."- Einstein

From M.S: I hope all is well and this finds you in excellent spirits. Me, I'm doing my best to unwrap the gifts of each passing day. I must say, I love what you wrote in the newsletter I just received. To understand that all are one is a true blessing in itself. Yes, I'm human. I love, I see, I feel, I understand. I have suffering, I have compassion. Most people forget, out of site-out of mind, that prisoners are a part of this world. But, we are truly a city in its own. There's love and hate, crime and drugs, evolution and change. I've been in and out of the system since I was 9 years old. I was never given a chance at success. Of course, I had a choice, but never a real chance. I now have a chance. I parole for good in early 2010. Oh, I have many of set backs. I have no family, I'm homeless, no money. I don't even have parole clothes. But, I do have happiness, love, compassion. I'm alert, my eyes are open to the pure existence of me, on this journey - I'll be alright. I don't know how, all I know is the answers are found within me. I've been practicing the Path for a few years and it has helped me experience me. It hasn't given me money, or a girlfriend. It hasn't provided me with food or even eased my personal suffering. Sometimes it even made things more complicated, but it has always provided me with a the answers to

complication, suffering hatred, and my personal bouts of loneliness and depression. Because of the Path, I have learned more than I ever sought answers for. My meditations have become stronger and stronger and more rewarding. I'm a writer, and my poetry has deepened and been given more substance. Enclosed is some of my work. Please share it with any and everyone.

Thank you for caring. Thank you for realizing. Thank you for seeing and thank you for experiencing. Please take care, be well and may your journey be blessed, yet not for just you, but for the whole world. M.S.

And from MS as well...

Statistically Proven

Another child born in poverty,
another high powered assault rifle on inner city streets.
Another child dies by "fate"
another statistic!

Another woman beaten,
another woman raped.
Another crime committed,
another statistic!

Another welfare check,
another homeless family.
Another potential surgeon, superstar, scientist, and senator
addicted to drugs,
another statistic!

Another lost hope,
another broken dream.
Another overdose,
another statistic!

Another ward of the state,
another ex-con.

Another number that means more to the state than my actual
last name,
another statistic!

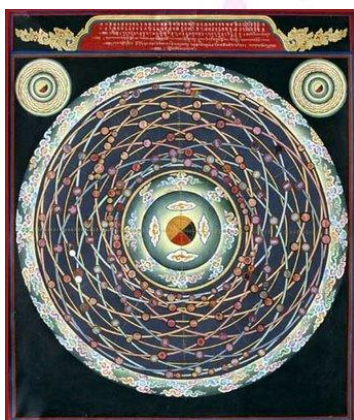
Another man gunned down last night,
another urban youth harassed and subjected to police brutality.
Another law-abiding citizen harassed and subjected to
violence,
another statistic!

Another person misjudged because of their complexion,
environment and race,
another statistic!

Another shooting,
another riot,
another city burned down,
another massacre,
another natural disaster,
another bombing,

another wife, mother, father, sister, child, grandparents,
brother, lover and friend - dead!

Another war,
another means to destruction.
Another statistic, after statistic, after statistic -
statistically proven!
Myron Stebbins



From FM: Namaste to you and everyone. I am so sorry for not writing for so long. I've been saving up so I would have something to say. I've been getting the newsletter and as always fascinated by all the comments. First, I'd like to say, prison is nothing close to a monastery. Guantanamo Bay is no monastery and especially Tibet. Percentage wise, in California there are 170,000+ inmates in 33 prisons. As to Buddhism, that alone can be considered queer, so an estimate would be 1%. Then there are factors of race in cellies. In all, Buddhists face lots of realities before Buddhism. 9 times out of 10 you get a cellie that smokes, drinks, curse, gangbang, fetishes, jacks off, try to do cellie, fights, threats, etc. Buddhism in prison must be a way of life to survive others and self per the circumstances, per the practice. I find myself thinking a lot, but I am a thinker and I could do working meditations all day - as I work in the prisons licensed hospital with many unfortunate inmates and many deaths. It seems to be my calling after 6 years with these guys. I'm 51 years old, came in at 38 after 10 years prior time-out on 4-5 months before life term.

Well, just to say "hi", I hope all is well. Oh, what ya got to read?

Signing Out. Namaste

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The right attitude for studying the way is just complete spontaneous acquiescence. Who cares whether it takes twenty or thirty years; you'll be naturally at peace, without the slightest bit of doubt or confusion. How can there be any obstruction again after spontaneous acquiescence? How can anyone arrive by way of externals? - Ming-pen

Dharma Friends

October 2010 issue # 165

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Additional Pages for EMAIL VERSION of *Dharma Friends*

The Compassion
Works for All
Worldwide
Olympics

Where All Things
Unfathomable Are
Made Possible



The CWFA Home
Runs - EVERYONE
COMES HOME

***Compassion Works for All just hosted a fabulous mini-conference called
WEAVE THE NET!***

We had a panel discussion with a most excellent group of presenters: Judge Morris Arnold, Bobby Roberts, PhD, Dr. Clint Kilts, Mara Leveritt, and I filled in for Chaplain John Wheeler who unfortunately was unable to attend at the last minute.

But you may attend now too!! We have put the Weave the Net powerpoint and some of the panelists' video recordings on our <http://www.JustUsFriends.org/ACTION.asp> web site.

Coming up Quickly...

anna will be doing another meditation retreat at Joy Fox's retreat center, Wattle Hollow, in October. We are presently filled to capacity but you could get on the waiting list if you wish. Go to - www.wattlehollow.com

The retreat is called - “The Next Step on Your Spiritual Path”

October 22 – 24 Friday evening – Sunday after lunch. Cost: \$125, includes meals and lodging.

You may also offer dana (Pali word for “donation”) to Anna for the teachings. All donations will go to Compassion Works for All and are greatly appreciated. They support all of our work.

We will do another retreat session next spring that will be a continuation of this work for participants. Maybe we should put our name on the list now...

DEDICATION of the new chapel at TUCKER MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON

On October 30 there will be a inmate/visitor dedication of this very beautiful new chapel that has taken over TEN YEARS to build. Hooray! We will have to be the representative for most of you there. We will bring your good wishes as there will be little room for visitors that are not regular volunteers. On Monday or Tuesday, there will be a more official Arkansas Department of Correction dedication during the day. Again, getting a seat is harder than at a rock concert, if you are not already approved by security. But if you are approved, and if you email me prior to the 15th of OCTOBER, it might be possible.

Thanks to Renie Rule for getting this chapel built out of nothing at all!! Many had tried to raise funds for years. Shortly after our friend Buddy King (a CRA) volunteered to chair the project, he was killed in a motorcycle accident. Renie took over as the chairperson and, with a small group of volunteers, a non-profit was organized. For ten years, Renie has been the primary fundraiser of hundreds of thousands of dollars plus she has coordinated the design and construction. I've been a cheerleader but this new and beautiful gift to these inmates is largely due to the miracles that she has manifest. Thank you from all of us to Renie.

This fall we are celebrating the Ecumenical Buddhist Society's 20th anniversary. There will be a number of events to honor this occasion. Go to their web site to read the plans.

www.ebslr.org

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

MINDFUL MONEY by LINDA BESSETTE

Mindful Money allows us to be fully present and aware of our money issues. Mindful Money teaches us to be conscious and responsible stewards of our resources so that money is a healthy vehicle to reach life's goals rather than our captor.

ENJOY! --as Linda says to us each month as we receive our current Dharma Friends issue! Linda has graciously offered to donate a portion of the proceeds of all books sold through Dharma Friends back to Compassion Works for All.

Email Linda (lbessette33@comcast.net) if you want a copy of MINDFUL MONEY. *Or send your check \$15 – plus \$5 handling fees, to: Compassion Works for All, Mindful Money, PO Box 7708, Little Rock, Arkansas 72217-7708*

Also Remember 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 (above) and she can give you more information about prices, mailing, etc. for all books.

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

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

And anna's books –

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

Join us at www.JustUsFriends.org.

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

Along with informative and inspirational articles –

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



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

-- Robert Quinn in Deep Change



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

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

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

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

