



offers you

# Dharma Friends

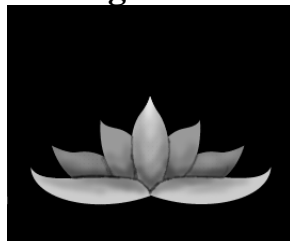
**Dedicated to Sharing the Dharma, Healing Each Other,  
All Sentient Beings, and Ourselves**

September 2010 issue # 164

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*Welcome to the 300 new readers that are joining us this month. You are all friends of Venerable Ani Thubten Chodren who was kind enough to ask us to send this gift of Dharma Friends to you. We are so happy to have you with us.*

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



### **Verse 4– FLOWERS**

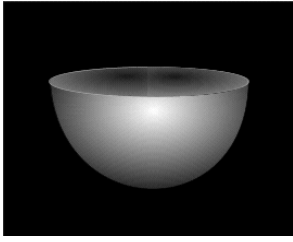
- 44 Who is it that can truly see as they are this earth, this body, the hell realms and the heavenly realms?  
Who can discern the well-taught Path of Wisdom, in the way the eye of a skilled florist can select perfect blooms?
- 45 It is those who knowingly walk the Way who can see as they truly are this earth, this body ,the hell realms and the heavenly realms. These are the ones who can discern the well-taught Path of Wisdom.
- 46 Know the body to be as transient as foam, a mirage. The flower of sensual passion has a hidden barb. See this and pass beyond death.
- 47 As a flash flood can sweep away a sleeping village, so death can destroy those who only seek the flowers of casual sensual pleasures.
- 48 To be frustrated and ungratified, yet still only seek the flowers of casual sensual pleasures brings one under the destroyer 's sway.
- 49 As a bee gathering nectar does not harm or disturb the colour and fragrance of the flower; so do the wise move through the world.
- 50 Dwell not on the faults and shortcomings of others; instead, seek clarity about your own.
- 51 As a beautiful flower without fragrance is disappointing, so are wise words without right action.
- 52 As a beautiful flower with a delightful fragrance is pleasing, so is wise and lovely speech when matched with right action.
- 53 As many garlands can be made from a heap of flowers, so too, much that is wholesome can be done during this human existence.
- 54 The fragrance of flowers or sandalwood blows only with the prevailing wind, but the fragrance of virtue pervades all directions.
- 55 The fragrance of virtue surpasses by far the fragrance of flowers or sandalwood.

56 The aroma of sandalwood and the scent of flowers bring only little delight compared to the fragrance of virtue, which suffuses even the heavenly realms.

57 It is not possible for Mara to find those who abide in appreciative awareness who, by perfect knowledge, are freed and live in virtue.

58 -59 Just as a sweet-smelling and beautiful lotus can grow from a pile of discarded waste, the radiance of a true disciple of the Buddha outshines dark shadows cast by ignorance.

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

Shakyamuni Buddha often used analogies from nature and metaphors from life to illustrate his teachings. The beauty of this verse, *Flowers*, is in how many ways that flowers can teach us about our spiritual life journey. In one line, he compares our busy lives -lives much too busy to stop and focus on the spiritual! - with the activity of hunting for beautiful flowers. On and on we go, always looking, always picking the pretty ones, and never really noticing that we are frittering our life away as we head towards our final day. "*As a flash flood can sweep away a sleeping village, so death can destroy those who only seek the flowers of casual sensual pleasures.*"

And then we read this: "*To be frustrated and ungratified, yet still only seek the flowers of casual sensual pleasures brings one under the destroyer 's sway.*" Do we recognize that we are caught up in negative patterns and old wounds and to assuage our distress, we compulsively or even addictively try to escape the pain with sensual pleasures. Those sensual pleasures allow us to soothe ourselves but deep within, the unhealed wounds destroy us. If we lay a psychological interpretation over this ancient teaching, we might say that we stay stuck in painful life dramas at the expense of awakening to our true Self. We all do this some, but the seeking of "sensual flowers" may be the ultimate destruction for many. That ultimate destruction is to never realize our highest Self.

### **We can't Awaken to All That We Are until we first recognize those old wounds that ultimately control our focus**

Most of us have early wounds that demand our attention until they are healed. I feel so sad when I watch folks under the sway of old wounds that continuously replay the patterns that cause pain in their lives. Often, as observers, we see more clearly than the one in the hypnotic fog of woundedness. We all know what is coming when we see the pattern begin over and over again. At the end of yet another repetitive episode, they feel like someone else or the world has been at fault and do not see their part in the events. No one can tell them differently. But in truth, their inner voice is trying to get their attention by repeating these painful life patterns until they recognize the wound. It is natural and healthy that those wounds won't leave us alone until we tend to them. It is like having a physical wound that is very tender. It asks us to pay attention to our healing until we are healthy again. Consider that this is a helpful internal push that is really at work. We all have a tenacious drive to heal but must do the deeper explorations.

### **Here is an example that we might identify with ....**

There are many emotional themes that cause all of us some distress and every one of them has had a basis in a true and traumatic reality. We have not made up any of these storylines because of an intention to be cruel to ourselves. Some of the themes that are common for most of us have an emotional story in which we are the victim. Others might feel like we can't ever get what we need, or that we are worthless, that we are the villain, that we can't trust our self, that no one loves us, and on and on. These are just a few of the very common themes that keep people stuck in a painful idea of self, of who they are in the world, and what their relationships are about. Most everyone feels some of these themes sometimes. But, depending on our unique early wounds, some of these themes may be all consuming and very compelling. It feels like a consistent theme in our life.

Let's take that theme of being the victim. Just like all these emotional themes, at one point in our life, it was absolutely true. If a tiny child has abusive adults in their life, that vulnerable infant or toddler is *truly* a victim at the hands of that abusive older person. The abuser could be a parent, a grandparent, an older sibling, a babysitter or some other caretaker at day care or in the home. Can you imagine the fear of a child who is always subject to anger, physical pain, sexual abuse, or conditions of great deprivation? That little

baby is always fearing attack. They may not have the capacity to think through what is happening to them but like any living creature, they cower in fear if somebody is yelling at them or if they are in danger. That baby has a strong emotional and physiological response when they perceive danger. This affects them in every way and could well cause a developmental disruption of their healthy brain and body. Some of that can be repaired but some of those injuries leave long lasting damage. An individual under such chronic stress will always be hyper-responsive to fearful emotional stimuli. It is similar to post traumatic stress disorder that occurs for many who have suffered trauma. Indeed, for some, that may very well be their diagnoses later in life. If a child is subject to chronic abuse in childhood or even if there are just one or two instances of severe trauma, this distress leaves a great wound in that child's normal development. It affects their feeling of safety in the world. That feeling of being a victim is strongly a part of who they are forevermore.

There are ameliorating factors that can lessen the bad effects of victimization. One of the most healing things that can happen to an abused child is for other caregivers to recognize the trauma that that child is going through and to soothe them. This will heal their stress and increase their feelings of safety and security. Unfortunately, when others do not recognize the signs that a child is experiencing trauma and if the child is bizarrely acting out their fear and anger, that traumatized emotional response is often seen as problem behavior. Their acting out is a call for help and it is being ignored. The child is often punished and not supported through their pain. This makes things worse. They feel even more like a victim.

### **The pattern begins to cement itself into one's life ...**

The child integrates the responses of adults, including the abuser, into their beliefs about themselves, others and the world. At a deep level, the child may believe that this is what life is all about. This is what love is about. This is what being in a family is about. This is what being in a relationship is about. Rather than seeing a path to heal these destructive and painful life patterns, they perpetually recreate circumstances where the pain is integrated into their normal life - because this is what *normal* is for them.

A child develops an instinct as to the people who are going to be abusive and those that are going to be warm and loving. It may be that for a while, when they're little, they may hungrily gravitate towards those who are warm and loving. But, if this is not reinforced and if this does not become a vehicle for them to be free of the abuse that they are suffering, they may very well shut that door as a viable pathway. They surrender to what feels like an overwhelming world of trauma and abuse as their *familiar* world.

When they grow older and are latency age children looking for playmates, they may choose abusive friends. They may join gangs or bullies to be with. Just as they learned in their families, they surround themselves with significant others that bring violence and pain into their lives. Very often an abused boy or girl grows up to have an addictive, magnetic attraction to abusive partners because that is all that they know about love.

At some point they may wonder - *Why do I always get stuck with such a losers? Why am I always in such terribly traumatic and abusive relationships?* But they can hardly see a way out. And that is the tough part. They are unlikely to see how their own past and pain is contributing to a life pattern and is creating their present life circumstances.

What did they do to choose this abusive relationship? First step. They semi-consciously made the choice of that particular partner. It is very unlikely that one who was abused as a child will choose a healthy partner. They more often choose an abusive person who was also abused. Some abused children grow up to become the victim and some identify with the abuser and grow up to become an abuser. Then they pair up - victim with abuser - to replay that painful early wound again and again. So even though there are warning signs of abusive people, if one has a deeply engrained history of abuse, all those wildly waving red flags are not noticed during the initial, early days of developing relationships. The unconscious, old pain is running the show. Later, once those abusive patterns appear, neither partner is at all likely to just come to their senses and become a healthy relationship partner. The chances of recognizing this old pattern and either person being able to change without lots of help is pretty poor. Only when a past victim goes through some pretty intensive healing is there much hope for that relationship to ever become healthier, and BOTH of the partners would need to work at it. And of course, if they bring children into these abusive patterns, the trauma will be repeated in the next generation.

### **What Can We Do To Heal the Past?**

Recognizing the pattern is step number 1. Usually the patterns of feeling like the victim (or many of the other painful life themes) are not just present in their challenging or abusive relationships. The "victim" may also feel victimized at work and in most all of their

life relationships. It takes recognition of how much of one's life revolves around repeating a very primitive painful childhood dynamic before the roots of that poisonous past can be dug out. As we take these steps, we must notice how all that unfolds for us is our own creation and not the fault of another. There is not an enemy and not a friend who can truly affect our lives more powerfully than our own thoughts about who we are and how our life is.

Step 2. Meditation is one of the most powerful ways to find our healing -- but it is also helpful if you have the opportunity to work with a skilled psychotherapist. If you have no one to help you, you can find the early roots of that drama through art or writing or visualizing old experiences in your life. Let all the old pain come back up, accept it, and rest in meditation. It is also important and helpful to assess lifestyle and health habits. If we are not getting enough sleep, if doing drugs or drinking, if not healthy, if not eating a healthy diet, if under too much stress, then we can meditate a lot and do insightful therapy but make little progress overall. We must address our entire life and eliminate all that causes our imbalance as much as we can.

Step 3. Develop a compassionate voice that can offer healing and parenting. It would have saved us much grief if someone had offered us kind and soothing support when the original wounding was happening, but if the wound never healed, it is unlikely that anyone was there to help us. We can't go back and undo what happened but we can gently introduce a new story into our past in a way that truly does affect emotional healing and brain repair. We can soothe ourselves during times of distress with a kind and gentle voice. We can do visualizations of getting what it is that we need now and what we needed but did not get back then. We can deliberately seek out people who have that healing and gentle manner to give us support. Even though it may go against our sense of deep biological attraction, we can choose partners that will offer a different way of relating to us. Those abusers often bring a kind of excitement, intensity and drama in the replay of abusive patterns. We must learn to love peace instead.

Step 4. We must become an observer that notices when our old 'drama thoughts' arise. We do have a choice. Our mind creates our world. If we see the drama get in gear, we can choose to feed and recreate the old patterns, or we can remember that we can meditate instead. We can allow the old thoughts to simply rise and fall away. We need not give them the power to grab hold of our emotions and fuel our life stories. We may choose transcendent thoughts and enter a transcendent view of reality. If we were to imagine that we are a Buddha, a Christ, a great teacher, or even a kind friend that loves us and wants us to heal, what would that person say to us? How would they be with us? How would they guide us? How would they remind us to follow a path of love, kindness and healing? Visualize them there with you. See them in your heart. Let them always be the One who cares for you.

Step 5 is to go beyond emotional healing. We must grow beyond the focus on internal healing and develop a sense of how our life story fits into a vaster view. Our story is our path to **Becoming** and not merely a human drama. It is not just a story of self-discovery and understanding our psyche and our wounds. The true journey is far more vast. What are we learning in this lifetime? How does such a story of our past trauma become our vehicle to **Becoming** all that we are? How are we developing realization as a spiritual person on a journey? With this view, our past life becomes the story of incorporating, perhaps, an abused child into the wisdom of becoming a compassionate being. If one has hurt others or even murdered another, our journey of realization is as one who has committed an atrocious act. This is all a part of our aliveness and our **Becoming** in this lifetime. It is learning SELF. Learning the higher SELF and the ordinary self that we share with all beings. We are learning compassion, which means to fully know the human condition. There are no good guys or those who never suffered. They don't exist. Every being has suffered adversity and every being has a dark side where they have caused pain. How has all that unfolded in our lives, peaceful and painful, been our spiritual life journey to Becoming?

We can't just pick the beautiful flowers. Nor can we indulge in the sensual flowers as a way to avoid the pain and suffering of life. It is only in reaching out for this deep understanding of **All That Is**, that we are then on our spiritual journey and seeing that we are receiving the perfect teachings that always prepare us for our next step.

Now, we are doing our true practice. We are Mindful. We are Awake. We incorporate seeing all the flowers, paying attention, being pricked by the thorns, and knowing sacred beauty. We are meditating on every arising and not running away from anything.

flower by D.W.





## A MEDITATION --

Many spiritual and esoteric teachings are offered to us through metaphors and analogies. All the great teachers told stories that incorporated metaphors because the most subtle truths cannot be understood by the intellect. We can only get a glimpse of them in our ordinary experience. But the metaphor opens the door to a deeper perception of 'knowing'. Then, when we rest in very subtle states of awareness like meditation or prayer, we may suddenly 'get it'. After we glimpse that new perspective, it then becomes the template upon which we build a new and more subtle perception of reality. We never see reality in the same old ways again. Let's look at all the metaphors that Shakyamuni Buddha uses in *Flowers*. Here are the ones that I found and maybe you found more.

"... the eye of a skilled florist can select perfect blooms"...

"... The flower of sensual passion has a hidden barb."

"...death can destroy those who only seek the flowers of casual sensual pleasures."

"To be frustrated and ungratified, yet still only seek the flowers of casual sensual pleasures brings one under the destroyer's sway."

"As a bee gathering nectar does not harm or disturb the colour and fragrance of the flower; so do the wise move through the world."

"As a beautiful flower without fragrance is disappointing, so are wise words without right action."

"As a beautiful flower with a delightful fragrance is pleasing, so is wise and lovely speech when matched with right action."

"As many garlands can be made from a heap of flowers, so too, much that is wholesome can be done during this human existence."

"The fragrance of flowers or sandalwood blows only with the prevailing wind, but the fragrance of virtue pervades all directions."

"The fragrance of virtue surpasses by far the fragrance of flowers or sandalwood."

"The aroma of sandalwood and the scent of flowers bring only little delight compared to the fragrance of virtue, which suffuses even the heavenly realms."

"Just as a sweet-smelling and beautiful lotus can grow from a pile of discarded waste, the radiance of a true disciple of the Buddha outshines dark shadows cast by ignorance."

There are lots of references to the subtle nature of flowers - fragrance, beauty, compelling, sensuality - but our relationship to these qualities allows us to remember our relationship to ordinary life. We all identify with finding a hidden barb in a rose. But all of these short analogies give us a window into knowing a vaster view; a peek at wisdom. I love the reference to the bee gathering nectar and not harming the flower. And perhaps you have entered a room and been surprised at the ever so subtle fragrance of flowers and happily taken a deep breath. Can our presence fill others with such a sense of beauty and well-being in such a gentle way? And lastly, my favorite: *"Just as a sweet-smelling and beautiful lotus can grow from a pile of discarded waste, the radiance of a true disciple of the Buddha outshines dark shadows cast by ignorance."* Could that be the metaphor that describes each of us? Are we the beautiful lotus growing out of that pile of discarded waste?

If you read and identified with our commentary telling of those of us who have transcended challenges and suffering and are trying to heal, you can meditate on all these metaphors where flowers are our teachers. No, the suffering may never end. And yes, we may all have scars left from those traumas. At the level of our ordinary perception of life and self, we may always succumb to our dramas, hopefully a little less over time. But in doing our meditation on the lotus flower growing out of the discarded waste, all of a sudden we transcend that ordinary view. We are transported to a new view of Self, a sacred being of great beauty and wisdom. We can instantly become the lotus flower in all of its radiance just by remembering who we already are. As such, we *outshine the dark shadows cast by ignorance*, our own ignorance of limited perception of who and all that we are.



### The meditation for this month:

Rest in meditation as the lotus flower growing from a pile of discarded waste. Just be. Just enjoy. Then, when you are ready, dedicate all that has awakened in you to benefit all those others everywhere who may be confused and think that they are merely another piece of junk in the refuse pile. May they all awaken to all that they are as well.

## 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.**



*The states of wakeful action, of Samadhi, and of deep sleep are to the Realized One, who is asleep in the gross body, like the movement of the cart or its standing still or its being unyoked are to the traveler who is sleeping in the cart unaware of any of it.*  
**Ramana Maharshi** sent by **B. W.**

**From MM:** Anyways, I'm still meditating here in my lonely "cell-cave" and practicing what I know the best I can. I did enjoy your subtle lessons (and humor) in those letters... trust everything is well with you?

I'm soon to be released and I'll be experiencing a "second birth". I'm going to be totally dependent on others for food, shelter, clothing, etc... until I'm able to apply my trade and earn some needful funding. The frightening part is that, I have absolutely no idea who these others are going to be, if they'll "be" at all? I'm not on probation and I have no family, perhaps your "humble" readers might have some suggestions? Peace.

### You Reading This, Be Ready

**Starting here, what do you want to remember?**

**How sunlight creeps along a shining floor?**

**What scent of old wood hovers, what softened  
sound from outside fills the air?**

**Will you ever bring a better gift for the world  
than the breathing respect that you carry  
wherever you go right now? Are you waiting  
for time to show you some better thoughts?**

**When you turn around, starting here, lift this  
new glimpse that you found; carry into evening  
all that you want from this day. This interval you spent  
reading or hearing this, keep it for life -**

**What can anyone give you greater than now,  
starting here, right in this room, when you turn around?**

**- William Stafford** - a poet who wrote a poem every day - including the day he died.

This poem was written two days before he died. What is your daily practice?

### From Abdul Rahim Abd Al Wali - EK

I would like to take a moment to touch base on something that is often overlooked: Our ability to see the faults of others, but not our own. We all too often worry about the splinter in our neighbors eye, while in fact we have a 2x4 in our own. I am convinced, that the man who dwells on his neighbors shortcomings is hiding from his own. Now, why would he do that? Well, it's simple. Our egotistical nature hates to be wrong. We will do almost anything to be "right", and damn it to hell, you'll drag us kicking and screaming if you point out the black stain on our "perfectly clean" white suit. As far as we're concerned, everything about ourselves is crispy clean and we are perfect. We just can't stand to be wrong. We hate it. And you know what, that's why we're always fighting somebody. "I'm right, you're wrong," says me. "No the hell you're not! You're wrong and I'm right.", says you. And then BOP! I hit you upside the head and war you have.

I think it's time we listened to the Sufi Sage Rumi: "Out beyond the ideas of right and wrong there's a field; I'll meet you there."

I would like to rebut a comment made by M.L.B. in the May 2008 Issue #136 of DF. Please print this, because I would like to correct his misinformation of Islam and express my displeasure at his "gung-ho" shot at my faith.

"Mr. B., Islam is not a religion that has ever required any "special" or "extemporaneous" circumstances for its revelation. It is the perfect first and last religion revealed to all mankind at different times and places, in different books, by different prophets. Muhammad (PBUH) was the seal of the prophets and Al Quran Al Kerim was the seal of the Law. Another prophet or law shall never come. Because Allah says to something, "be" and it "is", the concept you pose of "special" or "extemporaneous" circumstances is obsolete within the Perfect Religion of Islam: Submission to the Will of Allah (God)."

When I develop my Islamic library, I hope to have a few extra dollars to contribute to DF. However, I sincerely aspire to become an Imam (Muslim leader) and I must become learned in the Islamic Sciences to do this. What little money I have must go towards this goal.

It gets lonely in here (24/7 seg lock-up) with no one on an intellectual level or spiritual level to kick it with (communicate). Would you please set me up with a pen-pal (Muslim preferably, but anyone who will respect my religious boundaries will do.) I think if I recall correctly, a few months back, a Muslim brother named Rahmaan made an offer in DF to pen pal with people. Would you see if he will write to me. **"To smile is to be alive; to frown is to be alive with a chance to smile"** - EMK (Abdul Rahim Abd Al Wali)

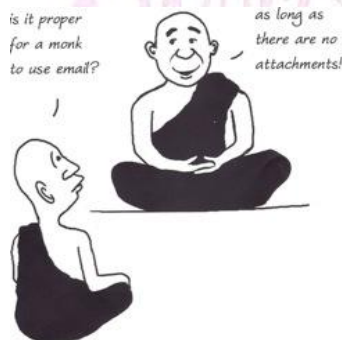
***Just as fog is dispelled by the strength of the sun and is dispelled no other way, preconception is cleared by the strength of realization. There's no other way of clearing preconceptions. Experience them as baseless dreams. Experience them as ephemeral bubbles. Experience them as insubstantial rainbows. Experience them as indivisible space.***  
**- Milarepa, "Drinking the Mountain Stream"**

**Sent in by James L. Halbirt** --What do you think?

- D Do service to yourself and others diligently.
- H Harm no one; heal yourself of hindrances.
- A Arrive to the moment to moment of Being.
- R Remove afflictions, addictions, and attachments.
- M Meditate with mindfulness.
- A Atone for evil karma.
  
- F Focus on relationships and the Teaching.
- R Renew your commitment with the vows.
- I Invite others to participate in the Sangha.
- E Equip to minister to yourself and others.
- N Network the Body and Mind of the Dharma.
- D Demonstrate love for all beings.
- S Serve with gladness and honor.

It all comes down to vision casting. (from anna - you are very clever! I like it!!)

**From B.W.**



**From SW:** There are so many things about my life that came to mind while I was reading this literary manual. I can relate to this in so many ways that the hairs on my neck stand perfectly straight! Right now, at this point of my life, I am really learning what works for me. Not without difficulty, I might add. Throughout my life I have made things so hard for myself. See, I know keeping things simple is what works best for me. Then one day I feel like I am missing out on something, and then out of longing to be something, or apart from something, I create hindrances for myself and then the bull headedness comes to the front.

My main problem seems to be my appearance, my tattoos, my walk, and my fixed scowl. People approach me a certain way that I don't like all the time. Mainly because of the 6" swastika in the center of my chest. It's big and very dark. When I take my shirt off, you can be all the way across the yard and it grabs your attention, EVERYBODY'S attention. People don't really know the true meaning behind the swastika, but they all assume it has to do with racism. I am white, so I kind of see where they are coming from. But still, I explain the meaning of it.

I just got put in solitary confinement, and oddly enough it is the best thing to happen to me in prison. I really enjoy myself in here. It's peaceful and quiet. I can meditate better. I really feel like I am on retreat. In population, I am always doing something, playing chess, working out, and drawing. My favorite past-times. I have been in solitary for 7 days so far, 15 more to go.

I am at the point to where I feel like Siddhartha amongst the child people right before he leaves them. I am getting ready to head back toward "the river." I can see it is now time to head that way.

Many, many blessings to you and everyone at DF. I really enjoy the newsletter. Some of the people who write don't seem to be very happy just being alive. When you strip everything away, you are left with the one thing staring back at you in the mirror. But who is that person? Really, I ask myself that. No available answer at this time. I just want peace. I have caused a whole lot of destruction to the people I love and to the people that counted on me and the people that looked up to me. With Metta P.S. - Now I shall try to cross back across the river. I will try to listen to the river. It has been laughing at me, but, I know you can't stand in the same river twice. I just hope with all my being that I don't let anyone down anymore. I'm tired of it. Everyone speaks on my potential. My problem is, I work my a\$\$ off and when I see just a little reward, I stop. One step forward, two steps back. Exhausting! I need help, that's all. Sometimes I am just plain lazy. Anyways, my parents don't write, nor does anybody else in my family. They all pretty much despise me. But, I keep my head up, however hard it is, I keep it up. It's hard with no support! None at all. It's all because of me, my making.

*Again and again some people in the crowd wake up,  
They have no ground in the crowd,  
And they emerge according to much broader laws.  
They carry strange customs with them  
And demand room for bold gestures.  
The future speaks ruthlessly through them. --Rilke*

**From SW:** Well, here I am again! I really do appreciate the newsletters. They are very insightful. I am a very inquisitive person. I really love to read. So much knowledge to be learned from books.

I have a question: What is the purpose of our existence? Is there a meaning for all of this? What is it? I seem to be stuck on these questions. I seemed to have messed my life off by doing the things I did in the past. See, in 2001, or actually 2002, I plead guilty to sexual assault charges to avoid being charged for some other things I did involving guns. Now, the 15 year old girl didn't make the outcry nor did her mother or father, it was her aunt. Anyway, me and the girl were very close, I was 22 at the time. Me and her aunt had a lot of problems, but; anyways, it was a big mess! The girl wouldn't testify against me! Imagine that! Some sexual assault, huh? Well, when I get out, I find out I have to register as a sex offender! So, I register at my parents' house. Later, I end up getting kicked out of my home because my parents and I have a falling out behind my younger brother. Well, when I get kicked out, I call the office where I register at and let them know of the things that happened, and that I don't have a place to stay. Well, I try homeless shelters (who won't take me because of the sex offense). I ask the person at the registration office if he has any ideas where I might be able to go so I can have an address to register at and he tells me he can't help, but notifies me that I need to do something quick. For 9 days, I called him, making him aware of my whereabouts and my situation. Still no help! I was arrested at work on day 9! I went to trial nine months later so that I could make my story heard. I got sentenced to 12 years! I am not a scofflaw! I had a job, paid taxes. I just was without an address for 9 days! Now, here is my problem, I get out in 2018, I have no job, no home, and no family or any support of any kind. Parole won't see me because I don't have anything asset wise (no address). I'm stuck in an endless, hopeless situation.

Yeah, I put myself in this situation, but I need help! I don't belong here. I love to work. I have a lot of skills. I love people. I have nothing to hide. Sure, I might be a little rough looking, but I'm all in all compassionate. I just made some mistakes when I was

younger. I realized them and have made or taken corrective measures. If it was just assault charges alone, I would be all right, but I have to register for the rest of my life. If I don't, back to prison I go. That is crazy! But, by all means, I will go out of my way to comply with this law. And I did. I had nowhere to go! I was camping in the woods when I got kicked out of my home, and I reported that to them, but it wasn't good enough. No one would take me in, and I had no resources available to me. I got on the internet and found some registered sex offenders, called them up and explained my situation, but THEY wouldn't even give me shelter! I was, and still am, pretty much up the creek!

I go to sleep at night and wake up thinking about the fact that even though I did all of my prison time, last time... I will still be punished for the rest of my life for a mistake I made when I was young. Now, I am in prison a second time for an event I had no control over. When I went to trial, I made the judge aware of my predicament, and the office where I register had an officer testifying for the state, but, who concurred to my testimony, but he wasn't trying to hear my side of the story. Well, he did, but he didn't care. The court before my trial offered me a plea agreement for 12 months state jail and I did what any innocent person (well, not guilty of the charge against me) would do, I declined to sign the plea agreement. I was represented by a court appointed counsel and my trial was a farce at best.

All of this because I was 22 and had a 15 year old girlfriend. We were deeply involved and cared for each other. Our relationship was very mutual and her mother (a single parent) was very supportive. Why? Because, I made her get back in school, I kept her off drugs and kept her from getting pregnant and taught her how to be responsible and what to expect in the real world. I am just a person seeking redemption. But, I get looked down on and scoffed at. You're a sex offender? Oh. I get met with suspicion everywhere I go. That was in the world. Here in prison, no one knows what I am here for and I plan on keeping it that way. I have a hard enough time right now as it is. With Metta

## Life Coaching by Jack Hollis, PhD

Kind of a strange name isn't it? Life coaching. What does that mean exactly? I don't know "exactly" as it is done differently depending on who is doing it. The definition I have come up with is "expanding perceptual range." Now, what does that mean? Most of us view the world in our own limited perspective. Where do the limits come from? We impose them. It makes it easier to navigate our daily life and it doesn't strain our thinking. We make assumptions, we put things/people in categories and that limits possibilities. Coaching is all about possibilities and expanding the range not limiting it. Barriers, limitations are self imposed for the most part and we limit ourselves much more so than society does. So coaching involves more thought not less and more probing to get at your way not everyone else's way. It is far easier to do what everyone else does or to not think about it and just react. A lot of times we do not know what we think or what road would be best for us we just push ahead in our automatic mode.

Coaching is for those people that want to be more intentional in planning, choosing and doing. Planning is often a feared word or one that we try to stay away from but it just means thinking about what we would like to do, when we want to do it and how we will do it. It can be written or it can just be in our head. Nothing magical about planning but the results can often be extraordinary. Enormous amounts of time are spent writing resumes, networking and contacting people for social or other opportunities. Very little time is spent on thinking about how do I want to live my life, what are the things that I do best, where do I want to live, what kind of friends do I want or how can I contribute to the community or the nation? Coaching can assist people in beginning to ponder these topics.

Coaching may be especially useful for someone that is within a few months of leaving prison to return to the larger community. Coaching could help the person begin to think in different ways and to consider some of the ideas mentioned above and to plan a more "intentional" path for the future. It could be an ideal time to start being more creative in thinking/planning for the future. A little secret - a coach is helpful but not essential. Don't tell anyone.

*(Jack Hollis will be offering Life Coaching for those who are getting out of prison in his state. Wouldn't this be a wonderful program to have available for everyone as they leave an old life to start life anew!)*



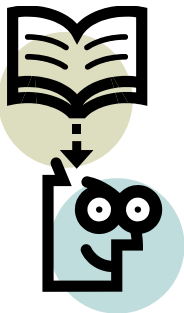
## On Practice By Chokyi Lodro

*"The Great Matter is birth and death. Life slips past and time is gone. Right now, wake up! Wake up! Do not waste time. - Zen exhortation -*

The mind will often interfere with sitting, if you allow it to. Anything can be the excuse, NOT TO SIT. The more I practice the less stress I suffer. Things that once held importance, no longer matter. My ego is shrinking, slowly but surely. The biggest obstacle to practice for me is often physical pain and discomfort. It helps tremendously to fold my blanket and sit on it to raise my body and lessen the stress on my arthritic knees. Often, I get fatigued and weary, but my experience has taught me to sit, relax, and the results are tremendously worthwhile. Afterwards, my mind is relaxed as is my body, my focus is clear and life is a wonderful treasure that makes me smile more than ever.

*"You can talk of great philosophy. But if you can't be kind to people every day it doesn't mean that much to me. It's the little things you do. It's the little things you say. It's the love that you give along the way." --Ani Difranco in "Not so Soft"*

**From G.K.:** I would like to thank you and the rest of the team for the great work that you do for all of us. I just started receiving the *Dharma Friends* newsletters in the last two or three months and I enjoy reading them very much. They always put a smile on my face and give me some needed hope and motivation. There isn't much of a sangha here. I know one other Buddhist besides me and he's not even in this unit. When I was going to "service" there were two, or sometimes three, of us. I was given a job in which I work at the same time as the service and so now I can't go and they won't change my shift, not even for religious purposes. But of course, these are only obstacles to overcome. I don't believe any experience is a bad experience as long as you can learn something from it and learning is what I've been doing. As far as I'm concerned, this is just a retreat and a great chance to learn. The Liberation Prison Project has sent me **Liberation In the Palm of Your Hand** and have helped me get started with my Vajrasattva practice which I do daily. I have a problem asking for help because I feel others need it more than I do. I think maybe I am a little stubborn. I thank you again for everything. May your path be clear and free from suffering. In love and light



**Book of Knowledge - Omar's dream -- Biz Kids** - This is a TV show for kids on public television on Sunday evenings. Believe it or not, it is the best and easiest science, math and worldly business instruction that I can get in 30 minutes throughout the week. It is enjoyable, light, and does not dumb-down the topics. If you can convince your cellie or pod mates that you are watching for **your** kids, they might let you watch it! You will learn a lot!

**ASK TIM** - Along with sharing books you like and find educationally helpful, periodically we are going to have an **ASK TIM** information session. You can write and ask any question about any life issues and **TIM** will answer them. 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. So - write to **ASK TIM, Dharma Friends**, PO Box 7708, Little Rock, AR. 72217-7708

*And don't forget that Linda has offered her book, **Mindful Money**, to you for free. Just write to us for your copy.*

*"There's an interesting transition that occurs naturally and spontaneously. We begin to find that, to the degree that there is bravery in ourselves--the willingness to look, to point directly at our own hearts--and to the degree that there is kindness toward ourselves, there is confidence that we can actually forget ourselves and open to the world."-- Ane Pema Chodron*

Another excerpt from our Dharma Friend, Larry King's book,

**What The Hell Were You Thinking? Freedom Machine.** Published by Boulderspace.org website,

January 31, 2008

Motorcycles are a cost effective way to get from point A to point B. Getting around on my bike, I can get a tank of gas (3 and ½ gallons) for \$10.00 and drive approximately 250 miles on this tank. I believe that motorcycles will become more popular in the near to immediate future based on their efficiency and increased pricing of gasoline.

When I ride my motorcycle, I feel like an eagle in flight. Feeling the wind in my face, I take in all the wonderful sights and sounds that Mother Nature has to offer. Just man and machine out there in the elements, becoming one with all that is – the mountains, streams, and valleys. With so many open roads and scenic byways, Boulder and its surrounding areas are great places to ride.

For those of you who have never been on a motorcycle before, it's an experience that you will never forget. It is like finding a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow or a breath of fresh air. It's peace, harmony and total bliss. It cannot be explained in words, it must be felt, and each one of you will have a different definition of what riding a motorcycle means to you.

In and around Boulder I can find places to ride. One place I recommend is at Chautauqua Park. Once you reach the top of Chautauqua you can overlook an amazing site of the entire city. Another scenic ride is up Boulder Canyon in route to Nederland. While driving up the canyon you will see some awesome views of the mountains and streams along the road.

Unfortunately, when trying to park my bike in Boulder, I have not experienced any "motorcycle accessible" places other than on Pearl Street. Every place else is just like having a car or a truck; you have to really search for parking. Additionally, it is disappointing that Boulder does not have any events specifically designed for motorcycle riders. The only event I can think of is the Native American Ride for Sovereignty. This takes place once a year and leaves Boulder in route to New Mexico. Other cities that host motorcycle events are Fredrick, Colorado (Ladies for Harley Poker Run) and in Longmont, Colorado, (Bikers for Best Friends Poker Run). I'd like to see more Boulder Motorbike events take place in our city.

What does riding your bike mean to you?

*In the beginning mindfulness takes away worries and fears about past and future and keeps us anchored in the present. In the end it points to the right view of the self.- Ayya Khema, "Be An Island"*

**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.**

**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.

*In Buddhism, the source of moral authority is the causal law. Be kind, be just, be humane, be honest if you desire to crown your future. Dishonesty, cruelty, inhumanity will condemn you to a miserable fall. - Soyen Shaku*

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

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

**FREE RELIGIOUS MATERIAL**

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



*A shortcut into the path is to be inwardly empty and outwardly quiet, like water that is clear and still, myriad images reflecting in it, neither sinking nor floating, all things spontaneously so. - Fu-jung*



# Dharma Friends

September 2010 issue # 164

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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

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## United Nations Day of Peace - September 21

In Arkansas, there will be a prayer vigil on the steps of the State Capitol in Little Rock at 6 PM. Anna will say the Buddhist Prayer. Hope you can join us. And if you can, print out and post this flyer. Thanks.

UN Day of Peace ~ September 21

Interfaith Prayer Vigil

Arkansas State Capitol Steps

6-7 PM

Please Come and Join us for an

Interfaith Prayer Vigil

To Pray for World Peace On

Tuesday, September 21

At the State Capitol

**PEACE  
ONE DAY**



*If we have...presence of mind then whatever work we do will be the very tool which enables us to know right and wrong continually. There's plenty of time to meditate, we just don't fully understand the practice, that's all. While sleeping we breathe, eating we breathe, don't we? Why don't we have time to meditate? Wherever we are we breathe. If we think like this then our life has as much value as our breath, wherever we are we have time. - Ajahn Chah, "Taste of Freedom"*

**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***

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***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](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.*



### ***PLAN AHEAD***

*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](http://www.wattlehollow.com)*

***“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. NOTE: this retreat is already more than half full – respond quickly to be sure you have a spot!

*"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](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.*



Compassion  
Works for All