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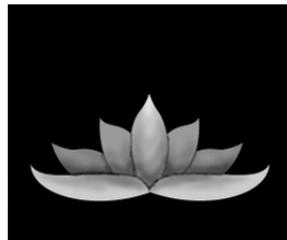
# Dharma Friends

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

**August/September 2013 issue #196.**

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



### **Verse X: AGGRESSION**

129. Having empathy for others one sees that all beings are afraid of punishment and death. Knowing this, one does not attack or cause attack.
130. Having empathy for others one sees that all beings love life and fear death. Knowing this, one does not attack or cause attack.
131. To harm living beings who, like us, seek contentment, is to bring harm to ourselves.
132. To avoid bringing harm to living beings who, like us, seek contentment, is to bring happiness to ourselves.
133. Avoid speaking harshly to others; harsh speech prompts retaliation. Those hurt by your words may hurt you back.
134. If spoken to harshly, make your self as silent as a cracked gong; non-retaliation is a sign of freedom.
135. Just as a herdsman drives cattle to pasture, old age and death direct living beings.
136. Though while they perform their evil acts they do not realize what they are doing, fools suffer the results of their own actions accordingly, just as one is burnt when handling fire.
- 137 -140. To cause harm to the defenseless soon brings suffering to those who attack. They will reap pain or poverty or loss, illness, insanity or persecution, abuse, distress or devastation, and, alone, after death they must confront their misdeeds.
141. Neither outer asceticisms, nor self-humiliation nor physical deprivation of any kind, can purify the heart of one still obscured by doubt.
142. Flamboyant outer appearance does not in itself constitute an obstruction to freedom. Having a heart at peace, pure, contained, awake and blameless, distinguishes a renunciate, a Wayfarer, a noble being.
143. A well-trained horse gives no cause for restraint. Rare are those beings who, through modesty and discipline, give no cause for rebuke.
144. Let the dread of endless mediocrity spur you into great effort, like a well-trained horse encouraged by the mere touch of the whip. Relinquish the burden of endless struggle with unapologetic confidence, with purity of action, effort, concentration, and by conscious and disciplined commitment to the path.
145. Those who build canals channel the flow of water. Arrow smiths make arrows. Woodworkers craft wood. The good tame themselves.



## Some thoughts about this *Dhammapada* Verse: Aggression

### We forget we are all alike.

*129. Having empathy for others one sees that all beings are afraid of punishment and death. Knowing this, one does not attack or cause attack.*

*130 Having empathy for others one sees that all beings love life and fear death. Knowing this, one does not attack or cause attack.*

The deepest need of every human being is the need to feel safe. From an infants' first breath, a baby is unconsciously and intuitively scanning and recording all the clues in its environment to do what is necessary to ensure survival. This survival instinct is innate within each of us. We each come into the world with this drive to survive. After our infant survival needs are met by mother, we continue to learn our cues from the responses of all those others around us. All these others learned in this same way what equaled safety for them. They instilled within them who were the safe people, the safe places, the safe things, the safe activities, and how to act in their world so that they stayed safe. All of these inner directives as to what created a safe world was then translated into subtle but all pervasive teachings for the next generation. On through the ages, each unique to our familial and cultural heritages, people passed on this information so that their children would make similar choices in order to feel safe in their world. Such a transmitted legacy means that humans have passed down the whispers of survival teachings embedded deeply in unconscious awareness in ways that we have no sense of choice beyond what we were taught.

For some, a safe world meant staying in a very small circle of stimuli and familiar faces. If our circle is small, with little variation in people, places, and things, our safety is challenged when anything arises that is different. Others learned to feel safe in a world where the circle of safe stimuli was big and wide, with a lot of people and vast differences. But for all of us, when there is new and different stimuli, our physical and emotional fears stir. Our ego then defends us by challenging the new. As children, we run to safe people. As adults, we often proclaim self righteously and confidently that *my* world, *my* way, *my* place, *my* music, *my* religion, *my* food, *my* people are each the best. All of these ways of *MINE* (in which I feel safe) are the right view! And we push away the new and intrusive stimuli and hope it does not push back!

Hopefully and ideally when we are young, we will have new and different challenges that allow us to travel, expand our education, read new views, meet new people, and, depending on our level of ego security, gently open and expand our circle to take in all that is new and exciting. This is healthy development and we watch children go through this evolutionary process as they grow into adulthood. Most healthy adults continue this growth throughout their lives. But sometimes we don't expand our world for some reason or another. Sometimes we get stuck. Sometimes the fear is too great and we are antagonistic towards those who are different. We decide they are bad and wrong. Perhaps others in our world taught us to fear those who are different. Who knows why, but some people become very aggressive towards those who bring up our deep fears of safety when new and different people come into our safe little life view.

Because I have long been a therapist and a healer and I have seen how we all limit ourselves, I felt it was my obligation to expose myself to as much as possible. I wanted to learn to mix with all human beings and to learn their varying cultures and customs. Only if I knew how others felt safe, was I able to be of benefit in helping them grow. So I traveled the world in order to meet people and learn their beliefs. This was not always an easy pursuit. Often I opened up my circle beyond my safety zone. That is how I know that this is hard for others who are expanding into new worlds, new thinking, and crossing their boundaries of safety. Frequently, I was in situations where I was the only one who had been acculturated in the values and traditions of my world. I was often the only one of my race, color, gender, religion, nationality, political

views, ethnicity, or age in a group of people. When I found myself in these circumstances, I usually just listened, trying to love and to understand those that I was with. I watched to see if, how and why they let me into their circle. I watched myself to see how I shut them out of my heart in fear. As I sat among them, either as the thorn in their side or after having become the invisible enemy, I often heard them pronounce in some way that their truth is the **One Truth** that supersedes all truths. The smaller their own personal circle, the smaller the view, the more loudly and assuredly - and maybe even aggressively - they felt that they held the **One Truth** in any particular arena. If they were on an ego mission, they often believed they should bring others to this **One Truth** that they had found. Sometimes they wanted to save others from *wrong* beliefs. They did not realize that love and compassion is a path where we effortlessly respect the beliefs of others. They did not realize that the views of others are equally valid, right and true for those who embrace them. They were often blinded to the continuum of respectfully sharing their views with others and then discussing the differing perspectives. Their 'missionary zeal' was a bullying insistence that their **One Way** must become the way of all others.

Over and over again, with a focus on their **One Way** and believing themselves exceptional, beings and groups approach others with the passion of their rightness. In truth, they only want to feel safe. I saw these patterns repeated in many of the groups that I met. We know that some peoples even feel the need to commit terroristic acts; to cause harm to those that don't believe as they do. They are so blinded by their fear of others who are different that they feel it is a justifiable means to deal with those differences but, in truth, with their fears. They see it as the way to dispense with those who are the source of their fear: those they call the enemy.

Of course, there are times when I feel discomfort as I'm listening to these positions valued so much by others, especially if I am being told adamantly that I am the enemy in their world. My personal challenge then is to allow them to be who they are as I hold them with compassion and appreciation. If they ask what I think, I will tell them, not as a debate but to share another opinion. They may take the stance that I should embrace their position for my own good or they may tell me how wrong or even sinful or immoral I am. If they do not want to hear my opinion as just that, as another opinion, then I decline to debate with them but I do stay and listen. There is no point in trying to educate another to a new view unless they truly are interested in expanding their world. But I still want to learn and understand their view.

We all can recognize almost any aspect of our lives as a motivator for these challenges of right views, right heritage, right lifestyle, etc., or believing that others should do it our way and be like us. We can debate food choices, we can be racist, or nationalistic, we can advocate one gang over another, spout regionalism, or political, religious or social policy positions. Remember, it is out of fear that aggression arises. It is when one does not feel safe and survival is at risk that we all lash out in rage. Our world is visibly torn apart by such strife. People are killing each other over such debates. These debates go on in families, communities and societies. The suffering of beings everywhere is because we are rejecting, bullying or terrorizing others because we believe we are right and they are wrong. (In truth, they threaten our safety and views) Some think that they should tell *them* the truth of what is right, or kill *them* because *they* are wrong.

### **INTERFAITH DIALOGUE is a good template for growth**

Right now, far ahead of any such movement in place in politics, social policy, or international or community relations, there is a dynamic movement to explore interfaith dialogue. In so many ways, this movement has caught hold of people's hearts as a way to grow. Programs are being offered in small towns, in big cities, by churches, colleges, civic groups and more. People are attending; exhilarated as they learn of various spiritual traditions and excited to feel that they now know others who embody different life experiences. I don't know why interfaith dialogue seems to be a safe portal through which we can respectfully listen to each other without quite so much fear but it appears to be a growing movement because we all have some exposure to the labels and definitions of religions and want to explore them philosophically. We can have a program with a Christian, a Muslim, a Buddhist, a Hindu, a Jew, and a Sikh. We can add or subtract a few more and a dialog begins. On the other hand, we can hardly put a Democrat and a Republican on a panel together and trust them to listen to each other respectfully. Yes, we have made progress with discussions among our racial groups, but social policy and community morals and lifestyles get very entangled in the unfinished racial, class, and religious residue

that it is intersecting our politics. There is still a theme of dissension at more subtle levels in our community divide and policies.

I would love to see this template of the interfaith dialogue be the model for all of us to grow safe enough to create one world as we gently, kindly and compassionately stretch ourselves to abandon "I am right" and "You are wrong" in all of its many presentations. Many still feel they can self-righteously save others from their blindness, institute morals and politics, or even legislate wiping out cultures. In group dialogues where it is clear that radical rants are immature, we all model expanding our sensitive boundaries with compassion and caring. People can learn how to grow into maturity.

Yes, we need to share our views, take our stand, and teach the values that we love. But, at the same time, we need to all come to the one place of "*Don't know mind*" - that place where we know that there is no right and wrong. In fact, no one knows what is right or wrong anyway! No one knows the ultimate truth. We are all each merely a knot in this one great net of *all that is*. Each knot just holds a little mirror of a piece of the great truth.



So now it is your job. We all empower one another. We can each do this piece of finding peace. You know your world and what truths that you learned. But you also know wisdom and you know to be curious about why each and every life truth is important to those that embrace those beliefs. You can know others' history and their fears. You know how to accept people where they are without having to be the one who is right or to be so superior that you want to make them wrong. You are trained in insight. You have and appreciate role models of peace and healing - Martin Luther King, Gandhi, the Dalai Lama, Saint Francis, Barrack Obama, and the healers you read about and follow in your life. You are in a unique position in your prison, in your family, and in your community. This is your call. You now have a vision far beyond your early identities: those old identities with a gang, or with money, or with cars, ethnicity or color, with your religion, politics, or more. You know the perfection of each being even in their pain and confusion. Can you use the template of the interfaith dialogue to bring others together to share their beliefs? Can you be a mediator in discussions that explore why their beliefs are important to them, as you steer them away from trying to proselytize or make others enemies because they hold different beliefs? Can you teach them to honor others and their ways of being in the world and help them to see why their ways were important to them and to their historical communities? And then, can you be the one who might lead them

towards compassion, kindness, acceptance, and caring for everyone from your/their children, family members, communities, and worldwide decision making so that they can all grow beyond fear-based reactivism and aggression?

You are in a unique position to bring about change. For everyone reading this, you have come from your particular family and community, and no one else can easily penetrate that community without being an outsider and generating fear just by their presence. Typically, TV or media presentation have bias and are primarily preaching to the choir. If we each go to those we connect to with our message and be the messenger, the Martin Luther King or the Gandhi for your world, then you may change hearts and minds because you, better than anyone, can reach and touch those who have known you. You have the credibility and you have gained the wisdom to be the teacher and the change agent for your part of the world. Please take on this assignment and report in as to how you are doing. We are all behind you!



## A MEDITATION – Aggression

As we practice meditation along with living an ongoing meditation of compassion and kindness, we become increasingly aware when aggression arises within us. For most of us, without these focused opportunities to increase our self awareness, we would be like most people who are taken by surprise when aggression arises and is reflected in our words and actions. When we have this self awareness practice, we can then catch aggression when it is still physiologically tightening our body or emotionally beginning to surge through our brain, stirring up our biochemistry and manifesting as thoughts. With these practices of meditation, kindness and compassion, we recognize when aggression is being directed towards us or is happening in our world. When we are not caught by surprise but, instead, we see aggression arising and growing, then exploding, we are much more capable of meeting it with kindness and understanding instead of being reactive. Practicing meditation on the cushion and then living kindness and compassion as we go through our daily life changes our inner world and creates a different realm for all those who come close to us. If they come to us carrying anger and meet kindness, very often the anger is transformed. They are better able to find different options with which to deal with their pain. When aggression is being directed towards us and we meet it with kindness and love, it is usually snuffed out immediately. The one who was directing aggression at us feels safer and can more quickly let go of whatever fear was at the root of their aggression.

So first of all, in this meditation on a cushion, we each are able to quickly reduce the amount of aggression in our inner world. We perceive a calmer outer world simply by practicing meditation and living compassion. We can understand in our commentary on our verse, *Aggression* that we each perceive an outer world depending on our own deep conditioning. We learn to view the world in the way that we were taught to see it. We all know that inherent in the world of animals and human beings, there will always be aggression. That is the nature of who we are as human animals. Aggression is deeply a part of our physiology and brain chemistry. Until we all are awakening beings who have transcended many of these deeply imbedded impulses, there will always be a belief in enemies, the arising of fears in the face of these enemies, and the reactive response of aggression towards them as our fight or flight response. Little by little, we can find balance and harmony and we can purify the intensity of the immediate reaction to our fears. Even though the circle of our safety grows larger and larger, there is always the chance of meeting a situation of danger and then, once again, we feel helpless and fearful and we respond with aggression. But that is the process of growing towards peace and harmony and an acceptance of all that arises. Each time we have an experience to which we react with aggression and then find a pathway of healing and acceptance, we grow to integrate all that we learn in that situation. With each time of stretching and then integration, we learn to invite a new harmony and balance that is a resource if a similar challenge arises again in the future. Our tolerance grows greater. Our harmony and balance is more stable. Little by little, we handle greater challenges without fear. As our sphere of safety grows, it reduces aggression. As we have more harmony and balance within ourselves, we have a broader vision as we look out at others in the world. As dangerous situations happen in the world, we can watch the news, read the paper, and hear the scary stories without having so much fear arise. We are not so vulnerable to the stirrings of fear that most others experience.

### *So how do we change the world?*

We can be the ones who stay in balance, who invite a greater view, and who give voice to the calming and soothing perspective that will ease the fears of others. Throughout history, there has been the "enemy du jour" and those with the greatest fear raise a ruckus of hysteria that stirs up the drama of people everywhere. Like so much of human behavior, we know that people are attracted to gossip, excitement and the horror story of the villains who are going to come and destroy everyone's lives. These stories go back thousands of years to all of the enemies and fears lived by vulnerable peoples

when confronted by those who would cause them harm. We know their hyper-vigilance saved them and we see thousands of years of battles as people tried to survive against those who would destroy them.

There definitely were these villains who would take innocent lives. There have always been those with the wish to gain power and treasure. They believed they had the right to take what they wanted from those that they did not see as people of value. To not see others as people like themselves allowed them to take what they wanted from them and to take their lives.

People are fed by the adrenaline of the drama of enemies and aggression that arises to the surface even when it is just talked about. Even our sports games mimic the ancient rush of adrenaline when enemies are set against each other. The tragedy is that people have always suffered terribly by such dramas. Those who did not see human beings of value are very stuck in primitive growth patterns, as are millions who live still in such cultures. Whether it is the Muslim, our enemy du jour in our culture right now, or the Jews of the past, or even the Catholics that came from Ireland to America, or people of color that were brought as slaves, aggression arises and pushes people to act out a deep permission to rid themselves of their fears, which is to enact their aggressive feelings towards the enemy. Whether a societal/cultural war or wars between nations, our deeply imbedded beliefs about primacy over others encourages aggression. We often make such aggression permissible and justified, and then live out these dynamics. This deeply primitive pattern in all of us as human animals causes incredible pain, suffering and disharmony amongst peoples. Those who only see an enemy and not people of value are stuck in primitive patterns, even when they are the bully in our own family.

We can remember a higher truth however. The truth is that there are peace loving people on both sides and we can transcend the warlike dramas. Each of us who lives an awareness of aggression at levels of mindfulness within us must become the voice that speaks a more compassionate truth and models kindness towards other beings. That is our meditation on aggression. The meditation is living kindness and compassion towards all beings no matter what stirs from within, especially when the stirrings carry a tribal belief system about enemies that are primitive and unjustified. We can all help others grow to a view of greater awareness so that they might see that their fears are fed by early and primitive belief systems that have no validity in the world. At the same time, as others approach us with aggression, if we hold awareness of their fear and their lack of any valid invitation from us to act out their aggression, and we receive them with love and acceptance, we give them an experience from which they may grow and gain awareness. Slowly they shed their inner fears and suffering.

***If we live kindness, those are around us are more likely to live kindness. If we live aggression, we will more likely be met with aggression.***



## From Your Letters

**Dear readers: Going Home Soon?** If you expect to be released in the next two years, please let us know. *Compassion Works for All* has prepared a *Re-Entry Guide* to help you plan what you need for a rich, productive life. For a free copy of the *Guide*, write to Johnny Bocce at CWFA. If you let Johnny know where you will be released, he will help you find re-entry resources there.

**Also, some things to remember:**

- 1. Please let us know your address changes as that costs us big \$\$\$ to send newsletters to those long gone..**
- 2. If you are a new subscriber**, please put that on an envelope. Also put on the envelope the person you are writing to, if you know, or what you are writing for. For example: NEW SUBSCRIBER. That saves us from reading every letter before passing it on.
- 3. Many of you have participated in our Jeff's Kids program** where your letters, written to incarcerated juveniles with words that you wish had been said to you at their age, are then read to the kids by their counselor, Jeff. We know those letters help and thank you all.

4. **ASK TIM** - Tim gets many letters asking for help with those things that we know you cannot do in prison. Tim works hard for all of you. But here are some things that Tim is not able to do:

1. Tim is not qualified to counsel about personal and/or relationship problems.
2. Money or 'things' will never be given to any writer.
3. We will not provide addresses of individuals in the free world to anyone.
4. We cannot provide information obtained from Facebook or other social media websites.

6. **Dictionary Drop Program** - we are out of dictionaries so please use your library copies so that you can keep playing. Write with your definition each month and use the word in a paragraph. After twelve letters of definitions, you will get your certificate.

**OUR DICTIONARY DROP WORD for August is 'cohere'**

7. **ART DONATIONS** - if you would like to make art for us as a donation that *Dharma Friends* can use with your permission for cards and calendars or art exhibits, we would be thrilled. This will help with our finances and it also sends a positive message to those who think of prisoners in negative ways. Your talents will open eyes and hearts and keep all those in prisons from being invisible to the world. Please write on the back of your art piece: your name, your institution, and maybe a little about yourself. If you can mail it in a way that it is not folded, that preserves the beauty of your work. Thank you so much.

**FOR THOSE OF YOU GETTING YOUR GED:** The Public Broadcasting System (PBS) in your area is likely running a series of tutoring classes to help you get your GED. In Arkansas, the classes are at 5 AM each Monday and Wednesday morning. They recently started a new series of 39 episodes. Tune your TV to PBS to see if your local PBS station is carrying this series. If not, a note to the local PBS will get you more information. If you have someone at home to check out this link for you, or if someone at home is doing their GED, here is the description of each class and the date they will run.

This link, [http://litlink.ket.org/gedlessons\\_descript.htm](http://litlink.ket.org/gedlessons_descript.htm), provides a list and description of each episode

8. **And another new idea!** A friend of Chelle's asked for a printed quote to put on the bulletin board in his prison. Who else but Chelle would then think, WOW. We can put quotes in *Dharma Friends* that people can put up on their bulletin boards in their barracks and recreation areas. Maybe some of you would like to take on the responsibility for being the **Quote Master** in your area and do this for us each month. Who knows how many lives might be changed by a few simple words. **Would you like to be our Quote Master** and put our Bulletin Board Quotes up on the day room or other available bulletin boards in your prison? Thanks for your help!

**Bulletin Board Quote for June:**

## The Top 10 things about time and space that most people seem to forget...



10. You chose to be here and you knew what you were doing.
9. There are no "tests" and you're not being judged.
8. Everyone's doing their best, with what they know.
7. You already have whatever you're looking for.
6. You are of the Divine, pure God, and so is everyone else.
5. Religion needs spirituality; spirituality does not need religion.
4. You're naturally inclined to succeed - at everything you do.
3. You happen to life, life does not happen to you.
2. Order, healing, and love belie every moment of chaos, pain, and fear.
1. Following your heart is the best way to help others.

from *Dharma Friends*, PO Box 7708, Little Rock, Ar. 72217-7708.



### Developing A Kind Nature

*A person disposed to anger will more and more easily erupt in anger anew at any provocation. But in a moment of kindness a kindly disposition is deposited, and one becomes incrementally more disposed to kindness. The attitude with which we respond to an object of experience, with anger or with kindness, will therefore not only influence the causal field outside ourselves but also progressively reshape our very nature. - Andrew Olendzki, "Karma in Action"*

### From T. M: A response to R's letter:

After reading your letter I felt for the first time the need to write in response to a letter in *Dharma Friends*. I see that you do need help in understanding the true meaning of dharma. What I read between the lines and then including the lines themselves is a person who thinks he's arrived but in reality, never bought a ticket. What I'm about to do in dissecting your letter is meant only to help you in your journey. I make no claims myself in how far I have gone in mine nor would I ever make any claims to that affect; only the ego makes those. Line 1 of your letter reads "...deep? Yup, but that's all I'm about." Well, to claim that you are deep means you don't understand the meaning. A. If you were "deep", you wouldn't state it. The ego is strong in you, young Jedi. :-)

You continue on in your letter with the dictionaries by your side picking out words to try to showcase your intelligence. (Me me me, look at me!!) How smart I am. Pity me for having no one in this prison capable of conversing with me, I, a higher being. I do have concern for you but remember the Buddha taught at a time when people were not educated at all and he taught according to each man's level. You state that you are not able to talk to anyone or write to anyone because you believe no one is on your level??? You are truly full of yourself and until you change how you feel about yourself, enlightenment will continue to elude you. You state how well you meditate after stating you have not met anyone even partially educated. I would be stuck on that first and look at how to overcome the negative image I have about the rest of the world and the people in it. Do you really meditate?? (try meditating on compassion) you should be reaching out to those less gifted. As a Buddhist, you should always consider yourself to be the lowest person when in a group, and you can never go wrong when living by that motto. (That is the true ego killer). I'm a little perplexed with *Dharma Friends* for not pointing out the obvious in your very obvious "me" letter and for printing it in the first place. It's very negative and full of "I's". When it should have been a humble plea for help, it turned into a showcase of just how far you think you have come and your ego has been well fed. I'm sure it hangs on your cell wall. One day, I hope when you wake up in your journey and you will see it for what it really is.

I do offer my help to you and I am willing to write you and maybe we can help each other along the way on a most difficult path. Now here's a test. If you are upset by what I wrote, that's your ego. The person you built yourself up to be as a great guy is who needs rewards. If you truly have arrived through your meditation this letter would have never been written and neither would yours have been submitted. I know how it feels to have your ego attacked when you feel you work so hard on something to only have it torn down in front of your very eyes. I'm sure your ego only expected to be praised for such penmanship but they are only words. But they show where you really are and they are a lesson on how far we all have to go. With love and respect, T

### Just by Listening

*Sounds, like everything else, arise and pass away. Just by listening, you can experience the insight of impermanence, an understanding the Buddha taught as crucial for the development of wisdom. - Sylvia Boorstein, "Sound Meditation"*

**From Robert Alston:** If any of my words are letters have been disdainful: I give my apologies. As for any or those who do not appreciate the time, the effort, the hard sacrifices, the budget constraints which are done to keep this letter going or for simple mindedness, there's no apology for they simply do not understand what CWFA does sort is about.

I am humbled by those such as yourself willing to give the ones inside compassion and acceptance, when we are long forgotten by the outside world. Reading these newsletters and reading all the correspondence from others around the country and the world, has helped when the times are rough. Thank you Miss Anna for the compassionate person you are. Sincerely, *one who cares*

### Seeing Our Oneness

*Because compassion is a state of mind that is itself open, abundant, and inclusive, it allows us to meet pain more directly. With direct seeing, we know that we are not alone in our suffering and that no one need feel alone when in pain. Seeing our oneness is the beginning of our compassion, and it allows us to reach beyond aversion and separation. Sharon Salzberg, "A Quiver of the Heart"*

## Our annual database cleanse with a little help from you!

**(Please tear off this page and mail it back to us by September 1 if you wish to continue to receive Dharma Friends newsletter. Mail to CWFA, PO BOX 7708, Little Rock, Ar. 72217-7708.**

**Make sure to include your name and address along with the other requested information.**

As you can imagine with everyone's comings and goings, we must check each year to see if everyone who wants Dharma Friends is getting their issues. With almost 5000 subscribers, this has become cumbersome. To help us stay up-to-date, would you please check the appropriate boxes, answer the questions, then tear off this page and mail it back to us?

#1. Check "yes" if you want to continue to receive Dharma Friends and mail this back so that we receive it by September 1, 2013. All those that we do not hear from will be removed from the Dharma Friends list by November. Yes I want to continue to receive Dharma Friends. \_\_\_\_\_ Here is my current name, ID number, and address.

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2. *Question:* Are you able to receive Dharma Friends electronically at your institution, either on a computer in your library, chaplain's office, on a hand-held electronic device or by other means? For some, this might mean sending Dharma Friends by email to a prison official where you can view it on their computer. If so, please help us set up an email subscription to Dharma Friends for you by giving us the email address we can send it to. Be sure to also include your present snail mail address so that we can take you off the hard copy mailing list.

*Answer:* \_\_\_\_\_

3. *Question:* Would you be willing and able to pick up your copy of Dharma Friends from the chaplain, teacher or librarian at your prison? (We can send multiple copies to a chaplain for much less money than to individual subscribers.) If this works for you, give us your name and address, and the name of your chaplain or contact person and their address so that we can make those arrangements. *Answer:* \_\_\_\_\_

4. *Question:* If you are part of a class or meditation group that uses Dharma Friends as your study guide, is it possible to receive one issue for your group to share? If so, please give us the name and addresses for yourself and everyone in your group. *Answer (include names and addresses):* \_\_\_\_\_

We are trying to be the best stewards possible of the donations that we receive – including those we receive from many of you!! – so that we can continue offering Dharma Friends to those who benefit. Expenses are great and monies are less great, and we want to make the most of every penny. Thank you so much for your help.

### Calm and Radiant Balance

*Equanimity takes interest in whatever is occurring simply because it is occurring. Equanimity does not include the aversive states of indifference, boredom, coldness, or hesitation. It is an expression of calm, radiant balance that takes whatever comes in stride.*

*Shaila Catherine, "Equanimity in Every Bite"*

### From Snake: Greetings my Dharma Friends,

That's cool that you are back to the beginning of the **Dhammapada**. I like starting from the beginning. And for real, if everybody were to learn just the first 5 verses, plus number 20, and embrace them wholeheartedly, you really would not need to know anything else. Number 1, especially says it all: "*All states of being are determined by the mind*". This lesson finally sunk through my thick skull in recent history and I've been trying to get anybody who will listen to understand this fact. All states of being are determined by one's mind and no one or nothing can make us anything or do anything. It all comes from within our self, from our mind. You can blame anyone else for any situation all you want for "making" you react in whatever way, but the fact of the matter is that you make you do, say, or react in whatever way you do. Once you realize this you can make whatever changes in your life that you want or need to, and conversely, if you don't realize and accept it, you're never going to make any real changes in yourself. And if you keep playing the blame game and keep those hatreds going, you're just going to keep bringing unnecessary negativity, bitterness, suffering, and unhappiness into your life.

Then in Anna's ruminations, one finds so much more to learn from in the pursuit of getting one's mind right and achieving some type of peace and contentment, if not nirvana. I learned a little tenant a while back that goes with what you said about laying down the roots for each event in your future: "Begin as you would end." If you want a certain something to happen, or to happen in a certain way, the next word out of your mouth to someone, the next action you make, is going to determine the way the outcome comes out. Also, if you don't like the way things are or like things about yourself based on your past actions, leave that stuff in the past. Who you are in the future and or the way things come out in the future really only depends on what you do from this second on. Sure you may have to overcome some messed up stuff and maybe some seriously messed up stuff but if the new, better 'you' deals with life in a positive better way from this second on, what you did in the past is totally inconsequential.

I also liked what Anna said about, "Today, we can either be grateful that we created the life that is unfolding now or not." I have said this more than a few times once I came to realize that nothing in the universe happens for no reason. I'm not exactly happy or proud of what I've done to arrive at where I am in my life now (30 plus years in prison and what I did to get put in in the first place - mostly stealing) but, when it comes down to it, I don't want to not have gone through all that has happened to me because it has accumulated to make me the person I am today. And I like the person I am now, since I've put all the work into becoming a positive, better man than I used to be.

If you keep yourself in a positive state of mind, not only will the positive and good things come your way, but, no matter what, you'll see and find the positive in any and everything. It's like a quote I read from Gilda Radner, the comedian. She said that when she finds she's become lost, she just changes her destination. I like that and I try to keep it in mind and paraphrase it to adapt to the negative as it happens to and around me. I'm not perfect at it (I've got a lot of work to do) but I am getting better. :-)

Then the last part of verse 20 sounds like it was written just for me. I'm not yet able to embrace being a full-on Buddhist because of a few things I disagree with, but there's a lot of the Buddhist philosophy and dharma that I do embrace - like letting go of hatreds, delusions and attachments -and this helps greatly in my life.

#### **Loving Attention**

*When we are fully present and able to pay attention in a sustained way to our experience we can begin to see directly, uncolored by our ideas and concepts. Placing our trust more in loving attention and less in analyzing the story can allow space for a new way of holding the question. Narayan Liebenson Grady, "Questioning the Question"*

#### **From ZL King: Forgiveness--a second look**

Recently I shared the forgiveness newsletter, **Inside Dharma**, January/February 2012, with four different inmates here at Hill Prison, Galesburg, Illinois. All inmates plus me were able to extract gems of Buddha wisdom from the forgiveness newsletter. Briefly, forgiveness means to be made whole. The Buddhist teachings must be practiced. The more that we practice, the more we will benefit from these noble teachings. Forgiveness is a simple, indirect way to put Buddhist teachings into practice.

Loving-kindness meditation is another simple, indirect method to put the Buddha's teachings into practice. Another word for loving-kindness is Metta. In my practice as a Buddhist, I cry profusely, almost each day. The Buddha's teachings are very deep and profound. Each day I spend some time in sitting meditation and each night I sleep with Buddhist beads under my pillow. Should I die, I want to die thinking about the Buddha and his noble teachings. My study and practice of Buddhism has been to help establish and maintain a proper Buddhist worship service here in prison. Each and every day of my life I have tried to be a good example of the Buddha's teachings. Often I fall short, but I get up again and again.

At first, in 1998, I read everything that I could get my hands on by or about Buddhist authors and teachers. Before long, I had more than 50 Buddhist teachers. A teacher for me is anyone that causes me to read their books or book over and over again. In my 14 years of Buddhist study and practice, I have been blessed to read more than 300 books by Buddhist authors. Some of my Buddhist teachers and spiritual teachers are well-known. For more than 45 years now I have been in prison as a first offender, serving time for murder. Yet I consider myself blessed to be able to study and practice the noble Buddha's teachings. Also I am blessed to have a host of wonderful Buddhist teachers.

Since 2007, I've recommended and continue to recommend the following books as an introduction to Buddhism:

**Fundamentals of Buddhism** by Peter D Santina; **What the Buddha Taught** by Walpoba Rahula; **The Teachings of Buddha** by Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai; **Basic Buddhism Course** by Phra Sunthorn Plamintr, PhD

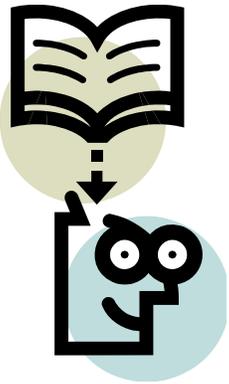
After reading the above four Buddhist books, the Buddhist inmates are asked to read anything that they like or I would be happy to recommend a book to each of them. **The Teachings of Buddha** is available in 44 languages, including English, and has been freely given to millions. In total, I've recommended between 20 and 30 Buddhist books to the Buddhist inmates here at Hill Prison and we are blessed to have most of those books in our Buddhist Chapel library. Some of our Buddhist books and spiritual books have been stolen, but this is a prison ...smile!

**Subscription information:** We have gladly been offering this newsletter free of charge to those in prisons. We are 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*, please email [annacoxar@gmail.com](mailto:annacoxar@gmail.com) and we will put your name on our email list. If you need a paper copy, and if you are a family member of someone in prison, we will put you on our paper copy list. Send your information to **Compassion Works for All, Dharma Friends subscriptions, PO Box 7708, Little Rock, AR. 72217-7708.**

**If anyone would like to make a donation that supports the almost 5,000 thousand paper copies that go out to those in prisons around the country, we are most appreciative of your help.**

We 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.**



**Book of Knowledge - Omar's dream** - our friend Omar dreamed of educating ourselves as much as we can so that we all can become all that we can be.. (Remember, CWFA is not able to offer these books)

#### **LOVE 2.0 by Barbara L. Fredrickson, PhD**

A review by Sharon Salzberg: In this book, Barbara Fredrickson conveys a powerful new view of what we all want most deeply - love. using rigorous science, practical exercises, and heartfelt daily life examples, Barbara shows us how to strengthen our capacity to more truly connect to ourselves and others. *Love 2.0* moves the entire field of understanding and accessing love forward.

**We continue to share the Path to Peace teachings of Shin Wuling written down by our dharma friend, Mr. Tron.**

- 21 Transform anger with patience, doubt with understanding, selfishness with generosity
22. Sincerity in words engenders trust. Sincerity in thought engenders pure living. Sincerity in generosity engenders loving kindness.
23. may ignorance give way to understanding. may hatred yield to compassion. May war surrender to peace.
24. The absence of expectations results in the reduction of disappointments.
25. Contentment is born of the capacity to love impartially, to listen uncritically, to give unconditionally, to forgive unreservedly, to laugh at oneself unaffectedly.



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

**Dear .....** , Here in prison, I receive a monthly newsletter from *Compassion Works for All* called *Dharma Friends*. It offers support from ancient wisdom with which we explore our spiritual path, no matter what tradition someone follows. We learn meditation teachings, psychological and emotional healing, and we build a community between those in prison and those out in the world through letters. *Compassion Works for All* encourages communication and healing of old family patterns and relationship issues with those I have left behind - like you. If we are both reading *Dharma Friends* issues, one way to support such discussions between us is to use the issues as a basis for our discussions. I welcome this opportunity to share such healing and growth talks and letters with you and would like to ask you to go to [www.CompassionWorksForAll.org](http://www.CompassionWorksForAll.org) and sign up for the twice monthly emails that will bring you *Dharma Friends* newsletter and also the *Compassion Works for All* web site updates. There are lots of healing videos on the web site as well, some especially for those with family members and friends who are in prison. I greatly regret that we are spending this time apart and the challenges that it imposes on our relationship. I also look forward to being able to use all of these traumatic events as a way to grow beyond the issues of our past and find a stronger healing that will benefit not only me and you but all those that we love. Thank you for considering sharing *Dharma Friends* and this part of my life with me. I hope it helps you as much as it has helped me. Love,

Compassion Works for All/ Dharma Friends  
PO Box 7708  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72217-7708  
Webpage: [www.CompassionWorksForAll.org](http://www.CompassionWorksForAll.org)

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**FREE RELIGIOUS MATERIAL**



St. Francis of Assisi

*Don't Take It Personally*

*That which we call 'I' is just impermanent, ownerless karma rolling along. Don't take it personally. Lama Surya Das, "Surya Says"*

*Prison mailroom: Please return issues if inmate is no longer in your institution*



# Dharma Friends

August/September #196 copyright 2013,  
Compassion Works for All

**Additional Pages for EMAIL VERSION of Dharma Friends**



## COMPASSION WORKS

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

The sessions are the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 1 PM and the first Thursday at 6 PM at Fletcher Library.

The next sessions are July 16 at 1 PM, then August 1 at 6 PM, and August 20 at 1.

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

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

**Compassion Works** sessions offer a quiet experience of compassion. With a few gentle and guiding prompts, we will let go of the struggle, renew, heal, and send compassion into the world.

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

(We also offer portions on videos and have a Compassion Works printout so that you can have an individual practice or you could start Compassion Works sessions in your locality. You can find these on our [www.CompassionWorksForAll.org](http://www.CompassionWorksForAll.org) web site)

Our public libraries in Little Rock also offer Introduction to Meditation classes that we provide for you. The next introduction to meditation class will be Tuesday at 6 PM at Fletcher Library on July 23 and the next will be at the main downtown library on the 2nd Monday at noon, August 12. For additional sessions, check the dates posted in our next emails.

### **3rd Friday Art Walk in Argenta**

Every 3rd Friday, there is a wonderful community event in Argenta where artists in the entire area exhibit their work in tents and galleries, along with other art events. Our Compassion Works for All office is in the heart of Argenta and we are housed in an art gallery! So, of course, we are welcoming the Art Walkers in to see our fabulous prison art donated by those in prisons to benefit Compassion Works for All. People usually start coming by around 6 and it goes until 8 or so. If you are in central Arkansas, come by and see the work by our incredibly talented artists. If you do not live nearby, we have some videos that show you a bit of their work on our web site.

*Are you looking for a place to do a retreat or take a little vacation in the Ozarks? Here is Kathy and Gary's cottage and it offers a perfect Eureka Springs retreat location rental. They are some of our Compassion Works for All friends so that you know you have a trustworthy person to rent from: Moon Dreams Cottage - Eureka Springs, Arkansas.*

Charming little cottage (3BR, 1 BA) for rent at great discounted prices. Victorian style furnishings including antique beds and armoire, stained glass lamps, windows, and art. Fully furnished kitchen, washer/drier, back deck. See [VRBO.com](http://VRBO.com) listing #430048 for more details and photos.



*Kathy Martone Ed.D., Jungian Psychologist, Author, Artist , 1271 Lafayette St., Denver, CO 80218*

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

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

*and 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. The movie, West of Memphis is now showing.*

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

***And anna's books –***

*Just As the Breeze Blows Through Moonlight, and Dharma Friends and the Healthy Living pamphlet are available 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 our website - [www.CompassionWorksForAll.com](http://www.CompassionWorksForAll.com)***

***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.***

**WATTLE HOLLOW RETREAT**

**The fall Wattle Hollow retreat in NW Arkansas is coming up in late September with Anna and Joy Fox leading in another session of The Next Step on Your Spiritual Journey. Sept 27-29, 2013 – Friday 6 p.m. til 3 p.m Sunday**

*Note from Joy: If you wish to sign up for the Anna Cox weekend after I've gone into silent retreat (between August 1 and September 14), friends, you'll need to email me your registration form online. Someone else will notify you of your acceptance. Also, please send in your deposits, and someone will check for those, as well. As usual, send to: Wattle Hollow, c/o Joy Fox, 344 Combs Ave., Fayetteville, AR 72701, and make checks payable to "Joy Fox"*

**NOTE: This retreat is more than half-full already... We must hear from you before June 29th (i.e. have received your deposits and registrations) for you to receive confirmation of your attendance at this workshop. Otherwise, you won't know until the middle of September if you've been accepted. If the retreat is already full, your name will go on a waiting list in the order that you sent your registration in. Cost: \$125, includes meals and lodging. You may**

also offer dana (Pali word for “donation”) to Anna for the teachings. [Retreat Registration Form](#) – email

joyfoxwath@aol.com

**Compassion Works for All** (formerly Dharma Friends Prison Outreach Project) is a non-profit interfaith organization that supports personal and spiritual healing for those who have experienced trauma and isolation, including outreach to those in prison. For more information, visit [www.CompassionWorksforAll.org](http://www.CompassionWorksforAll.org).

**We teach compassion to change the world.**



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*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 free but donations are always most welcome. If you would prefer a hard copy, the subscription fee is \$30, but unfortunately it is not tax deductible because you receive a paper publication for your donation.*



*The whole of humanity is one human family. This planet is our only home. - His Holiness the Dalai Lama*