



Compassion Works For All

Dharma Friends

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

December 2015/January 2016 issue #210

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The Dhammapada

The teachings of the Buddha



Verse XXIV. Craving

1. The cravings of a person who lives negligently spreads like a creeping vine. Such a person leaps ever onward, like a monkey seeking fruit in the forest.
2. Sorrow grows like grass after rain for anyone overcome by this miserable craving and clinging to this world.
3. Sorrow falls away like drops of water from a lotus for anyone who overcomes this miserable craving and clinging to the world.
4. This I say to you: Good fortune to all assembled here! Dig out the root of craving as you would the fragrant root of birana grass. Don't let Mara destroy you again and again, as a torrential river breaks a reed.
5. Just as a felled tree grows again if the roots are unharmed and strong, so suffering sprouts again and again until the tendency to crave is rooted out.
6. With the thirty-six streams of craving flowing mightily toward anything pleasing, the person of wrong views is carried away on the currents of lustful intent.
7. The streams flow everywhere; the creep of craving sprouts and remains. Seeing that the creeper has sprouted, use insight to cut it at the root.
8. When desire flows, pleasure arises. Attached to happiness, seeking enjoyment, people are subject to birth and old age.
9. Surrounded by craving, people run around like frightened hares. Held by fetters and bonds, they suffer, repeatedly, over a long time.
10. Surrounded by craving, people run around like frightened hares. Seeking dispassion, a monastic should dispel craving.
11. Although clear of the underbrush and out of the forest, someone attached to the forest runs right back to it. Come, see that free person run back into bondage.
12. It's not a strong bond, say the wise, that is made of iron, wood, or grass. A strong bond, say the wise, is infatuation with jewels and ornaments and longing for children and spouse – that bond is weighty, elastic, and hard to loosen.

13. Having cut even this, they go forth, free from longing, abandoning sensual pleasures. Those attached to passion are caught in a river of their own making like a spider caught in its own web. But having cut even this, the wise set forth, free from longing, abandoning all suffering.
14. Let go of the past, let go of the future, let go of the present. Gone beyond becoming, with the mind released in every way, you do not again undergo birth and old age.
15. For people who have agitated thoughts and intense passion, and who are focused on what's pleasant, craving grows more and more. Indeed, they strengthen their bonds.
16. But those who delight in calming their thoughts, are always mindful, and cultivate a focus on what's unpleasant, will bring an end to craving. They will cut Mara's bonds.
17. Fearless, free of craving, and without blemish, having reached the goal and destroyed the arrows of becoming, one is in one's final body.
18. Free of craving and grasping, skilled in words and their usage, knowing the order of the teachings – what precedes and what follows – one is said to be “a great person of much wisdom in one's final body.”
19. “I am all-conquering, all knowing, stained by nothing. Letting go of everything, released through the destruction of craving and having known directly on my own, whom could I point to as my teacher?”
20. The gift of Dharma surpasses all gifts. The taste of Dharma surpasses all tastes. The delight in Dharma surpasses all delights. The destruction of craving conquers all suffering.
21. Wealth destroys those who lack in wisdom, but not those who seek the beyond. Craving wealth, those lacking wisdom destroy themselves as well as others.
22. Weeds are the ruin of fields; passion is the ruin of people. So offerings to those free of passion bear great fruit.
23. Weeds are the ruin of fields; ill will is the ruin of people. So offerings to those free of ill will bear great fruit.
24. Weeds are the ruin of fields; delusion is the ruin of people. So offerings to those free of delusion bear great fruit.
25. Weeds are the ruin of fields; longing is the ruin of people. So offerings to those free of longing bear great fruit.



Some thoughts about this Dhammapada verse: Cravings

At first, cravings are an infants' inner push to fulfill those needs that insure survival. Those attractions and even desperate longings urged us all to seek what we needed to stay alive. For all children, when we have a healthy body and brain, age appropriate needs arise for our growth. If we receive loving support, our needs are met and we grow as we are meant to. The fulfillment of early needs helped us to evolve to our next developmental stage. At each stage, we let go of some outgrown cravings and new ones arose that fulfilled our new needs. Some babies craved sucking their thumb or a favorite 'blankie' to soothe them. It is unlikely that you still have your blankie or still suck your thumb. But during the time that a child needed them, fulfilling these needs helped when baby was stressed out. When older, they did not need the same objects but still they had needs to be soothed by things appropriate to new stages of growth. Through the years, we all progressed in our attachments to things and people that helped us to feel good and to avoid feeling bad. This is the healthy side of craving. Unless we are stuck holding onto a craving that prevents us from evolving to our next stage of growth, all is well.

If one does not naturally grow beyond their developmental needs, often because of trauma or illness, a child may continue try to fill an earlier but unresolved need so that they can complete that growth step, even if it is no longer age-appropriate. Sometimes a need that is not fulfilled begins to become an obstacle. Without a loving parent who understands that a child is struggling to attain relief from distress and who can help them complete an incomplete life transition, the child might feel that their craving is embarrassing. They might try to disguise it. They may feel shame. That adds another layer of stress. Then, all additional obstacles make it even harder for one to complete their earlier growth steps. Little by little, layers of pain and stress add up. It is very hard for children without parental support find healing resolutions for early trauma and stress. If we do not progress through age appropriate cravings that naturally resolve when fulfilled, we often develop secret cravings, 'transferred' cravings, that are more destructive. We might also recognize that these cravings are

'addictions' that can be harmful to various degrees. All addictions cause us some harm. This harm comes because, in our distress, we become desperately needy for fulfillment. Tragically, many have addictions that are their most compelling need to fulfill in life. Relationships are destroyed because one's addictions are more important than the people they love. Professional success is destroyed because one's addictions are more important. Health is destroyed because one's addictions are more important. A craving may keep us from our emotional, physical, psychological, relationship and spiritual growth. This is the pitfall of cravings that our verse talks about.

Let us consider again what our verse tells us. All addictions, all compulsions, all cravings cause us harm because we lose our choice to follow our deeper wisdom voice that guides us on our true path of becoming. When our craving is more compelling, we do not hear our desire for our wholeness and spiritual awakening. Here is a line from our verse, *Craving*.
11. "Although clear of the underbrush and out of the forest, someone attached to the forest runs right back to it. Come, see that free person run back into bondage."

Is this you? It is hard to grow beyond cravings. Most with strong cravings fail many times before we accomplish the willpower and motivation to gain insight into our craving and we are able to escape its grasp. I bet all of us have had the hope that we will never again succumb to an addiction. We are so hopeful and we feel confident that we are beyond that craving! But then, we do. When the conscious mind is barely aware, one might find that they are smoking that cigarette, eating that chocolate brownie, downing that alcoholic drink, initiating an affair, yelling at a loved one, or any of those addictive things that we might have committed to never doing again. We blindly run back into *bondage*. Even though we all may have to begin again, over and over, never give up.

What can we do to grow beyond craving and find our freedom?

1. Think about your history. What is your pattern with cravings? What did your early life teach you about normal and age appropriate cravings? Could you feel support and love as you grew through normal, age-appropriate cravings? Were you able to grow gently beyond your cravings as you integrated confidence in life tasks into your maturing self? OR, were those normal cravings that contribute to security, self-soothing and a sense of who you are blocked by something in your life? Did unfinished emotional tasks make it hard to assimilate your strengths into your healthy self? Did that struggling little child within you find an addictive fulfillment to soothing because of your life trauma or challenges?
2. As you gain understanding about the big picture of your path to wholeness, you can see that your cravings and even your addictions were life-saving efforts to not lose yourself. Identify now what was not finished back then. Identify what you substituted for your soothing. Now, you can approach the task of growing beyond your craving with compassion.
3. With this compassionate attitude and desire to bring yourself to wholeness, you can meditate on integrating your blocked or traumatized self into your highest self-realization. The longed for benefits of relief, happiness, or other sources of soothing can be visualized and absorbed into your heart and body as you meditate. You can work consciously with the subtle energies of all that you are.
4. Have a kind and compassionate plan to stay conscious, mindful, aware, and nurtured. When cravings arise, you will feel them. Validate their necessity in your life. Rest in the deep heart of this craving as a healing process until you are soothed in this subtle meditation.

Dharma means the path of each person's unique path to spiritual realization.



You each know in your deepest self what is emerging in your life if you listen. You know the path that will bring you to wholeness and to be all that you are meant to be. A deep wisdom has been pushing from within you since birth. No one is perfect in our inner resources but, if we are healthy, if our needs are met, if we are loved, and if we are free from trauma, that inner wisdom push to follow our path is heard and can be followed as a reliable guide. When we are unable to experience anything but the compelling call of a craving or an addiction, we will not hear that whispering voice of our inner guide. Our inner guide wants us to grow all aspects of our sacred and joyful self so that we will become all we are meant to be. We can let go of the cravings to be free to listen to our true heart.



A MEDITATION – on “*Craving*”

Let’s sit back and watch the show.

Begin your meditation as you normally do. Sit or lie down comfortably. Take some time to notice where you might be carrying stress in your body and relax. Relax as deeply as you can. Then, gently notice your breath. Breathe in and out without effort. Your mind might wander but don’t get uptight about that. It is just what minds do. When thoughts come, just notice and then return your focus to your breath. Within a few minutes, your awareness will stabilize somewhat and you will gently soften your body, your mind, and your awareness of yourself. Rest here for a while without effort.

Now, let’s scan awareness for cravings. It won’t take long. No matter what craving hops into your sphere of awareness, do not feed it or chase after it. Just notice it. If you do not attach to it or build a drama out of it, it will dissolve away. Don’t be surprised if it pops back up or is quickly replaced by another. This is just what we do out of our awareness all day long, every day. Ordinarily, it does not seem like we have this flood of cravings because most are floating in the background.

Here are some cravings that might arise: you might feel discomfort so you crave comfort; you might feel bored so you crave stimulation; you might feel rumbling in your tummy and crave food; you might have an image of a sexualized person so you crave sex; you might hear a voice so you crave interacting with that other; you might relax and you crave sleep. And on and on and on... whether a craving for something good and comforting, or a craving to prevent pain and discomfort, we are always on the alert for what we want and do not want. You will likely have a lot to notice during 5 or 10 minutes of watching cravings. They stir, arise, tug at you for fulfillment...and then, if you do this meditation well, you will receive the most liberating gift possible. You will find that a craving will disappear when it is merely noticed and not fed with energy or struggle. This is the key to ending the hold that cravings have on you.

But we must be diligent and learn to hold what arises with equanimity and peace. This way, we are able to break the link between the stirring of impulses to act towards attaining that stimuli or the need to repel an unwanted circumstance. We all long to manage our world. The cure is to be silent, still, and non-reactive. We just watch and do not act.

You learn the capacity to then know that it is not what happens to us in life, but it is the ability to let it be. We learn to not energize it with attachment or aversion. Meditate on this practice every day along with your daily meditations. Then, take it into your life. Learn to live this capacity to watch your cravings arise. Just let them be without the need to act on them in any way.

Board Quote for December 2015 and January 2016:

“Allow me to explain the good news my religion proclaims,” said the preacher.

The master was all attention.

“God is love. And God loves and rewards us forever if we observe God’s commandments.”

“If?” said the master. “Then the news isn’t all that good, is it?” – Anthony de Mello

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

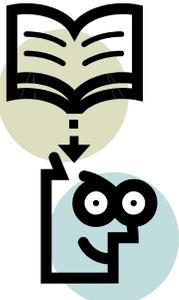


From Your Letters

If you write to us – here are a few thoughts:

1. **A request for you! A FAMILY GUIDE TO PRISON.** We are compiling a pamphlet and a web site offering for those newly incarcerated and for their families. We want your experiential wisdom of how to best survive in prison. What are the things you know now after a few years or long decades that helped you survive? How did you turn a terrible time into one of benefit? We will include everything from “study the prison handout” to “always keep your mouth shut and agree when security approaches you”. Please write and tell us your hints. Make them succinct statements rather than stories so we can more easily copy them onto our list. We do love your stories too, and those we will share in the “*Letters*” column.
2. Our friend, Steven, saw our request for art. He thought it would be very beneficial to all to dedicate your art to your victims. Your **ART is greatly appreciated.** If you would like to send art to *Compassion Works for All* for calendars, art exhibits, or cards, we would love it. Know that you are giving us permission to use your art, and we cannot return it. There is great benefit for us, and you are contributing to letting the world know the talent and sensitive beings who live behind bars. We want to help make you visible to society! Please write your name and address on the back of your art piece.
3. **Please let us know your address changes as that costs us big \$\$\$ to send newsletters to those long gone.** Include both your old and new address.
4. **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 to the proper person.
5. **ASK TIM** - Tim answers 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: Tim is not qualified to counsel about personal and/or relationship problems. Money or 'things' will never be given to any writer. We will not provide addresses of individuals in the free world to anyone. We cannot provide information obtained from Facebook or other social media websites.
6. Would you like to be our **Quote Master** for your unit? We offer a quote in each *Dharma Friends* to post on your bulletin board in your barracks. Who knows who might be inspired and their life is changed. Above you will see the quote for this issue.

Book of Knowledge - Omar's dream - our friend Omar dreamed of those in prisons being able to educate themselves as much possible so that each of you can become all that you were destined to be..



Starter Pack --- The Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archives offers free books for those in prisons. If you have never received these books from them, you may write and tell them you are in prison. You might wish to get on their mailing list, especially if you have the capacity to receive e-books, that they offer for 99 cents.

Write to Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive – Books for prisoners. PO Box 636, Lincoln, MA 01773

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- *Freedom Through Understanding* by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche
- *Becoming Your Own Therapist* by Lama Yeshe

From James M.: Dear **Dharma Friends**, Upon reading the discourse about Hell, I was inspired to write the following: We in America are spoiled – we have no conception what true “Hell on Earth” may be. “Hell on Earth” for me would be waking up each morning with the knowledge that today could be the day that my life may be taken away from me, just because I am Christian, Buddhist or Muslim. This is what those believers in many parts of the world live with. “Hell on Earth” is having to watch while members of my family are gang raped and beaten by others, often by the very policemen and soldiers that are supposed to protect me and my family. Our conception of “Hell on Earth” in America does not generally have to do with these extremes. We think that living in relative poverty is Hell, or growing up in an abusive family is Hell, whereas in some countries, daughters are mutilated and killed as a matter of course. Now that is Hell! The worst circumstances under which we live here in America would be considered a veritable Eden in many countries today. We need to always be thankful for the little bit we have, even here in prison. Yours in Peace and Wisdom - Namaste

Subscription information for Dharma Friends newsletter: We have gladly been offering this newsletter free of charge to those in prisons. We are happy to share this vehicle for those who have little 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 life 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 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 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.

“You Are Special” from Ronnie Haynes

Being valued as Special, everybody deserves it. When people are treated as if they matter, or not, their lives are changed. Whether we realized it or not... Everybody is special. The homeless person in the park, the elderly in a nursing home, our kids in school, their teachers, the principals. They all are special! Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhist, Pagans, all the people of this world that represent different religions are important. The store clerk, the taxi driver, the bus driver, waiters, police officers, prisoners, guards, immigrants, doctors, patients, and nurses; the poor, the wealthy, the middle class; big nations, small villages, people without a homeland should all be treated with respect.

Fundamentally, we are all born with the right to be valued and respected. We should all value ourselves and others just because we are alive. We all have the right to be here and we belong here. We should all honor everybody here and what they have to offer. We should be able to live in a culture which is safe for everybody to contribute their own gifts and talents. Every day, we witness stories of people who are treated without value and respect. We see it in personal relationships, families, businesses, school systems, healthcare facilities, religious organizations, and governmental bodies. We have all witnessed people who are perceived to be weaker among us, being treated badly. We see it when a supervisor harasses an employee, A child bullies a classmate, a sports team hazes its new members, a grownup that verbally abuses a child, or a prison guard who harass an inmate. A company that steals money from those who invest it.

Sometimes when the fundamental birthright of being trusted with value and respect are denied...we witness stories of some person going postal in the work place, a teenager who goes on a violent rampage because of being bullied at school, a seemingly small incident that escalates into an international crises. Of course, acts of violence are never justified but when we ignore it...it hurts our world as a whole. It leads to bigger widespread social problems like – high rates of school dropout, prison incarceration, violent crimes, depression, suicide, divorce, and despair. These are the consequences when we don't value ourselves and others.

If we look up under the surface, there is a bright side to these negative stories. We can see what happens when we get involved. We see dictatorships in some countries, transform into democracies. We see the birth of school sponsored anti-bullying programs. We see equal rights protections for people of different genders, skin colors, and physical abilities. Powerful movements are born. Movements that fight for people with AIDS; movements that fight for people with cancer; movements that fight for veteran rights, prisoner rights, civil rights, and even animal rights.

We all matter! We all are important! We all deserve to be valued and respected. Everybody here on earth is special.

Yes, I agree.....we live in a world of massive challenges – poverty, famine, crime, disease, climate changes, war, and so many other things that need to be changed. But I challenge you all to look within yourself, redesign how you view yourself. See yourself as special, valued, and important. Next, I challenge you to see the people around you as special, valued, and important. We all matter! Yes, You matter!

As you look within yourself, ask yourself – What movement might be born out of you? What change can you help bring about? No matter how small it may seem in the grand scale of things, it's still important.

Our ideas are powerful! Our imaginations are literally the workshop where all things are fashioned. Think about it for a second. It was in the imagination that Thomas Edison first saw the lightbulb. It was in the imagination of the Wright Brothers, that the first airplane was seen. It was in the imagination of Albert Bell, the first telephone was created.

There are no limitations to what you can achieve. Beethoven, Mozart, and Franz, all had defects in their hearing and still created beautiful music. Helen Keller was deaf and blind but still learned how to read and talk to others.

Have you ever heard of Craigslist? He started it off as an E-mail list publicizing tech-themed events and job opportunities in San Francisco. Soon Craigslist was everywhere – Over 40 million posts; sites in 570 cities, and 50 countries.

Facebook, was created by two Harvard room-mates. Silicon Valley successes like – Yahoo, E-Bay, Google, Pay Pal, Twitter, YouTube, Slide, Snap-Shot, and Yelp... Yes, all created in someone's imagination. Ideas are powerful!

Stephanie Meyer woke up one morning from a dream of a woman and a vampire talking in the meadows. From that dream, the book, "Twilight", was born. She had no experience in writing, but it didn't stop her from writing a book that sold more than 45 million books in the U.S., and 40 more million worldwide. The movie made over 350 million dollars alone.

Versace created his own clothing line. The first year sales were 15 million. Within 10 years, it reached 353 million dollars. The guy who created "Hell's Kitchen" started out as a simple chef. Today, he makes 38 million dollars a year. The woman who wrote "Harry Potter", J.K. Rawlings, had no experience in writing. Her idea came to her while traveling on a train. She was broke, no job, on welfare, living in a one bedroom apartment with a baby. Today, her books have sold more than 400 million copies, spawned a hit movie franchise and a theme park. Recently, Forbes magazine has ranked her as one of the richest women in Britain, with an estimated wealth of 1 billion dollars.

What dreams have you woke up with? What ideas have come to you while going through your normal day? What causes would you like to help change, if you could?

Within you, exists the ability to accomplish anything you set your mind to do. Though the impossible may seem impossible now...with time, the impossible can be possible. Our minds are like vast magnets that are able to attract anything we desire. It is positively amazing, absolutely astonishing, and incredibly miraculous What you can Accomplish. For we all are special! May you always remember that.

There are only two ways to live your life.

One is as though nothing is a miracle.

The other is as though everything is a miracle.– Albert Einstein

From T.M.: Shalome and how've y'all been? I really like your idea of a coping kit for incarceration. I wish someone would have had the forethought to provide me with such a compilation. For the first few years I kept my time too full to think. No growth at all. I'm curious to see what others have to say. Although I have high hopes for paroling in a few months, I'm a believer that aspects of everything can be applied everywhere. Uncle Sam teaches to inhale deeply and slowly, hold for a moment then release fully and slowly to calm oneself before going through a door, around a corner, etc. into a possible firefight. Here, I engage the same technique to calm myself and prevent initiating a fist fight. Same technique preps me for violence and quashes violence. My ability to spend days in a cell with plain evil during a lockdown will allow me to work productively next to anyone for the duration of a shift.

... I have written an original Jeff's kids letters very nearly every month...for about 3.5 years, and have a whole lot to say outside of the narrow confines of that program. Habitually trying to help some youth get their lives together could eventually help some people across the spectrum. I speak harshly sometimes and venomously at others but it has been noted that even when I'm blowing steam in an outrageous rant with the intent to make someone angry or hurt someone's feelings (those don't happen often) it is for the benefit of that person and society, even when I'm being selfish. Chris (his friend) nearly vetoed my August letter (I was super pissed), but, given the overall message, he could see where my desire to throw someone's wake-up cup into their face might possibly be called for. Get good, mad and challenging (productively).

Ya'll keep up the good work. Shalom/Namaste, T.M.

Letter that you can send to your loved ones if you wish.



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 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,

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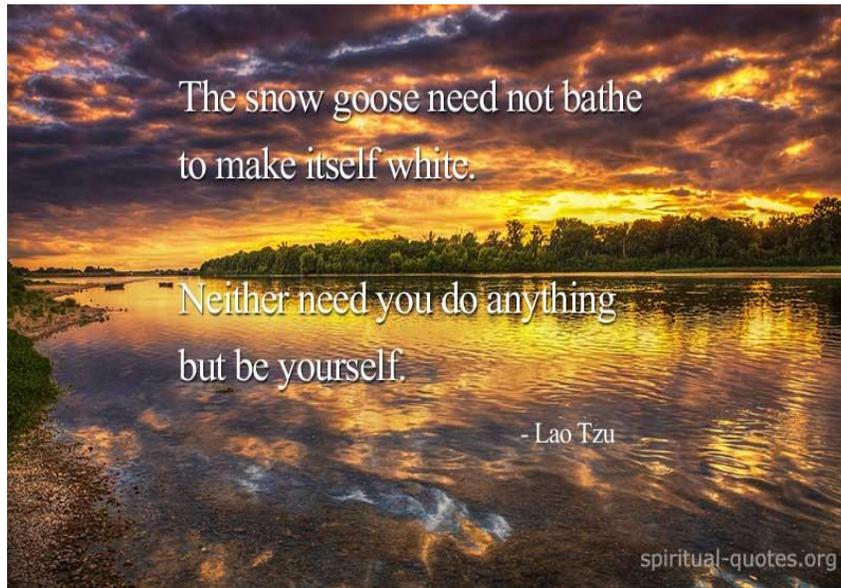
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