How to overcome loneliness during a shutdown

Navigating rough waters

Thinking positively to manage any difficulty, even COVID-19!

Thanissaro Bhikkhu: Freedom from Fear
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An unexpected global pandemic has disrupted the world, causing millions of people to reel from psychological distress, anxiety and fear in its aftermath, severely upsetting the normal rhythm of our lives and work, as well as our mental states.

Meditation is an important practice in Buddhism. According to a great Zen master, it is the backbone of Buddhism. It is also an effective way to regulate or settle our physical and emotional states. It not only complements the diligent practice of Buddhists to uncover the true nature of their mind, but is also suitable for others to release their emotions and cultivate inner equilibrium.

Simply put, meditation has many benefits for everyone.

For example, meditation is helpful for stress reduction. Sitting quietly in meditation, one relieves completely, focusing one’s attention on the breath or feelings, while being aware of one’s thoughts as they appear and disappear. Gradually, this process soothes one’s agitated mind so that it settles down into a deep peace, thereby enabling one to rapidly eliminate fatigue and relieve stress.

Meditation can also improve one’s psychological well-being. During meditation, the mind is highly focused, which makes it difficult for delusions or worries to take root. As a result, one’s mind becomes peaceful and calm, and this in turn transforms one’s entire mood, energy and appearance.

Meditation can help to develop one’s wisdom and to relieve anxiety, too. The meditator, by constantly and vigilantly watching over body sensations and mental activities, is able to sustain mindfulness, increase mental stability, and pacify both mind and body, eventually gaining insight and wisdom. With this, one is able to observe the phenomenal world with greater detachment and objectivity, giving up attachment to or confusion over various desires, thereby subduing one’s mind and cutting off the root cause of all vexations.

Moreover, in recent years, Western medicine, psychology and neuroscience have accumulated rich research data to demonstrate that meditation can effectively enhance physical and mental health, which includes alleviating physical symptoms, reducing negative emotions, cultivating a positive mindset, increasing emotional regulation, improving attention span and cognitive functions, as well as strengthening interpersonal skills.

Meditation is a training that involves exploring one’s inner world, discovering oneself, grasping the nature of life and developing wisdom. Through persistent, long-term practice, after we have accumulated enough training hours quantitatively, our lives will undergo transformation qualitatively, with promising effects and benefits that are beyond words or thoughts.

For this reason, Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery has built a Meditation Hall, to provide a comfortable and conducive environment for meditation, so that all who are interested to learn or practise meditation can do so wholeheartedly without distraction. This is a space they can dwell with mindfulness in the present moment and meditate in peace.

The Meditation Hall is now in operation and the Monastery will be running regular meditation courses there. In the future, the Meditation Hall will also fulfil a larger goal of actively promoting exchanges between meditators, so that the experience and wisdom gained from meditation can be directly applied to enhance daily living.

Meditation enables one to enjoy mental and physical relief. It allows us to cast away our worries and cares, and experience bliss, tranquility and respite instead. Let us nurture mindfulness to face reality. Let us allow the soothing experience of meditation to fill our lives with Dhammic joy and serenity.

Sik Kwang Sheng (Venerable) Abbot, Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery

The benefits of meditation

Freeing ourselves From FEAR

The COVID-19 outbreak has caused increased fear and worries. As a result, the pandemic has also intensified dysfunctional anxiety. The greater the uncertainty, the more fearful humans become. With increased fear comes higher levels of anxiety, which in turn skew one’s perception of things and affects one’s behaviours. Consequently, this can spark or amplify more serious mental health problems, triggering long-term anxiety and depression.

So how can we be free from the clutches of fear? We have to overcome the basic cause of fear: delusion (page 5). It is the delusion pervading our fear that makes us lose perspective. Only when we develop mental strengths can we see through delusions that give fear its power.

Trusting our ability to navigate hard times with courage and compassion, and understanding that difficulties do not define or limit us but are merely stepping stones in our lives to learn about great love and awakening is another way (page 9). No matter what one is facing — joy or blessings and being in awe of the wonders of life are there for our picking, if only one is open to them (pages 16 & 33).

No matter what situation we find ourselves in, we can always set our compass to our highest intentions in the present moment (page 22), and learn to be pliable and flexible when dealing with obstacles (pages 17 & 21).

Quantum physicists have proven that we create our own version of reality with our thoughts. Our opportunity to be peaceful and happy lies in the present moment, right here and right now, not in the past or the future.

However, to achieve these insights, we have to start by consuming the healing medicine of the Dharma (page 14). It is through the practice of meditation — by mindfully cultivating wholesome mind states in each and every moment — that we develop such wisdom (pages 13, 18, 20 & 34).

Every experience we have in life is self-created and constructed (pages 24 & 25). Realising this through wisdom, we can be “untouched” by ageing and death.

Happy reading.

Yours in the Dharma, Esther Thien

FEAR

no.50 | may-aug 2021

The Healing medicine of the Dharma

The wonders of life are there for our picking.
Light Offering, prayers and other ceremonies for a blessed New Year

Buddhists can kickstart the year of the Ox on an auspicious note filled with blessings for their families. The 88 Great Buddha names were recited at the Lunar New Year Wish-fulfilling Lantern Ceremony. Offerings to the Buddha and celestial beings, and pujas eliminating obstacles, bringing blessings and good fortune were also conducted for devotees and Buddhists.

An online pledge of the Maitreya Buddha’s Name Chant was also organised from end December 2020 to 12 February 2021 to cultivate mindful remembrance of the Buddha’s qualities and accumulate blessings and merits.

Devotees, Buddhists and members of the public can now also register online for the light offerings of the Great Compassion Repentance ceremonies.

Registration for light offering is open two weeks before the 27th of each lunar month. For more information on the monastery’s classes and events, please turn to pages 35 & 36.

A new online Chinese programme on the Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment

Singapore – A new Chinese programme will be conducted online via Zoom from 7 May till 3 September 2021, every Friday from 2.30pm to 4.30pm. The Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment will be taught in this course by Venerable Ren Xu.

This sutra is divided into twelve chapters as a series of discussions on meditation practice, dealing with issues such as the meaning and origin of ignorance, sudden and gradual enlightenment, original Buddhahood etc.

The Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment is one of the important classics of Mahayana Buddhism. Its insight can completely resolve the suffering and problems of life.

The Sixth Patriarch Huineng said: “If you don’t recognise your true nature, it is useless to study and learn the Dharma.” Our true nature is perfect enlightenment. It is innate in everyone so there is no need to seek it from the outside. With a pristine thought and intention, the pure land manifests, and you arrive in that present moment to a realm of purity and brilliance. This sutra is taught upon the request of the 12 Great Bodhisattvas. It is an important teaching on attaining the ground of pure awakening.

To find out more about this programme, please email ded@kmspks.org or call 6849 5345.

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An anthropologist once questioned an Alaskan shaman about his tribe’s belief system. After putting up with the anthropologist’s questions for a while, the shaman finally told him: “Look. We don’t believe. We fear.”

His words have intrigued me ever since I first heard them. I’ve also been intrigued by the responses I get when I share his words with my friends. Some say that the shaman unconsciously put his finger on the line separating primitive religion from civilised religion. Primitive religion is founded on childish fear; civilised religion, on love, trust and joy. Others maintain that the shaman cut through the pretensions and denials of civilised religion and pointed to the true source of all serious religious life.

If we dig down to the assumptions underlying these two responses, we find that the first response views fear itself as our greatest weakness. If we can simply overcome fear, we put ourselves in a position of strength. The second sees fear as the most honest response to our greater weakness in the face of ageing, illness and death—a weakness that can’t be overcome with a simple shift in attitude. If we’re not in touch with our honest fears, we won’t feel motivated to do what’s needed to protect ourselves from genuine dangers.

So, which attitude towards fear is childish, and which is mature? Is there an element of truth in both? If so, how can those elements best be combined? These questions are best answered by rephrasing them: To what extent is fear a useful emotion? To what extent is it not? Does it have a role in the practice that puts an end to fear?

The Buddhist answer to these questions is complex. This is due partly to Buddhism’s dual roots—both as a civilised and as a wilderness tradition—and also to the complexity of fear itself, even in its most primal forms. Think of a deer at night suddenly caught in a hunter’s headlights. It’s confused. Angry. It senses danger and aversion, a sense of danger, a sense of weakness, and a desire to escape—all of which are present, to a greater or lesser extent, in every fear. The confusion and aversion are the unskilful elements. Even if the deer has many openings to escape from the hunter, its confusion and aversion might cause it to miss them. The same holds true for human beings. The mistakes and evils we commit when finding ourselves weak in the face of danger come from confusion and aversion.
Maddeningly, however, there are also evils that we commit out of complacency, when oblivious to actual dangers: the callous things we do when we feel we can get away with it. Thus the last three elements of fear—the perception of weakness, the perception of danger, and the desire to escape it—are needed to avoid the evils common from complacency. If stripped of confusion and aversion, these three elements become a positive quality—heedfulness—so essential to the practice that the Buddha devoted his last words to it. The dangers of life are real. Our weaknesses are real. If we don’t see them clearly, don’t take them to heart, and don’t try to find a way out, there’s no way we can put an end to what causes our fears. Just like the deer: if it’s complacent about the hunter’s headlight, it’s going to end up strapped to the fender for sure.

Basic cause of fear: delusion

So to genuinely free the mind from fear, we can’t simply deny that there’s any reason for fear. We have to overcome the basic cause of fear: the mind’s prime weakness and its dangerous role in making fear unskilful. Despite the three factors that make fear unskilful—heedfulness, compassion, mindfulness, concentration, and discernment. It also emphasises the role that heedfulness plays in developing each, for that is what enables each strength to counteract a particular delusion that makes the mind weak and unskilful in the face of its fears. What this means is that none of these strengths are mere brute forces. Each contains an element of wisdom and discernment, which gets more penetrating as you progress along the list.

On conviction

Of the five strengths, conviction requires the longest explanation, both because it’s one of the most misunderstood and under-appreciated factors in the Buddhist path, and because of the multiple delusions it has to counteract.

The conviction here is conviction in the principle of karma: that the pleasure and pain we experience depends on the quality of the intentions on which we act. This conviction counters the delusion that “It’s not in my best interest to stick to moral principles in the face of danger,” and it attacks this delusion in three ways.

First, it insists on what might be called the “boomboom” or “splitting the wind” principle of karmic cause and effect. If you act on harmful intentions, regardless of the situation, the harm will come back to you. Even if unskilful actions such as killing, stealing, or lying might bring short-term advantages, these are more than offset by the karmic harm to which they leave you exposed.

Second, this same principle can make you brave in doing good. If you’re convinced that the results of skilful intentions will have to return to you even if death intervenes, you can more easily make the sacrifices demanded by long-term endeavours for your own good and that of others. Whether or not you live to see the results in this lifetime, you’re convinced that the good you do is never lost. In this way, you develop the courage needed to build a store of skilful actions—generous and virtuous—that forms your first line of defence against dangers and fear.

Next, conviction insists on giving priority to your state of mind above all else, for that’s what shapes your intentions. This counteracts the corollary to the first delusion: “What if sticking to my principles makes it easier for people to do me harm?” This question is based ultimately on the delusion that life is our most precious possession. If that were true, it would be a pretty miserable possession, for it heads inexorably to death, with holdovers in pain, ageing and illness along the way.

Convision views our life as precious only to the extent that it’s used to develop the mind, for the mind—when developed—is something that no one, not even death, can harm. “Quality of life” is measured by the quality and integrity of the intentions on which we act, just as “quality time” is time devoted to the practice.

Or, in the Buddha’s words: Better to have lived without virtue, uncentred, is one day lived by a virtuous person absorbed in jhāna. — Dhp 110

Third, conviction insists that the need for integrity is unconditional. Even though other people may throw away their most valuable possession—their integrity—it’s no excuse for us to throw away ours. The principle of karma isn’t a traffic ordinance in effect only on certain days of the year or on certain days of the week. It’s a law operating around the clock, around the cycles of the cosmos.

Some people have argued that, because the Buddha recognised the principle of conditionality, he would have no problem with the idea that our virtues should depend on conditions as well. This is a misunderstanding of the principle.

To begin with, conditionality doesn’t simply mean that everything is changeable and contingent. It’s like the theory of relativity. Relativity doesn’t mean that all things are relative at all points in space and time—which long were considered constants—with another, unexpected constant: the speed of light. Mass and time may be relative to a particular inertial frame, as the frame relates to the speed of light, but the laws of physics are constant for all inertial frames regarded as equal. The speed of light is always the same.

In the same way, conditionality means that there are certain unchanging patterns to contingency and change—one of those patterns being that unskilful intentions, based on craving and delusion, invariably lead to unpleasant results. If we learn to accept this pattern, rather than our feelings and opinions, as absolute, it requires us to become more ingenious in dealing with danger. Instead of following our unskilful knee-jerk reactions, we learn to think outside the box to find responses that best prevent harm of any kind. This gives our actions added precision and grace.

At the same time, we have to note that the Buddha didn’t teach simplicity to conditionally simply to encourage acceptance for the inevitability of change. He taught it to show how the patterns underlying change can be mastered to create an opening that leads beyond conditionality and change. If we want to reach the unconditioned—the truest security—our integrity has to be unconditional, a gift of temporal security not only to those who treat us well, but to everyone, without exception. As the texts say, when you abstain absolutely from conditionality, you give a great gift—freedom from danger to limitless beings—and you yourself find a share in that limitless freedom as well.
Conceit and integrity of this sort make great demands on us. Until we gain our first taste of the unconditioned, they can easily be shaken. This is why they have to be augmented with other mental strengths. The three middle strengths—perseverance, mindfulness, and concentration—act in concert. Persistence, in the form of right effort, counteracts the delusion that we’re no match for our fears, that once we arise we have to give in to them. Right effort gives us practice in eliminating milder unskilful qualities and developing skilful ones in their place, so that when stronger unskilful qualities arise, we can use our skilful qualities as allies in fending them off. The strength of mindfulness assists this as a barrier, when stronger unskilful qualities come, and where the comings and goings of internal and external dangers are less and less threatening to the mind.

Even then, though, the mind can’t reach ultimate security until it uproots the causes of these unconditioned states. The first four strengths require the strength of discernment to make them fully secure. Discernment is what sees that these comings and goings are ultimately rooted in our sense of “I” and “mine,” and that “I” and “mine” are not built into experience. Even when things make sense to us, they come from the repeated processes of I-making and my-making, in which we impose these notions on experience and identify with things subject to ageing, illness and death. Furthermore, discernment sees through our inner traitors and weaknesses: the cravings that want us to make an “I” and “mine”; the delusions that make us believe in them once they’re made. It realises that this level of discernment is precisely the factor that makes ageing, illness and death dangerous to begin with. If we didn’t identify with things that age, grow ill, and die, their ageing, illness and death wouldn’t threaten the mind. Totally unthreatened, the mind would have no reason to do anything unskilful ever again.

When this level of discernment matures and bears the fruit of release, our greatest insecurity—our inability to trust ourselves—has been eliminated. Freed from the attachments of “I” and “mine,” we find that the component factors of fear—both skilful and unskilful—are gone. There’s no remaining confusion or aversion; the mind is no longer weak in the face of danger; and so there’s nothing from which we need to escape. This is where the questions raised by the shaman’s remarks find their answers. We fear because we believe in “we.” We believe in “we” because of the delusion in our fear. Paradoxically, though, if we love ourselves enough to fear the suffering that comes from unskilful actions and attachments, and learn to believe in the way out, we’ll develop the strengths that allow us to cut through our cravings, delusions and attachments. That way, the entire complex—the “we,” the fear, the beliefs, the attachments—dissolves away. The freedom remaining is the only true security there is.

This teaching may offer cold comfort to anyone who wants the impossible: security for his or her attachments. But in trading away the hope for an impossible security, you gain the reality of a happiness totally independent and condition-free. Once you’ve made this trade, you know that the pay-off is more than worth the price. As one of the Buddha’s students once reported, “Before I was a householder, maintaining the bliss of kingship, I had guards posted within and without the royal apartments, within and without the city, within and without the countryside. But even though I was thus guarded, thus protected, I dwelled in fear—agitated, distraught and afraid. But now, going alone to a forest, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, I dwell without fear, unagitated, confident and unafraid—unconcerned, unruffled, my wants satisfied, with my mind like a wild deer. This is that which I have in mind that I repeatedly exclaim, ‘What bliss! What bliss!’”

His deer is obviously not the deer in the headlights. It’s a deer safe in the wilderness, at its ease wherever you go, at home wherever you are. Sometimes, during periods when your struggles overwhelm you or last for a long time, you can mistake them for your life. You become used to difficulty, you become loyal to your suffering. You don’t know who you would be without it. But your difficulties are not the end of the story, they are one part of it—they are part of your path to great love and understanding, a part of the dance of humanity.

When Siddhartha sat by the river at the end of the story by Herman Hesse that many of us read in high school, he finally learned to listen. He realised that all the many voices in the river comprise the music of life: the good and evil, the pleasures and the sorrows, the grief and the laughter, the yearnings and the love. His spirit was no longer in contention with all of life. He found that along with the struggles was also an unshakable joy. This joy can be yours as well.

Maha Ghosananda taught all those who met—including in Cambodia, where almost every family suffered unimaginable losses during the genocide—that in spite of our difficulties, love can return. He taught how to meet sorrows with compassion and understanding, how to transform them, and, finally, how to transform them. It is important not to let your sorrows become your whole life. “When you go to a garden,” asks Rumi, “do you look at thorns or flowers?” Spend more time with roses and jasmine.”

A Buddhist teacher and colleague, Debra Chamberlin-Taylor, tells the story of a community activist who participated in her year-long training group for non-Caucasians. This woman had experienced a childhood of poverty, trauma and abuse. She had faced the death of a parent, illness, divorce from a painful marriage, racism, and the single parenting of two children. She talked about her years of struggle to educate...
herself, to stand up for what she believed in. She described how she had become a radical to fight for justice in local and national politics. Finally, at the last meeting this woman announced, “After all the struggles and troubles I’ve lived through, I’ve decided to do something really radical! I am going to be happy.”

No matter what you have faced, joy and renewal await your return. When you remember you can open your eyes to the mystery of life around you. Sense the blessings of the earth in the perfect arc of a ripe tangerine, the taste of warm, fresh bread, the circling flight of birds, the lavender colour of the sky shining in a late afternoon rain puddle, the million times we pass by the sidewalk, in the end of every newly planted window box, in every torrential rainstorm and in every unexpected revolution, with the wonderful thing about difficulties is that they, too, are impermanent.

The world offers perennial renewal, in the grass that pushes itself up between the cracks in the sidewalk, in the end of every torrential rainstorm and in every newly planted window box, in every unexpected revolution, with each new morning’s light. This unstoppable spirit of renewal is in you. Trust it. Learn that it flows through you and all of life. The ultimate gift of our suffering is to teach us how to properly grieve, heal and learn compassion. But finally we come to the realisation that in any moment we can step out of the body of fear and feel the great winds that carry us, to awaken to the eternal present. It is within our power to experience the liberation of the heart offered to all by the Buddha in these words:

Live in joy.
In love,
Even among those who hate.
Live in joy.
In health,
Even among the afflicted.
Live in joy.
In peace,
Even among the troubled.
Look within.
Be still.
Free from fear and attachment,
Know the sweet joy of living in the way.
May you be blessed.

I t took a barber’s comment from his roommate, who practised a different faith, to set the Dharma wheels in motion for Mr Benny Liow back in his high school days. Like most youths, he was searching for something more in his life back then, such as the meaning of life. Then a student at St Xavier’s Institution, Penang, Malaysia, and a nominal Buddhist, he found himself stumped when his Christian roommate posed him a few questions about Buddhism. Mr Liow, 64, recalled: “He began to ridicule and condemn Buddhism as mere superstition. That set me thinking about what Buddhism actually was, and it led me to embark on a journey to discover the Dharma, which I truly appreciate till today.”

We cannot escape difficulties in life because dukkha is an inherent characteristic of existence. But like His Holiness the Dalai Lama has said, the wonderful thing about difficulties is that they, too, are impermanent.

Mr Liow said: “I am always thankful to have met him as he provided me the foundation for my study and the practice of the Dharma.”

Shortly after that incident, Mr Liow started learning the Dharma, which then introduced him to the realm of meditation. “I started meditating because it was part of what I learnt when I went to Buddhist temples. I was told to start by studying Buddhist teachings and then continue with the practice of meditation, so that I could realise what the Buddha actually taught,” said Mr Liow.

He began with learning the Mahasi method of meditation, taught by his first teacher, the late Luang Phor Dhammabavanuvud, at the Malaysian Buddhist Meditation Centre (MBMC) in Penang. Mr Liow said: “I am always thankful to have met him as he provided me the foundation for my study and the practice of the Dharma.”

Meditate to Keep Calm
Although he turned the unpleasant incident with his roommate into an edifying, life-changing moment and went on to gain personal and spiritual growth, he concedes that life continues to present challenges, just as before.

He said: “After all, this is samsara. But once you have studied and practised the Dharma, you can always see life in a positive manner.”

“We cannot escape difficulties in life because dukkha is an inherent characteristic of existence. But like His Holiness the Dalai Lama has said, the wonderful thing about difficulties is that they, too, are impermanent. “So we can transform our difficulties into happiness. And we can do that if we understand the Dharma, remain positive, and apply it in our everyday life.”

Visit https://soundcloud.com/jack-kornfield/the-return-of-joy, or scan this to listen to the Dharma talk. Being Transformed through Meditation and Volunteerism

Benny Liow tells Janice Goh how meditation and volunteerism have helped him gain personal and spiritual growth that make for a more edifying life.
Today, juggling multiple roles as a husband and a father, as well as company director and senior vice president overseeing global human resources, he turns to meditation to stay on an even keel amid the curveballs that come his way.

“As a lay practitioner with a family and career, meditation gives me calmness and balance when problems arise at work from dealing with fellow co-workers or my boss and at home in my relationships with my wife and our two children,” said Mr Liow, who practises mainly Vipassana and metta meditation.

He cited an example of how practicing metta has helped him keep his own emotions in check, when he once had to convince him keep his own emotions in check, when he once worked for “a very difficult executive chairman” of a large conglomerate.

He recollected wryly: “I would always radiate metta to him before our board meetings. Metta practice not only allowed me to maintain some calm before my meetings, but I believe it has worked very well on my boss, too, all these years!”

He also practises contemplations on the Dharma, especially on the Four Thoughts that Turn the Mind Towards the Dharma.

Give and Receive Through Volunteering

Besides wishing loving-kindness upon others through meditation, Mr Liow is also a proponent of practising kindness and compassion through volunteering.

Quoting the Vimalakirti Sutra, which says “You should be an uninvited guest”, he said: “If we have special skills that can benefit society, we should readily offer them.”

Having edited various Buddhist publications over the past decades, including Buddhist Miscellany of MBMC and Buddhist Digest English Series of Young Buddhist Association of Malaysia (YBAM), he now mainly edits a tri-annual publication of YBAM, called Eastern Horizon.

He is also a volunteer editor for Dharma books, like the recent 3-volume centenary publication of the late teacher K Sri Dhammananda, published by the Nalanda Buddhist Society. At other times, he shares Buddhist teachings by giving talks or seminars at various Dharma centres in Malaysia.

But it is not all about just giving to others. To him, volunteerism is a two-way street of giving and receiving. By contributing his skill sets and sharing his knowledge, he has gleaned deeper insights into the Dharma.

He said: “I have learnt so much from the different perspectives of the Buddha’s teachings and their application in our everyday life. The different writing styles by the authors also reveal to me the skilful ways with which they are able to communicate the message of the Buddha to people today.”

“And one of the benefits of volunteerism is that the volunteers eventually become more loving and virtuous as they serve others out of free will, kindness, humanity and charity.”

"And one of the benefits of volunteerism is that the volunteers eventually become more loving and virtuous as they serve others out of free will, kindness, humanity and charity."

Your Special Star

Nice, I heard about a special star. A star that everyone has, a star that is with you all the time.

Let’s imagine that star. How does it look? It can be just as you want it to be. It can be any shape, size or colour, made of fur, silk, cotton candy or anything you want it to be.

Imagine a star that brings a smile to your face. It can be shiny, soft or one with polka dots or stripes. Whatever you feel your star should be like, it is your star and yours alone.

The star I heard about changes like everything else. It is large sometimes; small at other times, can be hot or cold, all of these is up to you, it is your star after all. Whatever your star looks or feels like, it is comforting to know that it’s always there.

Let’s sit criss-cross applesauce on the cushion, floor or the bed, with one hand in front and one at the back and zip yourself up nice and straight. Hands on your knees.

Imagine your star in the sky right now, with its warm light on your body. Imagine what your skin feels like when it is bathed in the warm light of your own special star. Feel the warmth on the top of your head, then on your forehead and over your ears, moving on to your cheeks, your nose, your whole face, your chin and your neck, which is all nice and warm from the light of your special star.

Now, that light is getting bigger and going to move. The warmth is moving down your shoulders, to your chest, arms, hands and even your fingers. Now the warmth of the light of your own special star is moving to your middle, into your lower body, warming up your upper legs, your knees, your lower legs, your feet and even your toes.

Wow! It feels so good to be bathed in the light of my own star. It feels so good to just be me. What about you?

Once again, let’s imagine you can see your star and feel its warmth covering the whole of your body, like a cozy blanket. Really imagine and feel what that is like — the warmth from your star like a blanket softly enveloping your skin and relaxing your whole body so you can rest. Wow! I feel so much more rested.

We then close this meditation: sending our inner peace out into the world.

In my mind, I have a picture of all the children and their parents who are doing this meditation with their own special little stars above in the sky, all wearing a smile on their faces, happy, healthy and safe.

All are building their own inner peace, so that each of us can be a peace worker and take our inner peace out into the world.
The Healing Medicine Of The Dharma

Translated from Pali by Andrew Olendzki

Whatever medicines are found
In the world — many and varied —
None are equal to the Dharma.

Drink this, monks!
And having drunk
The medicine of the Dharma,
You’ll be untouched by age and death.

Having meditated and seen—
(You’ll be) healed by ceasing to cling.
— Miln 335

These two verses point to the healing symbolism of the Buddha’s teaching. He is often understood as the great physician who, seeing the suffering of all beings in the world, applies the medical formula of the Four Noble Truths to:

1. describe the symptoms of suffering;
2. investigate its specific causes;
3. using this information, reverse the causes to conceive a cure; and finally
4. lay out a flexible programme of treatment that will lead a person out of affliction to lasting health of body and mind.

Since all of our afflictions ultimately grow from our attachments (upadana), and from the clinging constructions we forge (upadhi), the path to freedom or health (nibbuta — the cessation of suffering) will unfold as we learn to abandon these constructions and as they begin to wane (khaya). The mechanism for this cure is wisdom, which emerges as we begin to meditate (bhavayitva) and hence see more clearly (passitva) the nature of our constructed experience. Being cured does not mean that the process of ageing and dying simply stops, (since whatever is constructed must undergo change). But we can, through wisdom, be “untouched” by ageing and death.

Health consists of a sufficiently deep understanding of the nature of things that we do not cling to anything in the world. Non-attachment itself is the cure.

Notice that the medicine will only work if it is drunk. The heart of the Buddhist message is not so much the theoretical analysis of the human condition, subtle and compelling as it is, but rather the practical effect of actually taking the cure.

The physician can do no more than offer us the medicine — it is up to each of us to drink it ourselves. This is where the practice of meditation and the moment-to-moment cultivation of wholesome mind states is so important.
How to overcome loneliness during a shutdown

Q: Since the pandemic began, many people say they are lonely. There is a difference between being lonely and being alone. We can be alone yet feel very contented and not lonely at all. We can also be with a huge group of people and feel very lonely, because we are with a group we don’t click with.

A: Loneliness is not really about a physical situation, but a mental one. If we change our mind and see things from another perspective, we can release that loneliness. There are many ways we can alleviate loneliness. You can reach out to others; or you can go inwards. Historically in times of huge social crises, more people would visit monasteries and start questioning what life is about. You can also volunteer at a welfare organisation and be involved in different online projects, depending on your abilities.

Or organise a meditation group online. You are not only connecting with others and doing your practice, but also helping those who have difficulty getting to the cushion and doing their practice. It just takes some initiative on our part. When you do something for others, you feel more fulfilled.

Closer to home, tell your family and loved ones how much you appreciate having them in your life and that you love them. This is also a good opportunity to apologise to people you need to apologise to, or forgive people you need to forgive by letting go of your anger. It is a good time to clear things up between you and others in this period where there is a greater, more heightened sense of awareness of the uncertainty of life. There are so many ways you can reach out.

Or read a book when you feel lonely. You are connecting with the author who is sharing something about life with you through the book as you engage with your own imagination as well. Reading is wonderful. You can pause and reflect about what you read. Another antidote to overcome loneliness is to sing and dance! Reading is wonderful. You can pause and reflect about what you read. Another antidote to overcome loneliness is to sing and dance!

Or you can call friends and relatives that you have not been in touch with in a while, especially people you cared about but have not talked to for some time. Contact them and let them know that you care about them.

Or you can call a nursing or old age home, and volunteer to talk to residents there who have no family members and connect with these people. Or bring gifts of foods to your neighbours and befriend them.

You can also volunteer at a welfare organisation and be involved in different online projects, depending on your abilities.

Q: I feel lonelier than ever since the pandemic started, especially during this time of social distancing with reduced social activities and connections. What can I do? – A

A: During this time of social distancing with reduced social activities and connections, there are many ways to reach out or to go within.

When confronted with an obstacle, water flows around it, without fighting it.

There is no need to compete or fight it out. Amituofo!

Humans need to learn from water when we handle problems by detouring around obstacles. There is no need to compete or fight it out. Amituofo!

If one wants to cultivate “endurance”, it is imperative to first learn how to be “pliable” like the fluid nature of water. Only after adapting to one’s environment can one blend in with it.
Siha, what is wrong with this world?! Everything is in chaos! People are suffering! I do not even know how to lead my life now!

Yenny, there is nothing wrong with this world. There will always be ups and downs, and there will always be impermanence. To truly gain inner peace, you can first start to cultivate the highest love.

Yes. Love in four ways, or what we call the Four Immeasurables. The first is LOVING-KINDNESS OR METTA. It is the sincere and genuine sense of goodwill for the welfare and happiness of all living beings. It is a love without exception, without selfish gratification, attachment, discrimination, prejudice, clinging or expectation. It is the unconditional love towards oneself, friends, foes without any preferential love.

I will care for you without any expectation or personal gratification. I love all beings, regardless of their race, religion or status!

For those who have hurt and abused me before, I forgive you. And I sincerely wish you to be well and happy. Loving-kindness is not being possessive. It is about true freedom.

The second is COMPASSION OR KARUNA. One helps others without expecting anything in return. When one witnesses those who are suffering or unfortunate, one will try his or her best to alleviate the pain of others within their means.

All beings suffer. I open my heart to help any being who is in need.

Compassion is not extreme grief or sorrow.

The third is APPRECIATIVE JOY. One feels happy when one sees others experiencing happiness and good fortune. Instead of jealousy and fault finding, we should try to rejoice and appreciate the goodness of others and even ourselves.

Nobody is perfect. Instead of blaming others or myself, I should always be kind to others and myself.

Well-done! I’m happy for you!

No envy

No jealousy

The last is EQUANIMITY OR PEACEFUL JOY. It is a balanced and steady quality of the mind that can receive any experience without being overcome by it, even with emotions such as anger, anxiety, fear, disappointment and sorrow. It is not a mind that is indifferent or cold, but one that is calm, strong and filled with understanding.

With equanimity, suffering does not overwhelm us, and we can face all difficulties and problems in life. In everything we do, our mind must carry LOVING-KINDNESS, COMPASSION, APPRECIATIVE JOY AND EQUANIMITY. By cultivating them, we can gain inner peace and happiness even in this turbulent, uncertain and impermanent world.
Weaving a Dream

Once, there was a boy who had an uncle who was a monk. The boy became his attendant. Every day, they would take their bowls out for alms. The monk, being older and more highly respected, would typically receive more alms. However, one day, the novice received a generous gift of a bolt of fabric measuring ten metres. Elated, he offered it to his teacher. The novice expected his uncle to accept the gift gracefully. However, the monk declined. Feeling offended and hurt, and thinking that his teacher didn’t love him, the novice left.

“I’ll ask my mum to sell the fabric. With the money, I will buy some hens and rear them for their eggs which I will then sell. With more wealth, I will then acquire other farm animals. When I become rich enough, I will find myself a kind-hearted and pretty wife,” he thought.

As planned, he was soon married and they welcomed a son. The baby grew up to be a very bright boy and the father decided that the little boy would become an attendant to his uncle, just like he once was. The couple took the boy to the mountains, where the uncle resided. The young mother, seeing the long journey ahead and concerned for the child, carried him. Her husband offered to carry the child, but she refused. The couple fought over who was to carry the child. In their struggle, the boy fell to his death.

Furious, the man hit his wife.

“Stop, you are striking my head!” cried the monk.

The novice awoke and found himself hitting his teacher with a folded fan.

It had all been a dream!

The novice came to realise the dream-like nature of all phenomena and was contented to remain with his uncle.

Moral of the Story: See the dream-like and transient nature of all phenomena in life. Do not follow your conjured discursive thoughts, and be hurt by them.

Retold by Esther Thien
very morning when the Dalai Lama wakes up, he begins his morning practices with a prayer from Shantideva: “May I be a guard for those who need protection; a guide for those on the path; a boat, a raft, for those to cross the flood; may I be a lamp in the darkness; a resting place for the weary, and a healing medicine for all who are sick. For as long as Earth and sky endure, may I assist until all living beings are awakened.” This is the Dalai Lama’s way of reaffirming the direction of his life and the direction of his heart before he starts his day. With this powerful prayer, the Dalai Lama recites his vow of compassion and love for all beings, even in the face of the great difficulties of the Tibetan people.

You too need a reliable compass to set your direction and steer through the rough waters. When you are going through hard times you need a way to guide yourself. But how can you set your direction when you can’t see any clear harbour? And how can you navigate through difficult waters when you’re swamped by overwhelming emotions? There is a wise spirit in us that knows that we can behave with dignity, courage and magnanimity, no matter what the circumstances.

In the Buddhist tradition, one who dedicates himself or herself to the spirit of courage and compassion is called a bodhisattva. Bodhi means awakened, and sattva means being. A bodhisattva is a being committed to the awakening of the good heart in everyone. A bodhisattva is committed to compassion, committed to making known the shining beauty that is possible for the human spirit, not because they believe that it is somehow a “better” way to live but because they know that it is the only way to be fully alive and awake.

Living our highest intentions can happen in great ways or in what may seem small—yet critical—ways of refusing to be conquered by the difficulties that come in our lives.

We can choose our spirit in spite of everything. Sometimes, all we’ll be able to offer is a smile to the weary or forlorn on the streets. Sometimes it will be to plant a garden where there was none, or plant seeds of patience in a family or of reconciliation in community difficulty. No matter what situation we find ourselves in, we can always set our compass to our highest intentions in the present moment.

When you’re overwhelmed by loss, by the difficulties around you, when you feel you are lost in the darkness, sometimes all you can do is to breathe consciously and gently with your pain and anguish and know that with this simple gesture you are resetting the compass of your heart, no matter your circumstances. By taking that one simple, mindful breath, you will return again to compassion and realise that you are more than your fears and confusions.

Whatever your difficulties, you can always remember that you are free in every moment to set the compass of your heart to your highest intentions. You can offer the best of yourself in any circumstance, including in difficult times.

In fact, the two things that you are always free to do—despite your circumstances—are to be present and to be willing to love. Sometimes you may be able to improve a situation immediately, and sometimes you will have to steadily carry the lamp for yourself and others through a period of darkness. Your intuition and your good heart will guide the way.

Adapted from A Lamp in Darkness

Navigating Rough Waters

Text: Jack Kornfield

Jack Kornfield trained as a Buddhist monk in the monasteries of Thailand, India and Burma under Buddhist masters Venerable Ajahn Chah and Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw. He has taught meditation internationally since 1974 and is one of the key teachers who introduced Buddhist mindfulness practice to the West. Over the years, Jack who holds a PhD in clinical psychology has taught in centres and universities worldwide, led International Buddhist Teacher meetings, and worked with many of the great teachers of our time. His books have been translated into 20 languages and sold more than a million copies.

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C
OVID-19 has taken the world by storm with practically every stakeholder in the global economy experiencing sudden, dramatic effects and changes, including families, businesses from large corporations to small and medium-sized enterprises, governments and civil society. Countless people have lost their jobs and the future seems bleak, leading many people grappling with mental health issues.

Yet, through this pandemic, we can emerge stronger if we think positively and do not allow the negativity that is floating around, to take control of the situation. Perhaps, this pandemic is an opportune time to tap into our inner reservoir of peace—so that many or most of us can make ourselves comfortable in our homes and have little or no disruptions. This is also an opportune time to practise good hygiene habits, eat healthy food and exercise regularly.

Working from home is an excellent opportunity to spend quality time with loved ones, where family meals give us a chance to bond closer.

Within a year, pharmaceutical companies have managed to produce vaccines. Hopefully, with these vaccinations, the situation will get better for humanity. I can say with full confidence that resilience, determination and perseverance are the virtues necessary to bounce back as quickly as possible if we also adopt the 5 A’s: Acknowledge, Adjust, Accommodate and Accept.

Given that I am 70 years old, going on 71, I will not be fearful of taking the vaccination as I want to travel freely once the skies are open again. Even though we have to abide by strict circuit breaker measures to suppress the spread of COVID-19, the use of technology can help people connect with one another in positive ways. The pandemic requires us to keep our physical distance from one another, but at the same time, new technologies allow us to remain digitally connected.

Being kind to others and doing charitable work have given me the chance to attend to those who are struggling in life. I fervently believe that if we are blessed with skills, it makes sense to share those skills with others.

That is why I find it such a joy to coach a student in the Philippines with her high school studies. The modules given to her by her teacher online, are far from easy and without WiFi facilities and computers to do her research due to poverty, it is not easy to achieve good grades. Despite the fact that the coaching and research eats into a few hours of my daily routine, I do so because I have much empathy and compassion for anyone going through hard times. Hence, I also squeeze in time to counsel those who are depressed and feel lonely.

Music produces a kind of pleasure which human nature cannot do without. Thus, there is no better way to spend time during this pandemic than to listen to music, pray and meditate.

In a nutshell, I would encourage those going through a storm in their lives not to see their journey—whether it is the loss of a job or in partnerships that did not work out—as a failure, but rather as an experience that will equip them with an opportunity to grow and come out stronger than ever before.

Have you heard of this fable? Once upon a time, pig said, “If I could be reborn, I want to be a cow because although the cow has to work hard, it has a good reputation and the humans take pity on it.”

Cow said, “If I could be reborn, I want to be a pig because the pig eats and sleeps the whole day and does not have to toil hard or sweat, living a charmed life like a god.”

Eagle said, “If I could be reborn, I want to be a chicken because the chicken has water to drink when thirsty and food to eat when hungry. The chicken also receives shelter and protection from humans.”

Chicken said, “If I could be reborn, I want to be an eagle because the eagle soars high in the skies, coming and going freely across the seas as it hunts for rabbits or chickens.”

This is the irony of our lives, aptly described as the grass is always greener elsewhere.

We often unconsciously envy what others have. We envy others’ jobs, our friends’ new houses, and strangers’ cars, while overlooking the fact that we may be the target of their envy too. Actually, everyone is envious of somebody else. People often wish that they may wake up one day and be magically transformed into a certain type of being. Perhaps it is because we are all painfully aware of regrets in our lives, that we keep comparing ourselves to those we think are living ideal lives, taking them as our life models. In fact, this world is imperfect, even those we envy have their own dissatisfactions.

Every family has its own problems and difficulties, but ego makes us strive to present our best face to the world. Who can really tell what is truly going on behind the splendid façades?

Often, the rewards we get in life are proportionate to the responsibilities we are prepared to bear. Everything, like a coin, has two sides; every positive has its negative. Humans, especially women, tend to compare themselves to others, and only make themselves upset in the end. Why not compare with oneself instead?

Ask yourself: Have you improved? Have you gotten closer to your own life goals? So encourage yourself regularly. This will spur you to do better. Who knows? The people you envy may be envious of you. There are people who deserve our admiration, but it’s not entirely because they have so much more than us. Rather, it’s because they are astute at managing available resources. The reason we envy others is because we aspire perfection, we wish to live better lives. However, we miss the point that everyone’s situation is different, and that it’s not possible to replicate another person’s life. What we can do instead is to learn to overcome our own shortcomings by observing others’ strengths. Instead of being envious of others’ happiness, we pay attention to how they create their happiness. Instead of being envious of others’ good fortune, it is more constructive to learn how they achieved it.

Stop envying how others are doing, but count the opportunities you have instead. You will realise that what you have far exceeds what you lack. As for those missing bits, even though lamentable, they are part of your life experience, learn to accept this fact and adjust your attitude. Your life will be happier and freed from so many cares. There really is no need to be envious of others. Cherish what you have. Consider carefully what we really want, then we can be truly happy.
If you are looking for a unique yet relaxed place to dine at, Ci Yan Organic Vegetarian Restaurant is the perfect place to visit. Situated just across from the Buddha Tooth Relic Temple, Ci Yan Organic Vegetarian Restaurant is a humble eatery with an ethnic vibe. At a glance, you may mistake it for a Buddhist book store or an antique shop.

Their friendly manager introduced me to their daily suggestions, I decided on dessert. Based on his helpful variety of main dish, soup and were five to six dishes with a chalk board. There introduced to me their daily

Vegetarian Yu Sheng and buds. On festive occasions, that will suit your taste just across from the Buddha Tooth Relic Temple, Ci Yan Organic Vegetarian Restaurant is the perfect place to visit. Situated just across from the Buddha Tooth Relic Temple, Ci Yan Organic Vegetarian Restaurant is a humble eatery with an ethnic vibe. At a glance, you may mistake it for a Buddhist book store or an antique shop.

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Vegetarian Yu Sheng and buds. On festive occasions, that will suit your taste

Overall Ratings:
Food 8/10
Ambience 8/10
Service 7/10
Address and Contact Details:
Ci Yan Organic Vegetarian Health Restaurant
8 Smith St., Singapore 058922
6225 9026
ciyan810@gmail.com
Operating Hours:
Mon-Sun 12 noon - 9.30pm
*info correct as of February 2021.

A HIDDEN GEM
in CHINATOWN

Text & Photos: Chloe Huang

Overall Ratings:
Food 8/10
Ambience 9.5/10
Service 9/10
Address and Contact Details:
181 Orchard Road #12-01
Orchard Central Singapore 238896
6838 6966
reservation@joierestaurant.com.sg
www.facebook.com/joiebydozosg
www.instagram.com/joiebydozo

Operating Hours:
Lunch 12 noon - 3pm (Last order at 2pm)
Dinner 6pm - 10pm (Last order at 9pm)
*info correct as of February 2021.

J oie (pronounced as ‘joy’) is located on the 12th floor lush rooftop garden of Orchard Central. While the cool breeze envelops you, enjoy the beautiful evening skyline, expansive panoramic views and dazzling lights of the busy Orchard Road shopping belt.

Opened in 2014, the meatless fusion restaurant offers an intimate dining experience with several private rooms as well as an outdoor private dining area. With its classy indoor deco and quaint outdoor seatings, the restaurant is an ideal place for private or celebrative events.

The restaurant serves set-menus only and draws its creativity from various vegetables, fruits and herbs turning them into exquisite dishes with some looking like Japanese or European art exhibits.

Lunch is a 6-course meal (comprising starter, side dish, soup, main, dessert and drink) while dinner is a 7-course meal (similar to lunch with an additional cold dish).

The starter dish is already quite impressive. The 3-item platter includes carrot sashimi, the warm and flavourful bisque is served with dehydrated basil crisp.

1. Charcoal coated tempura platter.
2. Zucchini tower.
3. Potato and cauliflower bisque with truffle mayo and puff pastry.
4. Grilled summer mushroom steak on “pu-ye” hot stone. The creative use of dried leaves on hot lava stones made this dish look like it belonged in an art exhibition—a true work of art on the dining table.
5. Layers of red bean and yam. An oriental sweet treat for yam lovers.

The restaurant does not provide any food delivery service. Due to limited seating capacity, you are strongly encouraged to make a reservation before heading to the restaurant. The set lunch is $39.80++ per person and the set dinner $69.80++ per person.

*info correct as of February 2021.

Fine-dining at Joie by Dozo

Text & Photos: Jes Tan

Overall Ratings:
Food 8/10
Ambience 9.5/10
Service 9/10
Address and Contact Details:
181 Orchard Road #12-01
Orchard Central Singapore 238896
6838 6966
reservation@joierestaurant.com.sg
www.facebook.com/joiebydozosg
www.instagram.com/joiebydozo

Operating Hours:
Lunch 12 noon - 3pm (Last order at 2pm)
Dinner 6pm - 10pm (Last order at 9pm)
*info correct as of February 2021.
Having a strong immune system is crucial in our day-to-day fight against viruses and bacteria. Boost your immune system with our recipes below.

Three-treasure powder is made of wheat germ powder, nutritional yeast and soy lecithin powder. It is loaded with vitamins and minerals. Wheat germ is a rich source of Vitamin E, a powerful antioxidant that is said to enhance blood circulation, strengthen elasticity of blood vessels to prevent stroke, and activate cell metabolism.

Coconut milk and cream, on the other hand, are sources of healthy fats called medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs) that promote healthy cholesterol levels, and may benefit weight loss and metabolism. Research also suggests that coconut milk may help reduce inflammation, decrease stomach ulcer size, and fight viruses and bacteria.

**Jackfruit Coconut Milk 1**

**Ingredients** (Serves one to two)
- 200ml Fresh coconut cream (Santan)
- 50ml Filtered water
- 150g Jackfruit flesh (Nangka)

**Method**
1. Mix coconut cream with filtered water and jackfruit flesh.
2. Blend the mixture in a high-speed blender for one minute, or until smooth.
3. Serve fresh.

**Instant Yoghurt Drink 2**

**Ingredients** (Serves two to three)
- 1 cup Unsweetened soy milk
- ½ lemon Fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp 3-Treasure powder
- To taste Cut fruits (cubes)

**Method**
1. Pour lemon juice into a cup, followed by soy milk.
2. Let mixture stand in room temperature for 10 minutes to coagulate.

Instant yoghurt is an innovative but a better and more scientific manner of consuming soy milk. From a scientific point of view, soy milk is made of wheat germ powder, nutritional yeast and soy lecithin powder. It is loaded with vitamins and minerals.

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Recipes & photos courtesy of Wong Kee Yew, a vegetarian nutrition teacher who conducts classes at Awareness Hub. Call Awareness Hub at 6336 6067, or turn to page 35 for more details.
Intricate Chanting Player
You can Wear!

This is a great gift for a devoted Buddhist to help keep his or her mindfulness on the Triple Gem.

This wearable digital chanting device is not only intricately designed with quality beads, alloy casing and thick corded rope, it also showcases gorgeous ornate motifs and engravings of the six syllable mantra. The top of the lotus casing even opens up like a pocket watch to feature an image of Chenrezig and the Hrih syllable!

The other design highlights the eight auspicious emblems, and allows you to unscrew the lotus cap to keep any precious relic or mani pilli you may have.

Both designs store 36 tracks of tranquil and dignified sutra and mantra chants that can play for up to 6 hours!

When the battery is flat, charge it through the connecting port like you would your mobile phone.

To find out more, please call Awareness Place stores at 6337 7582 or 6452 1732.
A tireless quest to reach the goal of spirituality
3
Existence is burning him, but the answer to the deep mysteries of life, especially after information from all walks of life whispers from the farmer, the priest, his father, and every moment even in the darkest of times, are dropped in; by the Sufi master points out that he has been listening to and following those, who do not really know.

Here we see a first-rate example of a tireless quest to reach the goal of spiritual teachings and how a conscious approach to life itself is the very boat to rock us to the place where we can learn what we need to know, manifesting the situations to teach us the way and the people we need to interact with, through sincerity and keenness.

Where in a movie nowadays, does the camera capture the face of a character watching something in the distance for more than a minute? When do people these days soak in their environs, entering what's going on around them in such a way?

This is a cinematic art lost from our present-day movie halls, immersing you in the meaning of the film, as well as the ultimate meaning, which you, the observer of this film, can and will also take away from this most beautiful rendition of the life of a great philosopher.

First, integrity is underrated in our moment-to-moment choices for well-being. Instead, we are usually preoccupied with considering how to obtain more of what we want or avoid what we don’t want. But when we don’t speak or act from our own sense of integrity, we feel lousy. The components of integrity—generosity, virtue, renunciation, wisdom, courage, patience, truthfulness, resoluteness, loving-kindness and equanimity—bring us more empowerment, clarity, commitment and joy, even in the darkest of times. Freedom is the ability to choose wisely, and thereby bring a cheerful mind and heart to a suffering world. A lovely, practical, intimate and wise book.

Creating a Life of Integrity
In Conversation with Joseph Goldstein
By Gail Andersen Stark
$21.90

T his is a gorgeous full-coloured book with cute illustrations that is easy-to-read. The messages and contents of the book may be simple, but it is the one that touches my heart the most because often people lose sight of their choice and ability to be joyful in the face of difficulties. This book brings awareness back to us that you simply have to consciously choose and develop the mental habits that will bring smiles, joy, and peace into your life. The publisher has thoughtfully added a yellow ribbon bookmark so that you can easily locate the page you stopped.

Mindfulness for Children
Simple activities for parents and children to create greater focus, resilience, and joy
By Sarah Rudell Beach
$18

What Would the Buddha Recycle?
A mindful guide to an eco-friendly life
$18

Everyday Smiles
Finding joy in every moment
By Guy Kospombut
$18

If you want to be a more mindful parent, this book is a great tool. Featuring more than 30 fun mindfulness activities for you and your child to enjoy together, you not only get to develop stronger and deeper bonds with your kids, you also help teach them important life skills on how to deal with stress, work with difficult emotions without becoming overwhelmed, develop empathy and nurture appreciation, gratitude and joy.

I f he is not a Buddhist film, but nevertheless offers food for thought for those seeking the spiritual path to realise the divine or Buddha nature that is in all of us, it is based on an autobiography written by Greek-Armenian philosopher G.I. Gurdjieff in 1963. The underlying philosophy amounts to the assertion that people generally live their lives asleep, are unconscious of themselves, and accordingly behave like machines, subject to outside causes and pressures. He also asserted that people of the past epochs lived in more suitable outer conditions and at higher inner levels than the people today. George Ivanovich Gurdjieff was born to speak the truth of existence and he knew it! Here, in this serenely-paced, ‘old-style’ movie, we follow the life of this Greek-Armenian philosopher, whose incessant curiosity from a very young age leads him to vigorously search for answers to the deep mysteries of life, especially after information that is in all of us. It is based on an autobiography written by Greek-Armenian philosopher G.I. Gurdjieff in 1963. The underlying philosophy amounts to the assertion that people generally live their lives asleep, are unconscious of themselves, and accordingly behave like machines, subject to outside causes and pressures. He also asserted that people of the past epochs lived in more suitable outer conditions and at higher inner levels than the people today.

Directed by: Peter Brook
Starring: Dragan Maksimovic, Terence Stamp

Visit https://bit.ly/37oQ7W8 or scan to watch the movie


A tireless quest to reach the goal of spirituality...
SusanGriffith-Jones

A lovely, practical, intimate heart to a suffering world.

By Sarah Rudell Beach

Finding joy in every moment

Finding joy in every moment even in the darkest of times

Creating a Life of Integrity

Everyday Smiles
Finding joy in every moment

What Would the Buddha Recycle?
A mindful guide to an eco-friendly life

Mindfulness for Children
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All books are available at Awareness Place stores.
Radical Acceptance 
Embracing Your Life with the Heart of a Buddha

Tara Brach, PhD | US$15.88

**Dharma**

**CEREMONIES, PRAYERS**

Online Pledge of Namo Shakyamuni Buddha’s Name Day
Recite the sacred chant of “Namo Bha Dha Shri Lax Min Neto” and submit your count on our website. Online Pledge Date: 1 – 26 May | Sat – Wed
Registration: Online www.kmmps.org
Enquiry: sed@kmmps.org

Lunar 27th Great Compassion Repentance Puja
8 May, Sat: 7 Jan, Mon | 6 Jul, Tue | 5 Aug, Thur 10.00am – 11.30am
Venue: Hall of Great Compassion
Enquiry: 6849 5133

Lunar 27th Great Compassion Repentance Puja
Online Light Offering
8 May, Sat: 7 Jan, Mon | 6 Jul, Tue | 5 Aug, Thur 10.00am – 11.30am
Venue: Hall of Great Compassion
Fee: $8 (1 candle with 1 sponsor’s name)
Registration: Online www.kmmps.org
Enquiry: 6849 5126 | sed@kmmps.org

**Radical Acceptance**

Esther Thien
Text:

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May-Aug 2021

scan this to download e-book

https://bit.ly/3dM64aE or

Get it from Google Play.

**Lifestyle**

**Children’s Art**

Child’s Art – Colours of Life
Free expression, reflection and exploration in arts for children to appreciate the beauty of things and their potential for transformation. Designed for children between 4 and 12 years old.
30 May – 5 Jul: Sat – Sun | 10.00am – 12.30pm Or 2.00pm – 4.00pm
Fee: $40 (5 sessions)
Venue: Awareness Hub
Enquiry: sed@kmmps.org

**Meditation**

Relaxation and Mindfulness Meditation (Bilingual)
Meditation which involves Body Scanning and Relaxation.
New run will start in JUNE, all dates and details to be confirmed.

Weekly Meditation Group Practice
To promote a culture of meditation which has been found to be beneficial towards health and mental well-being.
3 May – 28 Jun | Mon | 1:30pm – 3:30pm
Venue: Hall of Medicine Buddha
Fee: $50

**Online Pledge of Namo Shakyamuni Buddha’s Name Day**
Recite the sacred chant of “Namo Bha Dha Shri Lax Min Neto” and submit your count on our website. Online Pledge: 8 Aug – 6 Sep | Sun – Mon
Registration: Online www.kmmps.org
Enquiry: sed@kmmps.org

**National Day Compassionate Water Repentance**

Online Light Offering (TOC)
9 Aug, Mon | 8.00am – 11.30am
Venue: Hall of Great Compassion
Fee: $8 (1 candle with 1 sponsor’s name)
Registration: Online www.kmmps.org
Enquiry: 6849 5326 | sed@kmmps.org

Ushers’ Prayer (Conducted in Mandarin)
22 Aug, Sun | 8.30am – 10.00pm
Mass Offering: $50 (outdoor) / $100 (air-con)
$280 (individual table)
Registration: Online www.kmmps.org
Enquiry: 6849 5333

**TALKS | WORKSHOPS | COURSES**

Threshold Rebreathing & Five Precepts Preparatory Class (Conducted in Mandarin (TOC))
Jul | Sun | 9.00am – 10.30am
Venue: VCHM | Level 1 | Classroom
Free Admission

Threshold Rebreathing & Five Precepts Ceremony (Conducted in Mandarin (TOC))
Jul | Sun | 11:45am – 2.30pm
Venue: VCHM | Level 4 | Hall of No-Form
Free Admission

Buddhist Etiquette & Introduction to Cultivation (Conducted in Mandarin (TOC))
Jul | Sat | 9.00am – 11.30am
Venue: VCHM | Level 1 | Classroom
Free Admission
Venue: VCHM

**Enquiry: 6849 5333**

**Venue:** Hall of Great Compassion

**Registration: Online www.kmmps.org**

**Online Pastel Nagomi Art - School Holiday Programme**

**Art**

Seniors’ Art
Stay active and keep dementia at bay with arts and crafts! A beneficial course facilitated by qualified instructors.
30 May – 25 Sep | Sun | 2.30pm – 4.00pm
Fee: $120 per pair (4 sessions)
Venue: Awareness Hub
Instructor Fee: $160 (5 sessions)

**Online Pastel Nagomi Art - School Holiday Programme**

**Pre-requisite for Part II:** Parent/Guardian must have attended 50% attendance in Part I to qualify to attend Part II
3 – 24 Oct | Sun | 3.00pm – 6.00pm
Venue: Awareness Hub
Fee: $150 per pair (4 sessions)

**Enquiry: sed@kmmps.org**

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scan this to download e-book

https://bit.ly/3dM64aE or

Get it from Google Play.

**Due to the current COVID-19 situation, programmes and dates are subject to change. Please visit www.kmmps.org for up-to-date information.**
Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction
Learn how to cope with stress through the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programme. A well-researched and evidence-based programme developed by Dr Jon Kabat-Zinn from the University of Massachusetts (UMASS) Medical School, Centre for Mindfulness. MBSR will improve your focus, well-being and quality of life.
11 Jun - 30 Jul | Fri | 7.30pm - 9.45pm
20 Jul | Tue (PH) | 9.30am - 4.30pm (full day)
Venue: Awareness Hub
Fee: $330 (8 sessions) including 1 full-day session - subsidised rate

Rhythm Rejuvenation
Our fun and relaxing music sessions offer you the perfect opportunity to slow down and rejuvenate yourself by reducing stress, enhancing self-awareness and creating empowerment.
(No prior musical experience is needed! Instruments will be provided).
Self-Love for Recovery
16 May | Sun | 3.00pm - 5.00pm
Venue: Awareness Hub
Fee: $30

Lunch-time Hatha Yoga
• 4 May – 6 Jul | Tue | 12.20pm – 1.10pm
• 13 Jul – 21 Sep (except 20 Jul) | Tue | 12.20pm – 1.10pm
Venue: Awareness Hub
Fee: $140 (10 sessions) / Walk-in $18 per lesson
Hatha Yoga for Beginners
• 15 May – 17 Jul | Sat | 6.30pm – 8.00pm
• 4 Jun – 6 Aug | Fri | 10.30am – 12.00pm
• 23 Jun – 25 Aug | Wed | 8.00pm – 9.30pm
• 24 Jul – 25 Sep | Sat | 6.30pm – 8.00pm
• 13 Aug – 15 Oct | Fri | 10.30am – 12.00pm
Venue: Awareness Hub
Fee: $180 (10 sessions) / Walk-in $25 per lesson

Gentle Hatha Yoga
• 18 May – 27 Jul (except 20 Jul) | Tue | 2.30pm – 4.00pm
• 18 Jun – 20 Aug | Fri | 2.30pm – 4.00pm
• 3 Aug – 5 Oct | Tue | 2.30pm – 4.00pm
• 27 Aug – 29 Oct | Fri | 2.30pm – 4.00pm
Venue: Awareness Hub
Fee: $160 (10 sessions) / Walk-in $22 per lesson
Hatha Yoga
• 2 Jun – 4 Aug | Wed | 6.30pm – 8.00pm
• 12 Jun – 14 Aug | Sat | 9.30am – 11.00am
• 5 Jul – 13 Sep (except 9 Aug) | Mon | 6.45pm – 8.15pm
• 29 Jun – 7 Sep (except 20 Jul) | Tue | 10.30am – 12.00pm
• 11 Aug – 13 Oct | Wed | 6.30pm – 8.00pm
• 21 Aug – 23 Oct | Sat | 9.30am – 11.00am
Venue: Awareness Hub
Fee: $210 (10 sessions) / Walk-in $25 per lesson
Yoga for Diabetes
Learn yoga postures that stimulate insulin production to help manage diabetes. For non-diabetics, this gentle yoga boosts immunity.
• 3 Jun – 5 Aug | Thu | 10.30am – 11.30am
• 12 Aug – 14 Oct | Thu | 10.30am – 11.30am
Venue: Awareness Hub
Fee: $120 (10 sessions) / Walk-in $15 per lesson
Chair Yoga
2 Jul – 3 Sep | Fri | 12.30pm – 1.30pm
Venue: Awareness Hub
Fee: $160 (10 sessions) / Walk-in $22 per lesson

Yin Yoga
Learn to improve flexibility and mental focus while relieving stress and anxiety.
6 Jul – 14 Sep (except 20 Jul) | Tue | 6.30pm – 7.45pm
Venue: Awareness Hub
Fee: $170 (10 sessions) / Walk-in $23 per lesson

Venue: Awareness Hub
(Bras Basah Complex #03-39)
Registration:
1. Online | www.kmskps.org/lifestyle/
2. Reception Office (KMSKPS) | 9.00am - 4.00pm
(Closes for lunch | 11.30am - 12.30pm)
3. Awareness Hub
Enquiry: 6336 5067 | awarenesshub@kmspks.org

\* ENVIRONMENTALISM

Sorting of Recyclables @ Gratitude Corner
Assist us in sorting out items that can be recycled and reused for sale at the Gratitude shop.
Every Tue, Thur, Sat | 9.00am – 2.00pm
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Outside South Wing Office
Gratitude Shop
Check out our thrift shop for cheap and good deals.
Garden Compost is also up for sale! (2L pack: $5)
Tue - Sun | 10.00am - 3.00pm
Venue: Outside Dining Hall (South Wing)
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | gratitude@kmspks.org
(subject to govt guidelines for religious organisations, all visitors to the monastery must go through our online booking system)

\* COMMUNITY

Dementia Prevention Programme (conducted in Mandarin)
The Dementia Prevention Programme (DPP) is a structured programme developed by the National University of Singapore Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (NUS Medicine) and Singapore’s first community programme to stave off dementia.
7 Jul – 22 Sep | Wed | 9.00am – 11.30am
Fee (12 sessions)
Chinese Calligraphy (conducted in Mandarin)
This programme offers a platform to foster a fellowship of learning and appreciation of Chinese culture and art form.
• Foundation Class : 12 Jun – 14 Aug | Sat | 9.00am - 11.00am
• Basic Class : 12 Jun – 14 Aug | Sat | 11.00am - 1.00pm
13 Jun – 15 Aug | Sun | 2.00pm - 4.00pm
Fee: $150 (10 lessons)

Di 2 Gu Class [For ages 5 – 19 years] - conducted in Mandarin
The ancient teaching of the Chinese philosopher Confucius emphasises the basic requisites for being a good person and provides guidelines for living in harmony with others.
11 Jul – 17 Oct | Sun | 9.30am – 11.30am
Fee: $20 (per person) / $10 (2nd and subsequent family members)
Venue: KMSKPS
Enquiry: 6849 5359 | 6849 5317
community@kmspks.org
KMSKPS = Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery
VHCMH = Venerable Hong Choon Memorial Hall
TBC = To be confirmed
Programmes & venues are subject to change. Details are correct at the time of printing