

FREE

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# Awaken

to Compassion and Wisdom on the journey of life



The Return of Joy

How to overcome loneliness during a shutdown

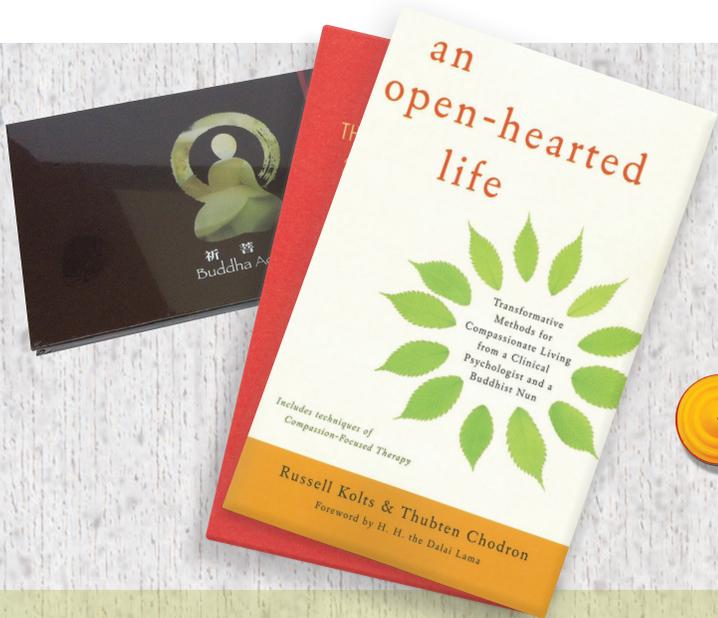
Thinking positively to manage any difficulty, even COVID-19!

Navigating rough waters

Thanissaro Bhikkhu:

# Freedom from Fear





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# The benefits of meditation



abbots message

**A**n 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 relaxes 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 Dharmic joy and serenity. ✨

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

# Freeing ourselves From FEAR

**T**he 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

editor's note



### 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.



Visit <https://bit.ly/3aTQtGC> or scan this to register for light offering



Scan this to view videos of the prayers

**Singapore** – On the last day of December 2020, with 108 tolls of the bell, we bade farewell to a year filled with challenges and welcomed 2021 with wholesome aspirations and prayers. The meditative and inspiring resonances of the bell functioned as reminders for practitioners to disentangle from avarice, hatred and delusion, and to mindfully cultivate bodhicitta.

In view of the pandemic, the monastery recently held an online Ancestral Prayer Service (Closed-door) for those who are unable to pay respect to their ancestors or deceased loved ones in person during the Chinese New Year period.

The Monastery also held online light offerings and wish-fulfilling lanterns for the public during the Chinese New Year so that

### 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@kmspk.org](mailto:ded@kmspk.org) or call 6849 5345.



圆觉经

2021 普觉讲法



# Freedom From Fear

Text: *Thanissaro Bhikkhu* © 2002

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 that it's weak in the face of the danger. It wants to escape. These five elements—confusion, aversion, a sense of danger, a sense of weakness, and a desire to escape—are present, to a greater or lesser extent, in every fear. The confusion and aversion are the unskillful 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 them. 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 coming from complacency. If stripped of confusion and aversion, these three elements become a positive quality—heedfulness—something 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 headlights, 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 weaknesses in the face of very real dangers. The elegance of the Buddha's approach to this problem, though, lies in his insight into the confusion—or to use the standard Buddhist term, delusion—that makes fear unskillful. Despite the complexity of fear, delusion is the single factor that, in itself, is both the mind's prime weakness and its greatest danger. **Thus the Buddha approaches the problem of fear by focusing on delusion, and he attacks delusion in two ways: getting us to think about its dangerous role in making fear unskillful, and to develop inner strengths leading to the insights that cut through the delusions that make the mind weak.** In this way we not only overcome the factor that makes fear unskillful. We ultimately put the mind in a position where it has no need for fear.

When we think about how delusion infects fear and incites us to do unskillful things, we see that it can act in two ways. First, the delusions surrounding our fears can cause us to misapprehend the dangers we face, seeing danger where there is none, and no danger where there is. If we obsess over non-existent or trivial dangers, we'll squander time and energy building up useless defences, diverting our attention from genuine threats. If, on the other hand, we put the genuine dangers of ageing, illness, and death out of our minds, we grow complacent in our actions. We let ourselves cling to things—our bodies, our loved ones, our possessions, our views—that leave us exposed to ageing, illness, separation and death in the first place. We allow our cravings to take charge of the mind, sometimes to the point of doing evil with impunity, thinking that we're immune to the results of our evil, that those results will never return to harm us.

The more complacent we are about the genuine dangers lying in wait all around us, the more shocked and confused we become when they actually hit. This leads to the second way in which the delusions surrounding our fears promote unskillful actions: we react to genuine dangers in ways that, instead of ending the dangers, actually create new ones. We amass wealth to provide security, but wealth creates a high profile that agitates jealousy in others. We build walls to keep out dangerous people, but those walls become our prisons. We stockpile weapons, but they can easily be turned against us.

**The most unskillful response to fear is when, perceiving dangers to our own life or property, we believe that we can gain strength and security by destroying the lives and property of others.**

The delusion pervading our fear makes us lose perspective. If other people were to act in this way, we would know they were wrong. But somehow, when we feel threatened, our standards change, our perspective warps, so that wrong seems right as long as we're the ones doing it.

This is probably the most disconcerting human weakness of all: our inability to trust ourselves to do the right thing when the chips are down. If standards of right and wrong are meaningful only when we find them convenient, they have no real meaning at all.

Fortunately, though, the area of life posing the most danger and insecurity is the area where, through training, we can make the most changes and exercise the most control. Although ageing, illness and death follow inevitably on birth, delusion doesn't. It can be prevented. If, through thought and contemplation, we become heedful of the dangers it poses, we can feel motivated to overcome it. However, the insights coming from simple thought and contemplation aren't enough to fully understand and overthrow delusion. It's the same as with any revolution: no matter how much you may think about the matter, you don't really know the tricks and strengths of entrenched powers until you amass your own troops and do battle with them. And only when your own troops develop their own tricks and strengths can they come out on top. **So it is with delusion: only when you develop mental strengths can you see through the delusions that give fear its power.** Beyond that, these strengths can put you in a position where you are no longer exposed to dangers ever again.

### The five mental strengths

The canon lists these five mental strengths: conviction, persistence, 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 unskillful 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 counteracts 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 "boomerang" or "spitting into 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 unskillful actions such as killing, stealing, or lying might bring short-term advantages, these are more than offset by the long-term harm to which they leave you exposed.

Conversely, 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.

Second, 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.

**Conviction 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 than a hundred years 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 hours of the day or 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. It simply replaces mass 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, regardless of speed. 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 unskillful 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 unskillful 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 conditionality 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 doing harm, you give a great gift—freedom from danger to limitless beings—and you yourself find a share in that limitless freedom as well.**



**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 to introduce 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.

# The Return of Joy

*If we cannot be happy in spite of our difficulties, what good is our spiritual practice?*

**T**here is an unquenchable human spirit born anew in each child. This spirit, which has carried Nelson Mandela and so many others through hardship and storms, can carry you. Inside you are a thousand generations of your ancestors, who learned how to survive storms and difficulties. Do not be afraid. You too will find your way.

**Trust your ability to turn towards your difficulty with courage and compassion. Ground yourself in your body and find the temple of healing within.** By bringing your most beloved wisdom figures into your heart you will find help as you navigate conflict and loss. You will discover how to cultivate practices of balance and equanimity. And learn the art of forgiveness.

**When you learn to navigate your difficulties with compassion and grace, you will also discover that joy will return.** Your difficulties and sorrows do not define you—they do not limit who 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 he 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 honour 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

Conviction 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—persistence, 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 they arise we have to give in to them. Right effort gives us practice in eliminating milder unskillful qualities and developing skilful ones in their place, so that when stronger unskillful qualities arise, we can use our skilful qualities as allies in fending them off. The strength of mindfulness assists this process in two ways.

- ❶ It reminds us of the danger of giving into fear.
- ❷ **It teaches us to focus our attention, not on the object of our fear, but on the fear in and of itself as a mental event, something we can watch from the outside rather than jumping in and going along for a ride.** The strength of concentration, in providing the mind with a still centre of well-being, puts us in a solid position where we don't feel compelled to identify with fears as they 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

**“**  
*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 doing harm, you give a great gift—freedom from danger to limitless beings—and you yourself find a share in that limitless freedom as well.*

comings and goings, which is why 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. 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 delusion 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 unskillful 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 unskillful—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 unskillful 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, when 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, distrustful 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 the meaning 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 it goes. What makes it more than a deer is that, free from attachment, it's called a "consciousness without surface." Light goes right through it. The hunter can't shoot it, for it can't be seen. ❀



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 other beings, in our cars and shops and out among the trees without crashing, conflict, or harm.

Spiritual practice should not be confused with grim duty. It is the wonder born with every child. Maurice Sendak, author of *Where the Wild Things Are*, depicts this spirit in the story of a boy who wrote to him. "He sent me a charming card with a drawing. I loved it. I answer all my children's letters—sometimes very hastily—but this one I lingered over. I sent

him a postcard and I drew a picture of a Wild Thing on it. I wrote, 'Dear Jim, I loved your card.'

Then I got a letter back from his mother and she said, 'Jim loved your card so much he ate it.' That to me was one of the highest compliments I've ever received. He didn't care that it was an original drawing or anything. He saw it, he loved it, he ate it."

Yes, we need to carefully navigate through hard times. But the whole world is also our temple, to be tended with love and dignity no matter what. As Martin Luther King Jr. exhorted us all, "If a person sweeps streets for a living, he should sweep them as Michelangelo painted, as Beethoven composed music, as Shakespeare wrote his plays."

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. ✨



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.

**I**t took a barbed 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.*

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 Dhammabanchanvud, 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."

profile



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 practising *metta* has helped 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

**“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.”**

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." ❀

# Your Special Star



Once, 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 like? 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 ourselves 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 cosy 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 friendly wishes to all.

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. ❀

**“In this guided meditation for the little ones, we imagine that everyone has a special star that's with him or her all the time. We picture in our heads what our star looks and feels like and learn just how imagining it can help us feel more relaxed and calm.”**



Visit <https://qr.go.page.link/Gc67v> or scan this to listen to the meditation track

By Susan Kaiser Greenland, author of *The Mindful Child*. ([www.susankaisergreenland.com](http://www.susankaisergreenland.com))

mindfulness parenting

# 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



“

**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.**

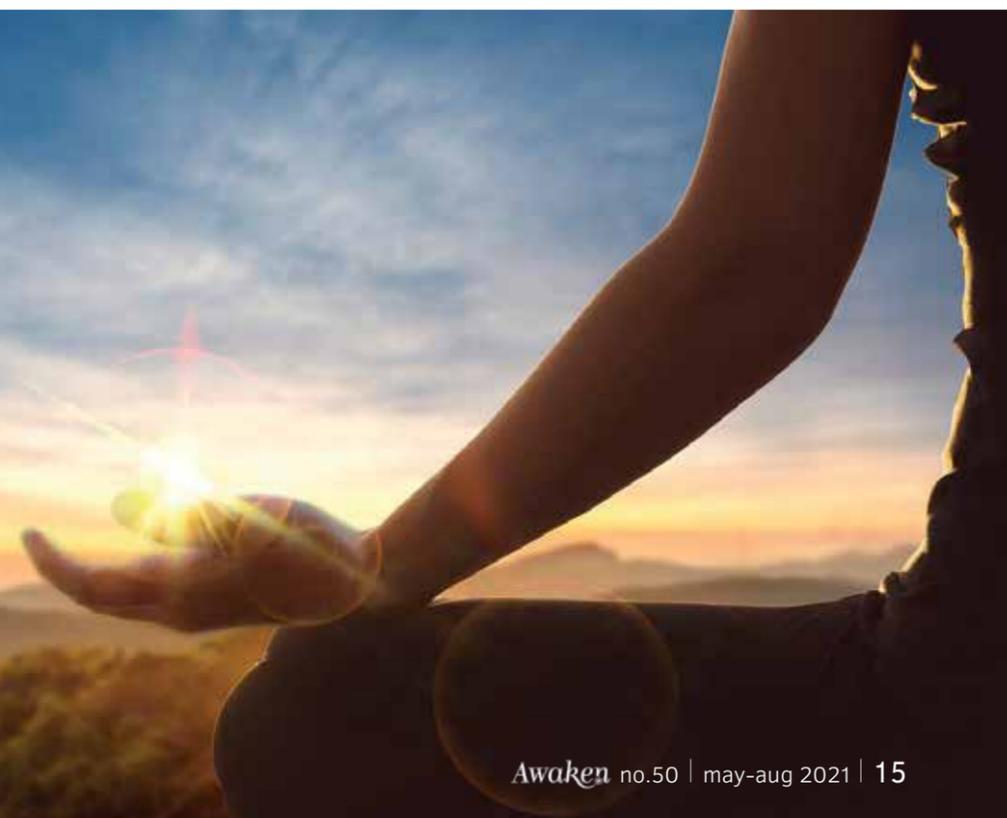
These two verses point to the healing symbolism of the Buddha's teaching. He is often understood as the great physician who, seeing the suffering of all beings in the world, applies the medical formula of the Four Noble Truths to:

- 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. ❀

did you know?





## How to overcome loneliness during a shutdown

**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:** 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.

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 go within and start questioning what life is about. More people also visit monasteries seeking religion during times of social upheaval. I have seen some indications of people connecting within themselves to conquer their loneliness.

**Checking in with ourselves to ask what is important in our lives and then doing it is powerful. Rather than worrying**

**what others are going to think of us or that we can't do it due to financial security etc, now is the time to live the kind of life that we want to live and really let our talents, abilities and gifts shine and contribute to society in a positive way.**

Loneliness can also come about because there are so many sources of sense stimulation—watching videos, reading the news all day long—that leave you feeling hollow inside. Loneliness can come from that too. There are many, many ways to reach out or to go within.

Take this opportunity during this period when at home to read or watch all the Dharma books and videos you have always wanted to read or view. The meditation that you have always wanted to learn or do? Now is the time to do them.

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.

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!

You can also imagine Chenrezig or Guanyin Bodhisattva giving you a great big hug filled with love and compassion with her thousand arms. You will feel very connected! ❀

**Ven Thubten Chodron**  
[www.thubtenchodron.org](http://www.thubtenchodron.org)  
[www.sravasti.org](http://www.sravasti.org)

## The Fluidity Of Water Enables It To Adapt To All Kinds Of Situations In The World

Illustration & original text in Chinese: Robert Yeo  
 Translator: Oh Puay Fong

buddhist tales



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

Water nourishes all living things, without seeking compensation.

Water invariably flows down and does not compete with others.

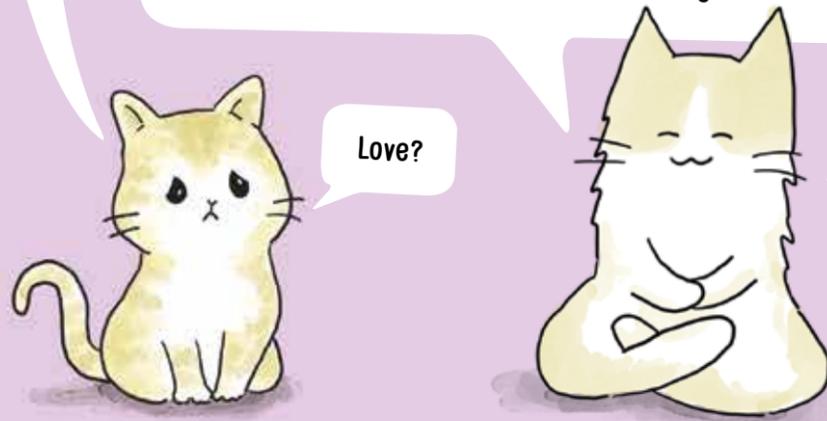
### SHARING

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

# ♥ The Highest Love

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.

All beings deserve help and love.



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.

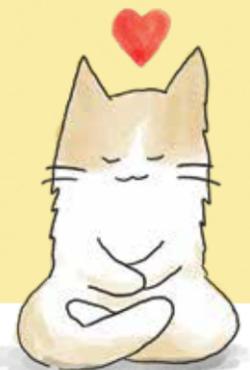


Nobody is perfect. Instead of blaming others or myself, I should always be kind to others and myself.

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.

# a few THOUGHTS ON OBSTACLES

Text: Ajahn Jayasaro

**B**e flexible in your approach. Ajahn Chah once said, "If obstacles come low, jump over them. If they come high, duck under them."

Don't try to get rid of thoughts during meditation; it gives them too much importance. Simply shine the light of awareness on thoughts and they will disappear by themselves.

**It is not the problem that is the problem. The problem is not wanting to have the problem.**

If you make peace the goal of meditation you will find the five hindrances depressing. If you make moment-by-moment clarity of mind your goal, the five hindrances will appear as challenges and teachers.

**Develop the skill of being fully awake to experience.** If you do this the blind grasping of pleasant feelings and the instinctive rejection of unpleasant feelings will fade. The true nature of things will manifest.

On the night of enlightenment, the Buddha became awakened both to the nature of the Four Noble Truths, and the correct way to relate to them.

Later, he summarised:

"Dukkha is to be fully understood.

The cause of dukkha is to be abandoned.

The cessation of dukkha is to be realised.

The path leading to the cessation of dukkha is to be cultivated."

Thus in our practice, we should constantly ask ourselves:

*Right now, where is the dukkha?*

*What is the cause that needs to be abandoned?*

*What cessation of this dukkha may be realised?*

*What path factors should I be cultivating?*

It is a very practical approach.

Recently, a schoolboy told me he is afraid of ghosts.

I asked him, "Right now, are you suffering because of ghosts

or because of your fear of ghosts?" He replied that it was the fear. I said, "Well, then that's your problem."

I went on to teach him how to observe the physical and mental expressions of fear, and how to let them go.

I've rarely heard of ghosts oppressing human beings, other than in books or on screen. But I hear of people being oppressed by fear every day. In dealing with our daily challenges, it's important to determine the real issues. ❀

**Ajahn Jayasaro**

is a Theravada bhikkhu in the Thai Forest tradition. He received full ordination by Ajahn Chah in 1980, and was abbot of Wat Rah Nanachat from 1997 to 2002. In 2019, Ajahn Jayasaro was honoured with a royal title from Thailand's King Vajiralongkorn (Rama X).



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 gratefully. 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

**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.**

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. ❀



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

## Weaving a Dream

Retold by Esther Thien

## Navigating Rough Waters

Text: Jack Kornfield

**E**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, a bridge 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 to us 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. ✨

**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.

# THINKING POSITIVELY TO BETTER MANAGE ANY DIFFICULTY, EVEN COVID-19!

Text: Raymond Anthony Fernando

ponder



**C**COVID-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 to 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, Adapt, 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

**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.** ✨

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.

**H**ave 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

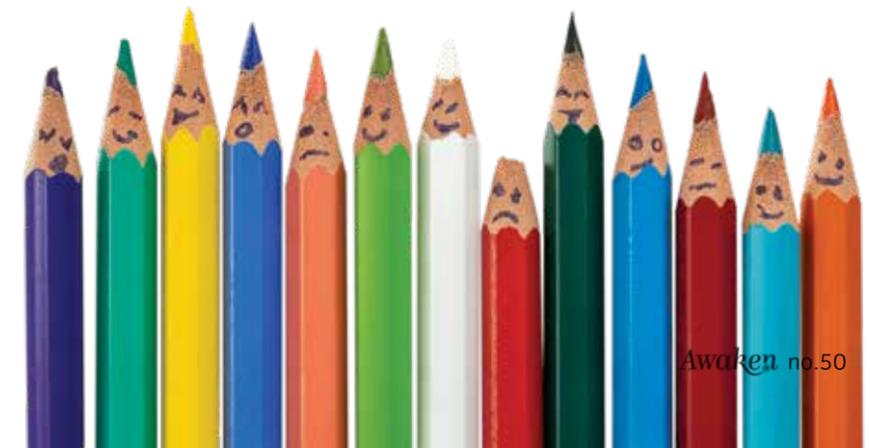
not entirely because they have so much more than us. Rather, it's because they are astute at managing available resources. The reason we envy others is because we aspire perfection, we wish to live better lives. However, we miss the point that everyone's situation is different, and that it's not possible 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 we have. Consider carefully what we really want, then we can be truly happy. ✨

## Cherish What You Have Instead Of Envy Others

*Consider carefully what we really want, then we can be truly happy.*



ponder

Text loosely translated by: Oh Puay Fong  
Original Chinese article, 不必羡慕别人 守住自己拥有 written by Ah Yu (阿雨) was published in issue 47



## A HIDDEN GEM in CHINATOWN

*Text & Photos: Chloe Huang*

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 to me their daily menu, which was handwritten on a chalk board. There were five to six dishes with a variety of main dish, soup and dessert. Based on his helpful suggestions, I decided on the Healthy Vegetable Brown Rice Set Meal (S\$7) with Old Cucumber Soup (S\$3), which

fills the stomach and is wallet friendly too!

Another dish not to be missed is the Pig's Trotter in Black Vinegar—despite its name, it is definitely vegetarian. Cooked with fragrant mushroom and *tau kua*, and simmered in black vinegar, both sweet and sour tastes were well balanced. If you enjoy spicy dishes, you will find familiar local dishes like *Nasi Lemak*, *Laksa*, *Assam Fish* and *Lontong* that will suit your taste buds. On festive occasions, like Chinese New Year, Vegetarian *Yu Sheng* and *Pen Cai* are available for pre-order too. Overall, it is a great place to relax and reward yourself with a healthy good meal after a busy day in the office or on a trip down town over the weekend. ✨



**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.*



## Fine-dining at Joie by Dozo

*Text & Photos: Jos Tan*

Joie (pronounced as 'joy') is located on the 12<sup>th</sup> 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,



seaweed cracker and raspberry sphere. You have several options for each category in the menu. These are my personal favourites:

**1. Charcoal coated tempura platter.** The crispy tempura is prepared using tempura yam, eggplant, apple, banana with Japanese sesame dressing. Taste-wise, the apple and banana stood out more strongly compared to the yam and eggplant.

**2. Zucchini tower.** The refreshing zucchini is stuffed with crême cheese, truffle mayo and puff pastry.

**3. Potato and cauliflower bisque with basil crisp.** The warm and flavourful bisque is served with dehydrated basil chip and salt-baked celery root.

**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.

**6. Hawaiian blue.** A beautifully concocted house mocktail using lychee and blueberry.

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.*



**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

**Daily Operating Hours:**

Lunch 12 noon - 3pm (Last order at 2pm)  
Dinner 6pm - 10pm (Last order at 9pm)

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.



### Instant Yoghurt Drinks

#### 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.
3. Stir in 3-treasure powder and cut fruits. Serve immediately.

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 relatively difficult to digest, often causing a lot of gastrointestinal problems. Lemon juice coagulates soy milk making it pudding-like. This makes it easier and faster for the stomach to digest the protein, preventing flatulence and indigestion.

— Wong Kee Yew

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

#### 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.



Recipes & photos courtesy of Wong Kee Yew, a vegetarian nutrition teacher who conducts classes at Awareness Hub.

Call **Awareness Hub** at **6336 5067**, or turn to page 35 for more details.

Scan this to find out more about Kee Yew:



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People's Park Centre S(058357)

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## Want Your story to be heard too?

Are you touched by the stories and interviews featured in this magazine?

Perhaps you too have a story to tell, a story of how the Buddha and His Teachings so inspired you to walk the Buddhist path, or maybe a simple account of the little treasures and blessings in life? Or perhaps you are a budding poet who would like to share a prose and a verse or two about how the Dharma changed your life forever?

Whatever your story or poem may be, we welcome you to write in to us. Share your inspiring tale of faith and awakening with the rest of the world.

Send your entries to publication@kmspks.org or:

AWAKEN, The Chief Editor  
Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery  
Dharma Propagation Division  
88 Bright Hill Road Singapore 574117

Please include your full name, address and contact details. We reserve the right to edit the stories and letters for space and grammar considerations.

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Issue 50 / May 2021

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## YOUR Feedback Matters

We value your comments and welcome your suggestions for improvements to AWAKEN. Tell us how we can improve our magazine to better cater to your spiritual and holistic needs. What new column would you like to see; which articles would you like to read? Send us your praises and flames. E-mail your feedback to [awaken@kmspks.org](mailto:awaken@kmspks.org) or send them to:

AWAKEN, The Chief Editor  
Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery  
Dharma Propagation Division  
Awaken Publishing & Design  
88 Bright Hill Road  
Singapore 574117

\* Please include your full name and personal particulars



## Seeking Fulfilling Careers?

**Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery (KMSPKS)** is an established Buddhist organisation with a vision to be the exemplary spiritual and service sanctuary for the spread and practice of Buddhism; one that is guided by compassion and wisdom to enrich the lives of the community at large.

If you are passionate about joining us in realising our vision and take pride in producing great work, we welcome you to join our big family.

You may send your resume to: [hrdept@kmspks.org](mailto:hrdept@kmspks.org) OR drop by our HR Office @ 88 Bright Hill Road, Singapore 574117 between 9am to 4.30pm (Mon-Fri), except public holidays.

Alternatively, you may log onto: [www.kmspks.org/career](http://www.kmspks.org/career) to view our job vacancies.



## 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* pill 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.



What's new

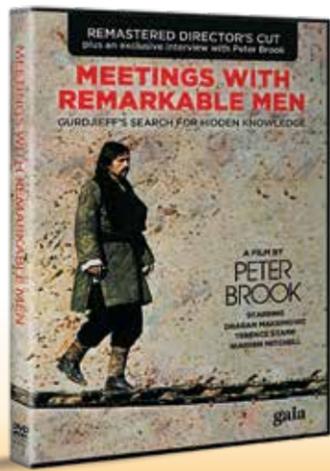
Text: Esther Thien

This 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 about a mysterious brotherhood pops up again and again.

From the very first frame, we're captured by the brilliance of the setting, as we follow a young, keen Gurdjieff walking with his father across a rocky, Central Asian terrain to watch a competition between musicians and singers to produce a perfectly pure tone that will make an echo within a specially shaped valley.

Something so fundamental to human beings—our survival and connection to a bigger force—is emphasised here, where the mood of the people and atmosphere in the air is so beautifully replicated and conveyed to us. All elements come together to bring out the vibe of the culture and psychology of the people. The question of his existence is burning him, but the strength to follow the path to his



## MEETINGS WITH REMARKABLE MEN

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

enlightenment comes from an inherent knowing within. "Even if I have to ride on the Devil's back," he declares, "I will find the answers at any cost!"

Gurdjieff's humility aids him, consistently opening the way for teachings to come to him from all around, as he is a vessel ready to be filled with the truth. Few words are spoken, but the quiet wisdom of masters from all walks of life whispers throughout this film. Snippets of understanding about our existence are dropped in; by the farmer, the priest, his father, and a drunkard, enrapturing us within every scene.

However, it's the deep compassion of the various masters he meets and their recognition of his sincerity that cuts through his delusion and helps him slowly find the way to his goal.

Staying true to his intentions of following a spiritual path, he shows selflessness in his relations

with people and generosity in his friendships, not holding anyone back from leaving him to walk their own path. Thus, life itself opens all doorways for him, bringing him the people he needs to meet and enabling his journey.

A Russian Prince opens his eyes to knowledge coming from the direct experience of the Nature of Mind, whereas the Sufi master points out that he has been listening to and following those, who do not really know.

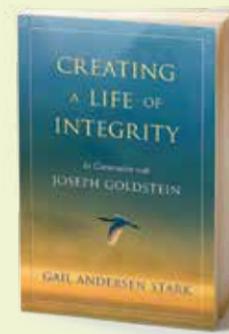
**Here we see a first-rate example of a tireless quest to reach the goal of spiritual teachings and how a conscious approach to life itself is the very boat to rock us to the place where we can learn what we need to know, manifesting the situations to teach us the way and the people we need to interact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

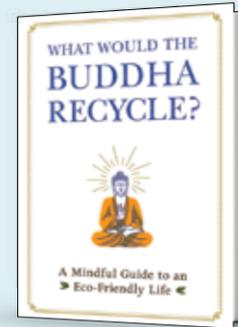


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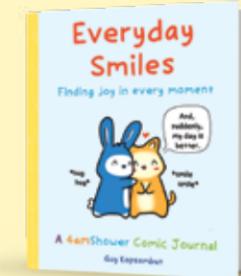
**Creating a Life of Integrity**  
In Conversation with Joseph Goldstein  
By Gail Andersen Stark  
\$21.90

Often, 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.



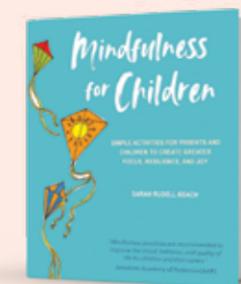
**What Would the Buddha Recycle?**  
A mindful guide to an eco-friendly life  
\$18

This hard-cover book printed from FSC paper gathered from responsibly managed forests features elegant cobalt blue and olive text printing for its 16 chapters. Just as the Buddha taught thousands of years ago that awareness of one's responsibility to self and the planet we live in precedes true enlightenment, this book reminds us that each of us is one with the world and that our thoughts, words and deeds affect the collective frequency and well-being of everything and everyone around us. It prompts us to acknowledge the consequences of our actions and to consciously adjust our lifestyle habits to those that support a sustainable environment.



**Everyday Smiles**  
Finding joy in every moment  
By Guy Kopsombut  
\$18

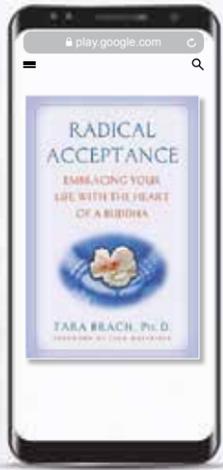
This is a gorgeous full-coloured book with cute illustrations that is easy-to-read. The messages and contents of the book may be simple, but it is the one that touches my heart the most because often people lose sight of their choice and ability to be joyful in the face of difficulties. This book brings 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

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.

All books are available at Awareness Place stores.



### Radical Acceptance Embracing Your Life with the Heart of a Buddha

Bantam | Tara Brach, PhD | US\$15.88

**T**ara Brach is a clinical psychologist and a popular lay Buddhist meditation teacher.

Writing with great warmth and clarity, Dr Brach offers a path to freedom, including day-to-day practical guidance developed over twenty years of work with therapy clients and Buddhist students.

She brings her teachings alive through fresh interpretations of Buddhist tales, guided meditations and numerous true personal stories.

Step by step, she leads us to trust our innate goodness, our Buddha nature and shows us how we can develop the balance of clear-sightedness and compassion that is the essence of this book.

*Radical Acceptance* does not mean self-indulgence or passivity. Instead it empowers genuine change: healing fear and shame to help build loving, authentic relationships. When we stop being at war with ourselves, when we truly love and accept ourselves, then we can be free to live fully every precious moment of our lives. An e-book containing wisdom that is very applicable in life. Highly recommended! Also available as an audio book.



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## Dharma

### CEREMONY | PRAYERS

#### Online Pledge of Namo Shakyamuni Buddha's Name Chant

Recite the sacred chant of "Namo Ben Shi Shi Jia Mou Ni Fo" and submit your count on our website.  
Online Pledge Date : 1 – 26 May | Sat – Wed  
Registration: Online [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
Enquiry : [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)

#### Lunar 27th Great Compassion Repentance Puja - Online Light Offering

8 May, Sat | 7 Jun, Mon | 6 Jul, Tue | 5 Aug, Thur 10.00am – 11.30am  
Venue: Hall of Great Compassion  
Enquiry: 6849 5333

#### Lunar 27th Great Compassion Repentance Puja - Online Light Offering

8 May, Sat | 7 Jun, 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.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
Enquiry: 6849 5326 | [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)



#### Vesak Day Auspicious Lanterns

15 – 26 May | Sat – Wed  
Venue: Hall of Universal Brightness & Hall of Great Compassion  
Fee: Company/Family: \$338 per lamp  
Individual/Family: \$50 per lamp  
Registration: Online [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
Front Office @ 9.00am – 4pm  
Enquiry: 6849 5333

#### Enlightenment Day of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva Puja (TBC)

28 Jul | Wed | 10.00am – 11.30am  
Venue: Hall of Great Compassion  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)

#### Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Puja (TBC)

8 – 16 Aug | Sun – Mon | 8.00pm – 9.30pm  
Venue: Hall of Great Compassion  
Registration: Online [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)



#### Online Pledge of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva's Name Chant

Recite the sacred chant of "Namo Di Zang Wang Pu Sa" and submit your count on our website.  
Online Pledge : 8 Aug – 6 Sep | Sun – Mon  
Registration: Online [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
Enquiry: [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)

#### National Day Compassionate Water Repentance Puja (TBC)

9 Aug | Mon | 8.00am – 11.30am  
Venue: Hall of Great Compassion  
Registration: Online [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)

## National Day Compassionate Water Repentance - Online Light Offering (TBC)

9 Aug | Mon | 8.00am – 11.30am  
Venue: Hall of Great Compassion  
Fee: \$8 (1 candle with 1 sponsor's name)  
Registration: Online [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
Enquiry: 6849 5326 | [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.org)

#### Ullambana Prayer (conducted in Mandarin)

22 Aug | Sun | 8.30am – 9.00pm  
Mass Offering : \$50 (outdoor) / \$100 (air-con) \$280 (individual table)  
Registration: 24 June onwards (till fully registered)  
Enquiry: 6849 5333

### TALKS | WORKSHOPS | COURSES

#### Threefold Refuge and Five Precepts Preparatory Class (Conducted in Mandarin) (TBC)

Jul | Sun | 9.00am – 10.30am  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom  
Free Admission

#### Threefold Refuge & Five Precepts Ceremony (Conducted in Mandarin) (TBC)

Jul | Sun | 11.45am – 2.30pm  
Venue: VHCMH | Level 4 | Hall of No Form  
Free Admission

#### Buddhist Etiquette & Introduction to Cultivation (Conducted in Mandarin) (TBC)

Teachings on Basic Practice, Observance of Buddhist Etiquette.  
Jul | Sat | 9.00am – 11.30am  
Venue : VHCMH | Level 1 | Classroom  
Free Admission  
Venue : VHCMH

**Registration:**  
1. Online | [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
2. Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9.00am – 4.00pm (Closed for lunch | 11.30am – 12.30pm)  
Enquiry: 6849 5300 | [sed@kmspks.org](mailto:sed@kmspks.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 : \$20

**Registration:**  
1. Online | [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org)  
2. Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9.00am – 4.00pm (Closed for lunch | 11.30am – 12.30pm)  
Enquiry: 6849 5346 | [meditationhall@kmspks.org](mailto:meditationhall@kmspks.org)

## Lifestyle

### CHILDREN

#### Children's Art - Colours of Life

Free expression, reflection and exploration in arts for children to appreciate the beauty of things and their surrounding environment. This programme is specifically designed for children between 4 and 12 years old.

15 May – 17 Jul | Sat | 1.00pm – 2.30pm Or 2.30pm – 4.00pm  
24 Jul – 25 Sep | Sat | 1.00pm – 2.30pm Or 2.30pm – 4.00pm  
Venue: Awareness Hub  
Fee: \$60 (10 sessions) *excluding art materials*

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

Through storytelling and illustrations, children get in touch with their emotional world and express themselves through the unique Japanese art of painting with fingers.

**[For ages 6 - 9]**  
9 Jun | Wed | 10.00am – 12.00pm (*Colours hiding in My Heart*)

16 Jun | Wed | 10.00am – 12.00pm (*My Flying Family*)  
Venue: Online Zoom  
Fee: \$40 per person per session

Material: \$15 per art set (*payable to the instructor*)

**[For ages 10 - 12]**  
9 Jun | Wed | 1.00pm – 3.00pm (*It's Me*)

16 Jun | Wed | 1.00pm – 3.00pm (*Enchanting Life of a Tree*)  
Venue: Online Zoom  
Fee: \$40 per person per session

Material: \$15 per art set (*payable to the instructor*)

**Mindfulness for Kids Paws B [ages 7 - 10]**  
31 May – 21 Jun | Mon | 2.00pm – 3.30pm  
Venue: Awareness Hub  
Fee: \$120 (4 sessions)

**Mindfulness for Kids Dot B [ages 11 - 16]**  
31 May – 21 Jun | Mon | 3.30pm – 5.00pm  
Venue: Awareness Hub  
Fee: \$120 (4 sessions)

**Mindfulness Training For Parents AND Their Children (With Additional Needs)**  
This course focuses on children who are hyperactive, lack concentration, are unable to focus or sleep, or are facing other emotional or mental stress.

**Part I: Breathing to Build Resilience**  
29 Aug – 26 Sep | Sun | 3.00pm – 4.30pm  
Venue: Awareness Hub  
Fee: \$160 (5 sessions)

**Part II: Breathing Together for Resilience**  
Participants: One (1) Parent/Caregiver and One (1) child with additional needs.

Pre-requisite for Part II: Parent/Caregiver must have achieved 100% attendance in Part I to qualify to attend Part II.

3 – 24 Oct | Sun | 3.00pm – 4.00pm  
Venue: Awareness Hub  
Fee: \$160 per pair (4 sessions)

### ART

#### Seniors Vesak Art

Stay active and keep dementia at bay with arts and crafts! A beneficial course facilitated by qualified and passionate instructors.

5 - 19 May | Wed | 1.30pm – 3.00pm  
Venue: Awareness Hub  
Free | Registration required | Donations are welcomed

#### Zentangle Basics - Black on White

4 Jul | Sun | 2.00pm – 5.00pm  
Venue: Awareness Hub  
Fee: \$60

Material Fee: \$12 (*payable to instructor*)

Due to the current COVID-19 situation, programmes and dates are subject to changes. Please visit [www.kmspks.org](http://www.kmspks.org) for up-to-date information.

### Online Pastel Nagomi Art - In Search of Inner Peace

Every gesture of cleansing the heart and mind is a taste of peace.

Join Sarana Khoo in this **online Buddhism themed painting retreat** and traverse the peaceful landscapes of your mind, while nourishing your heart with colours and Dharma.

23 May | Sun | 10.00am – 6.00pm [1hr lunch break]

Venue: Online Zoom

Fee: \$155 (New Students) / \$139.50 (for Returning Students)

Material: \$45 Starter Kit (New Students) payable to the instructor

### Zentangle Inspired Art - Gemstones and Colour

11 Jul | Sun | 2.00pm – 5.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$60

Material Fee: \$12 (payable to instructor)

### Zentangle Inspired Art - Totebag Tangling

18 Jul | Sun | 2.00pm – 5.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$60

Material Fee: \$12 (payable to instructor)

### Zentangle Intermediate (I) - Shine on Black

25 Jul | Sun | 2.00pm – 5.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$65

Material Fee: \$12 (payable to instructor)

### Zentangle Intermediate (II) - Zendala Mandala

1 Aug | Sun | 2.00pm – 5.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$65

Material Fee: \$10 (payable to instructor)

### Zentangle Advanced - Renaissance and Grey

8 Aug | Sun | 2.00pm – 5.00pm

Venue: Awareness Hub

Fee: \$70

Material Fee: \$15 (payable to instructor)



## • WELLNESS

### CULINARY

#### Online Wellness Series - The Ins & Outs of Nutritional Supplements

Topics include a variety of nutritional supplements, necessity, science and myths, safety and regulatory issues, common pitfalls and how to exercise due diligence.

30 May | Sun | 10.00am – 4.00pm  
[break 12.00pm – 2.00pm]

Venue: Online Zoom

Fee: \$80

#### Interactive Online Nutrition Class On

#### Mobile Radiation - Your Invisible Health Threat

11 Jul | Sun | 2.30pm – 5.00pm

Venue: Online Zoom

Fee: \$28

Participants are advised to have a copy of Vinitha's Cookbook with Nutrition Guide during the class (Participants' special price of \$18).



## • MINDFULNESS

### 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: \$300 (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

### Mindfulness through Rhythm

22 Aug | 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: \$180 (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 | Thur | 10.30am – 11.30am

• 12 Aug – 14 Oct | Thur | 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

## • 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.kmspks.org/lifestyle/](http://www.kmspks.org/lifestyle/)
  2. Reception Office@KMSPKS | 9.00am - 4.00pm (Closes for lunch | 11.30am - 12.30pm)
  3. Awareness Hub | 11.30am - 6.00pm
- Enquiry: 6336 5067 | [awarenesshub@kmspks.org](mailto: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: VHCMMH | 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](mailto: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 is Singapore's first community programme to stave off dementia.

7 Jul – 22 Sep | Wed | 9.00am – 11.30am

Free (12 sessions)

### Chinese Calligraphy (conducted in Mandarin)

This programme offers a platform to foster a fellowship of learning and the 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: \$110 (10 lessons)

### Di Zi Gui 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: KMSPKS  
Enquiry: 6849 5359 / 6849 5317  
[community@kmspks.org](mailto:community@kmspks.org)

KMSPKS = Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery  
VHCMMH = Venerable Hong Choon Memorial Hall  
TBC = To Be Confirmed

Programmes & venues are subject to change.  
Details are correct at the time of printing



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