



# THE LOTUS BUD

Magazine of Mindful Living ~ Issue No 37, December 2011

## Dear Sangha

This is the time of year when many of us wish our friends and family a Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year. This is a good time to reflect on what we mean by happiness and how we might enjoy it. Thay teaches that we can water the seeds of happiness or the seeds of unhappiness. Every time we focus on the joy in our lives, we're watering the seeds of joy, and every time we focus on our disappointment, anger, jealousy and so on, we are watering the seeds of misery. Acting with love and compassion will make us happier than acting with any of the other options. Nonetheless, while happiness comes as a consequence of right actions, chasing after it is another form of attachment. Our practice is to face reality as it is; our happiness and our suffering. 🧘

We begin this edition with an extract from an interview Thay gave to American TV host Oprah Winfrey in which he talks about happiness. This is followed by a teaching on 'nourishing happiness'. The second

mindfulness training, 'true happiness' then reminds us not to turn away from suffering. We end with a brief reflection on contemporary psychology – evidence about happiness and a poster made by a Sangha member which he placed in his house to foster happiness after reflecting on Thay's teachings. 🧘



## Oprah talks to Thich Nhat Hanh

Oprah: What is happiness?

Nhat Hanh: Happiness is the cessation of suffering. Well-being. For instance, when I practice this exercise of breathing in, I'm aware of my eyes; breathing out, I smile to my eyes and realize that they are still in good condition. There is a paradise of form and colors in the world. And because you have eyes still in good condition, you can get in touch with the paradise. So when I become aware of my eyes, I touch one of the conditions of happiness. And when I touch it, happiness comes. 🧘

Oprah: And you could do that with every part of your body.

Nhat Hanh: Yes. Breathing in, I am aware of my heart. Breathing out, I smile to my heart and know that my heart still functions normally. I feel grateful for my heart.

*continued over page...*

Oprah: So it's about being aware of and grateful for what we have.

Nhat Hanh: Yes.

Oprah: And not just the material things, but the fact that we have our breath.

Nhat Hanh: Yes. You need the practice of mindfulness to bring your mind back to the body and establish yourself in the moment. If you are fully present, you need only make a step or take a breath in order to enter the kingdom of God. And once you have the kingdom, you don't need to run after objects of your craving, like power, fame, sensual pleasure, and so on. Peace is possible. Happiness is possible. And this practice is simple enough for everyone to do. 🍵

Oprah: Tell me how we do it.

Nhat Hanh: Suppose you are drinking a cup of tea. When you hold your cup, you may like to breathe in, to bring your mind back to your body, and you become fully present. And when you are truly there, something else is also there – life, represented by the cup of tea. In that moment you are real, and the cup of tea is real. You are not lost in the past, in the future, in your projects, in your worries. You are free from all of these afflictions. And in that state of being free, you enjoy your tea. That is the moment of happiness, and of peace. When you brush your teeth, you may have just two minutes, but according to this practice, it is possible to produce freedom and joy during that time, because you are established in the here and now. If you are capable of brushing

your teeth in mindfulness, then you will be able to enjoy the time when you take a shower, cook your breakfast, sip your tea.

Oprah: So from this point of view, there are endless conditions of happiness.

Nhat Hanh: Yes. Mindfulness helps you go home to the present. And every time you go there and recognize a condition of happiness that you have, happiness comes. 🍵

Read more:

<http://www.oprah.com/spirit/Oprah-Talks-to-Thich-Nhat-Hanh/3#ixzz1fGH00WzP>

## Nourishing happiness

*May I know how to nourish the seeds of joy in myself every day.*

*May he/she know how to nourish the seeds of joy in him/herself every day.*

*May they know how to nourish the seeds of joy in themselves every day.*

*May I be able to live fresh, solid, and free.*

*May he/she be able to live fresh, solid, and free.*

*May they be able to live fresh, solid, and free.* 🍵

*May I be free from attachment and aversion, but not be indifferent.*

*May he/she be free from attachment and aversion, but not be indifferent.*

*May they be free from attachment and aversion, but not be indifferent.*

These meditations help us water the seeds of joy and happiness in our store consciousness. Joy and happiness are the food of a Zen monk. Before eating, we say, 'may all beings be nourished by the joy of meditation' 🍵


What is the nature of this joy? How can we touch true joy every moment of our lives?

How can we live in a way that brings a smile, the eyes of love, and happiness to everyone we encounter? Use your talent to find ways to bring happiness to yourself and others – the happiness that arises from meditation and not from the pursuit of fruitless pleasure. Meditative joy has the capacity to nourish our mindfulness, understanding, and love. Try to live in a way that encourages deep happiness in yourself and others. 'I vow to bring joy to one person in the morning and to help relieve the suffering of one person in the afternoon.' Ask yourself, 'Who can I make smile this morning?' This is

the act of creating happiness. 🍵

# True happiness

## *The Second Mindfulness Training*


Aware of the suffering caused by exploitation, social injustice, stealing, and oppression, I am committed to practicing generosity in my thinking, speaking, and acting. I am determined not to steal and not to possess anything that should belong to others; and I will share my time, energy, and material resources with those who are in need. I will practice looking deeply to see that the happiness and suffering of others are not separate from my own happiness and suffering; that true happiness is not possible without understanding and compassion; and that running after wealth, fame, power and sensual pleasures can bring much suffering and despair. I am aware that happiness depends on my mental attitude and not on external conditions, and that I can live happily in the present moment simply by remembering that I already have more than enough conditions to be happy. I am committed to practicing Right Livelihood so that I can help reduce the suffering of living beings on Earth and reverse the process of global warming. 

## *The Psychology of Happiness*

In recent years western psychology has become interested in happiness and not only in misery. The recommendations of 'happiness psychology' are based on empirical evidence. While 'positive

psychology' is not Buddhism it is interesting to note some similarities.


The evidence suggests that the accumulation of wealth is *not* crucial to happiness. Rather our happiness is built through connections to other people. This echoes Thay's emphasis on the importance of the Sangha. Evidence from psychology also suggests that forgiveness and gratitude, along with a mindful savouring of the present moment, promotes happiness. Rather than ruminating on the slights of the past, contentment comes through being grateful for that which went well and developing forgiveness in the present moment towards people who caused us suffering.

Positive psychology recommends that we cultivate the condition of 'flow' in the present moment by which one is so absorbed in activity that time stops. Flow emerges through concentration on a task that we can meet, but not too easily. Flow is a side effect of worthwhile action and is dependent on concentration and mindfulness in relation to a task. Our deepest emotional satisfactions come through the exercise of strengths and virtues. Like Buddhism, the psychology of happiness suggests that happiness involves 'right action' or virtue. Hence happiness depends developing on the meaningful life, that is, in finding a way of life in which ones actions are meaningful because they involve working for 'something bigger' than ourselves. 

*Chris / True Dwelling of the Mind*

# Happiness Poster


**You are already beautiful.** Open your eyes and see your own beauty. It may be clouded by your confusion. Put aside time to care for yourself and love yourself. Your love for yourself and others will grow.

**Create a beautiful environment for yourself.** You and your environment are a reflection of each other. Lift your heart by making your place peaceful and nourishing. This is caring for yourself. It makes you feel happy. Open the blinds and let the light shine into your room and into your heart. 

**Fill your mind with positive and nourishing things,** including TV, internet, books and conversations. Filling your mind with positive things waters the positive seeds within you and brings you happiness. You can choose what part of yourself you want to water.

**Take care of your body.** Fill your body with nourishing food and drink, exercise sunlight and fresh air. Your mind and body are inseparably connected. Caring for your body is caring for your mind.

**Be kind to yourself.** Under all the confusion you are a beautiful flower. With sunlight, water and nourishment you will bloom. You are like the clear blue sky obscured by clouds. The clouds never stain the sky. They just obscure it. Underneath the clouds is your true perfect self. Remember from the compost the flower grows and to the compost the flower returns. The flower needs the compost and the compost needs the flower.

**Our suffering, our darker side is a part of the whole of us. With acceptance and understanding we can transform our suffering and confusion to allow our true beauty to emerge.** 

*Andrew Condell*

## WHO WE ARE

The Communities of Mindful Living are inspired by the Buddhist teachings of Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh (pictured).



We aspire to live fully in each moment for the peace and happiness of ourselves and all beings. We meet regularly to observe the art of mindful living and to foster a supportive community of practitioners.

## Contacts

Sydney, Inner West - John Barclay  
[barclayjohn0@gmail.com](mailto:barclayjohn0@gmail.com)

Lismore Area - Tony Mills and Jenny Pittman  
[fivemountains@hotmail.com](mailto:fivemountains@hotmail.com)

Sylvania - Coral Miles  
[coralmiles@iprimus.com.au](mailto:coralmiles@iprimus.com.au)

Blue Mountains - David Moore and Ann Le 4782 9632  
[edenimages@bigpond.com](mailto:edenimages@bigpond.com)

## How to contribute

Email to: [cbarker@uow.edu.au](mailto:cbarker@uow.edu.au)

Post to: Chris Barker, Faculty of Arts, Uni of Wollongong, 2500

[www.lotusbudsangha.org](http://www.lotusbudsangha.org)

All images used with permission from [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com) creative commons unless otherwise stated.

## Notices...


**Wednesday night** Lotus Bud Sangha at the Buddhist library in Camperdown All welcome.

The Lotus Bud Sangha will meet again in the new year from Wednesday January 25th, 2012.



## Reading bell

As you read this magazine you have an opportunity to go back to the present moment.

You will notice a bell:  throughout the magazine.

When you come to each bell, you may like to stop reading, clear your mind and return to your breath before continuing.

## Our main activities

### Wednesday Mindfulness Meditation at Camperdown

We welcome all to come join us for meditation practice - We meet at 7:30 pm each Wednesday at the Buddhist Library, Church St, Camperdown, Sydney.

### Mindfulness Days - monthly

Once a month we offer a day of mindful practice and contemplation. The day normally consists of chanting sitting meditation, outdoor walking meditation (if weather permits), a dharma talk and lunch.

Mindfulness Days at Nhap Luu (Entering the Stream) Meditation Centre  
221 Maria's Lane  
Beaufort VIC 3733  
[streammpc@gmail.com](mailto:streammpc@gmail.com) [www.plumvillageasia.org](http://www.plumvillageasia.org)

Ian Roberts is a neighbour of Nhap Luu and a member of the Present Moment Sangha Melbourne 03 5349 2729