



# THE LOTUS BUD

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## *The courage to love* *Dear Sangha,*

*In our practice we talk about the importance of love and we practice to develop this capacity within us. In this edition of The Lotus Bud we explore the idea that love requires us to exhibit another important quality - courage. As writer Brene Brown explains, love opens us up to our vulnerability.*

'I define vulnerability as uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure. With that definition in mind, let's think about love. Waking up everyday and loving someone who may or may not love us back, whose safety we can't ensure, who may stay in our lives or may leave without a moments notice, who may be loyal to the day they die or betray us tomorrow- that's vulnerability. Love is uncertain. It's incredibly risky. And loving someone leaves us emotionally exposed. Yes, it's scary and yes, we're open to being hurt, but can you



Image by blmiers2

imagine your life without love or being loved? *Brene Brown, 2012, Daring Greatly. Gotham Books pg 34.*

*But we must find the courage to love. As Thich Naht Hanh advises us: 'Do not be afraid to love. Without love, life is impossible. We have to learn the art of loving. Love by the way you walk, the way you sit, the way you eat. Learn to love yourself and others properly. The Buddha offers us light to shine on the nature of our love. He offers very concrete ways to practice living our daily lives so love becomes something delightful. This world very much needs love.'* 

*Teachings On Love (2007) by Thich Nhat Hanh Parallax Press, Berkeley, California.*

## *Love is deep listening*

Just by listening deeply with compassion, we can bring relief and reduce the suffering in the family, in the community, and in the nation. We know that if we can sit and listen calmly like that for one hour, the speakers will suffer less and will feel that they are being understood. Many sessions of listening and loving speech can transform the situation. 

*Leading with Courage and Compassion*  
*Thich Nhat Hahn*  
*Mindfulness Bell, Summer 2009*

## Thich Nhat Hanh talks about love

So what does it mean to love? To love is to look at each other and to look together in the same direction. If we know how to look, then looking at each other is also wonderful. Because if you know how to look at each other and discover the basic goodness and the basic beauty within the other person and you have a chance to discover the same thing within yourself. Looking at the other person is also to look at yourself. You have a chance to discover that love is something real and existing. 🙏

Opportunities have been given to you, to each of us, to experience this. Love is something that really exists. Love is the energy helping us to be strong, to be loving and to be caring. We care for the well-being of other people and other living beings. We care about the relief of other people's suffering. We care about how to help people suffer less and become capable of happiness. When we touch someone who can embody that energy of love, we touch at the same time what we call the Beautiful. Because love is beauty. If by our own experience we know that love and beauty exist and can be generated in our daily life, our life begins to have meaning. We will suffer less, much less, right away. When we have learned how to be with people who can embody love and beauty we can learn to generate that energy of love and beauty in ourselves.

*Thich Nhat Hanh's dharma talk, January 1998.  
Found at: <http://www.abuddhistlibrary.com>*

*And Thay offers us four mantras to help our practice of love within relationships.*

The first mantra is "Darling, I'm here for you." When you love someone, the best you can offer is your presence. How can you love if you are not there? You look into their eyes and you say, "Darling, you know something? I'm here for you." You offer him or her your presence. You are not preoccupied with the past or the future; you are there for your beloved.

The second mantra is, "Darling, I know you are there and I am so happy." Because you are fully there, you recognize the presence of your beloved as something very precious. You embrace your beloved with mindfulness. And he or she will bloom like a flower. To be loved means to be recognized as existing. And these two mantras can bring happiness right away, even if your beloved one is not there. You can use your telephone and practice the mantra. 🙏

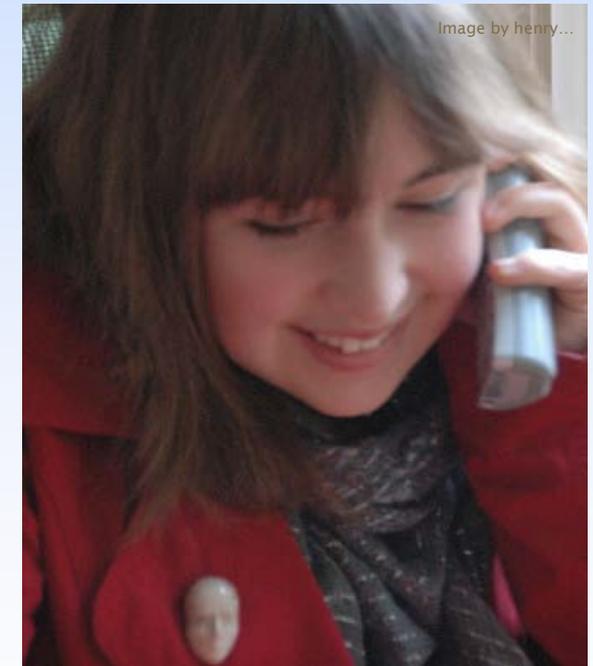
The third mantra is what you practice when your beloved one is suffering. "Darling, I know you're suffering. That is why I am here for you." Before you do something to help, your presence already can bring some relief.

The fourth mantra is a little bit more difficult. It is when you suffer and you believe that your suffering has been caused by your beloved. If someone else had done the same wrong to you, you would have suffered less. But this is the person you love the most, so you suffer deeply. You prefer to go to your room and close the door and suffer alone. You are

hurt. And you want to punish him or her for having made you suffer. The mantra is to overcome that: "Darling, I suffer. I am trying my best to practice. Please help me." You go to him, you go to her, and practice that. And if you can bring yourself to say that mantra, you suffer less right away. Because you do not have that obstacle standing between you and the other person. 🙏

<http://www.oprah.com/spirit/Oprah-Talks-to-Thich-Nhat-Hanh/7#ixzz29FXJ1YM7>

*Thich Nhat Hanh also points out that love and true peace requires non-fear and courage. This courage is a quality that Thay does not simply talk about but shows us in his life.*



## Peace in every step

*Thich Nhat Hanh's life of courage and compassion*

In 1976, Nhat Hanh attended the World Conference on Religion and Peace in Singapore and, while there, a group of Vietnamese women told him that thousands of Vietnamese refugees were in camps in various Southeast Asian countries, with no hope of being accepted into any other country because of immigration quotas. These refugees were dubbed 'boat people' because many of them had escaped in rickety boats. They were packed into the boats like sardines, says Sister Dang Nghiem, a nun in the Order of Interbeing who is originally from Vietnam. Her country because they were afraid of life under the Communists, but escape was perilous. If the government caught them fleeing, which often happened, they were either imprisoned or shot. Pirates were another terrible danger, and often refugees would no sooner get robbed and raped by one band of pirates, then they'd be attacked by another. The boat people, says Sister Dang, 'had more chance to die than to make it to the other shore.' 🙏

The Vietnamese women that Nhat Hanh met in Singapore told him that many governments, including Singapore, had a policy to push refugee boats back to sea - back to danger. The Vietnamese women knew that nine people were about to be expelled and they invited Nhat Hanh to be a witness. He was moved by what he saw

and began to work on behalf of the boat people. He and his allies raised money to rent two vessels, cargo ship, the Roland, and an oil tanker, the Leapdal and within a few weeks on the high seas they'd rescued more than eight hundred refugees. The plan was to take the refugees to Guam and Australia and if they were not issued visas on the spot, then Nhat Hanh and his friends would invite journalists to cover the situation. When word of this plan leaked out, however, refugees in Thailand and Malaysia began leaving camps in hopes of meeting up with the Roland or the Leapdal. This angered the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees and, less than three months after the project began, Nhat Hanh was forced to stop his work on behalf of the boat people. 🙏

Nonetheless, he continued to be of spiritual and emotional help, says Sister Dang. *Please Call Me by My True Names*, the most celebrated of all of Thich Nhat Hanh poems, was written in 1978 while he was helping the boat people. In these verses, he writes that he is the twelve-year-old refugee who throws herself into the sea after being raped by a pirate, and he's also the pirate, not yet capable of love. He's the member of the politburo with power in his hands, and he's also the prisoner in the forced-labor camp. He concludes:

*Please call me by my true names,  
so I can wake up  
and the door of my heart  
could be left open,  
the door of compassion.* 🙏

That's a lot of compassion,' says Sister Dang, 'and that's healing for many former boat people who read Nhat Hanh's poem. It will help them to embrace their own pain and make a connection with another human being. 🙏

*Andrea Miller  
Shambala Sun. July 2012*

*And while we may not be called upon  
or be able to display this level of  
courage we can tap into our courage  
everyday just by loving those around  
us and giving them our attention  
with deep listening.*



## 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

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## Notices...

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

All welcome.



## 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

## 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)