



THE LOTUS BUD

Magazine of Mindful Living ~ Issue No 51, June/July 2013

Dear Sangha,

In our tradition smiling is mindful and transformative practice. Here's a short teaching by Thây on how the smile is integral to practice:

"I always say that a smile can be a practice, a kind of yoga practice. Yoga of the mouth: you just smile even if you don't feel joy and you'll see after you smile that you'll feel differently. Sometimes the mind takes the initiative and sometimes you have to allow the body to take the initiative. 🧘"

Sometimes the spirit leads, and sometimes the body can lead. This is why when you have joy, you naturally smile. But sometimes you can allow the smile to go first. You try to smile and suddenly you feel that you don't suffer that much anymore. So don't discriminate against the body. The body also can be a leader, not only the spirit. I propose that you try this when you

wake up during the night. It's totally dark. Breath in and smile, and you'll see. Smile to life. You are alive, you smile. This is not a diplomatic smile, because no one sees you smiling. Yet the smile is a smile of enlightenment, of joy—the joy you feel of being alive. 🧘

So smiling is a practice, a yoga practice. Don't say, "I have no joy, why do I have to smile?" Because when you have joy and you smile, that is not practice, that's very natural. When you don't have joy and you smile, that is a real practice. You know there are something like 300 muscles, small and big on your face. Every time we get very angry or worried all these muscles are very tight. When people look at you with that tension on your face, they don't see you like a flower. People are afraid of you when all the muscles on your face are tense like that. You look more like a bomb than

a flower. But if you know how to smile, in just one second, all these muscles are relaxed and your face looks like a flower again. It's wonderful.

So we have to learn to smile and then we'll look presentable right away. Look into the mirror and practice, and you'll see that the practice of the smile is very important. It brings relaxation and you can let go. You feel that you are released from the grip of the anger, of the despair". 🧘



image by eperitas

Smile, and be at peace

From time to time, to remind ourselves to relax, to be peaceful, we must wish to set aside some time for a retreat, a day of mindfulness, when we can walk slowly, smile, drink tea with a friend, enjoy being together as if we are the happiest people on Earth. This is not a retreat, it is a treat. During walking meditation, during kitchen and garden work, during sitting meditation, all day long, we can practice smiling. At first you may find it difficult to smile, and we have to think about why. Smiling means that we are ourselves, that we have sovereignty over ourselves, that we are not drowned into forgetfulness. This kind of smile can be seen on the faces of Buddhas and bodhisattvas. 🧘

I would like to offer one short poem you can recite from time to time, while breathing and smiling.

Breathing in, I calm my body.

Breathing out, I smile.

Dwelling in the present moment

I know this is a wonderful moment.

'Breathing in, I calm my body.' This line is like drinking a glass of ice water-you feel the cold, the freshness, permeate your body. When I breathe in and recite this line, I actually feel the breathing calming my body, calming my mind. 'Breathing out, I smile.' You know the effect of a smile.

A smile can relax hundreds of muscles in your face, and relax your nervous system. A smile makes you master of yourself. That is why the Buddhas and the bodhisattvas are always smiling. When you smile, you realize the wonder of the smile. 🧘

'Dwelling in the present moment.' While I sit here, I don't think of somewhere else, of the future or the past. I sit here, and I know where I am. This is very important. We tend to be alive in the future, not now. We say, 'Wait until I finish school and get my Ph.D. degree, and then I will be really alive.' When we have it, and it's not easy to get, we say to ourselves, 'I have to wait until I have a job in order to be really alive.' And then after the job, a car. After the car, a house. We are not capable of being alive in the present moment. We tend to postpone being alive to the future, the distant future, we don't know when. Now is not the moment to be alive. We may never be alive at all in our entire life. Therefore the technique, if we have to speak of a technique, is to be in the present moment, to be aware that we are here and now, and the only moment to be alive is the present moment.

'I know this is a wonderful moment.' This is the only moment that is real. To be here and now, and enjoy the present moment is our most wonderful task. 'Calming, Smiling, Present moment, Wonderful moment.' I hope you will try it. 🧘

From *Being peace* by Thich Nhat Hanh

Being peace

**If we are peaceful.
If we are happy.
We can smile and blossom
Like a flower.**

**And everyone
In our family,
Our entire society
Will benefit
From our peace.**

Thich Nhat Hahn



Image by Thai Jasmine

Smile in each moment

There's a tendency to get caught up in the tasks of our day, the urgency of what's coming up, the distractions of being online.

And we forget to smile.

In the rush of the day, the stress of wanting things to happen a certain way, we lose the enjoyment of each moment.

In every moment, there's the capacity for happiness. It's not that we need to be ecstatic, full of pleasure, excited or even joyous each and every second of the day. Who needs that kind of pressure? And it's not that we can never feel sadness or anger or stress. It's that we can feel happiness, in some form, any moment we like, even in the midst of stress or sadness. 🧘

And it's exceedingly simple. We just need to remember to smile.

You can smile in each and every moment.

OK, maybe you don't need a smile on your face all day long — your cheeks will feel tired. But we can smile more, and in between physical smiles, we can have an internal smile.

Try an internal smile now: have a calm, unsmiling face, but think of the miracle of this moment, and find a thought to smile about. Feel the smiling feeling inside. Isn't that amazing?

•What do you have to smile about in this moment?

Some ideas:

- You have someone in your life who cares about you.
- There is beauty all around you, in many forms.
- You are generous, compassionate, and good-hearted.
- You have someone you can help.
- You have eaten today.
- You can move.
- You can see the sun shining.
- You can appreciate the leaves of a tree, rain falling, wind blowing.
- You can taste chocolate.
- You get to spend time with someone you love.
- You have music in your life.
- You get to create something.

And so on. You probably don't have all of these, but you might have one or two, and if so, that's a more than good enough cause to smile. 🧘

You'll forget to smile in some moments, because your mind gets caught up in stories about the past, stresses about what might happen in the future. None of this is

happening right now — it's just movies playing in our heads.

Instead, remind yourself of what's happening right now, and see the beauty in it, see the reason to smile. And then smile, externally and internally.

This changes your day, because now instead of being caught up in stress and stories, we are present, and happy. We can be content with every moment.

It changes your life, because too often we miss the smile-ability of life when we are not paying attention. 🧘

<http://zenhabits.net/>

By Leo Babauta

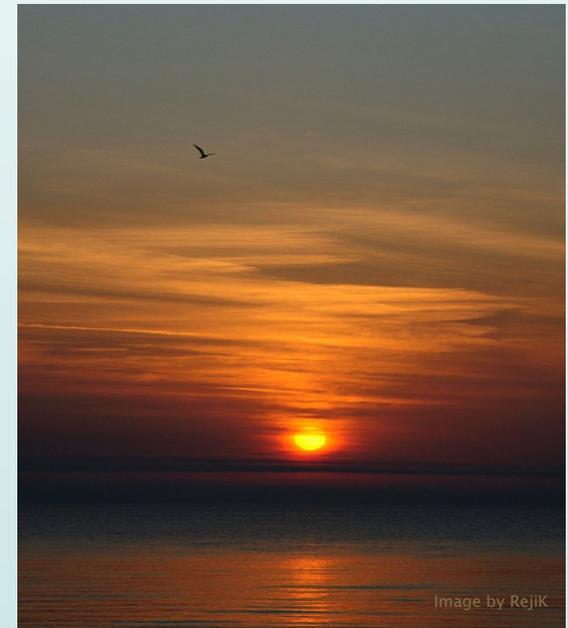


Image by RejiK

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. 🙏

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www.lotusbudsangha.org

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Coming events...

On Sunday 23 June there will be a recitation of 14 Mindfulness Trainings at a hall in Carringbah organised by the Flower of Peace sangha. It's also a farewell for Ali who is off to London at the end of the month and Coral - off to live on the Sunshine Coast in mid July. For more details email John: barclayjohn0@gmail.com

We would love to hear from you. We want the The Lotus Bud to be a place for sharing our experiences and building the Sangha; so why not write a short piece about your experiences with mindfulness ?

Email: cbarker@uow.edu.au

Post: 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.

Meditation and monthly Mindfulness Days at Canley Heights

Southwest Sydney - 7.30pm
Friday Night Meditation and Monthly Mindfulness Days.
49 Ferngrove Rd Canley Heights.

Mindfulness Days at Nhap Luu (Entering the Stream)

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