



THE LOTUS BUD

Magazine of Mindful Living ~ Issue No 79, April 2016

Dear Sangha,

We live in turbulent times that have been dubbed the ‘age of anxiety’. There are many pressures and expectations in modern life that can give rise to fears and feelings of inadequacy and lack of self-worth. In this edition of *The Lotus Bud* They explains how we might learn to live without fear and Tara Brach explores the idea that ‘radical acceptance’, by which we accept our feelings whatever they are without attachment to them, is the way to face our fears. 🙏

Chris / True Dwelling of the Mind

Fearlessness

Most of us experience a life full of wonderful moments and difficult moments. But for many of us, even when we are most joyful, there is fear behind our joy. We fear that this moment will end, that we won’t get what we need, that we will lose what we love, or that we will not be safe. Often, our biggest fear is the knowledge that one day our bodies will cease functioning. So even when we are surrounded by all the conditions for happiness, our joy is not complete.

We may think that if we ignore our fears, they’ll go away. But if we bury worries and anxieties in our consciousness, they continue to affect us and bring us more sorrow. We are very afraid of being powerless. But we have the power to look deeply at our fears, and then fear cannot control us. We can transform our fear. Fear keeps us focused on the past or worried about the future.

If we can acknowledge our fear, we can realize that right now we are okay. Right now, today, we are still alive, and our bodies are working marvelously. Our eyes can still see the beautiful sky. Our ears can still hear the voices of our loved ones. 🙏

The first part of looking at our fear is just inviting it into our awareness without judgment. We just acknowledge gently that it is there. This brings a lot of relief already. Then, once our fear has calmed down, we can embrace it tenderly and look deeply into its roots, its sources. Understanding the origins of our anxieties and fears will help us let go of them. Is our fear coming from something that is happening right now or is it an old fear, a fear from when we were small that we’ve kept inside? When we practice inviting all our fears up, we become aware that we are still alive, that we still have many things to treasure and enjoy.

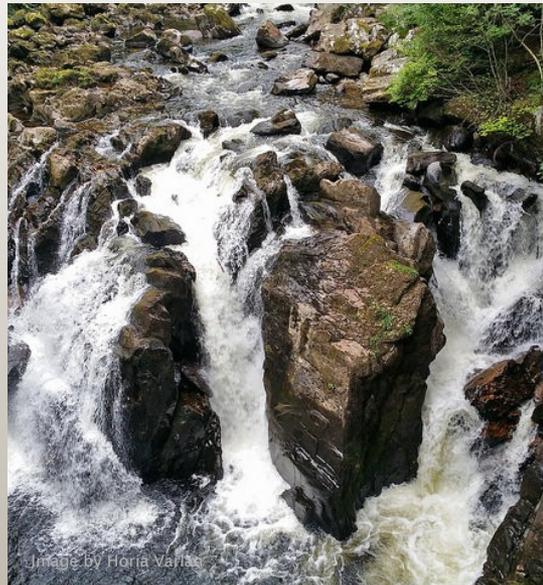
If we are not pushing down and managing our fear, we can enjoy the sunshine, the fog, the air, and the water. If you can look deep into your fear and have a clear vision of it, then you really can live a life that is worthwhile.

The Buddha was a human being, and he also knew fear. But because he spent each day practicing mindfulness and looking closely at his fear, when confronted with the unknown, he was able to face it calmly and peacefully. There is a story about a time the Buddha was out walking and Angulimala, a notorious serial killer, came upon him. Angulimala shouted for the Buddha to stop, but the Buddha kept walking slowly and calmly. Angulimala caught up with him and demanded to know why he hadn't stopped. The Buddha replied, "Angulimala, I stopped a long time ago. It is you who have not stopped." He went on to explain, "I stopped committing acts that cause suffering to other living beings. All living beings want to live. All fear death. We must nurture a heart of compassion and protect the lives of all beings." Startled, Angulimala asked to know more. By the end of the conversation, Angulimala vowed never again to commit violent acts and decided to become a monk. 🧘

How could the Buddha remain so calm and relaxed when faced with a murderer? This is an extreme example, but each of us faces our fears in one way or another every day. A daily practice of mindfulness can be of enormous help. Beginning with our breath, beginning with awareness, we are able to meet whatever comes our way.

Fearlessness is not only possible, it is the ultimate joy. When you touch nonfear, you are free. If I am ever in an airplane and the pilot announces that the plane is about to crash, I will practice mindful breathing. If you receive bad news, I hope you will do the same. But don't wait for the critical moment to arrive before you start practicing to transform your fear and live mindfully. Nobody can give you fearlessness. Even if the Buddha were sitting right here next to you, he couldn't give it to you. You have to practice it and realize it yourself. If you make a habit of mindfulness practice, when difficulties arise, you will already know what to do. 🧘

Thich Nhat Hanh [online source](#)



Radical acceptance

- an interview with Tara Brach

Tara Brach: Radical acceptance has two elements: It is an honest acknowledgment of what is going on inside you, and a courageous willingness to be with life in the present moment, just as it is. I sometimes simplify it to "recognising" and "allowing."

You can accept an experience without liking it. In fact, let's say you are feeling stuck in anxiety and disliking the feeling. Radical Acceptance includes accepting both the feelings of anxiety *and* the aversion to it. In fact, acceptance is not real and not healing unless it honestly includes all aspects of your experience.

There is an increasingly well-known adage that says "What you resist, persists." Your identity gets hitched to whatever you are not accepting. And the more you push something away or run from something, the more your sense of self is linked with that experience. 🧘

This dynamic has been expressed as an equation: Pain x Resistance = Suffering. Typically when anxiety or anger or sadness arises, it is met with a form of resistance like judgment (such as the thought "This is bad, this shouldn't be happening"), self-distraction or physical contraction. If instead you mindfully accept the difficult feeling and the dislike of how unpleasant it is,

there is a shift in your relationship to the experience. That which is aware and accepting of the feelings is larger than the feelings. Your sense of Being is enlarged: While the unpleasantness might remain, it no longer is hitched to your sense of who you are. There is freedom, there is room for what is going on.

Some helpful mantras in practicing radical acceptance are “This too” and “Yes.” Saying yes, or sending the energetic message of “Yes” helps to incline you toward allowing what is, to be there. 🧘

It can be helpful to remember that radical acceptance of a difficult feeling does not mean that you are resigned to always feeling that way. It doesn't mean that the feeling is “right” or “wrong.” Nor does it mean that you will be passive, and not take actions that might be helpful. Radical acceptance refers to your relationship with the reality of “what is” in the present moment. By arriving honestly and with openness to this moment's experience, you create the possibility of then responding with wisdom and compassion. For example, radical acceptance of anxiety might then incline you to share your experience with a trusted friend, go out to walk in the woods, or write in your journal. What is important is that you have first become intimate with your own experience.

Over the years I've been drawn to three primary gateways for awakening. In the Buddhist tradition they are referred to as the three refuges:

One (called “sangha”) is loving relationship-both live contact with loved ones and also meditation on the love that's in my life. In the moments of remembering love, there is an opening out of the sense of separate self. For me, reflecting on love has included prayer to the beloved, to what I experience as the loving awareness that is my source. When I feel separate and stuck, that loving presence might seem like it's apart from me and “out there.” But by reaching out in longing and prayer, I'm carried home to the loving presence that is intrinsic to my Being.

A second gateway (“dharma” or truth) is taking refuge in the present moment. The training of meditation is a gift as it has helped me to pause, wake up out of thoughts and contact my moment to moment experience. When I am no longer running away or resisting what is happening inside me, I reconnect with the space and compassion that has room for whatever is going on. 🧘

A third gateway (“buddha” or “buddha nature”) is turning towards awareness itself. Most of the time we are paying attention to the foreground of experience-to our thoughts, feelings and sensations. What we are missing out on is the background of experience, the formless dimension of Being itself. By asking questions like “What is aware right now?” or “What is knowing these sounds?” or “Who am I?” we begin to intuit our own presence or Beingness. The signs of this presence are space, stillness and silence.

For myself and so many I've worked with, becoming familiar with this formless dimension of who we are makes it possible to open with love to the changing expressions of life within and around us. It allows us to make peace with living and dying, and to live our moments fully. 🧘

[Online source](#)



Image by AJC-ajcann.wordpress.com

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

Sutherland Area - Lorraine Curtain
loricurtain@optusnet.com.au

Northern Beaches - Dharma Boat Sangha
Andrew Condell
raandrops@gmail.com

Blue Mountains - Ann Morris
annmorris52@gmail.com

Newcastle - Hannah Perkins
han.perkins@gmail.com

Caboolture Qld - Joyce and Rhys Davies_
rhystdavies@yahoo.com.au

Lismore Area
5mountainscommunity@gmail.com

www.lotusbudsangha.org

All images used with permission from www.flickr.com creative commons unless otherwise stated.

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 activities

Wednesday Mindfulness
Meditation
Sydney, Inner West

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)
Meditation Centre
221 Maria's Lane
Beaufort VIC 3733
streammpc@gmail.com
www.plumvillageasia.org
0431 470 172

Online sources for articles in this Issue

<http://www.awakin.org/read/view.php?tid=934>

<http://blogs.psychcentral.com/mindfulness/2009/09/radical-acceptance-an-interview>