



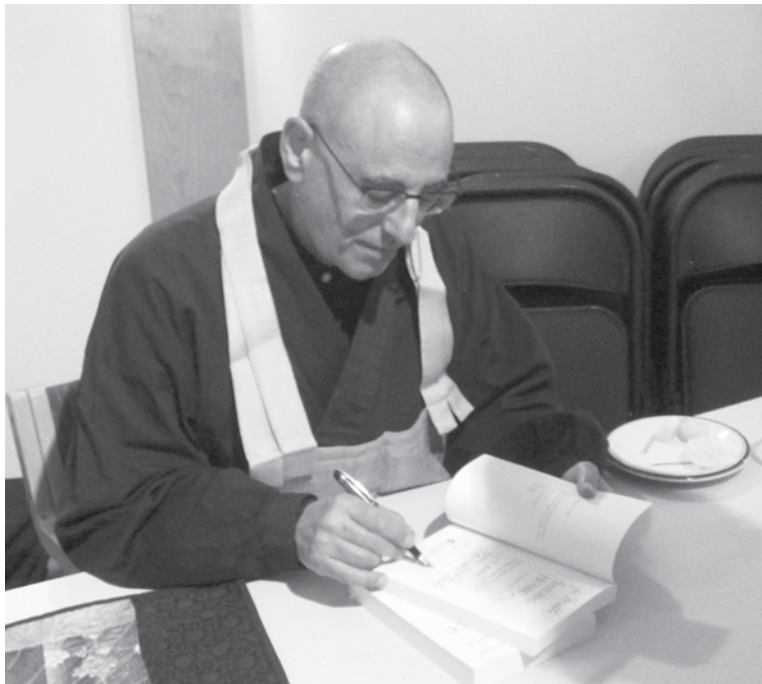
Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center

A Center for Mindful Living

652 17th Avenue NE, , Minneapolis, MN 55413 • Issue No. 43 • Summer 2016

What is Zazen?

In Dialogue with Norman Fischer



Editor's Note: In March Norman Fischer visited our Center and gave a presentation on "What Is Zen?" Norman is a Zen priest, a former abbot of the San Francisco Zen Center, and a highly-regarded writer and poet. His evening presentation consisted of a number of questions about Zen and human life that he was asked, followed by his responses.

One area of questioning had to do with zazen, the Zen form of sitting meditation. Zazen is usually considered to be the central practice in Zen, and literally means sitting (*za* in Japanese) zen (which derives from the Sanskrit word *dhyana*, which refers to meditation practice). Norman was asked, What is zazen? Why is it at the heart of the practice of Zen? And what difference does it make? What follows is his response.

Zazen couldn't be a more simple practice, really. It's just sitting down in the middle of the present moment of being alive, and noticing what it feels like to be alive.

Everything you have ever experienced, or will experience—every wonderful moment that you've ever had, every terrible moment that you've ever had, every problem that you've ever had—all have depended on the fact that you're alive. Because if you weren't alive you wouldn't have had any of these problems, or joys, or sorrows.

But we *assume* being alive—we just take it for granted. And then we focus on all our problems and issues and all our stuff.

But what is being alive? What does it feel like to be alive? What is the actual experience of just life itself? To experience life itself in a moment of life—that's basically what the practice of zazen comes down to.

The technique of doing this is very simple.

You just sit down. It's good to sit down in a posture in which there is some alertness, because it's easy to fall asleep, and if you're sleeping you're unconscious and

you're not really experiencing this moment of your life. So you want to sit in some awake, alert posture which means sitting up straight, more or less.

And then you just pay attention to breathing and being present.

Because when you think about it, what is the feeling of being alive? Well, it means you are embodied, because if you didn't have a body, there would be no life.

But it's not enough to have a body, because the body could be a corpse. When you're alive, you're breathing. So you pay attention to your breathing and your body.

And then, a living being is conscious. So you pay attention to your consciousness, your breathing, your body. And you just sit there and that's all you do.

That's really simple. A little kid could do zazen. There's nothing complicated about it.

And there's no advanced practice or anything like that. The beginning and the advanced are exactly the same.

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2016 Spring Appeal

Dear Friend:

This spring, it has been easy for me to see what was behind the years of work to open the new building: **a shared vision of a lively spiritual center at the heart of an active community.**

Energy has been high. As I write this, 35 people are coming to class with Michael every Wednesday evening, learning about the Four Noble Truths. Many of these people are new to “Buddhist Studies,” and they like it.

When Norman Fischer visited us in March, 65 people participated, and we had to look all through the building to find enough chairs. Once a month, people who want to take more responsibility for global climate change, without falling into blame or despair, gather for a potluck and a deep discussion. We’ve had welcome sessions, orientations to Zen practice, introductory classes, meditation and dharma talks, and various kinds of retreats. And we’ve added three new members to our Board of Directors, working to support these activities, our teachers, and our Zen center.

I want you to know that your participation in all of this is important and valued. If you have taken a class, or come to hear a speaker, or attended a meditation session, we hope that you have received something that makes you feel that you are on a path to more depth and happiness in your life.

Now, as the community that built the building, we need to keep building the community.

At this time we are carrying out our annual Spring Appeal, and **we ask for your financial support to carry on the programming of our Center.** We keep the costs of the classes and programs low so that anyone who wants to get involved can do so. As a result, two-thirds of the money we need to operate must come from us, members and contributors.

We hope that you want to contribute to the well-being of other people on the path with you. You could give us a good idea to help build a strong future for Compassionate Ocean—please put it in the enclosed envelope. You could volunteer to work with us on behalf of the Center. And you could provide important financial support. **Please be a contributor at this time if you are able.**

Thank you for considering this request. May mindful awareness and a loving heart be present in us all.

John Stuart

John Stuart
Chair, Board of Directors



Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Donations are tax deductible.



Summer Programs 2016

Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center

652 17th Avenue NE. , Minneapolis, MN 55413
(612) 781-7640 • www.OceanDharma.org

Lovingkindness

The Practice of Opening the Heart

Taught by Joen Snyder O'Neal



*illustration by
Mayumi Oda*

The Dalai Lama has said: "My religion is kindness." If we all adopted such a stance and embodied it in thought and action, inner and outer peace would be immediate... This is the work and power of lovingkindness, the embrace that allows no separation between self, others, and events—the affirmation and honoring of a core goodness in others and in oneself. The practice of lovingkindness is, in fact, the ground of mindfulness practice, requiring the same nonjudging, nongrasping, nonrejecting orientation toward the present moment, an orientation that invites and makes room for calmness, clarity of mind and heart, and understanding.

– Jon Kabat-Zinn

This course will explore “the revolutionary art of happiness”—the practice of lovingkindness and its companion states of compassion, joy, and equanimity. These are called the Four Immeasurables because there is no limit to their depth or scope—everyone can cultivate a heart as wide as the whole world.

We will investigate what supports these mind states and what hinders them. And we will explore how we can bring these immeasurable mind states to bear on pain, fear, and negativity within and around us. Our study will include materials from Thich Nhat Hanh, Ken McLeod, Sharon Salzberg, and other teachers. Each class will include meditation, presentations by the instructor, and discussion.

Summer 2016: Lovingkindness (#B78)

Wednesdays, June 8–July 27 (eight sessions)

7:00–8:45 p.m.

\$160 (members \$140) (includes course text: *Lovingkindness* by Sharon Salzberg)

Member rates apply to members of all local dharma centers.

Reduced fees are offered as needed; please contact the Center at (612) 781-7640.

To register, use the registration form on page 6, go to www.OceanDharma.org, or call (612) 781-7640.

Total Dynamic Living - Introductory Program in Mindfulness

Total Dynamic Living is a thorough, well-structured introduction to mindfulness practice in everyday life. It follows the nationally acclaimed mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) model developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn, presenting mindfulness as a universal practice for people of any (or no) religious background.

The program includes instruction and practice in sitting meditation, gentle yoga, body awareness meditation, and daily-life applications of mindfulness. It also includes information about stress and relaxation. The program enables participants to develop their own base in mindfulness practice integrated into everyday life.

The course includes eight weekly classes, an individual interview with the instructor, a Saturday retreat, the book *Full Catastrophe Living* by Jon Kabat-Zinn, four CDs, and handouts. 27 CEUs are available for all courses.

The course fee is \$295 plus a \$35 materials fee. Payment plans and some scholarship aid are available. Please contact the Center to discuss.

Enrollment is limited, and pre-registration is required. Please let your friends and colleagues know about this program.

#189 Minneapolis: Tuesdays
June 7–July 26 • 6:30-9:00 P.M.

Instructor: Joen Snyder O'Neal

Location: Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center
652 17th Ave. NE, Minneapolis (in the Northeast Arts District)

#270 St. Paul: Thursdays
June 9–July 28 • 6:30-9:00 P.M.

Instructor: Michael O'Neal

Location: Clouds in Water Zen Center
445 Farrington St., St. Paul (near University Ave. and Western Ave.)

Total Dynamic Living: One-Day Retreat

This retreat is open to all current participants in Total Dynamic Living courses. It is also open to graduates of past Total Dynamic Living courses on a donation basis. People not enrolled in a current course should call the Center in advance to reserve a space.

Saturday, July 23, 2016 • 9:00 A.M.-3:00 P.M.

Location: 652 17th Ave. NE, Minneapolis



27 CEUs are available for nurses, social workers, educators, and psychologists.

Guiding Teachers



Joen Snyder O'Neal
and Michael O'Neal

Joen Snyder O'Neal and Michael O'Neal are the guiding teachers of the Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center. They practiced and taught for many years at the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center and Hokyoji Zen Monastery under the guidance of Dainin Katagiri Roshi. They have also practiced with Thich Nhat Hanh in France and the United States, and have completed a training for professionals with Jon Kabat-Zinn. Joen was ordained as a Zen priest by Katagiri Roshi in 1980 and received Dharma transmission from him in 1989.

The guiding teachers are available for individual meetings regarding life and practice. To set up an appointment, call the Center.

Volunteers are welcomed and needed, to help sustain and grow Compassionate Ocean.

Special areas for volunteer help are the Finance Committee, Publicity and Promotion Committee, and Fundraising Committee. People to help take care of our building (cleaning, etc.) are also needed. Please contact the Center for more information.

Meditation and Dharma Talks

Most Sunday and Friday mornings throughout the year Compassionate Ocean offers meditation practice (sitting and walking) followed by a Dharma talk and discussion, focusing on aspects of Buddhist teaching and their application to everyday life. Our practice is in the mindfulness traditions of Soto Zen and Thich Nhat Hahn. Everyone is invited to participate. There are no prerequisites; people are welcome to come when they wish. There is no fee; donations are welcome. The Sunday gathering is co-led by Joen Snyder O'Neal and Michael O'Neal. Joen leads the Friday group.

Sundays, 9:00-11:15 A.M.

Schedule: 9:00 sitting, 9:25 walking, 9:35 sitting, 10:00 dharma talk and discussion, 11:15 ending.

Fridays, 9:30-11:00 A.M.

Schedule: 9:30 sitting, 10:00 walking, 10:10 dharma talk and discussion, 11:00 ending.

Welcome Sessions

New people are always welcome at our Sunday and Friday moenig gatherings. To provide a special welcome, welcome sessions that include an orientation to our practice are offered periodically. These are excellent opportunities to find out more if you are curious but haven't got around to coming.

Sunday, June 5, 9:00-11:15 A.M.

Friday, June 10, 9:30-11:00 A.M.

Orientation to Zen Meditation

Basic instruction in Zen sitting practice.

Sunday mornings at 8:15 A.M.

Introduction to Zen Practice with Michael

A two-class introduction to Zen meditation and related practices. No fee; pre-registration required.

Mondays, June 13 & 20, 7:00-8:30 P.M.

Meditation Sessions

Wednesday mornings:

7:00 A.M. zazen (sitting), 7:30 kinhin (walking), 7:40 zazen, 8:10 chanting service, 8:30 temple cleaning (to 8:45).

People are welcome to come for any part of the schedule.

Sangha Retreats

These retreats are open to community members as well as others who have had some experience with Buddhist practice and meditation. Each retreat offers an extended opportunity to settle the mind and body and open to the deep wisdom of human life. These retreats are excellent opportunities to strengthen and deepen the practice of presence, including benefiting from the support of others.

Weekend Sesshin at Ryumonji Monastery Friday, June 17, 7:00 P.M.–Sunday, June 19, Noon

Located in northeastern Iowa

Led by Shoken Winecoff, Joen Snyder O'Neal and Michael O'Neal. Fee due in advance: members \$125, non-members \$150 (includes meals and lodging). To register for this retreat, call the Center at 612-781-7640.

Day of Mindfulness

Saturday, July 16, 9:00-4:30 P.M.

Led by Joen Snyder O'Neal and Michael O'Neal.

This day will include sitting and walking meditation, yoga practice, body scan, and a Dharma talk. Includes vegetarian lunch. Fee: \$25 (members \$25).

Practice Period at Hokoji

Located in southeastern Minnesota

Seven-day practice period:

Monday Aug. 29, 5:00 P.M.–Monday Sept. 5, 2:00 P.M.

Sesshin only:

Friday Sept. 2, 7:00 P.M.–Monday Sept. 5, 2:00 P.M.

Fee: \$65/night (members \$55/night)

Led by Joen Snyder O'Neal, Michael O'Neal, and resident priest Dokai Georgeson.

This practice period offers participants an opportunity to practice mindfulness in a variety of forms over the course of seven days. It will include sitting and walking meditation, dharma talks, study time, yoga and mindful movement, deep

relaxation, vegetarian meals, work practice, and dharma discussion. There will be opportunities for individual meetings with teachers. This is a wonderful practice opportunity—register early to reserve a place. If you are interested in this event but have not attended a Compassionate Ocean sangha retreat in the past, please call.



Summer 2016 Registration Form

Name _____

Address _____

Zip _____ Email _____

Phone

H: () _____

W: () _____

To register, please check the appropriate activities.

Total Dynamic Living—Introductory Program in Mindfulness (\$25 deposit)

- Minneapolis, Tuesday evenings (#189)
- St. Paul, Thursday evenings (#270)

Total Dynamic Living: One-Day Retreat

- Saturday, July 23, 9:00 A.M.– 3:00 P.M.
(by donation for program alumni)

Lovingkindness

- Minneapolis, Wednesday evenings (#B78)

Baika Workshop:

- Sunday, June 12 (no fee)

For a Future to Be Possible

- Friday, June 10 (no fee)
- Friday, July 22 (no fee)

Introduction to Zen Practice

- June 13 & 20 (no fee)

Ryumonji Retreat

- Friday, June 17-Sunday, June 19 (enclose payment of \$125 members, \$150 non-members)

Day of Mindfulness

- Saturday, July 16 (enclose payment of \$25 members, \$30 non-members)

Hokyoji Practice Period

- August 29-September 5 (enclose payment of \$55/night members, \$65/night non-members)

Enrollment for these activities is limited, and early registration is encouraged.

To register, send this form along with the non-refundable deposit listed (payable to CODC) to:
Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center
681 17th Ave. NE Ste. 210, Minneapolis, MN 55413
(612) 781-7640 • www.OceanDharma.org
Or register online on our website in the Classes & Retreats section.

In Memoriam

Brother Chi-Sing

Sandi Weis-Freier

Zenkei Blanche Hartman

For a Future to Be Possible

Once a month Compassionate Ocean hosts an evening gathering to help us become more aware and active in preserving the natural and social health of our world. Our particular focus now is climate change. Each gathering is open to everyone at no charge; please pre-register by sending an email to admin@OceanDharma.org. There is an optional potluck at 6:00 P.M. followed by the program (presentation and discussion) from 7:00-9:00 P.M. Summer Schedule: Fridays, June 10 and July 22.



Joen with Byakuren Judith Ragir, Senior Dharma Teacher at Clouds in Water Zen Center and a dear longtime friend

Wish List

- Video projector
- Sound system components
- Washer and dryer (electric)

Membership

You are invited to become a member of Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center. Membership is a way to support the programs of the Center, and is encouraged for those who participate regularly as well as those who simply would like to help make possible the continued life of the Center.

A membership brochure is available at sangha gatherings or can be sent out by mail; please call if interested.



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And that's why I think Zen is such a great tradition. Because all you need to do is that, and whatever else there is, comes from that.

And that's the profound part. It is profound, literally, to be alive.

Which doesn't last that long. Have you noticed that? If you're as old as I am, you know that around 45 minutes ago you were young. And now you're not anymore. How did that happen? And what's next? I can't tell you how strange it is. You know how strange it is.

And so to practice zazen is really to sit in the middle of the strangeness of this existence. It's a wonderful thing.



So what difference does zazen make?

Well, on one hand, fundamentally no difference, because you're alive anyway.

But I think that for me, and for many people that I've practiced with over the years, doing zazen somehow puts you in this process. You become a partner with the journey of your life, and with the journeys of everybody in your life. You know you're on that journey. You become your own partner in the journey and the partner of the many other people who share that journey with you.

And that's going to be so anyway, but you don't *know* that you're on that journey, and you don't *feel* it as a journey, and you don't *feel* that you're a partner in it. I think zazen helps us to feel that.

I'm sure there are many other ways in which that takes place too, but zazen is so profound and so available—it's a good way. It just makes you conscious.

And I think for me anyway, it so much increases my appreciation of this journey, and of everybody that I'm sharing it with. It just increases wonder, it increases amazement. And it engages you more, I think, in your life's journey.

And how does it do that? I don't even know. It happens. You throw yourself into this practice, and this all happens in some way that you can't quite account for.

That's been my feeling and my experience.



Norman's most recent books are *What Is Zen? Plain Talk for a Beginner's Mind*, and *Experience: Thinking, Writing, Language, and Religion*. He is the Spiritual Director of the Everyday Zen Foundation (www.everydayzen.org).



Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center
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Summer Program Highlights

- **Introductory Programs in Mindfulness (MBSR)** offered in Minneapolis and St. Paul
- **Buddhist Studies course**
 - *Lovingkindness:*
The Practice of Opening the Heart
- **Retreats at Ryumonji, Hokyoji, and Compassionate Ocean**
- **Baika Workshop**
- **For a Future to Be Possible**

Baika Workshop

Sunday, June 12, 1:00-4:00 P.M.



Special presentation of a form of Buddhist singing with visiting teacher from Japan. No charge. Pre-register by emailing the Center at admin@OceanDharma.org.

Yard Sale



Friday & Saturday, June 24 & 25
9:00 A.M.-4:00 P.M.

4140 Xerxes Ave. S, Minneapolis

This fundraiser for Compassionate Ocean invites donations of good quality items, including furniture, kitchenware, decorative items, toys, games, books, CDs and DVDs, and gently used clothing. Please avoid outdated electronics, and call in advance to discuss donations of especially heavy or bulky items.

Volunteers are also needed; please call the Center.

And please come to shop!