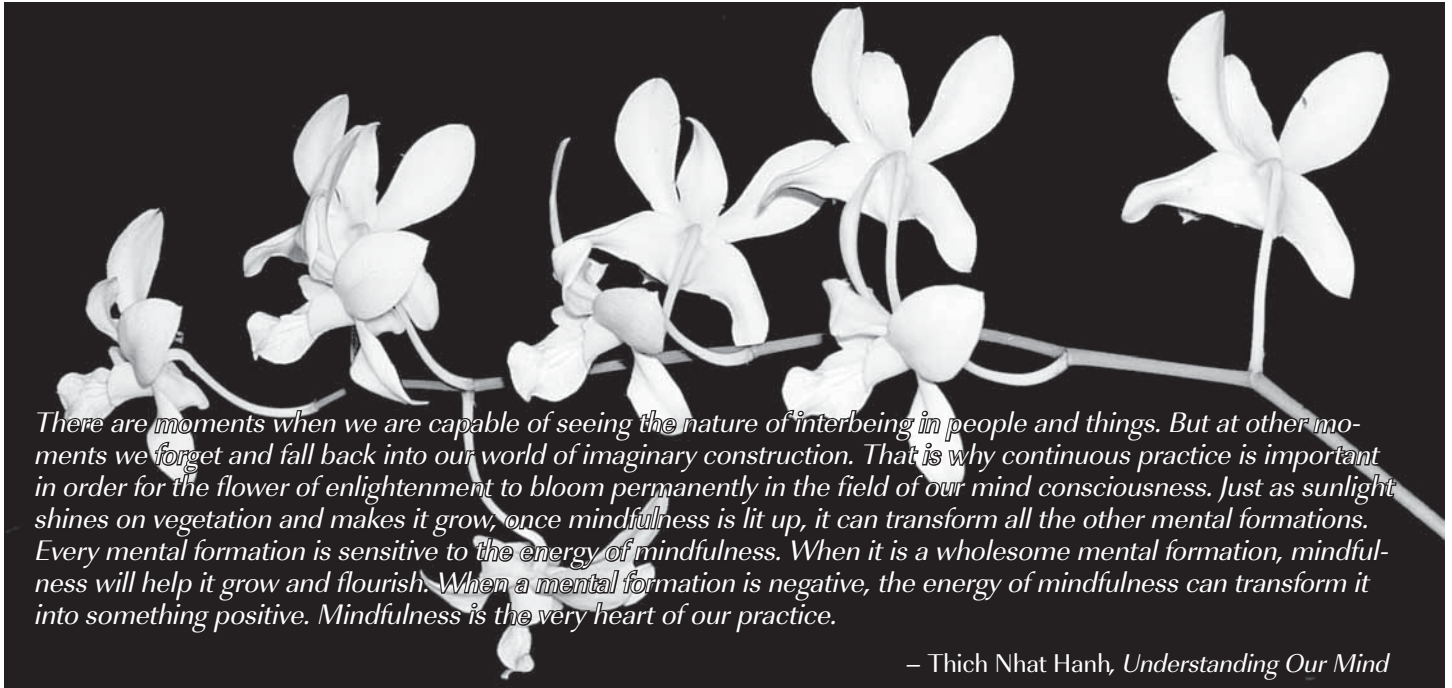




The Very Heart of Our Practice by Michael O'Neal



There are moments when we are capable of seeing the nature of interbeing in people and things. But at other moments we forget and fall back into our world of imaginary construction. That is why continuous practice is important in order for the flower of enlightenment to bloom permanently in the field of our mind consciousness. Just as sunlight shines on vegetation and makes it grow, once mindfulness is lit up, it can transform all the other mental formations. Every mental formation is sensitive to the energy of mindfulness. When it is a wholesome mental formation, mindfulness will help it grow and flourish. When a mental formation is negative, the energy of mindfulness can transform it into something positive. Mindfulness is the very heart of our practice.

– Thich Nhat Hanh, *Understanding Our Mind*

Recently someone who had completed an introductory mindfulness class told me that she didn't understand how to practice mindfulness. She understood how to practice lovingkindness meditation, which she often did on her way to work, and she would feel better from doing it. But just what she was supposed to do in a mindfulness meditation session was unclear, and it left her feeling frustrated and discouraged.

Mindfulness is difficult because it is different from the dominant way of being that we have cultivated throughout our life. Our usual way is to have a kind of scouting party of awareness that continually monitors our experience, inner and outer, for whatever is of interest to me. Everything that enters my awareness is treated as a kind of raw material that is brought into my central processing plant, squeezed for whatever satisfaction it can deliver, and then discarded like so much trash. We do this with our thoughts and feelings as well as our sense experiences. Because this way of being is so deeply ingrained, we aren't aware that we are doing it, and we can't really imagine, much less practice, an alternative.

An aspect of this way of being is that we are constantly evaluating everything in our world, inner and outer. Everything is judged on the basis of how pleasing it is to me.

When something pleases me, I am kindly disposed toward it and feel relatively happy; when something displeases me, I hate it and become surly. We usually have little insight into how our prejudices and expectations set us up to be whiplashed this way and that, constantly struggling with the not-satisfactory-enough nature of our world.

Mindfulness establishes itself on different ground. It is not primarily concerned with the agreeableness of our experience, but rather with its truth. That is, the energy of mindfulness is directed toward the wholeness of a moment of experience, and refrains from squeezing it to try to force it to be some particular way. There is a quality of respect for each moment, just as it is, beyond our preferences and prejudices. To the extent that we continue to judge our experience, we give every moment the same grade: A+. The basis of our grading is not how much it pleases us, but rather its truth value. I accept and respect this moment of experience 100% because it is the truth of my life in this moment. It is the way the universe is blooming now, and I am honored to be present with it.

When I treat my life in this way, moment after moment, my world begins to straighten up. Instead of being treated like a

beaten dog, now it is being treated like an honored guest, and it responds quite differently. The world has a chance to reveal its innate dignity and beauty, even in the most ordinary of moments. When this happens, we and our world together become more happy—not by grasping at happiness, but by practicing kindness.



In this sense, mindfulness is itself the direct, pre-verbal practice of lovingkindness. Every experience—restlessness, boredom, joy, irritation, physical discomfort, ease, etc.—receives a bath of acceptance, and from this way of being, of relating to experience, a more kind world arises. This then becomes the world we find ourselves in.

Mindfulness is not ultimately directed by the conceptualizing mind, but by the loving heart. It is a radical practice of transformation and healing. When Thich Nhat Hanh says that mindfulness is the very heart of our practice, it is true not only in the sense that it is the center of our practice, but also that it is the love in our practice

Passages

Quinten Manhatton Jones was born May 13 to Andy Jones and Meghan Manhatton. Nine pounds, eight ounces.

Rebecca Zaban and Benjamin Boylan were married August 7 in Sandstone, Minnesota. They have moved to Maryland to begin the next phase of their lives.

Donald J. Mattson, father of Donneen Torrey, passed away June 28. He was 84.

Nancy Ringstrom, mother of Page Appelbaum, passed away July 27. She was 81.

Mindful Kids in the Classroom

by Bobbie Fredsall

“Parents and teachers tell kids 100 times a day to pay attention. But we never teach them how” observed Stanford psychology department researcher Phillippe R. Goldin. Many children suffer from attention deficit disorders, too much media exposure, stress and anxiety from poverty, crime, or less than ideal living situations, or anxiety from high-stakes tests. This sounds like a ripe situation for the introduction of mindfulness-based stress reduction training in the schools. The MBSR model developed by John Kabat-Zinn has proven to be affective in helping adults deal with such situations. Can mindfulness training be helpful for children and adolescents whose mind-body processes function differently than those of adults?

School systems in Oakland and Los Angeles in California, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and Vancouver, British Columbia are among those that have introduced mindfulness programs in schools. Many of the programs were launched in schools that serve low-income children. Educators observe good results including less conflict in the school, better behavior, and children becoming calmer and more attentive. Research is being conducted to verify that the observed results do follow from the mindfulness training.

Megan Cowan in “Tips for Teaching Mindfulness to Kids” says that in introducing mindfulness to children and adolescents, it is important that the “connotation of mindfulness” remains accurate. She includes awareness (paying attention to one’s experience through senses and mind), non-judgment, and stillness in heart and mind as essential aspects. Mindfulness activities frequently involve the use of a bell that can be used to call children to attention and into a moment of mindfulness or to start a short period of meditation. Children can be involved in the process by periodically being in charge of the bell ringing. Some schools have introduced more extensive programs with weekly 45-minute periods of yoga and additional relaxation and mindfulness activities.

For more information see:

Megan Cowan, “Tips for Teaching Mindfulness to Kids,” <http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/1697/>

Jill Suttie, “Mindful Kids, Peaceful Schools,” http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/mindful_kids_peaceful_schools/

Patricia Jennings, “Mindful Education,” http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/mindful_education/

Association for Mindfulness in Education www.mindfuleducation.org/



Fall Programs 2010

Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center

3206 Holmes Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55408

612-825-7658 • www.OceanDharma.org

Transformation at the Base

Looking Deeply into the Nature of Consciousness

taught by Joen Snyder O'Neal, Michael O'Neal, and Sosan Flynn

*When we realize that afflictions are no other than enlightenment,
We can ride the waves of birth and death in peace,
Traveling in the boat of compassion on the ocean of delusion,
Smiling the smile of non-fear.*

—from *Understanding Our Mind:
50 Verses on Buddhist Psychology*
by Thich Nhat Hanh

Mondays, 6:30-9:00 P.M.

September 20–November 22 (10 classes)

#210 Casket Arts Building
681 17th Ave. NE, Minneapolis

Fee: \$250 (members: \$225) + \$20 materials fee

A twelfth-century Zen master said, “When we understand how our mind works, the practice becomes easy.” In this course we will explore what has been called Thich Nhat Hanh’s masterpiece, *Understanding Our Mind*. This book draws upon over a thousand years of development in Buddhist exploration of the mind, from the Abhidharma of the Pali Canon to later Mahayana teachings.

Through meditation, lecture, and discussion, we will study a way of understanding consciousness beginning with an image of a field: “Our mind is a field in which every kind of seed is sown...Every day our thoughts, words, and deeds plant new seeds in the field of our consciousness, and what these seeds generate becomes the substance of our life.” We will practice recognizing the seeds in our mind-field—seeds of compassion, sorrow, hope, fear, and joy. We will see how our ego, mind, and senses conspire to “stain” our perceptions and prevent us from opening to the true nature of reality. And we will practice treating painful seeds with compassion, touching them deeply with mindfulness in order to transform the roots of despair, anger, and fear.

This is an intermediate- to advanced-level course.

Joen Snyder O'Neal and **Michael O'Neal** are guiding teachers of Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center. They practiced for many years with Dainin Katagiri Roshi and have studied with Thich Nhat Hanh in France and the United States. Joen is a dharma-transmitted priest of Katagiri Roshi. **Sosan Flynn** serves as a priest at Compassionate Ocean and as executive director and priest at Clouds in Water Zen Center.



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, two 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.

#173 Minneapolis: Tuesdays

Sept. 21 - Nov. 9 • 6:30-9:00 P.M.

Instructor: Joen Snyder O'Neal

Location: Three Smooth Stones

3336 E. 25th St., Minneapolis (near I-94 & Riverside exit)

#250 St. Paul: Thursdays

Sept. 23 - Nov. 11 • 6:30-9:00 P.M.

Instructor: Michael O'Neal

Location: Clouds in Water Zen Center

308 Prince St., St. Paul (near I-94 & the 7th St. exit)

Wish List

- multimedia projector
- combination DVD & VCR player

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, October 30

8:30 A.M.-2:30 P.M.

Location: First Unitarian Society

900 Mt. Curve, Minneapolis

Teachers

Joel 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. Joel was ordained as a Zen priest by Katagiri Roshi in 1980 and received Dharma transmission from him in 1989.



photograph by Rebecca Pavlenko

Meetings with Teachers

Joel Snyder O'Neal and Michael O'Neal are available for individual meetings to discuss practice and daily life. Call the Dharma Center for an appointment.

Sangha Gatherings

The Compassionate Ocean Sangha is a group practicing in the Buddhist mindfulness traditions of Soto Zen and Thich Nhat Hanh. Throughout the year the sangha (community) has weekly gatherings that include sitting and walking meditation, dharma talks and discussions, mindful movement, chanting and singing, and other spiritual practices. Dharma talks focus on aspects of Buddhist teaching and their application to everyday life.

Everyone is invited to participate in our sangha gatherings. There are no prerequisites to participate, and people are welcome to come when they wish. There is no fee; donations are welcome.

There are two weekly gatherings of the Compassionate Ocean Sangha. The Sunday group is co-led by Joen Snyder O'Neal and Michael O'Neal. Joen leads the Friday group. There is also a meditation session offered on Wednesday mornings.

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

681 17th Avenue N.E., Suite 210, Minneapolis

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

*Note: Sunday gatherings will resume on Sept. 12.

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

681 17th Avenue N.E., Suite 210, Minneapolis

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

*Note: Friday gatherings will resume on Sept. 10.

Wednesday Morning Meditation: 6:30-7:50 A.M.

Schedule: 6:30-7:30 sitting, with a bell at 7:00 for stretching or standing, 7:30 chanting service. Held at Three Smooth Stones, 3336 E. 25th St., Minneapolis.

*Note: Wednesday morning meditation will resume Sept. 8 after our August break.

Open Houses

New people are always welcome at sangha gatherings. To provide a special welcome, open houses that include an orientation to our practice are offered several times a year. These are excellent opportunities to find out more about sangha gatherings if you are curious but haven't quite got around to coming.

Friday, Sept. 24, 9:30-11:00 A.M.

681 17th Avenue N.E., Suite 210, Minneapolis

Sunday, Sept. 26, 9:00-11:15 A.M.

681 17th Avenue N.E., Suite 210, Minneapolis

Genzo-e Sesshin

Led by Rev. Shohaku Okumura

Wednesday, Sept. 15–Sunday, Sept. 19

Dharma Field Zen Center

3118 West 49th St., Minneapolis

Sesshin is an extended meditation that includes zazen (sitting meditation), kinhin (walking meditation), oryoki meals, lectures, and mindful work. During this genzo-e (study) sesshin, we will be exploring "Bussho (Buddha Nature)" from Dogen Zenji's Shobogenzo. This genzo-e is the third in a series of three on the topic of "Bussho." The early sections of "Bussho" were covered in 2006 and 2008; access to these "Bussho" talks is available to current participants. This event is jointly sponsored by four local Zen centers including Compassionate Ocean. For further information or to register, contact Dharma Field at dfield@dharmafield.org or call (612) 928-4868.

One-day Retreat

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

Saturday, October 23, 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

One-day retreats include sitting and walking meditation, yoga practice, and a dharma talk by Joen or Michael. Participants should bring a bag lunch; drinks will be provided. Fee: \$20 members, \$25 nonmembers.

Buddha's Enlightenment Sesshin

Led by Byakuren Judith Ragir (Guiding Teacher of Clouds in Water Zen Center), Joen Snyder O'Neal and Michael O'Neal
Wed., Dec. 1, 7:00 P.M.–Wed., Dec. 8, 11:00 A.M.
Clouds in Water Zen Center, 308 Prince St., St. Paul

This seven-day sesshin (literally meaning "to gather the mind") offers an extended opportunity to settle the mind and body and open to the deep wisdom of human life. Activities include sitting and walking meditation, dharma talks, individual meetings with the teachers, vegetarian oryoki meals, and work practice. This retreat is an excellent opportunity to strengthen and deepen the practice of awakening, including benefiting from the support of other participants.

This sesshin will be held jointly with Clouds in Water Zen Center and is open to community members as well as others who have had experience with Buddhist practice and meditation. If this will be your first retreat with us, please call Compassionate Ocean in advance to discuss. Participants can register for one to seven days. Registration for this retreat is being handled by Clouds in Water. See their website (www.cloudsinwater.org) for fees and registration information. Early registration is encouraged.

Fall 2010 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 (#173)
- St. Paul, Thursday evenings (#250)

Total Dynamic Living- One Day Retreat

- Oct. 30 (by donation)

Transformation at the Base

- Minneapolis, Monday evenings (#B49) (\$50 deposit)

One-day Retreat

- Oct. 23 (enclose payment of \$25, members \$20)

Genzo-e Sesshin

Register at www.dharmafield.org

Buddha's Enlightenment Sesshin

Register at www.cloudsinwater.org

Baroque Music Concert

- Sept. 11 (\$30 per ticket)

Longevity Energetic Exercises

- Sept. 18 (\$20)

Tai Chi

- Oct. 16 (\$20)

The Poetry of Enlightenment

- Nov. 20 (\$20)

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

Please call if you have any questions.
To register, send this form along with the non-refundable deposit listed (payable to CODG) to:

Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center
3206 Holmes Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55408
(612) 825-7658 • www.oceandharma.org

Great Gathering Events

Great Gatherings are offered by members and friends of the Center and were organized as part of the Silent Auction held in November. The final three for 2010 are listed below. All are held at the Casket Arts Building in Minneapolis (681 17th Ave. NE, Suite 210). Please contact the Center if you would like to attend any of these events. The suggested donation is \$20.

Longevity Energetic Exercises

by Donna Honings Simmons

Saturday, September 18, 10:00-11:30 AM

Longevity energetic exercises, a form of qi gong, are a series of movements and postures, gently done, that provide physical conditioning and promote a sense of wellbeing. The exercises facilitate the flow of one's own life energy and promote the interaction of this energy with the larger field of energy that surrounds us. They improve posture, increase strength and muscle tone, increase flexibility and coordination, and improve focus and concentration. They are suitable for all ages and abilities.

Tai Chi

by Jose Figueroa

Saturday, October 16, 2:30-4:00 PM

Tai Chi Chen style was created in China during the Ming Dynasty (1600s) and is generally considered to be the original form of tai chi. It combines Chinese medicine, the energy principles of chi, controlled breathing, and the theory of yin and yang. Chen style differs from other styles in its use of coiling energy, known as "silk reeling." Tai chi theory is based on the notion that all things have a way of balancing themselves through the laws of yin and yang, which oppose one another, like up-down, fast-slow. Tai chi is a system of movement that physically embodies the opposition of yin and yang.

The Poetry of Enlightenment

by Michael O'Neal

Saturday, November 20, 7:30-9:00 PM

Michael O'Neal will offer an evening exploring poems by a variety of poets (Mary Oliver, Rumi, Basho, Rilke...) with commentary on each that will endeavor to illuminate the awakened quality of each poem, as well as highlight some of the many ways that spiritual depth can be expressed.

When men see Han-shan
They all say he's crazy
And not much to look at—
Dressed in rags and hides.
They don't get what I say
And I don't talk their language.
All I can say to those I meet is,
"Try to make it to Cold Mountain."

—Han-shan (China, 8th century)

AN EVENING OF BAROQUE MUSIC

ADAM KUENZEL, PRINCIPAL FLUTE, MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

DEAN BILLMEYER, PROFESSOR OF HARPSICHORD, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

SATURDAY,
SEPTEMBER 11,
2010
7 PM



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1531 HEWITT, ST. PAUL
\$30/ADVANCE
\$35/AT THE DOOR



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AN EVENING OF BAROQUE MUSIC

A Benefit for Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center

see Page 7 for details

On September 11, Adam Kuenzel, principal flute for the Minnesota Orchestra, joins harpsichordist Dean Billmeyer for an evening of baroque music. Over the past 20 years, Kuenzel has received a great deal of critical acclaim for his solos including world premieres of flute concertos by Stanislaw Skrowaczewski and Manuel Sosa. In addition to being an award-winning organist, Billmeyer is a harpsichordist equally at home in the 18th and the 21st centuries. He has performed frequently with the Minnesota Orchestra and St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, as well as on a Grammy-nominated recording by the Dale Warland Singers

Fall Program Highlights

- **Introductory Programs in Mindfulness offered in Minneapolis and St. Paul**
- **Buddhist Studies course:
"Transformation at the Base"**
- **Retreats:**
 - Genzo-e Sesshin
 - One-day Retreat
 - Buddha's Enlightenment Retreat
- **More Great Gatherings:**
 - Longevity Energetic Exercises
 - Tai Chi
 - The Poetry of Enlightenment



Harriet O'Brian's Jukai ceremony
(lay ordination) on May 22