



Finding Our Way

Michael O'Neal

*The quality of our life
Depends on the quality
Of the seeds
That lie deep in our consciousness.*

—Thich Nhat Hanh, *Understanding Our Mind*

Some time ago I happened to hear an interview in progress on public radio. The person being interviewed was a writer whose name I didn't recognize. As I listened I began to piece together the situation that was being discussed.

A number of years before, the writer, driving at night, came upon a car that was disabled in the road. He pulled over and got out to help. The couple who owned the car needed a tow truck and other assistance, and they decided to try to flag down the next approaching car to ask them to notify the authorities (this was before the time of cell phones). Standing to one side they waited, waving, as a car's headlights approached.

The car was coming too fast, however; it swerved to avoid the broken-down car and ran into the standing group. At the last moment the wife was pushed to safety, but the husband was struck and killed, and the writer was hit as well. His injuries required that one leg be amputated; the other was frozen in an extended position. For the rest of his life he was confined to a wheelchair.

He had been quite athletic; he loved to run. He was a former Marine. To lose the use of his legs brought up a deep bitterness in him, and an enduring sense of anger toward the driver of the car that had hit him. The driver never contacted him.

But the writer had been brought up Catholic, and he remembered that the nuns had taught him that it was good to forgive. So he prayed that forgiveness would come into his heart; but it made no difference. Day after day, week after week, month after month, he prayed that he would experience forgiveness, and every day there was no change; no hint of forgiveness, just the same bitterness and resentment as he dealt with his chronic pain, his one useless leg, and his restricted life.

And then one day as he prayed, forgiveness did come into his heart. He felt himself being released from his anger, and he no longer felt enmity for the driver.

As I listened to the interview I was very moved by the whole story, but one aspect that I found particularly inspiring was how the writer chose to deal with his anger. He accepted the nun's teaching that it was good to forgive; at the same time he was honest enough to recognize that he felt no forgiveness. And so he took up the practice of praying that his heart would be transformed. For a long time it seemed that his practice was completely without effect; but he kept praying anyway. And then one day the transformation took place.

What especially impressed me was his continuation of his practice even though it seemed useless. We often expect the fruits of our practice to appear instantly. If we don't see the result right away, we tend to lose patience with the practice and give up. But practice is not a temporary activity; it is our most authentic way of living; it is forever. Waiting on the fruits is not our concern; our job is just to practice without expectation. This is how "transformation at the base" comes about: taking care of the soil and the plants on the surface level, and trusting in the deep nature of mind and reality to do the deep work of transformation. Pick and shovel work, day by day. With joy.



Autumn Appeal

Dear Friend,

Mindfulness is a subtle practice, with a wonderful power of transformation.

Recent participants have talked about the impact our programs have had on their lives. A physician described his ability to take things less personally and be more open with patients, colleagues, and family members. A mother described her increased capacity for being deeply present with her active young children. A young man talked about for the first time wanting to quit smoking, coming from his attention to his breathing.

Many of us have experienced the positive effect of the practice of mindfulness. As a friend of Compassionate Ocean, and most likely a graduate of one or more programs, you know the value of this practice. Compassionate Ocean continues its dedication to the cultivation of mindfulness through our introductory program in mindfulness, Buddhist Studies classes, retreats, weekly sangha gatherings, special events, and individual relationships.

Our Center has had an eventful year, including events highlighted in this newsletter. Because of the Center's many successful events and classes and the improving economy, our income has improved over 2009. But our income has not risen to pre-recession levels, and despite significantly curtailing our budget we face unavoidable increased expenses in some areas. Program fees cover a portion of the Center's expenses, but only the generosity of friends and supporters make it possible for the Center to continue. This year-end appeal is a key source of financial support. Our goal is \$18,000.

Please consider making a contribution at this time. Donations of all amounts are important. Our fundraising costs are minimal, based on volunteer labor, so almost all of your contribution goes directly to operating the Center. All donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law. You may use the enclosed return envelope, or make your gift by credit card on the Center's website, www.oceandharma.org (see the "Membership and Donations" tab).

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

Donneen Torrey

Donneen Torrey
Chair, Board of Directors

Bobbie Fredsall

Bobbie Fredsall
Treasurer, Board of Directors



Winter Programs 2011

Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center
3206 Holmes Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55408
(612) 781-7640 • www.OceanDharma.org

Riding the Waves of Birth and Death

Taught by Michael O'Neal

*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.*

— Thich Nhat Hanh

This is the final verse of Thich Nhat Hanh's *Fifty Verses on the Nature of Consciousness*. It is the culmination of a deep exploration of the nature of mind, and of the role of engaged practice in bringing about a world that allows the true beauty of life to shine.

This class will have two emphases: studying how the mind works, and practicing the relaxed pleasure of mindfulness. "When you walk in mindfulness," Thay says, "you are in touch with all the wonders of life within you and around you. This is the best way to practice, with the appearance of non-practice."

Each class will include meditation practice, presentations by the instructor, and discussion, in roughly equal measure. The course text will be *Buddha Mind, Buddha Body* by Thich Nhat Hanh, which will be supplied at the first class. This class can be taken as a follow-up to the fall class; it also stands alone and is suitable for new people.



"It's impossible to read this book without being inspired to redouble one's efforts on behalf of other people, on behalf of all beings, and on behalf of the planet, knowing these efforts will also lead to our own happiness."

—from the foreword by Sylvia Boorstein

Minneapolis (#B50)
Wednesdays, Jan. 19–March 9 (eight sessions)
7:00–9:00 P.M.
#210 Casket Arts Building
681 17th Ave. NE, Minneapolis
Fee: \$160 (members \$150) + \$15 materials fee

Total Dynamic Living

Introductory Program in Mindfulness and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

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.

The Minneapolis class this winter will be taught by **Sosan Theresa Flynn**, a Zen priest and executive director of Clouds in Water Zen Center.

Psychologists, social workers, nurses, and teachers can receive 27 CEUs for this course.

#173 Minneapolis: Tuesdays Jan. 18 – March 8 6:30-9:00 P.M.	Instructor: Sosan Theresa Flynn Location: Three Smooth Stones, 3336 E. 25th St. Minneapolis (near I-94 & the Riverside exit)
#251 St. Paul: Thursdays Jan. 20 – March 10 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 7 th St. exit)

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, Feb. 26, 8:30 A.M.-2:30 P.M.**
Location: First Unitarian Society, 900 Mt. Curve, Minneapolis

Comments from recent graduates of the *Total Dynamic Living* Program in Mindfulness:

- *This course has given me a renewed focus on continuing my practice using the power of shared experience and group energy....I really liked the course....Thank you very much and I hope you can continue to offer this course for a long time to come.*
- *I have been wanting to start learning about meditation...and this course got me started and made the concepts real to me. No suggestions for changes—everything worked fine for me.*

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.

New people are always welcome at sangha gatherings.

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

681 17th Ave. NE, Suite 210, Minneapolis

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

Note: Due to our winter break the Sunday sangha will not meet on December 26 or January 2.

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

681 17th Ave. NE, Suite 210, Minneapolis

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

Note: Due to our winter break the Friday sangha will not meet on December 24 or 31.

Wednesday Morning Meditation

6:30-8:00 A.M.

Three Smooth Stones, 3336 E. 25th St., Minneapolis

Schedule: 6:30-7:30 sitting, with a bell at 7:00 for stretching or standing; 7:30 chanting service.

Membership

You are invited to become a member of the 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.

Sangha Retreats

These retreats are open to community members as well as others who have had some experience with Buddhist practice. Each retreat offers an extended opportunity to settle the mind and body and open to the deep wisdom of human life. Retreats are an excellent opportunity to support others and yourself through the deep practice of wholehearted presence. If this will be your first retreat with Compassionate Ocean, please call Michael or Joen at the Center.

Special Retreat in January

Blooming Heart Sangha is sponsoring a Day of Mindfulness in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh with visiting Dharma Teacher Jack Lawlor. **Saturday Jan. 15, 9:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M.** at the River Garden Yoga Center in St. Paul. By donation. To register, email bloomingheartsangha@gmail.com.

One-day Retreat in February

Saturday, Feb. 12, 9:00 A.M.-4:30 P.M.

681 17th Ave. NE, Suite 210, Minneapolis

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

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 non-members.

Four-day Retreat at Ryumonji Monastery

7:00 P.M. Wednesday, March 23-2:00 P.M. Sunday, March 27

Led by Shoken Winecoff, Joen Snyder O'Neal & Michael O'Neal

Ryumonji (Dragon Gate) Zen Monastery is located in northeast Iowa, about 2 ½ hours by car from the Twin Cities. Rev. Winecoff, a dharma heir of Dainin Katagiri-roshi, is developing Ryumonji as a place for traditional zen practice in a beautiful rural setting. Retreat activities will include sitting and walking meditation, dharma talks, individual meetings with the teachers, formal oryoki meals, and work practice. This retreat is limited to people who have completed a weekend or longer zen retreat. Carpooling will be arranged. Weekend-only participation is possible.

Fee (due in advance): members \$55/night, non-members \$65/night (includes vegetarian meals and lodging)

Teachers

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.

Winter 2011 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 (#251)

Total Dynamic Living: One-Day Retreat

- ☐ Saturday, Feb. 26, 8:30 A.M. – 2:30 P.M.
(by donation for program alumni)

Riding the Waves of Birth and Death

(\$25 deposit)

- ☐ Minneapolis, Wednesday evenings (#B50)

Mindful Parenting

(\$25 deposit or full payment of \$80))

- ☐ Minneapolis, Thursday evenings (#B51)

One-Day Sangha Retreat

- ☐ Feb. 12 (enclose payment of \$20 members, \$25 non-members)

Ryumonji Retreat

- ☐ March 23-27 (enclose payment of \$55/night members, \$65 non-members)

Sangha Gatherings

No advance registration is necessary for the sangha gatherings. Call for directions.

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 CODC) to:

Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center
3206 Holmes Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55408

(612) 781-7640

www.oceandharma.org

Passages

Duval O'Neal, father of Michael O'Neal, passed away on August 22. He was 94.

Building Update

Our project is beginning its final phase as the plumbers and electricians do their work. Part of the final funding package has been secured, and we will be working to complete the rest in January, anticipating moving our activities into the building in the coming year. Sincere thanks to all our loyal volunteers and donors. Our combined effort makes a real difference.

Great Gatherings



In 2010 the Center sponsored nine Great Gatherings, which were sessions presented by sangha members and friends on the topics of Sustainable Living, Haiku Writing, Mindful Marriage, Zen Tea Ceremony, Longevity Energetic Exercises, Tai Chi, Native Plants, Remembering Our Evolutionary Journey, and (pictured above) The Poetry of Enlightenment. The Gatherings were a delight, and more will be scheduled in the future.

Other Notable Events this Fall

In September 175 people had an exquisite listening experience at our Baroque Music for Flute and Piano concert, presented by Minnesota Orchestra flutist Adam Kuenzel and friends. Over a thousand people came to the Casket Arts building in November as part of its seasonal open studio event and toured our office space where we hosted a boutique sale of one-of-a-kind items. And our sangha participated in deep retreats at Hokyoji and Dharma Field in September and Clouds in Water in December.

Transformation at the Base Class

Our fall Buddhist Studies class on Thich Nhat Hanh's book *Understanding Our Mind* involved 32 students and three teachers in a fascinating exploration of the nature of mind, the nature of reality, and the way of practice. The course drew on over a thousand years of development in Buddhist study of the mind, from the Abhidharma of the Pali Canon to later Mahayana teachings. Two students' comments on the class are given below.



I found this particular Thich Nhat Hanh teaching the most awakening for me of any to date. It is such a wonderful and careful exploration of the nature of reality and helped me deepen my experience and understanding of the integration of mindfulness, delusion, and each moment as it blooms. The structure of the group study class supported me in reading the book. I probably never would have read it without this class and our teachers' efforts. This only serves to remind me of the importance of steady practice and sharing of dharma teaching in the supportive home of a sangha. —Sue Harrington



I notice that I keep saying, "I am watering the wholesome seeds and turning away from the unwholesome seeds." The other thing I am more clear about is manas [the aspect of the mind that is preoccupied with maintaining a sense of a separate self]. "Oh—there is manas again." And I can really feel the suffering that manas makes inside me—I can see the mess that manas makes. —Myo-o Habermas-Scher





Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center

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Winter Program Highlights

- Introductory Programs in Mindfulness offered in Minneapolis and St. Paul
- Buddhist Studies course: "Riding the Waves of Birth and Death"
- "Mindful Parenting" class
- One-day Retreats
- Four-day Retreat at Ryumonji in March

Mindful Parenting a new class led by Diane Benjamin

Drawing from the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh and his community, we will explore:

- **Breathing In, Breathing Out.** *How do we cultivate mindfulness together as a family?*
- **Deep Listening and Mindful Speech.** *How do we learn to listen deeply to our children and to speak mindfully?*
- **Being Peace.** *How do we handle anger and frustration skillfully, and how do we resolve conflict once it arises? How do we nourish peacefulness?*
- **Mindful Consumption.** *How do we cultivate wholesome mental and physical environments for our families, both individually and collectively?*

Classes will include time for meditation and discussion of specific family practices.

Thursdays, Feb. 3-24 (*four sessions*)
7:15-9:00 P.M.
681 17th Ave. NE, Suite 210, Minneapolis
\$80 for one or two parents from the same family



Diane Benjamin is a Zen Buddhist practitioner and mother, a longtime member of Compassionate Ocean, and teaches in the children's program at Clouds in Water Zen Center. She and her family have participated in several retreats with Thich Nhat Hanh and his community.