

# along the Path

SUMMER 2012

The Newsletter of the Mindfulness Practice Center of Fairfax

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## HEALING THE INNER CHILD & OURSELVES

by Anh-Huong Nguyen

Slow mindful walking is practiced inside the meditation hall at MPCF retreats. We place our minds at the sole of the foot that is stepping. We breathe in while shifting weight to the right leg and making a step with the left foot. Our right foot makes the next step as we breathe out. Through coordinated breathing, our steps become more relaxed and gentle. We are nourished by the peace, joy and stability arising with each step.



Along The Path-Summer

Whether our parents are alive or have passed away, we visualize our right hand holding our father's hand and our left hand in our mother's as we practice mindful walking in the sangha.

Once a puzzled friend asked:

“Walking with mom and dad is a disturbing experience. My home atmosphere was always one of mistrust and hate. It was nonsensical to a child's mind/

heart. To ‘walk with mom and dad’ puts me right back into that space. I have been unconsciously re-creating this ‘atmosphere’ in my current living environment. How can I get out of this cycle?”

As a child, we look to our parents for love and protection. Mom and dad were our first love. But

if mistrust and hate filled the home atmosphere, we became fearful, helpless and angry. Our hearts were broken and this emotional wound continued into adult life. Not until this childhood wound is healed, is the grown-up able to feel safe or to experience love and trust even from those who truly love us.

Wounds from childhood can continue to be devastating and pull our minds back to our childhood. Being unaware of or unable to take care of this pain, we may unconsciously identify ourselves with it.

Meditation brings us back to the present moment so that we can be nourished by the wonders of life within and all around. It also helps us to return to ourselves and recognize the suffering inside.

This suffering comes from our inner child. Physically and emotionally, inner child and adult counterpart are not separate from each other. When childhood pain begins to surface, we are drawn to believe, think, speak, and act in ways that mirror our childhood suffering. The past home atmosphere of mistrust and hate is unconsciously re-created.

Sangha's atmosphere of peace and safety is nourishing and healing to both adult and inner child. It protects us from being drawn into past suffering. As our mindfulness practice becomes steadier, the grown-up in us can listen deeply to her inner child during sitting meditation.

When the child feels safe to speak the truth in her heart, compassion is born inside the listener. The wound continues to heal as it is embraced by the sangha energy. With understanding and compassion, our grown-up self suffers less. We are able to practice bringing peace and joy into our life.

Genetically speaking, our parents are present in each cell of our body. Their experiences of joy, hope and suffering are still in us. We carry them in our heart, mind and body. It is through our walking mindfully with the sangha that our parents have a chance to be held safely in peace and love.

*While at home or with sangha, we can consciously invite our inner child as well as our mom and dad (either as 4 year-olds or as adults) into our sitting and walking meditation. Energy of peace and joy radiating from mindfulness practice will continue to transform and heal the inner child in us as well as in our parents and grandparents.*

By carrying childhood wounds, we may only think of our parents as unhappy and angry adults. In sitting meditation, we can look deeply into an old family photograph to see our father as a 4 year-old boy and mother a 4 year-old girl. They were so innocent and vulnerable. Mom and dad might have been confused and suffering at a very young age when our grandparents' suffering spilled out into their home atmosphere.

As compassion fills our heart, we can take the hands of mom and dad as 4 year-old children and make peaceful steps with them in the present moment. We can also bring our 4 year-old child into the present to walk with us. Each step brings reconciliation, nourishment, and healing for the whole family. Each step is a miracle.

While at home or with sangha, we can

consciously invite our inner child as well as our mom and dad (either as 4 year-olds or as adults) into our sitting and walking meditation. Energy of peace and joy radiating from mindfulness practice will continue to transform and heal the

inner child in us as well as in our parents and grandparents. Otherwise, childhood suffering will become more intense as it is unconsciously passed on from one generation to the next.

Within sangha's safe embrace of mindfulness and compassion, we will be able to free ourselves and our parents from this cycle of suffering. This is a precious gift for both our ancestors and future generations.



## THE SECOND BODY PRACTICE: BUILDING SANGHA

**Contributors (in sequence as they appear in the following article): Jill McKay, Walt Hare, Walt Mallory, Claudia James, and Holly Berman; Compiled and edited by Jane Phelan**

In the March 2012 issue of *Along the Path*, Anh-Huong introduced a new direction for the Sangha: "... in the spirit of continuing to strengthen mindfulness and build brotherhood and sisterhood within MPCF sangha, a group of friends came together recently to explore a practice called *Second Body*."

MPCF's initial group of Second Body partners

began meeting about eight weeks ago, and recently gathered on a Sunday morning to share their reflections on engaging in this practice. The responses included here offer insights into both the

reluctance people may have felt initially, and the kind of nourishing energy that springs up when both partners practice with open hearts and a commitment to share with their Second Body.

Jill wrote:

"The Second Body practice has watered seeds that I had not expected or anticipated. When the idea was first raised, I had reservations that stemmed from strong mental formations: not wanting to take on another "project;" fear of intimacy; resistance to being "forced" to share; fear of not doing it right; and on and on.

"Thankfully, my love of Sangha was stronger than my fears. I was paired with a Sangha friend whom I have known for several years but had

never spent time with one-on-one. So far, we have met at a coffee shop and in a park, by Skype, and before the Thursday sittings at MPCF. We have had a few "technical difficulties" along the way, including finding a good time, and dropped phone or Skype connections. Through it all, we have stayed true to our commitment to be there for each other by practicing deep listening and mindful sharing of what is true in our hearts.

"It has been a journey of small steps, of watering the seeds of trust and openness. It's been gentle but powerful. The difference for me between participating in Second Body, and meeting informally with a Sangha sister or brother, is the

commitment to this as a practice, and the awareness that as Second Bodies we are cells in the body of our beloved Sangha. How miraculous that simply by committing to being a Second Body to one sister

in the practice, my sense of interconnectedness with my entire Sangha family has deepened in such a short space of time!

"I am truly grateful for this experience, and give thanks to my Second Body Sister, to our teachers, and to the entire Sangha for their support as we all walk this path together."

Walt H. shared: "I'm a big fan of Second Body. Although the name is new to me, I've been following the practice for several years with some very close dharma friends from 'an earlier life' in another tradition. In that situation, we had been practicing and actually running a practice center, so our lives were very intertwined. That provided a set of common experiences we could

use as context for our struggles, progress and questions. I haven't quite built that same connection with MPCF yet, so I'm enjoying the opportunity. I had recently said that I would like to keep this running for six months at a time, but then realized that just because we change Second Body partners more frequently, doesn't mean we stop being Second Body practitioners or that we have to break that connection with past partners."

"I found the experience very powerful," writes Walt M. "My second body needs me and I need him – we each grow and learn. I look forward to another 8 weeks."

Claudia described her reactions to the first eight weeks of a Second Body practice: "One way of understanding our human existence is to see everything as a manifestation of the Dharma. I practice like this. And so, when the opportunity for Second Body Practice unfolded in our Sangha, it seemed a very natural everyday flower -- a daisy, coming into bloom.

"At first, though, old habits of thinking/feeling arose in me: in our initial meeting I felt an ancient inclination to flee. The mere idea of Second Body Practice seemed more like a tiger -- no daisy! But I didn't run. Instead, I watched thoughts and felt the emotions they generated, and followed my breath, in that first gathering.



Hadn't I set an intention to practice disclosing more of my true self with others? Of learning how to share uneasy emotions in the presence of friends? Of exploring a deepening emotional intimacy with myself and trusted companions? And wasn't Second Body Practice this very opportunity?

"I grabbed that tiger by the tail and took a ride! And within the space of about ten minutes those initial squeamish thoughts/feelings subsided and

then dissolved. I was free. And I felt curious and happy to be part of a new phase of our communal practice.

"Connecting each week with my Second Body Buddy was actually very simple. For the first meeting, we walked and shared. I felt deeply heard and,

in turn, listened deeply, opening my heart to inter-being. After that, we spoke by phone, usually once a week. No struggle with planning, and when we needed to accommodate each other, we did so with ease.

"I grew towards looking forward to each contact, even when tired from work, knowing that I could depend upon this practice and my second body, that my solitude would be nourished with tender-hearted connection.

"We focused on exploring our individual practice of that week. I felt encouraged. And it was fun! At times, our voices tremulous with

taking a risk; at times, light-hearted with laughter: practicing naturally, accepting, no judgments, no struggle.

"Each week we opened by asking "How is it going?" and I began to realize that Second Body Practice was clearly inspiring my individual practice, and I also noticed that it connected me with the larger Sangha in a new way. I felt more aware of others in our community knowing that they were also practicing like this. Now it has taken root and become a whole field of daisies: ordinary, lovely, wholesome. Who knows? Next month it may transform into a night sky filled with luminous stars or a mother bear, fierce and protective."

Claudia concluded that, "Whatever it is, we will welcome it, hand in hand, and the circle will grow, thanks to our Sangha brothers and sisters."

Holly put her thoughts about Second Body into verse form:

To walk this way with another  
as we weave the fabric  
into each of our lives  
sharing  
listening  
being there for one another

As Anh-Huong commented in the March newsletter, the Second Body practice "... brings nourishment and healing to both partners, their families and our sangha... the sangha is always "present" at second body weekly meetings, because each is also a second body of the sangha."

At the MPCF, over the next few months, we will be opening the Second Body practice to all who are interested. If you think you might like to plant the seeds of Second Body practice in your sangha, please see the winter article by teacher Anh-Huong in the Spring 2012 of *Along the Path* on the MPCF website.

## SANGHA AS HIGHER POWER

by Charlie H.

I am a recovering alcoholic. I am happy and humbled to say I've been sober quite a while. I say humbled because losing it would be easy, very easy indeed. All it would take is one drink -- one lapse in awareness, one moment of hubris or self-will. Within me exists an addict: a demon that allowed for no peace of mind by constantly showering me with criticism, judgment and self-hatred. Acting from that sad self-image made self-medicating a perfectly logical and appropriate response. So, I drank. A lot. I drank openly and I drank in secret. I drank hundreds of times when I didn't even want to. Scores of times I told myself "That's it -- no more: never again." I could rely on my own will to keep me sober for anywhere from a day or two to a couple weeks. But always, my addict overpowered my will to stop.

My father was an alcoholic, as were his siblings, as was my father's father, etc. We are a pretty clever set of folks with lots of native intelligence. So, why would my father repeat the suffering his dad inflicted on his family? Why would I repeat the mistakes of my father? And so on...

Addict energy is very powerful. It sits in our store consciousness and gathers up strength from generation to generation to trap the unsuspecting into lifelong cycles of self-medication and suffering. I am one of the lucky ones -- I was able to stop drinking and start to look deeply.

I got sober with lots of help, none of it from within. The help I got was from my loving wife, my children, my Buddhist practice, and AA/The 12 Steps.

The 12 Step program works well for millions of people. It has a simplicity and a sharing within it

that give the addict tools and insights that counter the power of addiction. One of the keys to success in 12 Steps is to surrender one's will to a Higher Power.

Having been raised in a strict Catholic way, surrendering to the biblical patriarchal God of Christianity was not going to work for me. Yet, I knew that something was working for me as I got stronger and stronger and was able to resist the urge to drink. I thought at first I was simply sober and staying that way without that particular part of the 12 Steps. Gradually, I came to realize that my higher power is the power of transformation embodied in my fellow addicts and their struggles. The strength generated in church basements during meetings is an inspiration and contains extraordinary energy.

My fellow addicts brought it all to the table every week. Some had over twenty years of sobriety and kept coming to meetings. Some had slipped the night before and were hung-over. We sat around the room and were inspired – both by those of us with twenty years and those who just fell off the wagon. My fellow addicts were there for me. Like my mindfulness sangha.

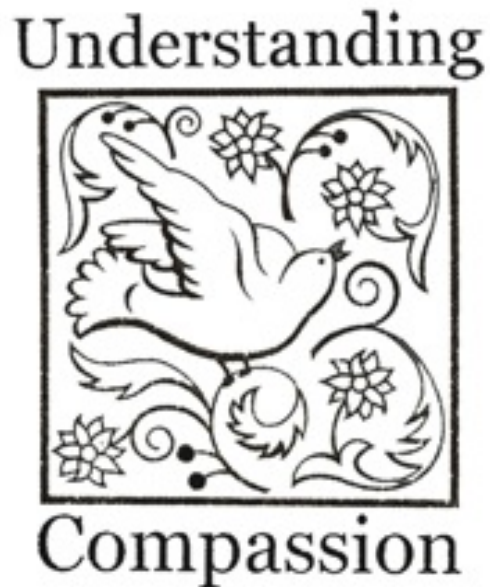
Thus this conclusion: the transformational energy of a group of recovering addicts is the energy of a sangha. I'm a lucky guy -- I get strength and transformation from two sanghas: any 12 Step Meeting I attend, *and* the sangha of my fellow Buddhist practitioners.



photo by Diana Adams

## A MINDFUL FAMILY SANGHA PRACTICES ON CAPITOL HILL

By Jane Phelan



On Sunday, May 6th, 2012, several families with children ranging from five to eleven years old gathered on Capitol Hill to share a special ceremony: receiving The Two Promises and The Three Jewels. Our Dharma teachers, Anh-Huong and Thu, traveled to Capitol Hill to perform the simple, powerful ceremony at which each of the children received a certificate with a special name to acknowledge their commitment to practicing the Two Promises, Understanding and Compassion.

Anh-Huong introduced Avalokiteshvara as a loving friend, and everyone chanted together, "*Namavalokiteshvariya*," as she invited the bell and the ceremony officially began! She gently coached the children through Touching the Earth, and how to breathe with the sound of the bell. Watching the children's thoughtful reactions to all that Anh-Huong said and asked, the adults in the family sangha were deeply nourished by the children's sincerity.



A child receives the Two Promises

The family mindfulness group on Capitol Hill was initiated by longtime practitioner Jindra Cekan, whose two children, Kaja and Erik, have been practicing mindfulness both at home and at retreats, since the boys were quite young.

Since the Capitol Hill Mindful Family Sangha (CHMFS) began getting together in October 2011, they have taken many gentle, loving steps on the path to learn about mindfulness practice, and how we water the seeds of understanding and compassion for ourselves and others.

During Sunday morning gatherings, children and their families explore mindful activities together, such as: “Stirring the Jar of Thoughts, Feelings, and Perceptions;” “Mad, Sad, Scared, Glad;” and “What Kind of Seeds Do We Want to Grow?” Through these activities, we introduce and build the children’s awareness about understanding and compassion, to help the children connect with each other and the adults present.

From dropping a pebble into a glass vase filled with water (“*Stirring the Jar of Feelings*”), we learn that our minds need to clear when we are upset, and that many of us share similar unpleasant feelings. To learn about each other’s feelings, we need to listen deeply to one another.

(“Stirring the Jar of Thoughts, Feelings, and Perceptions,” originally entitled “Mind in a Jar,” was adapted from Kerry Lee MacLean’s book entitled *Peaceful Piggy Meditation*.)

### ***What Kinds of Seeds Do We Want to Grow?***

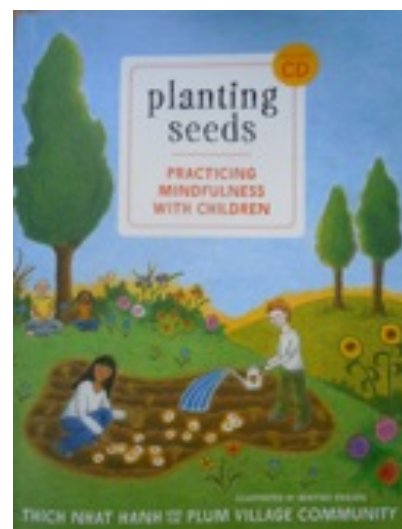
When we talk about feelings, we also share our ideas about ways of feeling calm and happy, and one of our activities was to create our own packet of seeds that we would like to cultivate. As parents and children shared about the kinds of seeds they would put into their packets, we noticed how we all valued each other’s choices.

We hope that our family sangha gatherings will encourage other families with children who would like to participate in mindful activities together on a regular basis, cultivating the seeds of community as a sangha.

Interested families will find more comprehensive information on mindfulness practices for children, including links to related activities, on the website related to the book: *Planting Seeds: Practicing Mindfulness With Children*.

See <http://www.plantingseedsbook.org/>

Many peaceful smiles to everyone!



## **WALKING WITH THICH NHAT HANH IN WASHINGTON, D.C.**

by **Diana Hawes**

In reading one of our beloved teacher Thich Nhat Hanh's many inspiring and helpful books, I remember reading the sentence: "I know a monk who traveled in the busiest country in the world and maintained his mindfulness every step of the way." I think I, and perhaps you, know who that monk was.

The sentence touched me deeply with its humility and possibility, and watered the seeds of my own aspiration to maintain my mindfulness with every step I take.

Recently, as I traveled to the second busiest city in the busiest country in the world, I decided to practice wholeheartedly to maintain my mindfulness every step of the way. Although I knew that this intention was a finger pointing at the moon and I would not actually reach the moon, it would be a wonderful training for me.

The aspiration was further watered by the realization that, though I would not be seeing Thay and the monks and nuns on their recent teaching visit to Washington because I would be attending an acupuncture conference, I would have the awareness of their presence in the city as well as the presence of the MPCF community, the WMC community and the dharma teachers who guide these sanghas.

I have walked with Thay and the community and sanghas many times. One memorable experience was walking directly behind Thay and the children on a walk at Plum Village. I was able to literally "follow in the footsteps of the master." I was profoundly struck by the evenness, stability, and presence in each and every one of his steps. I was also aware that, uphill or down, even terrain or uneven terrain, the pace and steadiness never varied. It led me to reflect that as I myself went to the past in my thinking, I slowed down,

and when I was projecting myself into the future, I speeded up. My steps changed when my mindfulness flagged.

When I left the conference and went by Metro into the City, my determination was strong but my mindfulness was deeply challenged. Driving around looking for a parking place at the Vienna Metro, encountering sign after sign saying "Lot Full," I clearly felt my seed of impatience sprout. I began to breathe and calm my mind and the tension in my body. "Aware that my seed of impatience is sprouting, I breathe out. Calming my impatience, I breath in. Calming my impatience, I breathe out."

Amazing how much easier it was to find a parking place when I was no longer tense and irritable. But the Metro itself lay in wait...

People were bustling about, jostling each other, hurtling through the turnstiles, running for the train. "Breathing in, I calm my mind and my body. Breathing out, I smile. Breathing in, my own seeds of hurry are being watered. Breathing out, I continue walking mindfully with the sangha within and my brothers and sisters in the dharma."

The Metro card machines and route system, though once familiar, were somewhat confusing, and those in line behind me in a hurry. I maintained my breathing and my mindfulness and practiced one of my sangha mantras: "Sir, I am having difficulty, can you help?" Sangha is everywhere not just at retreats and the MPCF. He patiently assisted me and I continued on, happy to still be aware of my breathing and my steps.

Through the turnstiles and onto the escalator. Ignorant of the custom of standing to the right on an escalator step, as opposed to racing down the moving escalator if you are on the left, I was cursed from behind by a man speeding for his train, who bumped into me so hard and so angrily that he nearly catapulted me down the



steps. “Breathing in, I feel my own seed of anger waking up. Breathing out, I use my breath and my mindfulness to embrace and calm my seed of anger, and send it back to the store consciousness. Breathing in, I water my seed of compassion. Breathing out, I feel my compassion for my hurried fellow traveler begin to sprout. Using my breath and my mindfulness, I keep my seed of compassion in the living room of my mind for as long as possible. Breathing out, I smile to Life.”

As others raced for the train, I continued my relaxed pace. Inside, I sang the little practice song: “Happiness is here and now, I have dropped my worries. Somewhere to go, something to do, but not in a hurry.”

Arriving at the museum, I discover it is closed for the day. “Breathing in, I calm my disappointment. Breathing out, I smile.”

I went gratefully to a rendezvous with my dear sangha sister, Brigitte Pichot. We had arranged the visit to water my seeds of mindfulness and support while in DC. We sat in the golden sunshine, sharing deeply, listening mindfully, and laughing joyfully. “Breathing in, I am grateful for my sangha friends and their support of my mindfulness. Breathing out, I take refuge in the sangha.” Everyone else who sat near us was eating while talking on a cell phone. One couple sat with each other, holding hands, but never spoke a word. They were both on their individual cell phone and communicated only by intermittently showing each other what they were looking at on their cell phone. “Breathing in, my dear sangha sister, I know you are there, and it makes me so happy.”

My mindfulness reinforced and my happiness watered, I made the return trip to the Vienna Metro.

I did not maintain mindfulness every step of the way, but my practice was deepened. I returned to

my car relaxed and peaceful. Prior to the practice, I would have returned to my car tense and jangled and somewhat hostile to my fellow travelers. “Breathing in, I offer these fruits of transformation to my sangha, my teachers, and to the world.”

Breathing in, I know a monk whose mindful steps I follow with infinite gratitude. Breathing out, I am lucky to have this wonderful practice and my sangha.

## **DEWDROP ON PETAL** by Elisabeth Dearborn

Dewdrop on petal gathers momentum,  
then falls.  
How blissful the edge.



photo by Diana Adams

## NEVER GOOD ENOUGH

by Garrett Phelan

“Whatever I do is never good enough for you,” a former student told me was her husband’s response when she was sharing with him her desires for a better house, better neighborhood, better schools, and more family time. I felt sadness. Not because a young couple had dreams of a better life, but because the intensity of her desires for what she wanted was blocking any space to listen deeply and compassionately to what her husband was saying.

As I listened, I realized that in the thirteen years I have known her, she has always been unhappy because of the suffering she experienced as a young child. What she accomplished -- which is amazing -- has never been good enough for her to fill that emptiness, and now she was transferring that “never good enough” in herself to her young family.



photo by Diana Adams

In family groups at retreats, at our regular Thursday sitting, and most recently with our Second Body practice, we participate in Dharma Sharing. To begin, quietness is created through a sound of the bell or a few mindful breaths. We offer a lotus to the sangha when we would like to open our heart and share our happiness or suffering in the context of our mindfulness practice. The sangha or friend responds with a lotus indicating that they will listen with an open heart without judgment. As they listen deeply and embrace what is shared, no one interrupts, tries to solve problems, challenges, or questions us. It is a particularly strong practice of healing and building family or community.

It is, however, a difficult practice to bring into daily life in family, socially, and at work because

others you are with may not practice or appreciate mindfulness. I began to explore how I might nonetheless use these guidelines in my daily life.

Am I present 100% for my loved ones? Do I listen compassionately and without judgment? Do I share from my heart when I speak? Do I feel *our* time together is also *my* time? When could I be silent? When do I get hurt when others speak? When do I have the urge to respond, question or fix? Where did that urge to question or retaliate come from?

As I practiced dharma discussion guidelines with myself, I found I am judgmental many times during the day about people, even friends and family. I realized I had elements of “not good enough” in me, just as my former student has. I transfer those feelings to other people: they are not good enough. I spend a lot of time being critical of others or the way

things are; I am often too busy to stop and appreciate and feel gratitude for all that I have. I realized I wasn't listening to anyone with compassion, least of all myself.

I had a job interview last week. I hadn't had a job interview in over thirteen years! At first some old fears manifested. Was I good enough? What should I say to impress the interviewer? Instead having all these questions making monkey mind -- I just listened! Because of cultivating listening deeply during dharma sharing, I could feel her love and passion for her community organization. I enjoyed listening to her anecdotal history of the place. I let go of being present only to “get the job” and became present for another person. This was *our* time together.

And then recently, because of some old family letters my sister shared with me, a pool of sadness welled up in me. One letter was to my grandmother from her father. It was evident that he was trying to keep the family together through letters, after his children had emigrated from Ireland to America. On the letter, my grandmother had written a note that this was the last time she ever heard from her father.

Another letter was from my brother to my sister, sharing with her his deep need to wear different masks to survive in hostile environments. He was less than two years older than me. His life was full of pain and suffering and it brought him to his early death at age 48. These letters left a pool of sadness in me that put me in my own funk about their sadness and suffering .

I held it for a week. It seemed to grow and deepen. I finally shared it with my Second Body, with another sangha friend, and my wife, Jane, who is also my core practice partner. Each of them responded by embracing me with little comment, or efforts to fix my feelings. Maybe a question or gentle comment to allow me to deepen my sharing. The sadness began to loosen. I was sad, *and* I know I am not my sadness.

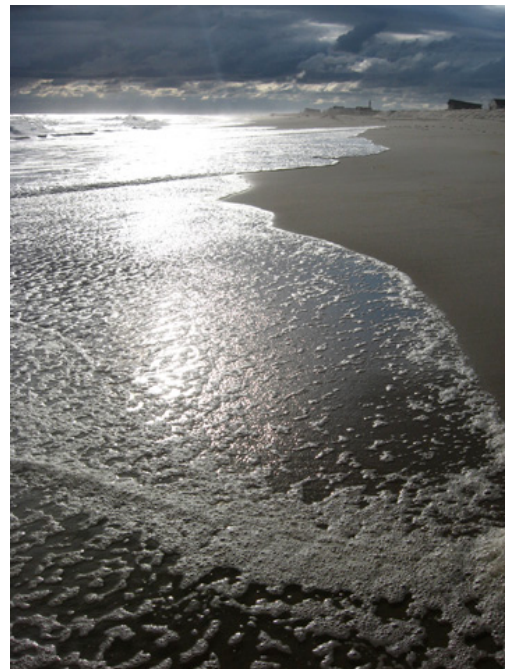
The other awareness that developed was that the increased quietness of my week made me more aware of how I speak to myself because I was listening more and speaking less. I wondered how I might share with my former student what I had been learning, to offer her my insight into "never good enough."

I asked my former student and friend whether she could hear her husband's suffering? How would her deep listening affect her anger towards her husband for his reply? Does she hear her own suffering in his reply? I asked her whether she loved her husband. She said she did love him. I will hold their suffering, knowing that embracing their struggles may be the first step in healing.

## ANGER by Judy Winston

Hello, anger  
What do you need--what do you want?  
*I need to be acknowledged.*  
*I need to be accepted.*  
I acknowledge you.  
I accept you  
and I want to understand you.  
*I seek your understanding as well.*  
I open my arms to you and  
I embrace you.  
I offer you my love.  
*I cannot fester when I can feel your love;*  
*let your love spill over and encompass all*  
*around us;*  
*don't select the ones to love; love us all.*

Anger, I thought I did love them all  
and I was wrong.  
Help me move to the place of right thinking  
and loving kindness to all.  
*I am your friend, never your enemy,*  
*and I am here for you.*



Dark clouds by the sea

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*(Please visit the MPCF website for updates, suggested donations, and directions.)*

### *Ongoing Activities in the UUCF Chapel (Program Building)*

#### **Morning Guided Sitting Meditation:**

Opportunity to relax, sit quietly and comfortably. Practice enjoying each moment of sitting and mindful walking.

Monday to Friday 8:15-9:15 am (except Thursday)  
Thursday 8:00-9:00 am

#### **Morning Mindful Movement:**

Learn to be mindful with movements. Improve one's health and vitality with soft physical exercises, Taiji and Qigong.

Thursday 9:15-10:00 am

#### **Noon Guided Sitting Meditation:**

Thursday 12:00-12:45 pm

#### **Thursday Evenings Meditation with Anh- Huong:**

A peaceful evening of meditation, mindful movements, walking meditation and dharma sharing. Every Thursday from 7:30-9:00 pm

#### **First Thursday of month: Recitation of the Five Mindfulness Trainings and Dharma talk by Anh-Huong.**

Tea and cookies 6:45-7:25pm. Sitting begins at 7:30pm. Before meditation you are invited to join us for tea and cookies any time between 6:30 and 7:20 pm.

### *Workshops & Classes*

#### **Weekend Retreats in West Virginia in 2012 led by Anh-Huong and Thu Nguyen October 12-14 and December 7-9.**

From 6:00 pm Friday to 3:00 pm Sunday Practicing mindfulness in a rural setting for the whole weekend, together with a loving and supportive community.

#### **Days and Half Days of Mindfulness**

(see website for details)

#### **led by Anh-Huong and Thu Nguyen**

**Saturdays at the MPCF in Oakton, Virginia (in the Chapel) May 26 (all day), June 16 (all day), and June 23 (half day).**

## Special Classes and Events

(see the website for updates)

### *Submission Guidelines*

*Along The Path* is a newsletter of the art of mindful living. Practicing mindfulness cultivates understanding, love, compassion, and joy. This practice helps us to take care of and transform suffering in our lives and in our society.

*Along The Path* is intended as an inspiration and teaching resource for those practicing mindfulness in daily life.

Writers please submit stories, poems, photos, art and teachings on mindfulness, based on your direct experience of transformation through the practice of mindfulness. Instead of giving academic or intellectual views, the teachings emphasize simple and successful ways to transform the difficulties and limitations in our lives so that each day becomes an experience of peace, happiness, and freedom.

Send submissions to Garrett Phelan at:

[gjphelan@gmail.com](mailto:gjphelan@gmail.com)

### *Along the Path*

Summer 2012

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