



Building Compassion

By Jeff Hardin

In Buddhism, compassion is defined as the skillful response of the mind, heart and body confronted with suffering. It is both an inward meditative practice and an outward expression of wholesome intentions to respond to suffering with care and concern.

In practicing compassion, we develop and strengthen the heart's wish for ourselves and others to be free from suffering. Rather than turning away from the pain of our own or other's struggles and hardships, we courageously turn towards suffering exposing our open heart to the reality of the current circumstances. We are not seeking to magically make everything better, fix what is broken or wrong or to pray for an external entity to remove obstacles and difficulties. Instead, compassion accepts what is present, no matter how challenging, and accepts our limitations in relation to what is present. It acknowledges that we all suffer and that freedom from suffering comes from an open heart and a clear-seeing mind.

True compassion is the willingness to be fully present for suffering and when appropriate, respond with our thoughts, speech, and actions to end suffering. We need always be on the lookout for what is called the near and far enemies of compassion. The near enemies are mimics of compassion that have clinging as their roots: pity, despair, blame, indifference, bargaining, and conditional care and concern. The far enemy of compassion is its opposite which is cruelty or wishing for another to suffer or vanish.

The first step in building compassion is to set the intention to be present for our experience with mindfulness and caring. With practice, over time, the skill of compassion becomes a bedrock of a life of wisdom, balance, peace and skill.



Cambodia Update

The International Team is planning IWA's first overseas group volunteer trip to Cambodia. The trip will include medical and non-medical volunteers. The date is still to be determined but will likely be later this year. Stay tuned for details.

Volunteer Fair at IMC

Sunday, June 10, 2012
11am -1pm, during the tea.
Insight Meditation Center
108 Birch Street, Redwood City
Sponsored by Dharma Friends

IWA Welcomes New Board Members

IWA announces two new board members: **Linda McGrath**, founder and owner of *YogaSource Los Gatos*; and **Gary Kissiah**, lawyer and author of *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali: Illuminations through image, commentary and design*.

Welcome Gary and Linda!

If you've been thinking about getting involved in volunteer work outside of IMC, please come hear what other sangha members are doing. If you're already volunteering, we hope you can share your experience of taking the practice out into the world. Literature and/or audio visual aids are most welcome.

For more information contact: Hilary Borison
hborison@sbcglobal.net

Volunteer Teams are Forming

Individuals are coming together to volunteer their time and skills to make the IWA vision a reality.

Marilyn Johnson, retired C.P.A, is our new financial coordinator.

A group has met as the International Team. They are researching and preparing for IWA's first international medical mission to Cambodia.

The Communications team is beginning work on the website, facebook page, newsletter, and many other projects.

Much needed are: a Volunteer Coordinator, a Local Projects Team, fundraisers, grant researchers and grant writers.

Opportunities to practice compassion in action continue to be available. All teams welcome volunteers. No experience necessary!



Compassion in Medicine Forum at Insight Meditation Center

A Sunday afternoon of presentations and discussions of how healthcare providers work with compassion and wisdom in the setting of stressful situations. Coming this Fall (Date to be determined).

Support Insight World Aid

1. **Volunteer:** Insight World Aid is in need of volunteers. We appreciate help from both people with medical training and qualifications and also people with non-medical skills.

IWA is seeking volunteers to help fundraise and research grants. No experience needed. Opportunities to volunteer are also available on the communications, local projects and international teams.

If you would like more information regarding donating your time and skills to IWA please visit our website and download a volunteer description list and application.

2. **Donate** - Insight World Aid is now accepting donations. As a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization, donations made to IWA are tax-deductible. If you would like to make a donation at this time please send your check to our mailing address below or visit our website to donate through PayPal.

3. **Spread the word** – If you know someone who may be interested in our work, please forward this information to them or give them the link to our website.

How to contact us

Our Website: insightworldaid.org/

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