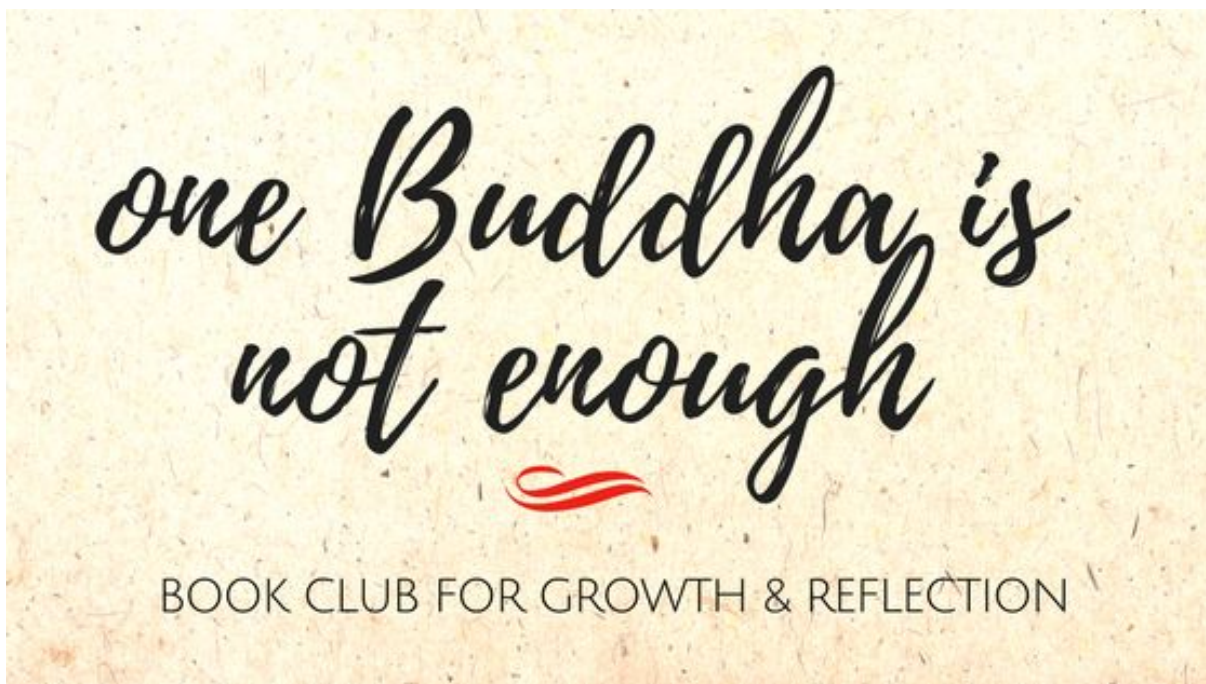


Chapters 4 through 6

Contributed by Dharma Teacher, Joanne Friday



INTRODUCTION

How do we learn to believe in ourselves and not just rely on our spiritual teachers? This question was answered in August of 2009 when over a thousand people came to Colorado to spend a week with Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh only to find he was in the hospital and wouldn't be able to lead the retreat. The result of this event is *One Buddha Is Not Enough*, a book on how to become your own teacher and create your own community where you might least expect it.

One Buddha Is Not Enough, the second book we will be studying during June and July, offers fresh and original insight from emerging Buddhist teachers on topics such as how to handle grief, strengthen our relationships, deal with anger, and find happiness in the present moment.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR



Joanne Friday, True Joy of Giving, is a Dharma teacher in the Tiep Hien Order. She has been a student of Thich Nhat Hanh for over 25 years and he authorized her to teach in 2003. Since then she has been offering retreats in the US and Canada. She is the co-founder and guiding teacher for the six Sanghas that comprise the Rhode Island Community of Mindfulness. She considers the Dharma to be the greatest gift she has ever received and her greatest joy is to be able to share it.

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CHAPTER 4: BREATHE! IT'LL BE OKAY

- “A monk came onstage and sat down and invited the bell, and the whole atmosphere in the room changed. I remember that experience. That was the first time I’d ever seen anything like that...this was the first time I’d ever experienced that change in the atmosphere of a place. That energy interested me and I became very curious about it.”
- “Anger is in me, irritation is in me, but I don’t need to do anything until I’m calm. Otherwise I’ll say or do something I’ll regret later.”
- “What happens when we don’t water a flower? It wilts. That happens to humans, too, if we don’t care for each other, and if we’re not loving to each other. Sometimes by the way someone looks or talks, we know that the flower needs to be watered.”
- “Thay tells us, 'When you plant lettuce, if it does not grow well, you don't blame the lettuce. You look for reasons it is not doing well. It may need fertilizer, or more water, or less sun. You never blame the lettuce. Yet if we have problems with our friends or family, we blame the other person. But if we know how to take care of them, they will grow well, like the lettuce. Blaming has no positive effect at all, nor does trying to persuade using reason and argument. That is my experience. No blame, no reasoning, no argument, just understanding.'”

Audio & Video Resources

1. Joanne Friday's Audio Reflection: [Click here to download \(7 min audio MP3\)](#)
2. Enjoy listening to the song, ["Breathing In, Breathing Out"](#). A classic song in the Plum Village tradition that can be sung to calm strong emotions.

Chapter 4 Discussion and Reflection Questions

1. Thay Phap Dung received an energetic transmission from Thay which brought him to the path of practice. Seeing how Thay walked and invited the bell affected a whole auditorium full of people and made Thay Phap Dung curious. How does curiosity motivate your practice? Thay tells us that we are transmitting and receiving energy every minute and the quality of the transmission depends on the quality of our consciousness. What practices have helped you to take care of your consciousness so that you will be transmitting your highest and best energy?
2. We need to strengthen our mindfulness and concentration so that we can recognize the energy of anger and other difficult and strong emotions as they arise in us. What are some early warning signs you have recognized in yourself which signal you to stop and breathe before you react?
3. We are co-creating every one of our relationships. Our first reaction might be to be angry or judge or criticize someone who is bringing up some suffering in us. In this chapter we are asked to look deeply to understand the conditioning of those who we find to be difficult in order to develop our understanding. When we do this we can see that we need to water the highest and best seeds in them, rather than criticize and reinforce the most unwholesome ones. Is there a difficult person in your life for whom you are having trouble feeling compassion? What is their suffering and what wholesome seeds in them might you water?

CHAPTER 5: A STORY OF COLLECTIVE AWAKENING

- “When I sit and look into my emotions, it also helps that I remember I’m not this emotion only. Sometimes when a strong emotion comes up, I’m completely just this emotion. I’m only very angry, and I act out of that anger; it just seems to take over. But when I sit and just recognize it, embrace it and look deeply, I notice that I’m actually much more than that emotion. Even in that moment when it’s so strong, I’m much bigger than that emotion. The more I practice with it, the less it fills up my whole being and the less it takes over.”
- “However, every time I take care of such a seed (ie. anger) - bringing up the energy of mindfulness, recognizing it, embracing it, looking deeply into it - it becomes a little bit weaker and usually I have learned a little bit more about it. It becomes a bit more of a friend than an enemy. This is very helpful, because each time I do this, it gives me a little more freedom not to react in a certain way and to see that I actually have a choice.”
- “The first thing we need to do when we have a difficult emotion coming up is to embrace it with our mindfulness and to see how strong it is. Then we need to look at ourselves and ask, “Do I have enough strength right now to take care of it? Do I have the time and the energy right now to take care of that emotion?” We need to be very honest. If we say “Right now I haven’t slept enough, I’m very tired, and I haven’t eaten well,” maybe right now isn’t a good time to take care of these emotions. What we can do at that point is to “Change the CD.”...We invite positive seeds from our store consciousness into our mind consciousness to help.”

Joanne Friday's Audio Reflection:

[Click here to download \(10 min audio MP3\)](#)

Practice Songs:

Brother Phap Thanh shared the significance of Thay's teaching on the phrase "this is it".
[Enjoy this practice song](#) recorded by Sister The Nghiem and Sr. Hai An.

This is it! This is a happy moment
This is it! This is a wonderful moment
This is it! I have arrived in this moment
And the only moment is now

This is it! Only breath breathing
This is it! Only life blooming
This is it! Only interbeing
The only way is right now

This is it! The holy mountain is here
This is it! The sacred temple is here
This is it! The pathless path is here
And the only place is right now

This is it! This is a happy moment
This is it! This is a wonderful moment
This is it! I have arrived in this moment
And the only moment is now

Chapter 5 Discussion and Reflection Questions

1. Br. Phap Thanh suggests that we need to develop a routine of “mental hygiene” in order to gain the strength that is necessary to take care of the negative seeds as they come up in us. What are some of your daily practices that strengthen you? Is there one practice offered in this chapter that you might like to experiment with and incorporate into your daily life?
2. When you have a difficult mental formation come into your mind, what do you do to encourage it to go back to the store consciousness? Is there a practice offered in this chapter that you might like to experiment with, i.e., naming it, observing its impermanent nature, embracing it without judgment, etc.?
3. Thay has offered us the practice of changing the CD. Do you have a selection of CDs to choose from when you need to replace a negative thought? Br. Phap Thanh goes into nature, the Buddha offered the Brahmaviharas, what replacement CDs are in your collection?

CHAPTER 6: WE INTER-ARE

- “I love the Dharma, because the Dharma teaches me and trains me how to live in the present moment, to rejoice with what is - the challenges, the difficulties, as well as the beauties and wonders in that moment. And the Dharma teaches me and trains me how to love.”
- “The teaching and practice of interbeing is the foundation of true love.”
- “Maybe you have never met Thay in person. However, if you touch the miracle of your own breath- you touch the miracle of your own steps - how they bring you back to the moment and how they enable you to enjoy something as simple as the yellow flower in the sidewalk - then you are with your teacher. If you have learned something and made it a part of your life, the teacher becomes a part of you. The teacher becomes you.”

Audio & Video Resources

1. Joanne Friday's Audio Reflection: [Click here to download \(10 min audio MP3\)](#)
2. A wonderful song to remind us that we inter-are: <https://youtu.be/cfBpZFnVU6c>
3. [One more song](#) by our Sangha brother Michael McMahon with a video from an OI Retreat about the importance of taking care of our own hearts and the beauty of interbeing and supporting each other on the Path. Enjoy!

Discussion and Reflection Questions

1. Am I able to bring joy and happiness to myself? What prevents me from being joyful? (Suggested reading and practice the 16 exercises from the Sutra on the Full Awareness of the Breath in the book *Awakening of the Heart*.)
2. We get habituated to label our world and loved ones and are unable to see everything and everyone with fresh eyes. Have any of our relationships become “stale”? Are our daily routines lifeless? Can we practice looking at our loved ones and the world around us with fresh eyes for 24 hours?
3. Have you been able to use the “four immeasurable minds” to deepen your capacity to love? Is there a relationship in your life that needs renewal or healing? Is there one practice from this chapter that you might use to deepen your understanding of the other person and to water their seeds of joy?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation: www.thichnhatanhfoundation.org

Parallax Press: www.parallax.org

Mindfulness Bell Magazine: www.mindfulnessbell.org

Wake Up International (Young adult sangha): www.wkup.org

Plumline Sangha (Online sangha): <http://plumline.org>

Wake Up Schools (Mindfulness in education): www.wakeupschools.org

USA Mindfulness Practice Centers

Blue Cliff Monastery: www.bluecliffmonastery.org

Deer Park Monastery: www.deerparkmonastery.org

Magnolia Grove Monastery: www.magnoliagrovesmonastery.org

International Mindfulness Practice Centers

Plum Village Monastery: www.plumvillage.org

European Institute of Applied Buddhism: www.eiab.eu/

Thai Plum Village Monastery: www.thaiplumvillage.org

Asian Institute of Applied Buddhism: <http://pvfhk.org/index.php/en/>

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www.thichnhatanhfoundation.org