

Save the Dates 2008:

September 11-14 Nonviolence as a Way of Life Conference featuring keynote speaker Marshall Rosenberg at the University of Oregon, Eugene, OR. Organized by the Coalition for Nonviolent Living. FFI: www.nonviolentliving.org



October 16-18 Counseling: Our Passion and Profession Oregon Counseling Association (ORCA) Conference at the Hilton in Eugene. I will present on Mindfulness & Compassion for Counselors and on a panel discussing private practice. FFI: www.or-counseling.org


The Doorknob Gazette is available

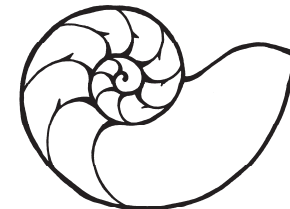
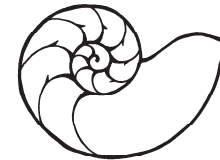
at my office, by mail, and at the offices of:

- Dr. Arthur Ticknor, Chiropractor
1245 Charnelton Street, Suite 7
- KellyRose Zuvuya,
Full Spectrum Bioenergetic Healing,
260 E. 15th Avenue, Suite F
- Dr. Virginia Oram, ND
400 E. 2nd Avenue, Suite 105
- Coleen Stevenson, LMT, Bowen work
2401 River Road, Suite 102
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The Doorknob Gazette
Spring Equinox
2008

*Plant seeds of joy, peace, and
understanding in yourself in order to
facilitate the work of transformation in
the depths of your consciousness.*
- Venerable Thich Nhat Hahn

Dear Ones -
Happy Spring!

Spring means sprouting and growing and change. Human growth is a natural process, aided by intention, awareness and heart. Our minds need care if we want them to flourish. When we lovingly plant the seeds of new ways of thinking, we need to maintain attention for them to root and eventually develop fruit.

In turning the soil of our minds, we unearth the seeds of old habits, bringing them light and the opportunity to sprout. These old habits are like weeds – something natural growing where it is not wanted. The habits we formed to protect ourselves long ago, while no longer useful, are not bad or wrong in themselves. Just like weeds, they can have medicinal value, but they can run rampant if unchecked, choking out the delicate seedlings we have recently chosen to take their place.

We sometimes wonder why it is so hard to change habits, why new behaviors and ways of thinking are so challenging to bring into our lives. As in a garden, what we intentionally place in our minds is going to need our supportive attention, while the elements already in the territory have deep roots and well-developed reproduction systems. This isn't a problem. It is good survival skills. But if we want vegetables instead of quackgrass, compassion instead of criticism, we have to make room for the former and remove the latter.

The manner in which we attend to our minds and our gardens will impact what grows there. If we move in haste to

yank a weed, it may break off and stimulate fresh growth beneath the ground, or scatter its seeds in a sudden burst. (Dandelions do both these things, hence their prevalence!) With our minds, if we act aggressively against ourselves, we only sow seeds of aggression. If we use poison on the weeds, we poison our gardens as well.

If we attend quietly, patiently, and kindly to what we have set in the ground this season, if we patrol the garden frequently with our eyes open and curiosity in our hearts, we will notice the sprouts of weeds before they take hold, and we will be able to attend to them, to follow the roots to the source and gently lift them out. We will plant the seeds of kindness in their place.

We may even, in the course of things, notice the beauty of the tapestry, the ecology of the whole. We may appreciate the diversity of experience we are capable of having, even as we prefer to cultivate one thing over another, peace over anger, love over fear.

Minds will always have trouble, and gardens will always have weeds. Accepting this truth while attending to it brings the richest bounty possible.



Ker Cleary, M.A. is a psychotherapist in private practice in Eugene, Oregon. She specializes in Contemplative Psychotherapy, helping people discover friendship with themselves as the path to healing. Ker teaches and writes on mindfulness, compassion and Buddhist psychology.

*For more information,
call (541)349-0595 or visit*

www.ContemplativePsychotherapy.com

May all beings benefit.

*The thought manifests as the word;
The word manifests as the deed;
The deed develops into habit;
The habit hardens into character.
So watch the thought and its ways with care,
And let it spring from love
Born out of concern for all beings.
- The Buddha*

Book Review:
The Lost Art of Compassion
by Lorne Ladner

Even as the word "compassion" grows in popularity, few bother to consider what it means or how to develop it. We often think we should (or do) know all about compassion, but we can't always muster it when we need it most. This book, subtitled "Discovering the Practice of Happiness in the Meeting of Buddhism and Psychology," is a practical and warm guide to cultivating compassion in our daily lives.

Dr. Ladner, a psychologist and Buddhist teacher in the Washington, DC area, writes with eloquence and ease, evoking his subject with each page. Ladner makes a case for what Buddhists have always known and non-Buddhists are beginning to catch on to: compassion is a learned skill that takes practice and bears fruit essential to our happiness. He also explains how it works.

This book is more definitively Buddhist than many of its kind, and simultaneously more psychological (in the Western sense). Ladner strikes a nice balance of accessibility and aha! moments, interspersed with examples most of us can relate to. Throughout the book, Ladner offers a clear, warm-hearted perspective on the suffering we cause ourselves through clinging to delusions, and a path of practice to let go of false hope and move toward our true compassionate natures.

