

### Upcoming Fall Events

***Meditation in Everyday Life Class***  
***September 30 - November 18, 2009***  
Wednesdays 6-8 p.m. 8 weeks, \$160.  
Basic instruction in Shamatha (calm-abiding) meditation & other practices.

***Intermediate level Meditation Class***  
***October 1 - November 19, 2009***  
Thursdays 6-8 p.m. 8 weeks, \$160.  
Deepen your Shamatha practice.

***Meditation & Stress Relief Workshop***  
***Saturday, October 24, 9:30-11:30 a.m.***  
Tamarack Wellness Center \$18 adv/\$22 door  
Register through TamarackWellness.com  
or call 541.683.7506

***Zafu-Making Workshop***  
TBA (November?) Make your own meditation cushion!


Call Ker at 541.349.0595 for information  
& registration or check the Calendar page  
at [www.ClearHeartCounseling.com](http://www.ClearHeartCounseling.com)

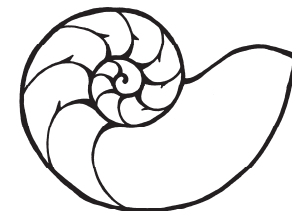
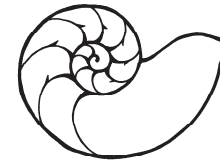
***The Doorknob Gazette*** is available  
at my office, by mail, and at:

- Dr. Arthur Ticknor, DC Chiropractor  
1245 Charnelton, Suite 7
- Dr. Virginia Oram, ND Naturopath  
400 E. 2nd Ave, Suite 105
- Coleen Stevenson, LMT, Bowen work  
2401 River Road, Suite 102
- Pam Farmer, Acupuncturist  
840 Lawrence Street
- Tamarack Wellness Center  
3575 Donald Street
- Acupuncture For the People  
2833 Willamette, Suite E
- Hazel Courtman, LMT  
2691 McMillan Street
- Dr. Barbara Robertson, DC  
A Healing Space, 380 W. 3rd Ave

Back issues available to download at  
[www.ClearHeartCounseling.com](http://www.ClearHeartCounseling.com)

Address Correction Requested

  
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The Doorknob Gazette  
Fall Equinox  
2009

*How we spend our days is how we  
spend our lives. ~ Annie Dillard*

Greetings, Dear Ones ~

Lately I have been noticing a lot of yearning for “perfection,” in myself and in others. We tell ourselves that if we could only break this habit, or meet that person, or lose x number of pounds, we would be happy. Even as we recognize our faulty thinking, we cannot help but strive to get there. Oddly enough, what we develop through our striving turns out to be unhappiness.

Through cultivation of this yearning, allowing our minds to perpetuate the notion of some future perfection, we develop the very thing we are trying to escape: dissatisfaction. Somehow we miss this rather salient point, and continue to nourish this restless habit of rejecting our present circumstance in the hope of getting somewhere else. This is a little bit like thrashing about in the water, hoping to get dry.

There is nothing inherently problematic with wetness, and nothing inherently beneficial about being dry. It is all relative. When in the desert, we long for water; adrift in the ocean we ache for dry land.

We divide the world and our experiences into right and wrong, based on stories we make up on the spot to explain our lives to ourselves. We base these stories on our past experience and our expectations for the future. We hardly ever base them on present moment reality, because we rarely stay present long enough to perceive reality. Our minds leap so quickly to making sense (aka a story) of our experience that we barely have time to actually have it!

We are deeply conditioned to take a stand on every sensation. Do I like this? *I want more of it.* Do I dislike this? *I want it to go away.* Do I feel neutral about this? *It isn't happening to me.* This is, of course, perfectly natural and human and we all do it, pretty much all the time.

These stands are essentially a rejection of reality, and that's where our unhappiness arises. Many of us seem to dream of something outside us that can be attained, that will not irritate or challenge us, that will make it all better. A home that will always be clean and cheerful, a partner who will only be loving, a set of habits that “good” people have, that will make us “good” too, if we can only hang on to them.


**But.** As Buddha noted, we create infinite suffering for ourselves in thinking this way, because of the impermanent nature of all manifest phenomena - that is, you, me, and life! ***We want to set up something permanent in a fundamentally transitory situation.*** We reject the fact of impermanence and cling to our ideal of what will make us happy. We forget that even if we *could* create that perfect situation, things *will* change. Objects and bodies eventually disintegrate, people come and go, even our own tastes and desires change (avocado shag carpet, anyone?).

If we can accept that things change, that the future is unknowable and the past has dissolved, we are left with only the here and now. If we truly want to be happy (we all seem to want that), we must understand that here and now is our **only** opportunity for happiness.

Imagining a permanent, perfect,

happy future is no more useful than imagining ourselves to be dry when we are wet. Every life contains both suffering and joy. If we cannot be present with our experience in this moment, as it is, we will never be present for any moments to come, happy or otherwise. We'll be less able to enjoy our happiness (hint: it's here now) and less able to work with our pain (also here, now).

What we practice, we get good at. If we practice rejecting the present moment in favor of a fantasy, we become experts at rejection and fantasy. We don't actually become good at manifesting the fantasy. If we practice ***simply being in the water***, accepting and noticing the qualities and our direct experience of wetness without objecting to it, we will develop the capacity to fully experience dryness as well.

**Try this, if you wish:** Sit quietly for a few minutes and allow your thoughts and feelings to arise. Don't judge or try to stop them; don't follow them. Just notice that they arise and dissolve again. Note any impulse to reject or cling or ignore, and let that impulse dissolve as well. Just get to know your own mind, a little at a time, with a gentle curiosity. After a few minutes, go about your day. 

Ker Cleary, M.A. is a counselor in private practice in Eugene, Oregon. Trained in Contemplative Psychotherapy, she helps people discover friendship with themselves as the path to healing. For more information, call (541)349-0595 or visit [www.ClearHeartCounseling.com](http://www.ClearHeartCounseling.com) May all beings benefit.