

UPCOMING EVENTS WITH KER CLEARY



Saturday, September 30, 2006

Mindfulness Meditation

for Counselors

presentation at the
Oregon Counseling Association
Conference, Warm Springs, OR



Save the dates!

I will be offering free talks this
winter and spring on
Contemplative Psychotherapy
as it relates to various topics
(to be announced in the Winter
issue of this newsletter). In the
meantime, save these dates:
Third Tuesdays from 7-9 pm
January 16, February 19
and March 20, 2007



The next class in

Building Your

Authentic Private Practice

starts Tuesday, January 16, 2007



Please call Ker at (541)349-0595 or email
ker@contemplativepsychotherapy.com
for information on any of these events.



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Address Correction Requested



The Doorknob Gazette

Autumnal Equinox

2006

Dear Ones -

The autumn equinox is about balance. In the Buddha families, autumn is the time of Ratna, the yellow in prayer flags. Ratna's wisdom aspect is equanimity. Each Buddha family has both a wisdom and a neurosis, two sides of one coin. In its neurotic aspect, Ratna is represented by the Hungry Ghost, whose body is as huge as a mountain and whose mouth is the diameter of a hair. No matter what the Hungry Ghost tries to take in, it can never be enough. When we indulge our cravings, whether for food, possessions, power, anger or control, we are in the Hungry Ghost realm, being run by our belief that something can fill the emptiness inside. We think something is wrong, we dislike our current experience of hunger or craving, and we race after whatever we think will fix it. (Do I need to point out here that it doesn't actually work? We aren't broken, so we can't get fixed.)

The antidote to craving is to cultivate equanimity of mind. Equanimity has no preferences, is easy with not knowing, and refrains from leaping to judgment about situations and the people in them. This takes practice. Equanimity is illustrated in this story:

An old man's only horse ran away. The villagers said, "Oh, how awful!" The old man said, "Maybe, maybe not. We'll see." Then the horse came back, followed by several wild horses. Now the old man was wealthy! The villagers said, "Oh, how wonderful!" The old man said, "Maybe, maybe not. We'll see." (This old man sounds a lot like my mother!) Then the old man's only son was thrown off one of the wild horses he was trying to train, and broke his leg. Now the

old man had no help on his farm.

"Oh, how terrible!" the villagers cried. "Maybe, maybe not. We'll see." Soon after, the local lord declared war on a neighboring land, and sent soldiers to all the farms to round up young men to go fight in battle. The old man's son was left behind, unfit because of his broken leg. "Oh, that is so good!" said the villagers (having still not figured out how the old man saw things). What do you think the old man said?

We could use the old man's words as our mantra in times of lost balance. When hunger and craving arise as resistance to what is, and we try to pigeonhole our experience, like the villagers, rather than just having it, we could use a little equanimity. For we never truly know the outcome, and jumping to conclusions does not even count as exercise. It can be a relief to release the need to know, and to let go of the illusion of control.

I have been working with this approach myself for about twenty years, and am recently noting some real progress. So, have patience! Car cut you off in traffic? Is the other driver an idiot? Maybe, maybe not. We'll see.



Ker Cleary, M.A. is a psychotherapist in private practice in Eugene, Oregon. She specializes in Contemplative Psychotherapy, the application of mindfulness and compassion to the obstacles that keep us from happiness. She teaches and speaks on various topics related to Buddhism and psychology and helps other practitioners develop Authentic Private Practices. For more information, call (541)349-0595 or visit www.contemplativepsychotherapy.com May all beings benefit.

On the other hand...

sometimes preferences are helpful!

I want your input about which subjects you would like to learn about in my free talks this winter. Choose as you like from the list, or offer your own ideas. Leave a message at (541)349-0595 or e-mail me at ker@contemplativepsychotherapy.com with your thoughts **by November 1st** and I will develop talks based on the three favorites (see Events for dates).

I am grateful for your assistance.

Possible subjects include:

Working with Fear
Working with Anger
Developing True Compassion
What is Contemplative Psychotherapy?
Dealing with Difficult People
The Five Buddha Families
Don't Believe Everything You Think
Mindfulness Practices
or?????

BOOK REVIEW:

**WHEN YOU'RE FALLING, DIVE:
ACCEPTANCE, FREEDOM AND POSSIBILITY
BY CHERI HUBER**

The title says it all. Huber offers us insight into - and practical steps out of - our fear and resistance to opening fully to our whole lives. She differentiates between resignation, which saps our energy, and acceptance, which activates us. Her warm and uncompromising words shine wise light into the squirmy, shadowy corners of our minds. We could actually develop compassionate acceptance of ourselves. Dive on in, it's fine. 