

CLEAR MIND



Non-Residential Lovingkindness Retreat July 9-11:

Sharon Salzberg

Renowned meditation teacher Sharon Salzberg will lead a non-residential meditation retreat at the Lussier Family Heritage Center in Madison, WI, July 9-11.

Sharon has taught and written extensively on the subject of loving-kindness. Her books include *Lovingkindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness* (Shambhala Books), *The Force of Kindness* (Sounds True), and *Faith: Trusting Your Own Deepest Experience* (Riverhead Books). She has



studied in India, Burma, Australia and other countries with such respected teachers as S.N. Goenka and Sayadaw U Pandita, among others. She has taught meditation and lovingkindness practices since 1974 and was a co-founder, with Joseph Goldstein and Jack Kornfield, of the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, MA.

The July retreat will focus on the cultivation of metta, or lovingkindness. It will be appropriate for both beginning and experienced meditators. Clear and simple instructions will be presented. The retreat will be held in silence except for question and answer periods. Sitting meditation periods will alternate with periods of walking meditation throughout each day. The cost is \$100, which covers vegetarian meals, teacher

transportation and other retreat expenses. In keeping with Theravada Buddhist tradition, there is no charge for the teachings; however, a donation (*dana*) to the teacher is encouraged.

For more information or to register, see the registration form included with this newsletter. The form is also available online at www.vipassana.net.

To learn more about Sharon Salzberg, see pages 2 and 3 or visit www.sharon Salzberg.com.

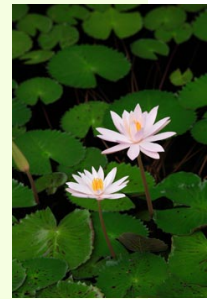
Friends Along The Path

The Buddha once told his attendant, Ananda, that spiritual friends are 100 percent of the spiritual path. How do you cultivate spiritual friends? By joining a *Kalyana Mitta* group.

Kalyana Mitta means "spiritual friend." The *Kalyana Mitta* program was created by James Baraz, a Spirit Rock teacher who

has led many retreats in Madison. The program involves setting up small groups of six to ten people, who meet monthly to support each other's practice. There is a sitting, a check-in period, and often a discussion of readings, with emphasis on how the readings relate to members' actual practice.

Many Madison Insight Meditation Group members find *Kalyana Mitta* groups to be tremendously enriching because they enable a more intensive bonding with spiritual friends. Two members, Dave Creswell and Tony Fernandez, are working together in mentoring new groups. If you have questions or are interested in a new group starting this fall, please call Dave at 238-1234.



Increasing the Odds of Happiness

Sharon Salzberg on sympathetic joy

I recently visited a friend in Malibu, a spectacularly beautiful beach town north of Los Angeles. As I walked along the sand, I was captivated by the warm breeze, the sound of the ocean, and the light glinting off the water. Glancing at the luxurious houses lining the shore, I imagined that this was as good as it gets.

Then the rains came. Hour after hour, day after day, rain pounded down. My friend's garage roof leaked. The stuff she was storing there all had to be moved. In the midst of the chaos, a national news correspondent called and asked if she could come out with a television crew to film the scene. Puzzled, my friend asked, "Why?" The woman replied, "Well, all around the country people get excited if they hear that something's gone wrong in Malibu."

We relish others' misfortunes when we begrudge them their apparent happiness. Hearing about another person's success, we might think, "Oooh. I would be happier if you had just a little bit less going for you right now." We react as though good fortune were a limited commodity, so the more someone else has, the less there will be for us. But someone else's pleasure doesn't cause our unhappiness—we make ourselves un-

happy because our negativity isolates us.

An alternative to feeling painfully cut off is to learn to rejoice in the happiness of others. In Buddhist teaching, this is called sympathetic joy. The term is unusual; sympathy is commonly used in the sense of feeling bad for others. Learning to share their joy revolutionizes our thinking about where we can find happiness.

One doorway to sympathetic joy is compassion. If we remember that even people who have more than we do suffer, we will feel closer to them.

A friend told me about her envy of a woman who had it all. The "lucky" one had a good relationship, was a mountain climber and champion swimmer, and, because of her job, was invited to lecture at distinguished universities. My friend was single; she was challenged by something as simple as a long walk; she worked without prestige or glamour. And she felt scalded by jealousy whenever she thought of this other woman.

She decided to try a practice of compassion to reach sympathetic joy. She recalled the hardships in this other woman's life: Her brother was an alcoholic, her father had Alzheimer's, and she was worried about money. Seeing

the bigger picture not only enabled my friend to view the other woman in a new way, it allowed her to appreciate the joy in her own life. Now this woman no longer seemed so alien, and my friend could feel a burgeoning and genuine connection to her. The bindings of envy loosened, and instead of seeing someone else's happiness as a threat to her own, it actually became her own.

Another way to reach sympathetic joy is through meditation. Sitting comfortably with your eyes closed, silently recite your intention to rejoice in the happiness of others. Phrases often used are "May your happiness and good fortune not diminish. May they increase further and further." You can offer the phrases to different people in your life, one by one. End the meditation by offering the phrases in a global way: "May the happiness and good fortune of all increase further and further."

As the Dalai Lama puts it, there are so many people in this world, it simply makes sense to make their happiness a source of our own. Then our chances of experiencing joy "are enhanced six billion to one," he says. "Those are very good odds."

From *O* magazine, May 2001. Excerpted with permission.

Karaniya Metta Sutta

The Buddha's Words on Lovingkindness



*This is what should be done
By those who are skilled in goodness,
And who know the path of peace:
Let them be able and upright,
Straightforward and gentle in speech,
Humble and not conceited,
Contented and easily satisfied,
Unburdened with duties and frugal in their ways,
Peaceful and calm, and wise and skillful,
Not proud and demanding in nature.
Let them not do the slightest thing
That the wise would later reprove.
Wishing: in gladness and in safety,*

*May all beings be at ease.
Whatever living beings there may be;
Whether they are weak or strong, omitting none,
The great or the mighty, medium, short or small,
The seen and the unseen,
Those living near and far away,
Those born and to-be-born—
May all beings be at ease!
Let none deceive another,
Or despise any being in any state.
Let none through anger or ill-will
Wish harm upon another.
Even as a mother protects with her life
Her child, her only child,
So with a boundless heart
Should one cherish all living beings;
Radiating kindness over the entire world,
Spreading upward to the skies,
And downward to the depths;
Outward and unbounded,
Freed from hatred and ill-will.
Whether standing or walking, seated or lying
down,
Free from drowsiness,
One should sustain this recollection.
This is said to be the sublime abiding.
By not holding to fixed views,
The pure-hearted one, having clarity of vision,
Being freed from all sense desires,
Is not born again into this world.*

"Karaniya Metta Sutta: The Buddha's Words on Loving-kindness" (Khp 9), translated from the Pali by The Amaravati Sangha.

The Sound of Suttas

You can hear an alternate translation of this sutta read by Thanissaro Bhikkhu, as well as related suttas read by Sharon Salzberg, at <http://www.suttareadings.net/audio/index.html>

MIMG Meditation Classes

Madison Insight Meditation Group will offer two meditation classes this summer. An introductory class, *Training the Mind: The Skill of Meditation*, will be offered from 3 to 5pm on four Saturdays: May 22, and June 5, 12, and 19. A continuing class, *Clearing the Path: Meditation in Context*, will be offered from 3 to 5pm on five Saturdays: June 26 and July 3, 10, 17, and 24.

The introductory class provides instruction in breath meditation, lovingkindness meditation, and walking meditation, as well as strategies to incorporate meditative awareness into daily life. The continuing class is for those with an understanding of basic breath meditation and a daily meditation practice. It examines how meditation fits into the teachings of the Buddha and provides the context to understand what we notice and learn about the heart and mind through our meditation. Both classes are taught by Janice Cittasubha Sheppard at 9638 Shadow Ridge Trail, Middleton, WI.

Details and information about registration are at www.vipassana.net/classes. Questions can be directed to Jan at Janice.sheppard@yahoo.com or (608) 829-0944.

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The Newsletter of Madison Vipassana, Inc.
Madison, WI

This newsletter is published periodically as a service to our meditation community. It is also available on our website at: <http://www.vipassana.net>

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