



Compassionate Ocean Zen Center

A Center for Mindful Living

652 17th Avenue NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413 • Issue No. 51 • Winter 2019

Just Do It

Joen O'Neal

My teacher, Dainin Katagiri Roshi, would often express an important point in a few pithy words. One expression that I remember well was "Just do it." He used to say this before Nike made it popular.

He didn't mean "Just do something—it doesn't matter what." He meant, "If something is worthwhile to do, then just do it, without being tossed aside by momentary likes and dislikes."

Some time after the death of Katagiri Roshi in 1990 I read an essay by Melody Ermachild Chavis. Melody, a Zen practitioner, worked as a defense investigator to protect the rights of inmates on death row. As part of her work, and for over 20 years, she would go into San Quentin prison in California to meet with prisoners. Although she had done it many times, it was always difficult for her to go into the prison—the waiting, the going through all the check points and metal detectors, the harsh sounds of locks and steel doors, entering ever more deeply into the oppressive prison environment.

Sometimes as she waited she would look into her datebook, where she had written a quote by Katagiri Roshi: *Don't worry about whether you like it or don't like it. Just do it, and your life will blossom.*

When I first read this I was thrilled. It was like an unexpected visit from my teacher. Melody had never met Katagiri Roshi but had come across this quotation and had seen his ashes site at Green Gulch Zen Center, not far from San Quentin.

Melody wrote that reading Katagiri Roshi's words she thought, "He's probably talking about zazen. Probably he meant, Don't worry. Don't worry about whether your legs are hurting. Don't worry about your mind filling up with things you have to do. Just sit. Just keep bringing your mind back to your breath. Just bring your body back to your cushion. Just keep bringing yourself back here to your life, right now. Just sit in the middle of everything."

One of the prisoners Melody regularly went to visit was Jarvis Masters. Jarvis has been in San Quentin since 1981, when he was nineteen years old. He is there now, as you read this. Melody introduced Jarvis to Buddhist teaching and practice, which deeply transformed his life. She also encouraged him in his writing, and he has written two moving and beautifully written books—about his traumatic early life, and about bodhisattva practice in prison.

At one point Melody arranged for Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche, a Tibetan Buddhist teacher, to visit Jarvis at San Quentin, where Jarvis took a number of vows. One of them was, "From this day forward, I will try to end the suffering of all human beings and other beings."

Jarvis takes the practice of trying to end the suffering of others very seriously, but it's not an easy practice in prison. Actually, it's not an easy practice anywhere, but in prison it may put his own life at risk. He has to be very skillful and attentive. Nevertheless, Pema Chodron, who became Jarvis's teacher after the death of Chagdud Rinpoche, has written, "I have rarely met anyone who took these vows as wholeheartedly as Jarvis."

Jarvis begins every day with the practice of meditation, sitting on the cold floor on a folded blanket. He "just does it." This continuity of practice helps give him the strength and stability to be upright in a supremely difficult environment. If Jarvis thinks—for a minute, a second, or even a millisecond—whether he likes being in San Quentin, immediately he is in hell. He has to simply turn, again and again, and face his actual situation, beyond his like and dislikes.

Jarvis and Melody learned what Katagiri Roshi meant by "Just do it." Our own situation may or may not be as challenging as theirs, but we too can do this practice. I still hear my teacher's voice, saying, with a special kind of joyful enthusiasm, "Just do it!" And I renew my own vow—"Yes, I will."

2018 Year–End Appeal

It takes time to practice generosity, but being generous is the best use of our time.

–Thich Nhat Hanh

Dear friend,

As someone connected to Compassionate Ocean Zen Center, you have been supported in becoming more open to the joy and happiness available to us here and now. As a friend and probably a graduate of one of our programs, your seeds of mindfulness and kindness have been watered and strengthened. Through the guidance of our teachers, Michael and Joen, you have found encouragement on your journey of awakening and wholeness. I am confident of all of this.

Compassionate Ocean is about to begin its 25th year. In that time, we have directly touched the lives of many hundreds of people, extending a circle of compassion and mindfulness ever wider. This is the purpose of Compassionate Ocean—to be a vital, thriving center for awakening and peace in the heart of northeast Minneapolis.

Our aspiration for 2019 is to carry this mission forward—deepening participation in our Center and extending the Center’s gifts to the broader community. We’ll continue our meditation sessions and dharma talks, our classes and retreats. We’ll continue our climate change programming. We’ll continue to build on our arts programming, which brought classical and contemporary music performances to the Center for the first time in 2018. We’ll continue to strengthen our community outreach by improving our online presence via our redesigned web site and through social media. In the past year our membership has grown 20%. More people are finding their way to Compassionate Ocean, including many from nearby neighborhoods.

Compassionate Ocean depends on the generosity of people like you and me. The income from classes and other programs covers about 40% of our Center’s operating expenses. Fees are kept low to make our Center accessible. The rest of our income comes from contributions from people like us who value what the Center does and want it to grow and thrive. This Year-End Appeal is our chance to end 2018 in a positive financial position. Our goal is to raise \$25,000. Every donation, of any amount, is important. Will you help?

Your tax-deductible donation can be mailed in the enclosed return envelope. Please include any ideas you have for the future development of our Center. You can also contribute online at our website, OceanDharma.org (see the “Giving” tab).

Yours in gratitude,

Jan Sutton

Jan Sutton

Chair, Board of Directors

Compassionate Ocean Zen Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.





Winter Programs 2019

Compassionate Ocean Zen Center

652 17th Avenue NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413

(612) 781-7640 • www.OceanDharma.org

Essential Zen Teachings

Heart of Great Perfect Wisdom

Taught by Michael and Joen O'Neal



The Heart of Great Perfect Wisdom Sutra, commonly referred to as the Heart Sutra, is one of the most frequently studied and recited sutras in Buddhism. Only one page long, it presents a deep insight into the nature of wisdom. It also points to the role of compassion in human life, and the relative and absolute nature of truth. The Heart Sutra is a wonderful Dharma gate into the whole range of Buddhist teaching and practice.

The course will include meditation, lecture, and discussion, with a special emphasis on bringing these teachings alive in our day-to-day lives. Our texts will be *Living by Vow* by Shohaku Okumura and a second text on the Heart Sutra, to be determined.

Wednesdays, Jan. 16 – March 6 (eight sessions) (#B88)

7:00–9:00 p.m.

\$185 (members \$165) (includes course texts)

Member rates apply to members of all local Dharma centers.

Reduced fees are offered as needed; please contact the Center at (612) 781-7640.

To register, use the form on page 6 or go to www.OceanDharma.org.

Center for Mindful Living: Programs in Mindfulness

Total Dynamic Living - An Eight-Week Program in Mindfulness and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

Total Dynamic Living is a thorough, well-structured introduction to mindfulness practice in everyday life. It follows the nationally acclaimed mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) model developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn, presenting mindfulness as a universal practice for people of any (or no) religious background.

The program includes instruction and practice in sitting meditation, gentle yoga, body awareness meditation, and daily-life applications of mindfulness. It also includes information about stress and relaxation. The program enables participants to develop their own base in mindfulness practice integrated into everyday life.

The course includes eight weekly classes, an individual interview with the instructor, a Saturday retreat, the book *Full Catastrophe Living* by Jon Kabat-Zinn, four CDs, and handouts. 27 CEUs are available for all courses.

The course fee is \$295 plus a \$35 materials fee. Payment plans and some scholarship aid are available. Please contact the Center to discuss.

Enrollment is limited, and pre-registration is required. Please let your friends and colleagues know about this program.

#198 Minneapolis: Tuesdays

Jan. 15–March 5 • 6:30-9:00 P.M.

Instructor: Joen O'Neal

Location: Compassionate Ocean Zen Center

652 17th Ave. NE, Minneapolis (in the Northeast Arts District)

#279 St. Paul: Thursdays

Jan. 17–March 7 • 6:30-9:00 P.M.

Instructor: Michael O'Neal

Location: Clouds in Water Zen Center

445 Farrington St., St. Paul (near University Ave. and Western Ave.)

27 CEUs are available for nurses, social workers, educators, and psychologists.

Total Dynamic Living: One-Day Retreat

This retreat is open to all current participants in Total Dynamic Living courses. It is also open to graduates of past Total Dynamic Living courses on a donation basis. People not enrolled in a current course should call the Center in advance to reserve a space.

Saturday, March 2 • 9:00 A.M.-3:00 P.M.

Location: 652 17th Ave. NE, Minneapolis



Gift certificates for the Introductory Program in Mindfulness are available. Please email admin@OceanDharma.org or call (612) 781-7640.

Guiding Teachers



Joen O'Neal and Michael O'Neal are the guiding teachers of Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center. They practiced and taught for many years at the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center and Hokyoji Zen Monastery under the guidance of Dainin Katagiri Roshi. They have also practiced with Thich Nhat Hanh in France and the United States, and have completed a training for professionals with Jon Kabat-Zinn. Joen was ordained as a Zen priest by Katagiri Roshi in 1980 and received Dharma transmission from him in 1989. Michael was ordained as a Zen priest in May of this year.

The guiding teachers are available for individual meetings regarding life and practice. To set up an appointment, call the Center.

Volunteers are welcomed and needed, to help sustain and grow Compassionate Ocean. Special areas for volunteer help are the Finance Committee, Publicity and Promotion Committee, and Fundraising Committee. People to help take care of our building (cleaning, etc.) are also needed. Please contact the Center for more information.

Meditation and Dharma Talks

Most Sunday and Friday mornings throughout the year Compassionate Ocean offers meditation practice (sitting and walking) followed by a Dharma talk and discussion, focusing on aspects of Buddhist teaching and their application to everyday life. Our practice is in the mindfulness traditions of Soto Zen and Thich Nhat Hahn. Everyone is invited to participate. There are no prerequisites; people are welcome to come when they wish. There is no fee; donations are welcome. The Sunday gathering is co-led by Joen and Michael. Joen leads the Friday group.

Sundays, 9:00-11:15 A.M.

Schedule: 9:00 sitting, 9:25 walking, 9:35 sitting, 10:00 dharma talk and discussion, 11:15 ending.

Fridays, 9:30-11:00 A.M.

Schedule: 9:30 sitting, 10:00 walking, 10:10 dharma talk and discussion, 11:00 ending.

Welcome Sessions

New people are always welcome at our Sunday and Friday morning gatherings. To provide a special welcome, sessions that include an orientation to our practice are offered periodically. These are excellent opportunities to find out more if you are curious but haven't got around to coming.

- Friday, Jan. 4, 9:30-11:00 A.M.
- Sunday, Jan. 6, 9:00-11:15 A.M.

Orientation to Zen Meditation

Basic instruction in Zen sitting practice. No pre-registration needed.

Sunday mornings at 8:15 A.M.

Introduction to Zen Practice with Michael

A two-class introduction to Zen meditation and related practices. No fee; pre-registration required.

Mondays, Feb. 4 & 11, 7:00-9:00 P.M.

Weekday Meditation Sessions

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings
7:00 A.M. zazen (sitting), 7:40 chanting service, 8:00 temple cleaning (to 8:15)

Friday mornings

6:30 A.M. zazen (7:00 ending—no chanting service or temple cleaning)

Thursday evenings

7:30 P.M. zazen (sitting), 8:00 kinhin (walking), 8:10 zazen, 8:40 ending.

People are welcome to come for any part of the schedule.



Elektra and Joen preparing lunch at our fall sesshin at Hokyoji.

Retreats

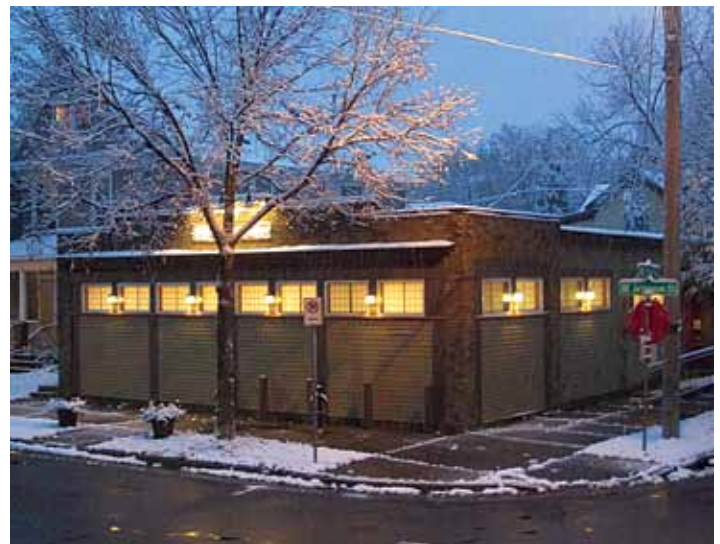
These practice events are open to community members as well as others who have had some experience with Buddhist practice. They offer extended opportunities to settle the mind and body and open to the deep wisdom of human life. They support strengthening and deepening the practice of presence in community with other practitioners.

Sesshin/Days of Zen Practice

- Saturday, Jan. 12, 7:00 A.M.-9:00 P.M.
- Friday, Feb. 8, 7:30 P.M.-Saturday, Feb. 9, 9:00 P.M.
- Friday, March 8, 7:30 P.M.-Saturday, March 9, 9:00 P.M.

Led by Joen and Michael

These practice events will include sitting and walking meditation, a Dharma talk, body practice, and a work period. There will also be an opportunity to meet with a teacher. Includes three vegetarian meals. Fee: \$50 (members \$45).



Winter 2019 Registration Form

Name _____

Address _____

Zip _____ Email _____

Phone

H: () _____

W: () _____

To register, please check the appropriate activities.

Total Dynamic Living—Introductory Program in Mindfulness (\$25 deposit)

- Minneapolis, Tuesday evenings (#198)
- St. Paul, Thursday evenings (#279)

Total Dynamic Living: One-Day Retreat

- Saturday, March 2, 9:00 A.M.– 3:00 P.M.
(by donation for program alumni)

“Heart of Great Perfect Wisdom” Course

- Wednesday evenings (#B88)
Jan. 16-March 6 (\$25 deposit)

Introduction to Zen Practice Mini-Course

- Feb. 4 & 11 (no fee)

Sesshin/ Days of Zen Practice

- Saturday, Jan. 12
- Friday-Saturday, Feb. 8-9
- Friday-Saturday, March 8-9
(\$50, members \$45)

Facing Climate Change (no fee)

- Friday, Jan. 11
- Friday, Feb. 22
- Friday, March 22

Enrollment for these activities is limited, and early registration is encouraged.

To register, send this form along with the non-refundable deposit listed (payable to CODC) to: Compassionate Ocean Zen Center
652 17th Ave. NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413
(612) 781-7640 • www.OceanDharma.org
Or register online on our website in the “Classes & Retreats” section.

Facing Climate Change: For a Future to Be Possible

Monthly drop-in gathering to educate ourselves about the unfolding crisis in climate disruption and what we can do about it. Optional vegetarian potluck at 6:00 P.M. followed by a program from 7:00-9:00. No fees, but please register in advance by sending an email to admin@OceanDharma.org.

Winter Schedule:

Friday evenings, Jan. 11, Feb. 22, March 22



Help Wanted:

Administrative Assistant/Communications Coordinator

We are seeking a paid, part-time (10 hours a week, possibly more), Administrative Assistant/ Communications Coordinator to manage our database and website, prepare and send email marketing and communication, do general program promotion and miscellaneous administrative tasks. For further information, please call the Center or send an email to admin@OceanDharma.org.

Wish List

- Projector (to be able to show documentary films at our climate change meetings)
- Plumbing help—replacing a toilet mechanism, hooking up a washing machine
- Carpenter/handyman help (various projects)
- Graphic design help



You are invited...

...to become a Sustaining Member of Compassionate Ocean, joining others to make possible the continued life of our Center. For further information please go to our website or contact us to request a Membership Brochure.

Joan receiving a surprise gift on her birthday in October



Labor Day practice period at Hokyoji Zen Practice Community in southeastern Minnesota:
Adam, Elektra, Joen, Michael, Dokai, West, Ekyo



In November, Adam, Amy, and Lisa participated in a lay ordination ceremony that included formally receiving the Three Refuges, the Three Pure Precepts, and the Ten Prohibitory Precepts from Joen. They also received Buddhist names: “Kaishin” (Ocean Heart) for Adam, “Jiko” (Compassionate Light) for Amy, and “Eisho” (Eternal Illumination) for Lisa.



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Administrative Annex
681 17th Ave NE, Suite 210
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admin@OceanDharma.org
www.OceanDharma.org

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Winter Program Highlights

- **Buddhist Studies Course:**
Heart of Great Perfect Wisdom
- **Introductory Programs in Mindfulness (MBSR)**
offered in Minneapolis and St. Paul
- **Intro to Zen Mini-course**
- **Climate Change Action gatherings**
- **Ongoing Meditation and Dharma Talks**
- **Monthly Sesshin (Days of Zen Practice)**
- **Winter Zendo Music Night (see below)**

Winter Zendo Music Night

Lydia Liza

singer/songwriter (performing two solo acoustic mini-sets)



plus Evans, Harada, Zahller, and Savot String Quartet

7:30 P.M. Friday, January 25

(By donation)

Part of our ongoing series highlighting local musicians performing in our intimate zendo space.