

Creating Safe Space for Deep Listening & Mindful Speech

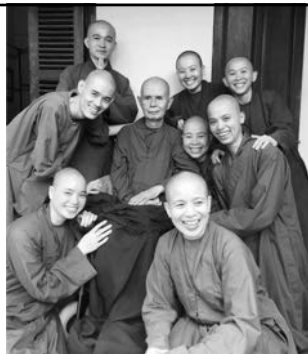
WITH THE FIVE MINDFULNESS TRAININGS OF THE PLUM VILLAGE TRADITION

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The Plum Village Tradition

- Named after the first practice center established by Zen master, poet & peace activist Thich Nhat Hanh.
- Hallmarks of the tradition:
 - Moment-to-moment awareness of everyday activities, such as walking, eating, speaking and listening
 - Grounded in the ethic of the Five Mindfulness Trainings

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July 8, 2019 Hue, Vietnam
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The 5 Mindfulness Trainings

- Buddhist vision for a global spirituality and ethic
 - Nonsectarian
 - Universal in nature
- “A concrete expression of the Buddha’s teachings on the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path” - preamble to the 5MT recitation ceremony

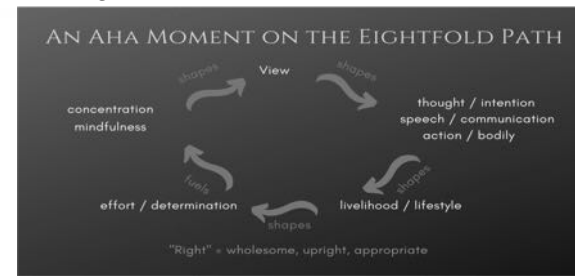
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The Four Noble Truths

- Ill-being (and well being) exist.
 - Be aware of them
- Ill-being (and well being) have their roots.
 - Look deeply to find them
- Ill-being can be ended (and well-being can be cultivated).
 - Transformation & healing are possible
- The Eightfold Path is the way to end ill-being (& cultivate well being)

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The Eightfold Path



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The First Training: Reverence for Life

to protect life, to decrease violence in oneself, in the family and in society.

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The 2nd Training: True Happiness

to practice social justice, generosity, not stealing and not exploiting other living beings.

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| The Third Training: True Love

the practice of responsible sexual behavior in order to protect individuals, couples, families and children.

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| The Fourth Training: Loving Speech & Deep Listening

the practice of deep listening and loving speech to restore communication and reconcile.

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| The Fifth Training: Nourishment & Healing

about mindful consumption, to help us not bring toxins and poisons into our body or mind.

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| **Sangha its Role in Creating Safe Space for Transformation & Healing**

- Personal practice can take us only so far
- We need Sangha
 - Generates a collective energy that makes mindful living far easier
 - Powerful force for transformation and healing
- Sangha are "Communities of Resistance" according to Thich Nhat Hanh
 - Not opposition, but protection, like an umbrella from the rain
 - Resisting/protecting against the negative habit energies of society
 - Creating Safety

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Negative Habit Energies:

- The speed of life, always in a hurry
- Distractions, e.g. media
 - Negativity
 - Anger & Violence
 - Unkindness, disrespect
 - Sexual Imagery
- Prevent us from taking care of ourselves, our family, our society and our world
 - Increased sympathetic overdrive
 - Hard to slow down, be present and create conditions of safety

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Create Safety by Cultivating:

- Creating a refuge for practice of mindfulness
 - Ability we all share to know what is going on in and around us in the present moment
 - Right Mindfulness when we do this to transform and heal ourselves, our families, our society and our world

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Practice of Mindfulness

- Breath is our anchor to the present moment
- Stopping, Calming, Looking Deeply
 - Practice throughout day with bells of mindfulness
 - Walking, eating, telephone, chopping vegetables
 - Seated Meditation
 - Develops our concentration
 - Improves moment-to-moment awareness
 - Like “scales” to a musician, drills to an athlete

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Benefits of Mindfulness

- Joy & Happiness
 - Touch the beauty that is all around us in every moment
- Strength to look at our pain, sorrows without being overwhelmed by them
- Cultivate compassion, understanding, insight which leads to transformation and healing
- Help develop PACE (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, empathy)

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Mindfulness Exercise

- In-out
- Deep-Slow
- Calm-Ease
- Smile-Release
- Present Moment-Wonderful Moment

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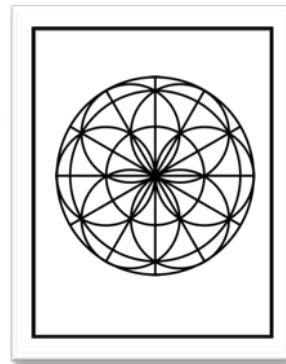
How the 5 Mindfulness Trainings Create Safe Space for Deep Listening and Mindful Speech

- All begin with “Aware of the suffering caused by....I am determined to...”
 - About Mindfulness
 - First step of deep listening, to be aware of the person you wish to deeply hear
 - Impossible without awareness/full presence
 - Start with YOURSELF

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From 1st MT: Reverence for Life

- Treat all beings with reverence, especially our children
- Insight of Interbeing: Always leads to compassion
 - Nothing sits by itself alone
 - Web of interdependencies
 - Not one, but not two: I am in you and you are in me
 - The 5 MTs inter-are, can't practice one without practicing all of them



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From 1st MT: Reverence for Life (cont)

- Non-killing
 - About mind state, not whether or not to kill insects or eat animals
 - Killing the spirit with our inability to listen and quality of speech
- Love without understanding is not love - TNH
 - Understanding requires deep listening

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From 1st MT: Reverence for Life (cont)

- Imposing Views on Others
 - Want loved ones to be safe, secure, happy
- Right Mindfulness to cultivate patience, openness, curiosity
- Right Mindfulness helps us recognize, transform and heal our anger, fear, greed and intolerance
 - Arises when lose sight of insight of interbeing
 - Deep Listening begins by listening deeply to ourselves

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From 2nd MT: True Happiness

- All we want for ourselves and others
- Deep Listening is an act of generosity
- Happiness of others is not separate from my own
 - Insight of Interbeing
 - Practice Happiness
 - 30 second rule

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From 2nd MT: True Happiness (cont)

- “Running after wealth, fame, power and sensual pleasures”
 - Prevents us from being truly present to ourselves and others
 - Can lead to anger, fear, greed and intolerance (see 1st MT)
- “More than enough conditions to be happy”
 - About contentment
 - Not having enough, not being enough huge source of suffering
 - Advertising manipulates us to believe (5th MT)
 - Unmet expectations of self and others kill the spirit (1st MT)

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3rd MT, True Love

- Sexual communication requires deep listening at all levels between two people able to give consent and take responsibility for their actions
- Family: you decide who they are
- Inappropriate use of sexual energy damages people, let alone, loving speech and deep listening
 - #metoo

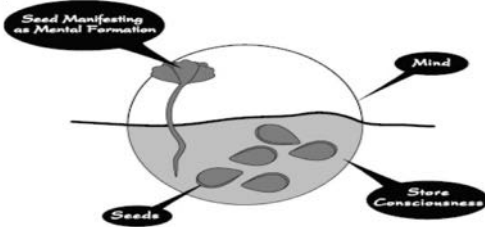
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4th MT Loving Speech and Deep Listening

- "...practice Right Diligence to nourish my capacity for understanding, love, joy, and inclusiveness, and gradually transform anger, violence, and fear that lie deep in my consciousness"
 - Essential for the practice of deep listening and mindful speech
 - How we know our minds
 - How you know "When anger is manifesting in me, I am determined not to speak."
 - How we apply the four noble truths
 - Almost anyone at any age can understand this at some level
 - We are responsible for and must take care of our emotions

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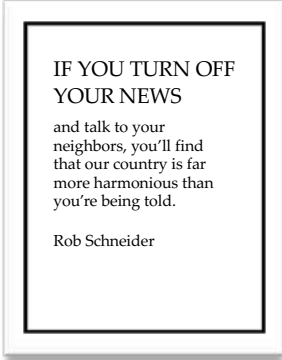
4th MT: Right Diligence



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5th MT Nourishment & Healing

Take care of our consciousness
 Be mindful of what we take in
 Use Care with Media
 Changes our View (1st element of eightfold path)



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Practices to Promote Deep Listening & Mindful Speech

- Loving Kindness Meditation
 - Do before deep listening to nourish your compassion, love and understanding
 - Do regularly for the ones you listen to often
- Dharma Sharing
 - Deep listening and mindful speech practice by the sangha

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Practices to Promote Deep Listening & Mindful Speech

- Beginning Anew
 - Untie knots
 - Restore love and understanding
 - 48 hour rule
 - Do regularly in relationships you wish to maintain long-term
- Peace Treaty
 - Rules of engagement when angry
 - Do not speak, instead practice the peace treaty

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Takeaways

- Deep Listening begins with listening to yourself, then understanding and healing your own suffering.
- Mindfulness practice grounded in the ethic of the 5 Mindfulness Trainings is a longstanding and effective way to do this.

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Go Deeper

- Nhat Hanh, Thich, Happiness: Essential Mindfulness Practices, Parallax Press 2009
- Nhat Hanh, Thich, The Blooming of a Lotus: Guided Meditations for Achieving the Miracle of Mindfulness, Beacon Press, 2009
- The Five Mindfulness Trainings:
 - <https://plumvillage.org/mindfulness-practice/the-5-mindfulness-trainings/>
- Find a Sangha
 - <https://www.mindfulnessbell.org/directory>

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