



# GAY BUDDHIST Fellowship

SPRING 2020 NEWSLETTER

The gay Buddhist  
fellowship supports  
Buddhist practice in the  
gay men's community.  
It is a forum that  
brings together the  
diverse Buddhist  
traditions to address  
the spiritual concerns  
of gay men in the  
San Francisco Bay Area,  
the United States,  
and the world.  
GBF's mission includes  
cultivating a social  
environment that is  
inclusive and caring.

## The End of Dukkha

By Donald Rothberg

*Donald Rothberg, Ph.D., has practiced Insight Meditation since 1976, and has also received training in Tibetan Dzogchen and Mahamudra practice, the Hakomi approach to body-based psychotherapy, and trauma work. He regularly teaches insight and lovingkindness meditation, as well as on the subjects of transforming the judgmental mind, mindful communication and wise speech, working skillfully with conflict, and socially engaged Buddhism. He is the author of *The Engaged Spiritual Life: A Buddhist Approach to Transforming Ourselves and the World*.*

*Note: This talk was given on Sunday, June 30, 2019—the day of the San Francisco Pride Parade.*

It's so good to be here. I've been pleased to be here with you over the years, but I think it's been two or three years since my last visit. Since I don't come that often, I thought I would talk about the most fundamental dimension of our practice. It's helpful if that comes up anyway in all talks, but I wanted to really go right into the core of the practice, which in the language of the Buddha is going to the end of *Dukkha*. So the Buddha often said, "I teach *Dukkha*, and the end of *Dukkha*." So what does that mean? That's what I want to explore with you today: understanding this teaching and how it guides our daily practice, and then make some connections also with Pride Day. Two or three weeks ago I remember reading an article in either the *San Francisco Chronicle* or *The New York Times* which said that basically 75% of LGBTQ people in the world are under heavy oppression. Of course, there's oppression here, too, but the article was referencing very severe manifestations of it. So that's sort of a backdrop for this.

So the teaching of *Dukkha* and the end of *Dukkha* is the central teaching, but what does it mean? It can be quite a confusing teaching. We may think that it's clear, but when I hear other teachers teach it, or see the way it's talked about, I think it's quite confusing. One of the reasons it's confusing is that there are multiple meanings of *Dukkha*, usually translated as suffering. So we talk about the end of suffering, but that can be confusing too.

I think there are at least four different meanings of *Dukkha* in the texts, and one of the challenges that we have, especially if we go by the teachings of the Buddha in the Pali Canon, is that these early teachings were written down discourses. The Buddha didn't systematize everything. He didn't say, "Over 30, 40 years, I've talked about this in a lot of ways. Let's clean it up. Let's just have one complete record." He didn't do that. So we have a lot of different teachings, and much of them are fairly clear, but a lot of things are not systematized. And later Buddha sometimes tried to systematize things that weren't systematized, and that didn't go so well either. So just for example, I think there are at least four meanings of *Dukkha*. Listen for these different meanings in terms of understanding what the end of *Dukkha* means. So I'm going to suggest that for the

first three of them it's confusing to understand what the end of *Dukkha* is, but the fourth is a clear meaning.

So the first sense of *Dukkha* is *Dukkha* as the unpleasant. And this is like when the Buddha talked about *Dukkha*, he often pointed to the challenging or painful aspects of life. He talked about birth, old age, and so forth—different kinds of painful experiences. And this is probably the main way that *Dukkha* is talked about, basically unpleasant experiences. And sometimes when we hear the word suffering, we may simply see it as a synonym for unpleasant experiences. If it's simply unpleasant experiences, then what does the end of *Dukkha* mean? To be human is to sometimes have unpleasant experiences. So the end of *Dukkha* can't mean the end of unpleasant experiences. It can't really mean that.

A second meaning that we find often is the sense that even if we have pleasant experiences, because of impermanence, they will soon change. The pleasant experience will at some point become unpleasant, and that's taken to be a form of *Dukkha* as well. It's called *Viparinama-dukkha*. The first kind of *Dukkha*, the unpleasant is called *Dukkha-dukkha*.

And then there's a third kind of *Dukkha*, which is called *Sankhara-dukkha*, and this is the fact that nothing of a conditioned nature will give lasting satisfaction. That is also taken to be a kind of *Dukkha*, the fact that if we try to take any conditioned phenomenon, any state of mind, any way our life is, anything we get, anything we don't get, and that if we try to take that as being what will answer our quest for a satisfactory life, it won't do it.

But again, we can ask, what does the end of *Dukkha* mean? Because that kind of experience, the fact that things in themselves won't give lasting satisfaction, that's always going to be here. So what's the end of *Dukkha*? So I think it can be quite confusing.

The fourth sense of *Dukkha* is where we get a little bit more from the teaching of the *Four Noble Truths*, but even that I think is confusing. Anyone ever found the *Four Noble Truths* confusing? I think it can be quite confusing, especially when you translate *Dukkha* as suffering, because unless we have a very precise meaning for suffering, again, what does it mean to end *Dukkha*?

## We can't just be mindful of reactivity if it's too much, so we always want to evaluate and assess the level of reactivity. Is it workable?

It doesn't mean to end unpleasant experiences. I think the core meaning for our practice of *Dukkha* is *Dukkha* as **reactivity**. And I think we can talk about it in very ordinary English, very straightforwardly, in a way in which the end of *Dukkha* makes sense. There's a teaching that for me is a more succinct way of talking about the *Four Noble Truths*, that some of you probably know called *The Teaching of the Two Arrows*, sometimes called *The Teaching of the Two Darts*.

This teaching is the beginning of an unpacking of *Dukkha* as reactivity. It goes like this. Everyone at times has unpleasant experiences, and the Buddha was talking to a group of practitioners, and he said, "Everyone at times has these unpleasant experiences. How does a practitioner differ from a non-practitioner?" We should understand non-practitioner to mean people who think they're practitioners when they're not practicing, okay? So what differentiates a practitioner from a non-practitioner in terms of how they relate to the unpleasant?

## Our aim is to be responsive moment to moment, rather than reactive. It's that simple.

No one answered him, and so he answered his own question, which was a very common pedagogical strategy that the Buddha had. He said, "In that, everyone is the same. A practitioner does not differ from a non-practitioner in terms of having these unpleasant experiences at times." But he said it was like being shot by an arrow, an arrow of what's unpleasant. He was particularly talking about unpleasant physical experiences, although I want to generalize and talk about any kind of unpleasant experience. So we can talk about unpleasant physical experience, which we all have from time to time, unpleasant mental emotional experiences, difficult emotions, unpleasant interactions, unpleasant experiences related to injustice or not being treated fairly, and this is all part of what all of us experience.

He said, "Everyone at times is shot by an arrow." He talked about that as the first arrow. "Everyone at times is shot by the first arrow in one or more of those ways." And he said that a non-practitioner, because of being shot by the first arrow, will tend to shoot a second arrow as if that would help.

So what does this look like? We have an unpleasant physical experience, and then we shoot a second arrow in multiple possible ways. We may tense around the unpleasant physical experience as if that's going to help. That tension can be a large part of the dynamic of living with chronic pain. If there's chronic pain, some types of chronic pain, not all, but some of them people will tense. And so, actually the first medical intervention using mindfulness was done by Jon Kabat Zinn at the University of Massachusetts Medical School for people with chronic pain.

And some people said as much as 80% of the pain was the reaction to the initial unpleasant sensations, tensing around it. And they found if you could eliminate a large percentage of that 80%, there was still pain, but a greatly reduced level of it. And they found that they could do that with mindfulness. So we can tense at times around some forms of physical pain. And of course, we can have all sorts of mental ways we shoot the second arrow as well. We can blame ourselves, we can blame others. I was walking across the living room, and I tripped on my partner's shoe, stubbed my toe. It hurt. I shot the second arrow by blaming my partner.

So we can have the physical experiences and shoot the second arrow. We can have emotional or mental experiences. Something difficult happens, and I shoot the second arrow by blaming myself, blaming others, telling a negative story about myself, about others, about the world. Did any of us do that within the last 24 hours? Can I have a show of hands? About half raised their hands. And so we can shoot the second arrow in that way.

## The Buddha emphasizes that if we just follow our conditioned ignorance, we keep going in loops. This is consistent with contemporary neuroscience, which addresses the loopy nature of our minds.

We can have difficult interpersonal experiences, and we may instantly shoot the second arrow. Someone says something nasty to me. I react right back by saying something nasty. That is shooting the second arrow, and we can do that. I have experienced injustice, and I can react by shooting the second arrow. I have received pain, so will inflict pain. I can do that. And a lot of the conflicts in the world are two groups shooting second arrows at each other. That describes a lot of what's going on in the world, even if one group did it first, or maybe has more power on its side and so forth, but there's still that shooting of the second arrow.

And so, in this fourth way of understanding *Dukkha*, *Dukkha* is reactivity, and the teaching points to one form of reactivity. I like understanding *Dukkha* as reactivity, because we can see something that we don't see so easily, even in the *Four Noble Truths*, is that there are two major forms of reactivity. One is pushing away the unpleasant in various ways and shooting the second arrow. The other is grabbing hold of the pleasant, which is a form of reactivity. So you remember in the *Four Noble Truths* teaching, the Buddha says in the first noble truth that there is *Dukkha*, and he points particularly to the unpleasant. That's what the first noble truth is about.

But curiously perhaps, the second noble truth, the cause of *Dukkha*, is grasping after the pleasant. Have you ever seen that asymmetry and been a little confused? The first noble truth is about what you do with the unpleasant. The second noble truth is about what you do with the pleasant. How are they connected? I think he's actually pointing to the fact that there are two forms of reactivity. The compulsive pushing away of the unpleasant, reactively, and the grabbing hold of the pleasant.

And so, the teaching about reactivity helps us see that there are these two forms, and it also helps us to avoid a certain confusion that can be there when we interpret *Dukkha* as suffering, because unless we make a very strong, almost technical distinction between what's unpleasant or painful on the one hand, and the reaction to it, and call the reaction suffering, then there's going to be confusion when you talk about ending suffering. You have to be really precise. Some people are.

I go to teach in Kentucky every year, and one year, one of my people I was working with who's a hospice nurse, said she was working with this woman in hospice, a double amputee who had a sign at the end of her bed, and the sign said, "Pain is a given; suffering is an option." That's making a distinction between the first arrow and the second arrow, or we could say between pain and suffering. And in that sense, suffering is a form of reactivity. It's the resistance to the present moment.

But we have to be really clear when we use that language.

So I like equating reactivity with *Dukkha*, and it also, I think, makes the teachings really clear and simple. Our aim is to be responsive moment to moment, rather than reactive. It's that simple. Responsive is ordinary English, but it also in a way points to some very deep dimensions. We could say that if I'm truly responsive,

I'm free. Responsiveness points to the quality of non-reactivity, which is a kind of freedom. We could also say it points to a kind of wisdom. If I'm really responsive, I know that being reactive isn't going to really help.

I know that deeply. Responsiveness also carries the dimension of love, that to be truly responsive, I bring the energy of compassion and love forth. And so, ordinary English, but I think this is really pointing to what is right at the center of our practice in a way which I think is very faithful to the traditional teachings. So then, how do we practice? Again, this is really pointing to ways of practicing that will be very familiar.

If the core of our practice is transforming reactivity into responsiveness, which I believe it is, how do we practice? We want to obviously be on the lookout for moments of reactivity. And if we notice it, if the reactivity is workable or manageable, then there are ways we can practice, and I'll talk about those ways in a moment. But it's very important to know if the reactivity is in the workable range, because sometimes it's not, such as when we have a history of trauma, or in certain moments when we're just overwhelmed.

And at those moments, what we need to do with reactivity is to find ways to come back to balance. So that's a really crucial pointer. We can't just be mindful of reactivity if it's too much, so we always want to evaluate and assess the level of reactivity. Is it workable? If it's not, what can we do to bring ourselves back into balance? It could be any number of things: something physical, taking a walk, talking to a friend, or doing trauma practices.

*Metta* practice, lovingkindness, is a great tool here. One of the stories around lovingkindness is that it was an antidote to fear. Lovingkindness can be great for coming back to balance. I could tell some stories about that. I'll tell a little one. The one that comes to mind is when I was at a retreat center called Tara Mandala, and the lodging I chose was in kind of a remote location. The nearest persons were like a quarter mile away, and they told me that a bear had been there last week. But they told me they'd caught the bear and taken it a little bit away. So I said, "Okay, it looks like a great place," and then at night, 9:30, it didn't look that good. And I started feeling fear. Probably most of us have had the experience of

camping, where every little rustling of a twig means the bear is coming. And so it took a little while, but at a certain point I said, “Time for lovingkindness practice, because lovingkindness can be an antidote when we’re kind of out of whack.” And so I eventually practiced it for three hours, because it was heavy overwhelm.

And it worked, and I was able to stay in that place. I was doing lovingkindness mostly for me and others, but partly for the bear. So that’s the first guidance for practice: to ascertain the level of activation and reactivity. We want to look at the forms of reactivity, and one particular teaching that is the teaching of dependent origination is really helpful for working with reactivity. Some of you remember this core teaching of Buddhism. It’s another way that you can see that he’s really getting at reactivity. The dependent origination teaching is complicated, and it’s more or less identifying what comes before experience that leads to a continuation of *Dukkha*, and that is particularly focusing on ignorance. The Buddha emphasizes that if we just follow our conditioned ignorance, we keep going in loops. This is consistent with contemporary neuroscience, which addresses the loopy nature of our minds.

The Buddha said there are four steps that really point out what happens in this process with reactivity. First there is contact with some experience of the senses, meaning the senses as we think of them, the five senses, and also the mind. Something happens. We have some encounter with someone. Based on that content, there is some kind of feeling tone—pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. When we’re not mindful of the pleasant, we will tend to want it and then grasp it. Those are the third and fourth steps.

Wanting and grasping when we’re not mindful of the unpleasant, we will tend to not want it and push it away. And that cycle just keeps on happening. So meditation can help us to study that kind of pattern really closely. And so, in this context, studying when we have an unpleasant or pleasant experience is crucial. So next time you have an unpleasant experience, and it’s workable, see what it’s like—stay with it. Next time you have a pleasant experience, do the same.

You know, I did this once with a group with whom I was working. I said, “There’s no problem being in pleasant experiences. It’s what you do with it that’s the problem.” I said, “We could stay here eating chocolate the whole of our session next time, and that wouldn’t be an issue,” and they said, “Let’s try it.” And so, we stayed just being with the pleasant, and watching what goes on in the mind. Is there a tendency to want and grasp? Same thing with the unpleasant—you can really look out for any unpleasant experience. Sometimes the unpleasant just goes immediately to the reaction.

If someone says something I don’t like, I just immediately react. There’s actually an unpleasant experience there, but it just goes too quickly. So sometimes we can actually have the reactive experience occur, know that it’s unpleasant, or know that we reacted, and then say, “What’s the unpleasant experience right now? Oh, I didn’t really like what that person said. That doesn’t feel good.” But sometimes we can actually reverse the process. Go from the reactivity and say, “What’s

unpleasant?” Because the teaching is that if you can be with the pleasant or the unpleasant with awareness, you can watch the tendencies to reactivity, and not be reactive. That’s where you can actually explore it in meditation. It can provide a template for what we do in the flow of experience, though of course it’s harder to catch these things in the flow of experience. We’re having a discussion, and someone said something we don’t like or said something judgmental towards me. It’s hard not to be immediately reactive. We can be reactive and not say something. Because what I’m pointing to is that each of us needs to be an expert on our five main forms of reactivity.

This is probably not in the promotional literature for the Gay Buddhist Fellowship: Come to the Gay Buddhist Fellowship,

**Non-reactivity is a fruit of the practice. So we need to study the ways that we grasp, and study the ways that we push away.**

study your five main forms of reactivity, and become really knowledgeable. But isn’t that a big part of the practice? It’s not the only part. We want to develop beautiful states as well, but a big part of the practice is studying where we “lose it.” Again, it’s not in the promotional material for Spirit Rock. We talk about mindfulness, loving kindness, compassion, wisdom. We don’t say, “Come study all the places that you really ‘lose it’ or are reactive; come explore your neuroses. That’s what we do.” I’m giving a pep talk for that, okay?

This is really crucial, and so we want to study the different ways that we’re reactive, study the ways we grasp. What are the ways I grasp? What are the main areas where there is grasping? Maybe it’s food or sex or self-image. We need to study all of these. This is what the Buddha is pointing to in talking about understanding *Dukkha* and moving towards the end of *Dukkha* means working through our reactivity. A lot of us are probably non-reactive now compared to some area of our life where we were reactive three years ago, or five, or ten, or 20 years ago, right? How many can relate to that?

Non-reactivity is a fruit of the practice. So we need to study the ways that we grasp, and study the ways that we push away. Again, it can be all sorts of ways. I once offered a class called Greed Management. This was a while ago, but, as you can imagine, I had extremely low enrollment in the class. In fact, we had two teachers and five students. But the five of them were really into it, and the teachers were too. I don’t even think we charged money. We were just really into it as teachers. I don’t even know if there was *dana*. It was really illuminating just to study the dynamics of greed, which we found really interesting, that when we looked at greed, there was often a sense of compulsivity, which is kind of obvious, but there was also a sense of no concern for consequences. Other people’s needs don’t matter, and often there was a sense of entitlement or privilege. It’s interesting to study it closely. We had our final exam for the class where we did silent walking meditation for 30 minutes in a newly opened Bed, Bath, and Beyond.

So study greed, study the forms of pushing away and reactivity of that kind. Study your anger. Study your judgmental mind. Look at it. This is not easy. Sometimes we need that group on greed. I've taught a lot, as some of you know, and I'm working on a book called *Transforming the Judgmental Mind*. I've been teaching groups and daylongs for 17 years, based on the premise that I've totally worked through my own judgmental mind. That was a joke!

Another dimension of doing this kind of intensive study of our reactivity is that it's crucial to bring in compassion and lovingkindness practices and hold ourselves with some care, because looking at our reactivity is not altogether pretty. If we do it a lot, we want to balance it by bringing out our own beauty and positive qualities. So when we're looking a lot at reactivity, it's really important to do practices which gladden the mind, bring about compassion and so forth.

Another area that I enjoy teaching on is speech practice, and there's an enormous amount of teaching about how to develop non-reactivity in the context of speech. It's huge. I'm not going to go so much there, because that would be like a series of talks or a retreat or something like that. But just to name that it is a big area. How do we work with skillful speech when we're reactive, or we're in a situation, or we're going to a situation where other people are reactive, where we know we might become reactive?

And so I want to start drawing to a close by pointing a little bit to the relevance of these teachings to Pride Day, and to generally working for more justice in the world. When I talked about the teaching of the two arrows, and the idea of not shooting the second arrow, some of you may have heard an echo of the teachings of Gandhi and King on nonviolence, because I think that the core of the teaching of the Buddha about *Dukkha* and the end of *Dukkha* is pretty close to what we find with teachings of nonviolence. Gandhi and King, they're basically saying we have received pain and oppression. We will not pass on the pain and oppression to others, that we will meet a moment of injustice with wisdom and love.

It's a tall order, but that's the essence of these teachings—that we will not simply react to our own pain and the injustice, but that we will try to respond in a way which is on a different level. Again, this is very challenging, but very clearly the teaching. And for me, it points to the way that we can have reactivity even though we have reactivity about injustice. We can have reactivity about things that are wrong. We can have reactivity about things that are unjust.

And I think this is why simply having right on our side, so to speak, is not the end of the story. It points to what Gandhi, King, Dorothy Day, and others who have kind of a spiritual-

ly grounded activism are pointing to, the fact that there's both inner work and outer work to be done. Part of the inner work is working through the reactivity, and you can see this if you read the work of Gandhi, King, Dorothy Day and others. They took this as something really crucial. And again, I've done a lot of teaching with activists, and this is a big issue.

In fact, I remember one workshop I did at a conference a while ago on spiritual activism in Berkeley. I asked the participants, "What is your major challenge with your work?" They said the fact that our fellow activists dump on each other all the time—that they are reactive to one another. It's almost like the frustration or whatever builds up. It's hard to know how to work with that. The application of the teachings of non-reactivity, of *Dukkha* and the end of *Dukkha* are also very appropriate for those engaged in social justice.

That's at the heart of what for me are the most inspiring teachings and practitioners in this area. Gandhi, King, plenty of others. So let me end with just a few quotes. The first is from the Buddha: "Hatred never ends through hatred. By non-hatred and love, alone does it end. This is an ancient truth." This is from the *Dhammapada*. Hatred never ends through hatred. And this is from Dr. King: "But the end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of the beloved community. It is this type of spirit and this type of love that can transform opposers into friends. It is this love which will bring about miracles in the hearts of human beings."

And then the last one is from Larry Yang. This was from his reflections on when he was a grand marshal in the Pride Parade three years ago. He said this: "As we transform our own experience and relationship to our realities, we cannot help but affect those around us, and read in circles into the larger culture. These moments of freedom and transformation begin to change and elevate the consciousness and awareness of the world." So our own practice necessarily affects the world. Our own non-reactivity deepens non-reactivity in the world.

**So our own practice necessarily affects the world. Our own non-reactivity deepens non-reactivity in the world.**

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# Sunday Sittings

## 10:30 am to 12 noon

Every Sunday at 10:30am we meditate together for 30 minutes, followed by a talk or discussion till 12pm. Everyone is then welcome to stay and socialize over refreshments till approximately 12:30pm, after which those who are interested usually go somewhere local for lunch. Our sittings are held at the San Francisco Buddhist Center, 37 Bartlett Street (look for the red door near 21st St between Mission and Valencia Streets).

**MUNI:** 14 Mission or 49 Van Ness-Mission, alight at 21st St, walk 1/2 block

**BART:** 24th and Mission, walk 3 1/2 blocks

**PARKING:** on street (meters free on Sundays) or in adjacent New Mission Bartlett Garage. The Center is handicapped accessible.

# Your Thrift Store Donations Earn Money for GBF

GBF members can donate their quality cast-offs to the Community Thrift Store (CTS) and GBF will receive a quarterly check based on the volume of items sold. This is a great way to support our Sangha, and the community. So far this year we have received over \$800 through members' generosity. Bring your extra clothing and other items to CTS at 623 Valencia St between 10am and 5pm, any day of the week. The donation door is around the corner on Sycamore Alley (parallel to and between 17th and 18th) between Valencia and Mission. Tell the worker you are donating to GBF. Our ID number is 40.

Information: (415) 861-4910

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Mail correspondence:

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**PMB 456**

**2215-R MARKET STREET**

**SAN FRANCISCO CA 94114**

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# Sunday Speakers

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## March 1 Pamela Weiss

Pamela Weiss has practiced Zen and the Theravada traditions of Buddhism for over 30 years. She is trained in both the Zen and Theravada traditions, including several years of Zen monastic training and teacher training with Jack Kornfield at Spirit Rock. Pamela leads a Wednesday evening sitting group at SF Insight, and teaches classes, workshops and retreats internationally. She is also an executive coach and the founder of Appropriate Response, a company dedicated to bringing the principles and practices of Buddhism into the workplace.

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## March 8 GBF Board of Directors

Come meet the GBF Board of Directors, review the 2019 GBF Survey Results, Q&A.

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## March 15 Eve Decker

Eve Decker began practicing Vipassana meditation in 1991. She has been teaching dharma since 2006. She has released two CDs of original, dharma-based music. She leads groups on 'Metta-for-Self' and a monthly 'Sit-and-Sing-Sangha' in her hometown of Berkeley CA. She is a graduate of the Path of Engagement and Community Dharma Leader training programs at Spirit Rock Center in California. For more on Eve see her website at [www.evedecker.com](http://www.evedecker.com).

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## March 22 Uma Reed (Chanting)

Uma Reed has traveled the spiritual path since the early 1970s, studying with many teachers over the years. A devotee of Neem Karoli Baba, she is also a longtime student of traditional Advaita Vedanta (the teachings of the Upanishads) through the lineage of Swami Dayananda Saraswati. Uma has journeyed to India many times. She began bringing groups there in 2011, and in 2016 she began leading retreats there. She enjoys sharing a deeper understanding of the Hindu deities, and leads kirtan, workshops, retreats, and classes, weaving together the practices of bhakti, mantra, and the vision of the Upanishads.

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## March 29 Rev. Liên Shutt

Rev. Liên Shutt is a Dharma Heir of Zenkei Blanche Hartman in the tradition of Shunryu Suzuki Roshi. Born into a Buddhist family in Vietnam, she began her meditation practice in the Insight tradition of Spirit Rock. She was a founding member of the Buddhists of Color in 1998. Her Soto Zen training began at Tassajara monastery where she lived from 2002-2005, after which she practiced monastically in Japan and Vietnam. Drawing from her monastic experiences, she endeavors to share ways in which the deep settledness of traditional practices can be brought into everyday life. Liên's strength as a teacher is in making Zen practice accessible to all.

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## April 5 Trip Weil

Trip Weil has been practicing in the Theravada tradition since 2004. He is a graduate of Spirit Rock's Community Dharma Leader and Dedicated Practitioner programs. Trip serves on the board of San Francisco Insight, where he also leads sitting groups and teaches meditation classes. He is a psychotherapist in private practice in San Francisco and a former attorney.

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## April 12 Open Discussion (Easter)

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## April 19 Jon Bernie

Jon Bernie, author of *Ordinary Freedom* and *The Unbelievable Happiness of What Is*, is a contemporary spiritual teacher who offers a compassionate, heart-centered approach to spiritual awakening. A profound enlightenment experience as a teenager ignited Jon's spiritual search. In his early twenties he ordained as a monk in the lineage of Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, and spent the next four decades practicing and studying in the Zen, Theravada Buddhist, and Advaita traditions. Jon's most important mentors include Jean Klein, Robert Adams and H.W.L. Poonja (Papaji), Brother David Steindl-Rast, and he was formally asked to teach by Adyashanti in 2002.

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## April 26 Mark Hoffheimer, Baruch Golden, David Hunt

"Awareness of Gender Conditioning," GBF Sangha members will lead a panel discussion.

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## May 3 Steven Tierney

Steven Tierney is Professor of Community Mental Health and Chair of the Masters in Counseling Psychology Core Curriculum at CIIS. He is a licensed psychotherapist in California and a nationally certified counselor. An ordained Buddhist priest, he is the co-founder and chief education officer of the San Francisco Mindfulness Foundation. Dr. Tierney lectures and leads workshops and retreats nationally and has taught at a number of universities. Steven's areas of interest include Buddhist psychology and mindfulness-based therapies for addiction, recovery and resiliency services.

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## May 10 Kevin Griffin

Kevin Griffin is an internationally respected Buddhist teacher and author known for his innovative work connecting dharma and recovery, especially through his 2004 book *One Breath at a Time: Buddhism and the Twelve Steps*. He has been a Buddhist practitioner for over thirty-five years and a teacher for two decades. With teachings firmly based in the Theravada Buddhist tradition, he reaches a broad range of audiences in dharma centers, wellness centers, and secular mindfulness settings.

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## May 17 Open Discussion

End at 11:30/leave by 12:00 for SF Buddhist Center Ceremony.

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## May 24 Vinny Ferraro

Vinny Ferraro has been a practitioner of insight meditation (vipassanā) since the mid 90s. He is a co-Founder of the Dharma Punx and he's been the Guiding Teacher of a Sangha in San Francisco for 15 years. He is also a nationally recognized leader in designing and implementing interventions for at-risk adolescents and is a Senior Trainer for Mindful Schools. In 1987, he was introduced to Service work and began leading groups for incarcerated populations. In 2001, he began teaching for Challenge Day, a nationally recognized social & emotional learning program, eventually becoming their Director of Training and leading workshops for over 110,000 youth on four continents.

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## May 31 Charles Garfield

Charles Garfield is a psychologist, professor and lecturer, and the author of twelve books including *Life's Last Gift*. He has been recognized internationally as the founder of Shanti Project, a widely acclaimed AIDS and cancer service organization ([www.shanti.org](http://www.shanti.org)). For more than forty years, he has pioneered the development of healthcare and social service oriented volunteer organizations in a wide variety of settings. Of these efforts, Garfield says: "Shanti's work demonstrates that health professionals and volunteers (America's largely unrecognized workforce) can learn to be tender with people and tough on problems as they serve those who need them most."

**GBF NEWSLETTER  
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by the power and truth of this practice, may all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness, may all be free from sorrow and the causes of sorrow, may all never be separated from the sacred happiness which is without sorrow, and may all live in equanimity, without too much attachment or too much aversion, believing in the equality of all that lives.

—GBF dedication of merit