



# Gay Buddhist Fellowship

APRIL / MAY 2011 NEWSLETTER

## Why I Do the Things I Do

BY DELBERT COLLETT

Everything is a lie. To someone who is not on the path, that may seem like nonsense. We Buddhists, however, continually speak of all things being empty of inherent existence and our sense faculties being unreliable. We speak of developing correct perception and *knowing* all things. Great teachers have espoused this truth, and we listen attentively to instructions on how to train our minds and condition our consciousness to experience the profound. But being completely honest, how many of us have truly found the experience that will release us from cyclic existence? How many of us abide in a blissful state that is beyond the stresses of work, family, and getting cut off in traffic?

Many of us follow the bodhisattva path that seeks to serve all beings and work toward ending their sufferings. I know I've become much happier working for the benefit of others rather than trying to satisfy my own selfish desires. It really works, doesn't it? Yet is that why we do the things we do? Is seeking our own satisfaction just that, whether we do it in a self-serving way, or by playing the loophole and seeking our own happiness by working for others?

Whether we follow the Hinayana, the Mahayana, or the Vajrayana, we know the heart of it all is the direct perception of the profound state.

So how close are we?

Do we even have to seek the realization of emptiness to call ourselves Buddhists? When we recite the refuge prayer, does that invoke some obligation to try to become something we have not yet become?

Many people become Buddhists so that they can learn various meditation techniques for their stress-relieving effects and even to gain insights into all the junk in our minds that holds us at bay, keeping us from being what we feel is a whole person. That's okay. We don't mind in the least. The only way we can make this world a better place is one person at a time, and change must come from within.

Many people seek a path to peace because things in their lives just aren't working out the way they feel they should. Some people live a path because it's all they've ever known. Others, still, choose a path out of fear. Of course, there are various combinations and variations to these motivations that end up propelling us toward one spiritual tradition or another.

The fact is, a spiritual pursuit is an individual matter, and although we may choose one religion or another, what we are really doing is accepting a philosophy on faith. We are adhering to a particular set of tenets because we believe they will bring us to some goal or state we have not yet realized. The problem is that we define those particular tenets according to our own perceptions.

Seeing is not believing. Our visual faculties are always playing tricks on us. Entire industries have grown that base their income on optical illusions. Even basic anatomy teaches us that light refracts and is captured by our pupil and projected on the back of the eye

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.

All matter we perceive is an illusory event resulting from other illusory events and is itself a cause for future illusory events. The very essence which gives animation to what we believe our bodies to be, however, is perfect awareness of what is. Our complex awareness is consciousness resulting from a particular event of traversing energy.

organ. The problem is that the optic nerve is also located on the back of the eye and therefore creates a blind spot on the image. No need to worry, however, since our brain fills in the gap with whatever it believes is the most logical shape and color. So much for believing our eyes.

Hearing is also a deluded event. Countless vibrations bombard our eardrums every microsecond. Our brain sorts out what it feels is pertinent and discards the rest. Even our language is a cause for misperception: *there, their, they're, bear, bare, tear, fair, lair, hair, pear, Cher* ... Ask twenty people what they heard at the lecture and you'll come up with about twenty variations of the topic.

What's more, we process our philosophical teachings through every previous moment we've experienced, defining them into our own categories of validity. Finally, our consciousness takes them and makes them our own. It's unfortunate, but this very process has brought many pure and compassionate disciplines to violently oppose one another through bloody wars and other dualistic prejudice.

Individuals may sincerely seek a path to truth that can bring an end to their sufferings, but if the life experience through which they process those teachings is tarnished, then what? Imagine an individual

- who is raised by well meaning, but unknowing, parents who act out of delusion;
- who is educated in overcrowded schools whose teachers are overworked, underpaid, and inadequately trained;
- who is babysat by video games and television shows that glamorized sex and violence;
- whose examples of relationships come from abuse and divorce, or even *The Bachelor* and *Jersey Shore*;
- who is raised under governments and judicial systems that are controlled by dollars instead of justice;
- who experiences commercialism every moment of every day.

Hundreds of millions of people are raised under varying degrees of these deluded influences. Not all of them are fortunate enough to

have been born with the stability to rise above this swamp of self-serving perpetual growth.

One who is clouded by these deluded influences is bound to process their path of truth with a need to gain and receive personal satisfaction. Their selflessness will be conditional based upon what *they* feel will bring *them* toward *their* salvation.

About fifteen years ago, in an old life I would rather not live again, I was leaving the old Charlie Chaplin Studios in Hollywood, walking to a dinner engagement on Hollywood Boulevard. As I crossed Sunset Boulevard, I noticed a nicely dressed young woman speaking with a raggedy looking homeless man on the sidewalk outside of a fast food restaurant. I watched, trying to determine whether she needed help or not. Before I reached her, however, an equally nicely dressed man left the establishment carrying a bag of food. He reached the woman and homeless man just prior to me and handed the bag of food to the bearded, dirty man.

After the obligatory "Thank you/God Bless" routine, the well groomed man put his arm around his pretty date, and they walked away just ahead of me. I was about to excuse myself and comment on what a nice thing it was they had done, but just before I had said anything, the man said something to his date, just loud enough that I could hear. "I don't mind buying them food," he stated proudly, "but I won't give them any money. There's no telling what they might buy with it."

Was that kind of act a selfless one, or was it a selfish one conditioned upon preconceived prejudice? There are, of course, varying ways to look at it. Yes, it's possible the man was helping while not facilitating harmful behavior. By buying food, he may have possibly prevented a premature death from alcoholism or drug addiction. Nevertheless, conditional is conditional, no matter how we look at it. What would Buddha, Jesus, Great Grandfather, or another such enlightened being have done? Of course, they would have been able to see within the mind of the beggar and therefore have been able to perform the most beneficial deed for the individual and the situation. I don't know about you, but I am not such a being. I still struggle with turning generosity into a perfection and recognizing the emptiness of receiver, giver, gift, and giving. I still feel an inner satisfaction when I do something nice for someone as that subtle pride peeks outward. But what if beggar were actually a manifestation of one of these enlightened beings who projected that form to give a teaching on selfless giving? I would give my vote for this latter choice.

There is no doubt in my mind that highly realized beings manifest in lower forms to help us sort out mistaken views that keep us trapped in our cycles of sorrow. Once we open and purify our minds, we can see them in their radiant, blissful bodies. Until we attain the state where we can see purely, however, all we perceive is a lesson we can choose to accept or ignore. So maybe that beggar was indeed an enlightened being because some fifteen years later, here we are debating the virtue of generosity because of him.

Reality becomes a far different cry from what we're used to once we start realizing the insights that come through sincere practice. This isn't some far out mystical thing fairy tales are made of, either. Theoretical physicists are every day defining a reality that is similar to various views of heaven or pure lands. They speak of alternate, simultaneous realities that reflect every possible result arising from every possible action. They speak of string vibrations that bring our perceived reality into existence and can be changed through the electro-chemical influence of the human brain. Albert Einstein once said, "There are

two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as if everything is. I believe in the latter.” It’s no wonder the man was so brilliant. When we believe that miracles happen every moment of every day, all of our experience is new, exciting, and worth exploring. Our minds are open and not clouded by limiting delusions that keep us focused on what may ultimately prove to be false.

When we consider the process through which our minds work, we begin to see how the universe is more like a great thought than a giant mechanism. Its entire expanse is accessible once we expand our mind. We can surpass the limits of our mortal bodies because our very essence is beyond the physical and material. I propose that the purpose of life is to become one with the universe by realizing an expansive, universal consciousness. Wouldn’t this be the same as becoming one with God? Once we attain this state, every beggar we meet we will see as a projection of God.

I use the word “God.” However, I do not see the capital-G-word as a word of definition or a noun. Rather, I see it as a word of discovery. It’s like a direction to turn our minds toward. Much like setting sail on a boat to discover something you could never have imagined. Just as Columbus never conceived of the Americas, you set sail to discover peace and virtue without conceiving what you’ll ultimately find. All we know is that our final discovery is much more than what we find along the way. Are we happy with all the small benefits we received from our practice? I know I am. However, I’ve gained enough insight to know that I’ve experienced them many times before in lives long gone. Yet here I am in this life learning them again. I admit that many of the teachings I’ve received have been easily learned, as if memory had arisen from its slumber. Throughout my life I’ve even felt a . . . something I could never explain, so I sought. Christianity, drugs, money, and a lavish lifestyle did not help me find what I thought should be there. But when renunciation was forced upon me, I found the dharma knocking on the door of my mind that had been closed too long. The capital-G-word is within me and around me. It is with you also. And we can be it now because we are it.

No matter how distorted the lens of our perceptions may be, we can prove this philosophy. All it takes is a little knowledge and the ability to work the logic.

As living beings, what we know is limited. It’s as though we were trapped on a small island in an endless sea of the incomprehensible. We have three options: we could accept our little island and try to make it a paradise; we could expand and try to create a continent to accommodate more beings; or we could become courageous adventurers and build a ship to sail into what was previously unimaginable to us. The three schools of Buddhist thought define each of these ideas pretty well.

Biologist Rupert Sheldrake developed a “hypothesis of formative causation.” He based it on the existence of organizing fields he called “morphogenic fields.” He proposed that these fields were established once an organism performed some initial behavior. Those fields then facilitate that behavior in other organisms through a process he labeled “morphogenic resonance.” Applying this hypothesis to conscious awareness, we might predict that the more people who work toward raising their levels of consciousness, the stronger the morphogenic field for higher cognitive states would become and the easier it would be for others to follow suit. Society would gather momentum toward enlightenment and we would enter a phrase of super-exponential evolution.

**When we try to attain the profound state, we will never find it. When we try to attain the state beyond all suffering, it evades. When we sit down to just be, however, allowing our crazy minds to settle for a while, that’s when insights and peace will arise.**

Unfortunately, the opposite would also be true and degeneration of love and compassion could lead to the development of dualistic aversions, leading to an age of strife, hatred, violence, and oppression. Looking at today’s state of world affairs makes one wonder toward which age mankind is truly headed.

So where do we start? What must we do to realize the unrealizable? Well, we need to gain a little knowledge. Once we gain that knowledge, we apply. Simple, huh? Yeah, right.

I’m going to explain something I’ve realized for myself. I remain faithful to the path I follow because of its truth. I’ve not realized the capital-G-word, but because of this truth I know the discovery is there to be made. Check it out for yourself by researching the science. It’s fascinating, and once you’ve looked into it, you’ll be driven to sit down and realize its truth, just as I have been.

About six-hundred-trillion-years ago (please excuse me if my dates are off by six digits or so), there was a vast expanse of universes, beginningless and endless. Imagine an infinity filled with soap bubbles. All different shapes and sizes, all bordering one another, round, oval, long, flat, all the shapes you may find in a cosmic bubble bath. (Go ahead, light some candles and relax.)

Some of these universes were too big and therefore too cold to support carbon-based life as we know it. Others were small and too hot for our familiar life to flourish. There were many, however, that were just right for Goldilocks to enjoy her porridge in. Now, I’m not excluding all life from the hot and cold cosmic enclosures, just the ordinary life we typically perceive with our senses. The one thing each of these universes had in common was that the very essence of each of them was energy. Instead of being formed by air trapped within a thin layer of soap, these universe bubbles had as their boundary the limits of the energy of which they were comprised.

Just as the bubbles in a bath tend to do, some of these great cosmic events would expand, others would contract, some would split, and others would be pressed into expansive deformities as if some leviathan clown were shaping them into entertaining caricatures. Probably the greatest event possible for these phenomena would be the “pop,” the universe that spontaneously exploded, spouting its energy in all directions. Both the exploding universe and the leaking universe provided excess energy to coat other enclosures. This surplus of energy, neither expanding nor contracting, would nonetheless move and merge one with another. When this energy, combined from a thousand universe events, found a corner or a crevice, it would condense upon itself. One such particular event is the topic of which I write.

Imagine a point, smaller than the period at the end of this sentence, yet heavier than ten thousand planets, were it to have mass. That's how our event began. Complex and magnificent this pinpoint of energy was. Pure energy, perfect, powerful, and capable of all things both imaginable and beyond imagination. Because energy is an event that always tends toward complexity, it moved, pushing against the limits of those universes surrounding it. The kinetic result of this expanding motion was heat. Hotter than a million suns, this energy expanded. The combined heat of its motion and the purity of the energy involved gave it first the consistency of cream soup, then whole milk. As eons fled by, it cooled into non-physical tentacles of flowing energy, like a giant spider web where each strand was no further apart than one-one-thousandth the diameter of the simplest atom. With a tendency toward complexity, this energy flowed in strings that continued to stretch and expand. Then it happened.

Conditioned through countless ages of flowing in various complexities, a pulse event vibrated. This string on which it traversed bumped against neighboring strings that again vibrated back against the original string. The result was an illusion. Today we see a scientific constant whenever we encounter this illusive event, and were we around then, we would say we had witnessed the birth of the first hydrogen atom.

As is usually the case when strings of energy vibrate on such close proximity to one another, other illusions were born: helium, nitrogen, and other simple atoms. Now it may seem a little uncommon to think of atoms in this way, but just two hundred years ago it was uncommon to even think of atoms, wasn't it? Just keep an open mind while gaining knowledge to feed your logic.

There were soon countless many of these atoms of various weights floating along on their vibrating strings. As they moved, many of them slammed together and became chaotic. (Chaos is actually where we got the word "gas." Some botanist from, I think, Vienna just pronounced it wrong.) Gas clouds formed and ran into one another, smashing into their own weight, eventually forming giant gas suns.

As the first of these gas giants lived out its life, the explosion caused by its death—or nova—was so hot that the atomic vibrations became much more excited and new frequencies combined. Matter was formed in the shape of carbon, iron ore, etc. Eventually, the string vibrations became even more complex, and galaxies, solar systems, planets, and life vibrated into existence.

So here we are. This entire universe we've always thought of as a solid, stable home is merely a great ball of energy, expanded into complex strings. Since all universal energy has a tendency to become more complex, eventually we will become just that: perfect. The energy vibration who writes these words has been in existence

(or "non-existence," if you will) throughout countless universes from time without beginning. The same for the illusory vibration reading this: you. We are born from the energy of the universe; we abide within the energy of the universe; we breathe the energy of the universe; and we will pass into the energy of the universe. All matter we perceive is an illusory event resulting from other illusory events and is itself a cause for future illusory events. The very essence which gives animation to what we believe our bodies to be, however, is perfect awareness of what is. Our complex awareness is consciousness resulting from a particular event of traversing energy.

Right about now, you're wondering, "What the heck is this guy talking about?"

As beings who think, we abide. As scientists listen to the vast night sky, they hear the vibrations of peace, love, and compassion. We are drawn to that expanse, just as a child is drawn to the comfort of his mother's embrace. Our very essence is love and compassion; it is a universal event that comprises all animate and inanimate objects. When we take a moment to stop, close our eyes, and take a deep breath, we can feel the peace that flows throughout us. Yes, we abide merely because we do think. When we allow ourselves to just breathe and be part of the greatness around us, we cease to abide as a singular vibration and we allow our selves to expand into what we truly are.

We need not be aware of seeking the profound; we are already there. When we breathe and know that we are breathing, all the energy of the universe flows through us. By understanding the energy that flows, we actually give strength to that energy and our life slows down.

So much time is spent imagining an uncertain future and remembering a past that is unchangeable. All possible events occur right now. Just as an action potential flows from neuron to neuron in our brains, all possible vibration events flow from string to string. Because we are part of these vibratory events we are capable of *knowing* all things because we *are*. It is already us, so of course, we know.

When we sit down and quiet our minds, we are allowing ourselves to just be. No right practice, no wrong practice, just practice in allowing our consciousness to flow, expand, and be one with what we have already been.

When we try to attain the profound state, we will never find it. When we try to attain the state beyond all suffering, it evades. When we sit down to just be, however, allowing our crazy minds to settle for a while, that's when insights and peace will arise. We've spent a lifetime escaping the truth and we can't expect everything to change overnight or with sporadic practice. We have to be willing to be honest with ourselves first. Then we must be compassionate with ourselves, offering forgiveness for all the casualties we've left on the battlefield of our pursuit of happiness.

Since the moment we were born, we have been conditioned to believe that we are separate individuals who are deserving. We deserve rewards, and we deserve punishments. We deserve nice things, and we deserve not to lose our things. We deserve friends who like us, and we deserve to be free of enemies. We deserve praise for our accomplishments, and we deserve blame that is free of harsh punishments. We've been taught that who we are ends at the limits of our skin and that we must be taught everything we know.

Do we truly believe ourselves separate? Our intuition feels that our essence is intangible and occasionally we may catch a glimpse

**So much time is spent imagining an uncertain future and remembering a past that is unchangeable. All possible events occur right now.**

of the greatness that is the true nature of all things. Anyone who has seen light pour through the stained glass of an ancient cathedral knows a feeling of sacred unity. Anyone who has held a sleeping baby knows a oneness with peace. But why is it we tend to restrict our experiences of what we term “sacred” to what we perceive with our physical senses? We all have the ability to interact on a non-temporal level as we advance on our discovery of the ultimate sacred—the union that binds us all though ultimate awareness of truth. We are neither a thing nor a process but rather an opening though which the absolute can manifest. In his *Four Quartets*, T.S. Eliot wrote, “In order to arrive at what you are not, you must go through the way in which you are not.”

Attaining the ultimate state is not an article of faith; it is a law of the universe. Energy gave birth to this universe and all matter within it. Likewise, matter will return to the energy from which it was born. Energy gives substance to all we know and it consistently changes from one event to another. Through recognizing that we are but a small part of a much greater whole, we can then be a part of that whole instead of fighting to be a-part from it. We can transform the human condition, rising above our hopes and fears. We have at our disposal the most powerful and valuable tool in the universe—the human mind. While we are beings who think we have the ability to rest, be calm, and direct the power of love and compassion, we ultimately are and build the paradise we’ve always sought out there just by realizing it already exists. Within. We can choose to ride upon the vibratory events that reflect our view of heaven merely by acknowledging it and choosing its peace as our reality. For the time being our consciousness may ride upon the body, but when that phase of its existence has expired it will once again *be*.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Century Persian mystic Jelaluddin Rumi said:

I’ve heard it said there’s a window that opens  
From one mind to another,  
But if there’s no wall, there’s no need  
For fitting the window, or the latch.

We always seem bent on results. A result happens in the future based upon actions from the past. But what are we doing *right now*? This is the only place we live. By realizing true practice we tear down the walls of the past, present, and future. There is no such thing, anyway. Time is a construct humans have developed in our need to measure things. Albert Einstein said that “people like us, who believe in physics, know that the distinction between past, present, and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion.”

Know that there is nothing but the interplay of energy, vibrating at various frequencies. There is no self and other. There is no now and then. Once we tear down our preconceived notions and just allow ourselves to flow with the energy that is all things, we have realized the goal. There is nothing to achieve because we are already it. We’ve never lost the profound emptiness, the state beyond all suffering. It lies within our hearts and we feel it with every awareness of love.

Try this simple practice.

Sit quietly in your meditation posture and peacefully quiet your mind by watching your breath.

**We all have the ability to interact on a non-temporal level as we advance on our discovery of the ultimate sacred—the union that binds us all though ultimate awareness of truth. We are neither a thing nor a process but rather an opening though which the absolute can manifest**

After five or ten minutes, allow your consciousness to rest on a time in your childhood when someone showed you selfless, unconditional love.

How did it feel? How does the memory feel? Allow yourself to physically experience it. Where does your body feel it most? Now imagine yourself as the person who gave you this love. How does it feel being them? How does the memory feel from their perspective?

Now imagine the love you felt as the giver and the receiver. Allow yourself to experience this love, to *be* the love. How does it feel? Where do you feel it?

Bring this experience of love into your heart center and experience it, resting and holding it there.

Slowly allow this experience to expand, overtaking your body, and as it expands further, allow it to merge with the same vibration that is universal and all around you. Without fear or preconceptions, allow yourself to feel this same sensation in all living beings.

Now smile and know the truth.

So why do I do the things I do? I do the things I do because I’ve found these truths I’ve spoken of to be self-evident. I have caught a glimpse of God and I know his countenance is within us all. We are the divine because it is from there we have come. I still suffer from lack and riding a body that is aging and breaking. However, I know it is all transition and if this illusion I manifest can help another *know*, then the things I do are not for naught. ■

Please feel free to share your experiences on the path:

**Delbert Collett**  
**c/o Human Concerns**  
**621 Richmond Avenue**  
**Oxnard, CA 93030**

# GBF

## Steering Committee

Ray Dyer  
Clint Seiter  
Marvin Snow  
Jim Stewart  
Carl Wolf

## Treasurer

Teng-How Bae

## SUNDAY SITTINGS

## Program Committee

Baruch Golden  
Jerry Jones  
Shantanu Phukan  
Jim Stewart

## Speaker Coordinator

Baruch Golden

## Facilitator Coordinator

Ray Dyerß

## Facilitators

Tom Bruein  
Peter Fitzpatrick  
Joe Goode  
Roy King  
David Lewis

## Host Coordinator

Kei Matsuda

## Hosts

Richard Azzolini  
Brayton  
Jim Christrup  
Jay Corbett  
Mark Hoffheimer  
Tage Lilja  
Dave Limcaco  
Kei Matsuda  
Tony Pasqua  
Roger Pinnell  
Paul Shepard

## NEWSLETTER

### Editor

Michael Langdon

### Transcribers

Michael Altshule  
Gary Ost  
Tony Pasqua  
Jim Stewart

### Design / Layout

Michael Gabel

### Mailing List

Bill Hurley  
Marvin Snow

### Newsletter Mailing

Jack Busby

## MAIL

Richard Azzolini

## LARKIN STREET

## YOUTH CENTER

## Volunteer Coordinators

Clint Seiter

## PRISON OUTREACH

## Coordinator

Baruch Golden

## WEBSITE

Joe Kukulka

## YAHOO GROUP MODERATOR

George Hubbard

## SOUND / RECORDINGS

George Hubbard

## RETREAT COORDINATOR

Michael Murphy

# 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.

## Note to Readers

Send us poetry you have written that is related to or inspired by your Buddhist practice. We will include some of these poems in future issues of the Gay Buddhist Fellowship Newsletter. If we receive enough poems we may devote an entire newsletter to poetry.

## How to Reach Us

[www.gaybuddhist.org](http://www.gaybuddhist.org)

For general questions about GBF write to:

[inquiry@gaybuddhist.org](mailto:inquiry@gaybuddhist.org)

To contact Program Committee with suggestions for speakers and comments:

[gaybuddhist.org/programs](http://gaybuddhist.org/programs)

Mail correspondence:

**GBF**

**PMB 456**

**2215-R MARKET STREET**

**SAN FRANCISCO CA 94114**

Address changes or to subscribe or unsubscribe to the newsletter:

[www.mailinglist@gaybuddhist.org](mailto:www.mailinglist@gaybuddhist.org)

GBF Newsletter. Send submissions to:

[editor@gaybuddhist.org](mailto:editor@gaybuddhist.org)

### GBF Yahoo Discussion Group

There is now a GBF discussion group for the general membership (and others) on Yahoo. Join the discussion at:

[www.groups.yahoo.com/group/gaybuddhistfellowship](http://www.groups.yahoo.com/group/gaybuddhistfellowship)

# Calendar

## Sunday Sitzings

**10:30 am to 12 noon**

Every Sunday at 10:30am we meditate together for 30 minutes, followed by a talk or discussion till 12 noon. Everyone is then welcome to stay and socialize over refreshments till approximately 12:30, 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.

## Sunday Speakers

---

**April 3<sup>rd</sup> Kevin Griffin**

Kevin Griffin is the author of *One Breath at a Time: Buddhism and the Twelve Steps* and *A Burning Desire: Dharma God and the Path of Recovery*. A longtime Buddhist practitioner and 12 Step participant, he is a leader in the mindful recovery movement and one of the founders of the Buddhist Recovery Network.

---

**April 10<sup>th</sup> Open Discussion**

---

**April 17<sup>th</sup> Emilio Gonzales**

Come for a body-centric, experiential Qigong session, via a repeat engagement with Emilio Gonzalez. Emilio has been practicing Qigong and Tai Chi Chuan since 1973. A senior student of Grand Master Kai Ying Tung, he taught Tai Chi at 50 Oak Street in San Francisco for over twenty years. In the 1990s, he established a special Qigong for Health class for people with HIV and other chronic illnesses. He also taught at San Francisco State University, at Mills College, and at various national conferences on Traditional Chinese Medicine. In 1996 he produced a best-selling Qigong video that was broadcast nationwide on PBS.

---

**April 24<sup>th</sup> Nina Wise**

Nina Wise is a well-known performer who has devoted her career to investigating the relationship between art and spirit. Artistic Director of Motion, she is the recipient of multiple fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Marin Arts Council and has received seven Bay Area Critics Circle Awards. She is the author of *A Big New Free Happy Unusual Life: Self-Expression and Spiritual Practice for Those Who Have Time for Neither*. Her stories and articles have appeared in *The Sun*, *Yoga Journal*, *Tricycle*, *Inquiring Mind* and *Whole Earth Review*.

---

**May 1<sup>st</sup> Open Discussion**

---

**May 8<sup>th</sup> Poetry Day**

Poetry Day Led by Shantanu Phukan

---

**May 15<sup>th</sup> David Lewis**

David Lewis has been a member of the sangha for three or four years now. He has studied the dharma for thirty-five years, first in the Vajrayana tradition and more recently in the Vipassana-Theravada tradition. He is currently enrolled in the Spirit Rock Meditation Center's Dedicated Practitioner's Program.

Topic- "Buddhist Happiness"

---

**May 22<sup>nd</sup> Larry Robinson**

Larry Robinson has been practicing meditation since 1969. He is a student of both Zen (Diamond Sangha lineage with John Tarrant) and Vipassana (through Spirit Rock). He is a retired psychotherapist whose work focused on ecopsychology. Larry has served on the Sebastopol City Council since 1998, including two terms as mayor. His passion is the restoration of the oral tradition of poetry.

---

**May 29<sup>th</sup> Dharma Duo**

Eric Anderson and Oswaldo Garcia

**GBF NEWSLETTER**  
**PMB 456**  
**2215-R MARKET STREET**  
**SAN FRANCISCO CA 94114**  
**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

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, and live believing in the equality of all that lives.

—GBF dedication of merit