

# Clinical Dharma: Mindful Self-Care for Healers & Helpers in the Midst of a Health Crisis

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# Dr. Stephen Dansiger

- PsyD, Clinical Psychology
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- Including One Year at a Zen Buddhist monastery
- Teaches Dharma classes locally and internationally
- Presenter 2016/18/19/20 EMDRIA Conferences
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- Senior Faculty, Institute for Creative Mindfulness
- Author, *Clinical Dharma*; Coauthor, *EMDR Therapy and Mindfulness for Trauma-Focused Care*; Author, *Mindfulness for Anger Management*
- Coauthor, *Trauma and the 12 Steps Meditation Reader and Step Workbook* (Fall, 2020); Coauthor, *Healing Addiction with EMDR Therapy: A Trauma Focused Guide* (Summer, 2021)
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# Meditation: Mindfulness of Body

# The Four Noble Truths

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- The Basic Teaching of the Buddha on suffering and the end of suffering.

# The Truth of Suffering

# The Truth of Suffering

- A simple yet elegant way to maintain our direction and our purpose while also keeping our sanity is for us to gain a deeper insight into the truth of suffering.
- Our successful maintenance of a life as a helper depends on our going beyond our initial starting point and investigating suffering with a spirit of curiosity.

The Cause of Suffering is  
Craving, Clinging, and  
Attachment



# The Cause of Suffering is Craving, Clinging, and Attachment

- The cause of suffering for the helper is the craving for a positive result or an aversion to a negative result and an attachment to the result, regardless.
- The most likely place for suffering to be generated for healers or helpers is at this crossroads of whether or not they will be able to let go of the result.

Suffering Can End

# Suffering Can End

- It is seen through the ability to apply loving detachment in our helping relationships, maintaining our compassionate touch while providing boundaries that respect both self and other.

# The Eightfold Path Prescription

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- This is the path laid out by the Buddha, designed to provide a very practical guide to living mindfully and skillfully.
- For the helper, being mindful of our inner experience as well as our relational presence in a helping or healing posture with someone gives us a greater chance to connect, not only for the benefit of the two in this engagement, but for all beings.

# Wise Understanding

# Wise Understanding

- It is said that the reason why wisdom is the first factor of the Eight Fold Path is that we need just enough wisdom to know that beginning this practice and this path would be a good idea.
- Much wisdom is further garnered through the practice, but we will not even consider it if stuck in the delusion that there is no point seeking a different way of seeing, a different way of experiencing reality.

# Wise Intention



# Wise Intention

- Once I have set the intention to help, to heal, to increase connection and develop a life of service, then I can use the guidance found in the Buddha Dharma to set wise intention moment to moment, hour to hour, day to day, month to month, year to year, and (if you subscribe to it) lifetime to lifetime.
- And since we are in the helping professions, then that intention will always have the undercurrent and foundation of service.

# Meditation: Setting Intention

# Wise Speech

# Wise Speech

- In order to provide the best care, I need to use words that reflect my deepest intention to meet clients where they are, not force them to meet me where I am, or where I think they should be.
- I want to find words that help generate the relational bond between us, but most importantly, provide a context for the internal deepening of the integration experience for the client.

# Wise Action

# Wise Action

- Essentially defines all of the rest that we do beyond words.
- In a state of mindfulness, the nature of action and the mental and emotional act of self-reflection become more intertwined.
- Over time, actions and speech that have been heavily considered prior to their launching take on a very different character from impulsive acts of craving, clinging and aversion.

# Wise Livelihood

# Wise Livelihood

- The goal of wise livelihood is to be of help and not do harm.
- The guiding principle is that all beings be free from fear, healthy, happy and at ease.



# Wise Effort

# Wise Effort

- Wise effort means that I am going to put the correct energy and practice into my mindfulness and concentration at any given time.
- The Buddhist teaching on effort focuses on different types of effort, all of which are pertinent for the healer:
  - Effort to avoid,
  - Effort to eliminate,
  - Efforts to lead a skillful life.

# Wise Mindfulness

# Wise Mindfulness

- Wise mindfulness is the cultivation of non-judgmental awareness, infused with acceptance of ‘what is.’
- Rather than disconnecting from painful states and difficulties, one has to cultivate a mindfulness of all of it, every aspect of life.

# Wise Concentration

# Wise Concentration

- Helps us to deepen our state of mindfulness and to retrain the brain out of its monkey mind ways, ceasing the swinging from branch to branch for even a moment, thus showing our minds a different type of activity and a new perspective.
- One can become more concentrated anywhere, anytime.

# This is Not a Sprint, It is a Marathon

- We are doing what we have to in order to support our communities to get through this pandemic and beyond.
- This is our moment as healers and helpers because the entire world is going through a collective trauma.
- If we show up in this way and help out in a compassionate, mindful and intelligent way, we will not only prevent symptoms for many and treat those symptoms that do arise, but we might bring about new modalities of healing, innovative and effective ways of relating to each other.

# Keep Calm and Lean into The Four Noble Truths and The Eightfold Path



# Meditation: Loving Kindness

Questions?

# Thank You!

May you be free from fear.

May you be healed.

May you be happy.

May you be at ease.

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