



BUDDHIST RECOVERY

Noble Journey

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A publication of the Buddhist Recovery Network (BRN), supporting the use of Buddhist teachings, traditions and practices to help people recover from the suffering caused by addictive behaviors .

We are an all volunteer organization and we rely on the generosity of our members and donors to fund our mandala of community support, research, and treatment.

Please become a member and give as generously as you are able.

Contact Us

<http://www.buddhistrecovery.com>

BRN Board Member Kevin Griffin has recently released his new book, *A Burning Desire: Dharma God and the Path of Recovery*. Kevin has been to Seattle, Boston and New York, teaching on this topic, and is scheduled for Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Colorado, Las Vegas, and Portland, OR. For more information, go to <http://www.kevingriffin.net>.

Kevin spoke to a packed house of approximately 70 people at the Shambhala Center of Boston on January 25. People were there from all the Twelve Step traditions and from many of the Buddhist communities in the Boston area. There was a lively discussion of the place of God or a higher power in a non-theistic tradition such as Buddhism.

The Boston gathering was hosted by the Heart of Recovery group. This group is part of the Shambhala Buddhist tradition,

2009 Inaugural Conference

In October 2009 the Buddhist Recovery Network Inaugural Conference brought together a group of about 70 individuals with exceptional credentials and enthusiasm. Presenters and participants included Dharma practitioners, scientists, counselors, and therapists from across the United States and Canada, Holland, England and Australia.

The conference took place on the weekend of October 9 through 11, at the center for Against the Stream Buddhist Meditation Society in Los Angeles, California. Kevin Griffin, BRN board member and author of *One Breath at a Time* and *A Burning Desire, Dharma God and the Path of Recovery*, opened the conference on Saturday morning with a keynote address about the evolving Buddhist recovery movement, its forms, challenges, and potential.

Dr. Alan Marlatt and Dr. Kathy Lustyk spoke on the topic of addiction and the neuroscience of mindfulness. Dr. Marlatt, a BRN board member, is Professor of Psychology and Director of the Addictive Behaviors Research Center at the University of Washington. Dr. Lustyk is Professor of Psychology at Seattle Pacific University and Affiliate Associate Professor at the University of Washington School of Nursing. Drs. Lustyk and Marlatt are currently collaborating to investigate changes in the psychological stress response of persons with substance use disorders following treatment with Mindfulness Based Relapse Prevention (MBRP). Drs. Marlatt and Lustyk discussed how mindfulness-based therapies may benefit addicts by acting on brain systems. Dr. Marlatt provided an overview of MBRP in the treatment of addictive behavior, and Dr. Lustyk focused on the neural anatomical and chemical systems affected by mindfulness that are also altered by addiction.

Dr. Ann Bolger, a BRN board member and clinical psychologist who has trained extensively in Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction, led a workshop introducing participants to several components of MBRP. She addressed mindfulness meditation practices and strategies to cultivate moment-to-moment nonjudgmental awareness, and the impact of mindfulness on cravings, triggers, physical sensations, thoughts, and feelings.

Noah Levine, author of *Dharma Punx* and *Against the Stream*, and founding teacher of Against the Stream Buddhist Meditation Society, with a Masters degree in counseling psychology, led a workshop that explored the possibilities of a non-12-step model of recovery. Noah spoke and engaged input regarding his current project, which involves taking the core teachings of the Buddha, the 4-Noble Truths, and adopting them to a path that ends the suffering that stems from addiction.

Laura Burges, Damon Gay, Kevin Griffin, and Rev. Alex Holt participated in a cross tradition panel on facilitating Buddhist recovery groups. Laura Burges is a lay teacher in the Soto Zen tradition who lectures and leads retreats in northern

which fostered the Rime movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth century in Tibet. In the Rime Movement key teachers made a special effort to incorporate all the different sects and traditions of Buddhism into an integrated whole. The spirit of this effort, to be ecumenical and integrative, is present in Kevin's work as it has been in the teachings of many teachers coming to "the West" since the early 1960s. Fortunately this ecumenical, open and integrative spirit and approach has made its way into the Buddhist recovery movement. And yes, there are still conflicts in Buddhist communities too, as there have since the time of the Buddha, which will make for continually enjoyable discussions.

Jeffrey M

Heart of Recovery

jmcintyre@enlightenment.com

Welcome New Board Members

The BRN has recently added two board members:

Pablo Das.

Pablo is a mindfulness based nutrition, wellness and recovery counselor. He centralizes mindfulness practice as well as the principles of non-religious Buddhist Dharma in his client work. He is a graduate of the Institute for Integrative Nutrition (NYC) and has trained in food therapy at the Natural Gourmet Institute (NYC). He is trained and empowered to teach meditation and Dharma by Noah Levine at the Against The Stream Buddhist Meditation Society (L.A.) He is a strong advocate for empowering and non dogmatic approaches to nutrition, wellness and recovery. Pablo is a nationally distributed indie-folk punk musician. He volunteers at a suicide helpline for Gay Youth. He lives in Brooklyn, NY.

California. Damon Gay is a member of the Tucson Shambhala Meditation Group (Tibetan Buddhist tradition) and began the Sarphashana meditation group for people in recovery, which has been on-going since 2002. Rev. Alex Holt is a consulting minister at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Yakima, Washington, and is a long term Zen Buddhist student at Great Vow Zen Monastery in Oregon. The panel discussion explored the wide variety of programs being created to support people in recovery using a Buddhist framework.

On Friday evening, Trudy Goodman gave a keynote address titled "Recovery as Crucible." Trudy is President and Founder of InsightLA, a non-profit organization for secular mindfulness and Vipassana meditation training. She spoke about the need for the recovering individual to befriend suffering, and to use this challenge as a crucible for emotional and spiritual growth.

Santikaro, a Dhamma student-practitioner, translator, and Buddhist meditation teacher who lives at Liberation Park in Norwalk, Wisconsin, gave a keynote address on Saturday morning titled "Addiction to Self." He described how self, our most basic and central addiction, is born from ignorance and craving and perpetuates further ignorance and craving. Santikaro's talk reflected on how recovery, ultimately, is the same as liberation. Santikaro also led a breakout session on addictive culture, touching on cultural addictions such as consumerism and addictions to war and money, and looking at the many ways individuals struggle with finding meaning in a society that cultivates these addictions.

Pablo Das, a mindfulness-based nutrition, wellness and recovery counselor, led a breakout session on food, substances and dependency. Pablo provided a non 12-step perspective on Buddhist recovery, describing dependency as a conditioned or habitual response to uncomfortable internal experiences. At this session, participants talked about using the Buddhist teachings to deconstruct cravings and cultivate non-reactivity.

Jeff Bell, author of *When in Doubt, Make Belief: Life Lessons from OCD*, shared the many parallels he has found between obsessive compulsive disorder therapy and Buddhist mindfulness practices. Jeff offered practical strategies for facing uncertainty and cravings with mindfulness.

Thich Dao Quang (Thay), born and raised as a Buddhist in a small village in central Vietnam, is Abbot of the Tam Bao Vietnamese Temple in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Thay shared his experiences and successes in teaching mindfulness for recovery, both with clients and with the counselors and therapists who benefit from these techniques.

Dr. Beverly Berg and Trudy Goodman led a workshop on the anatomy of emotional recovery for the sober Buddhist family. Dr. Berg is a marriage, family, and child therapist with over 25 years of experience in the field of chemical dependency. The presenters introduced the Buddha's four foundations of mindfulness as a systematic path for attaining sobriety for the recovering family. They presented a family systems approach to define stepping-stones for integrating the four foundations of mindfulness with the recovery path to foster emotional maturity in sober couples, to in turn enhance stability and warmth in families in recovery.

On Saturday evening, Kevin Griffin and Noah Levine engaged in "The God Dialogues." Kevin has developed a way to define God that can work for the Buddhist minded recovering person, while Noah has opted for a more rejectionist stance, feeling that the concept of God is not a vital aspect of recovery for Buddhists. By providing these two valuable perspectives, Noah and Kevin help provide access to recovery for all who embrace Buddhist principles, whether or not they find the God concept beneficial.

On Sunday morning the conference closed with discussions on the future of the



Jeffrey McIntyre.

CADAC, LMFT, LMHC began training and working in the field of addictions treatment thirty-seven years ago. He started practicing Buddhism thirty-six years ago. He has also taught and written about family systems treatment of addictions in graduate and medical school mental health programs. As part of his own recovery from a compulsive eating disorder, he began participation in OA five years ago, and initiated the Heart of Recovery© program within the Shambhala Buddhist network of meditation centers two and a half years ago, to integrate Buddhist and Twelve Step practices.



Buddhist Recovery Network. A list of potential BRN projects was put to the group for discussion, including: creating a group facilitators kit for recovery groups, membership growth, opening a Buddhist recovery treatment center, website issues, and fundraising.

The inaugural conference was an auspicious event that provided inspiration and ideas to those attending, and resulted in the instigation of various projects and formation of committees to carry forward the mission of the BRN (see below for more information on committees and opportunities to participate). The date for the next BRN conference will be announced in the near future.

BRN Committees Seek Your Participation

At the end of the 2009 Inaugural Conference, two committees were formed to help BRN move to the next level in growth and outreach:

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee, chaired by Fran DiDomenicis, is charged with increasing membership and strengthening the involvement between members and the organization. The Committee is currently in the process of structuring and implementing a tiered membership system and determining the benefits provided to each of the member groups, as well as exploring ways to improve outreach. The committee is in need of additional people to assist in these efforts. If you are interested in contributing your experience and ideas, please contact Fran at 510-915-2647 or at frandphd@gmail.com.

Buddhist Recovery Groups Support Committee

The Buddhist Recovery Groups Support Committee, chaired by Rev. Alex Holt and with advisory support from Kevin Griffin, was formed to help those wanting to start Buddhist addiction recovery groups. The committee is tasked with (a) developing and publicizing resources and methods for those interested in starting Buddhist Recovery Groups, and (b) providing support and guidance for such groups and individuals. The committee hopes to have a group of trained persons who can provide support to recovery groups and their leaders, but will not act in the role of therapists or counselors. Kits of support materials are available, primarily online at the Buddhist Recovery Network website. Hard copies of the material are also available upon request. We welcome additional members to this group. Please contact Alex Holt at revalexholt@earthlink.net if you're interested or have questions.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Consider joining a committee. The Membership Committee is particularly in need of additional help, but members are free to join either committee.
- Please share with your dharma friends why you have been interested in the Buddhist Recovery Network and direct them to the web site at www.BuddhistRecovery.org. If you are a member of a sangha, please consider making an announcement at your next meeting to spread the word!



Recovery Books

BRN has received \$543 in referral commissions on book sales since the website was launched, selling around \$11,000 worth of Buddhist Recovery books through Amazon.

“There's a reason you can learn from everything: you have basic wisdom, basic intelligence, and basic goodness”...Pema Chodren

The BRN doesn't seek to spread a dogma or system of recovery, but rather to act as a hub from which a mandala of skilful means, community support, research, and treatment might grow, bringing new visions of healing to the recovery community and a deeper understanding of ancient Buddhist wisdom to us all.



New Recovery Meetings Available

The following recovery meetings have recently been announced to BRN. You can find additional information on these meetings, as well as postings for other meetings around the world, at the BRN website (<http://www.buddhistrecovery.com>).

Berkeley California

Venue: Berkeley Shambhala Center Streetspace and Gallery

Day: Mondays

Time: 7:30pm-9:00pm

Type: 12-step meditation meeting

Address: 2177 Bancroft Ave. between Fulton and Shattuck, Berkeley, CA 94704.

Contact: bill_barstad@yahoo.com

Western S. Dakota/eastern Wyoming

A group has recently begun meeting in this area but not in any systematic way with regard to time and venue. If you are interested please contact Richard Gayle at

tipsyhotei@gmail.com.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Venue: Milwaukee Mindfulness Practice Center

Day: Sunday

Time: 6:30pm - 7:30pm

Type: 11-Step Meditation Meeting

Address: 1922 E. Park Place., Milwaukee, WI USA 53211 (a block and a half east of Oakland - between Murray & Cramer)

Contact info: <http://www.milwaukee mindfulness.com/>

Baltimore, Maryland

Venue: Towson Unitarian Universalist Church

Day: Mondays

Time: 7:00pm

Type: 12 Step Buddhist Meditation Meeting

Address: 1710 Dulaney Valley Road, Lutherville, MD 21093

Contact: harlyfrog@comcast.net

San Jose, California

Venue: St. Francis Episcopal Church

Day: Tuesday

Time: 7:00 – 8:30 pm

Type: Dharma & Recovery

Address: 1205 Pine Avenue, San Jose, CA

Other info: Donations only. Hosted by San Jose Dharma Punx

San Francisco, California

Venue: Hartford Street Zen Center

Day: Fridays

Time: 7:30pm - 9:00pm

Type: Buddhist Recovery Meeting

Address: 57 Hartford St, San Francisco (Castro district)

Other info: The format is the same as our Monday meeting at the Zen Center but

Talks by Noah Levine on recovery from a Buddhist perspective (Audio)
Addiction Pt.1
Addiction Pt.2

Buddhism and the 12 Steps from Santikaro at Liberation Park (Audio)
12 Steps

"The God Dialogue" with Noah Levine and Kevin Griffin from the Inaugural Conference (Audio)
The God Dialogue



For story ideas and contributions, contact Ellen Berryman at Ellen@berrymanecological.com

the group is smaller and more intimate with between 20 and 30 people each week. All recovery backgrounds are welcomed.

Contact: timothywicks@comcast.net

Santa Cruz, California

Venue: Santa Cruz Zen Center

Day: Fridays

Time: 6:45 pm to 7:45 pm

Type: Ordinary Recovery

Address: 115 School Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Contact: JP at 831 457 0207

Email: jplavalamp@yahoo.com

Olympia, Washington

Venue: First Christian Church, Library

Day: Thursdays

Time: 7:00pm to 8:30pm

Type: Buddhist 12-Step Study Group

Address: 701 Franklin St. SE, Olympia, WA 98501.

Contact: Kobai Scott Whitney, kobai@plummountain.org

Honolulu, Hawaii

Venue: Church of the Crossroads

Day: Every Monday

Time: 6:45pm- 8:00 pm (people are encouraged to show up a little early so our twenty minute sitting meditation can begin promptly at 6:45.)

Type: Buddhist/12 Step group

Address: University Ave. 1 1/2 blocks up from King St.ewa side, Honolulu.

Contact: Lue Zimmelman, luezim@msn.com

New York City

Venue: Shambhala Meditation Center Of New York

Day: Sundays

Time: 6:30pm - 8:30pm

Type: "The Heart of Recovery" weekly 12 Step Recovery and Buddhist Meditation Meeting

Address: 118 West 22nd Street, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10011.

Other info: A weekly sharing support group bringing together meditation practice and the Twelve Steps. Meetings are anonymous and confidential and explore the relationship of addiction and recovery to our personal path as spiritual warriors, bodhisattvas, meditators.

\$2 suggested donation.

Contact: Rick R. Phone (212) 675-6544

Email: recovery@shambhalanyc.org **Web site:** ny.shambhala.org

