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Zen Peacemaker Order

1999 Retreat Schedule

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| Landmark Program | Zen Peacemaker Order |
| Wilderness Practice: Alonetime & Fasting | Zen Peacemaker Order Seminary |
| March 12-21 (Kauai, HI) | February 10-14 |
| July 2-11 | September 22-26 |
| August 20-29 | |

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| Introduction to Alonetime | Council Training |
| April 2-11 | April 8-11 |
| Wilderness Practice Retreat | October 12-17 |
| July 2-15 | Session |
| Wilderness Youth Retreat | March 30-April 4 |
| July 2-10 | December 12 |
| Mountain Walk | Introduction to Peacemaking |
| September 3-10 | April 15-18 |

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| Introduction to Wilderness Course | Upaya Peacemaker Council |
| September 30-October 3 | August 12-15 |

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| Being with Dying Professional Training | Women's Retreat The Shelter of Each Other |
| February 19-26 | September 16-19 |
| October 22-29 | |



Joan Halifax

Joan Halifax, Ph.D. is a Buddhist teacher, anthropologist and author. In 1990, she founded Upaya in Santa Fe, NM, where she now teaches, works in the New Mexico Penitentiary with maximum-security prisoners, works with individuals who have catastrophic illnesses and is the founder of the Project on Being with Dying. Joan is a Founding Teacher in the Zen Peacemaker Order of Roshi Bernie Glassman and the late Sensei Jishu Holmes and is Upaya's head teacher.

For more retreat and facilitator information, please contact Upaya.

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THE SCIENCE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

The Buddha's Answer to Darwin and God

JOE LOIZZO

WHY IS BUDDHISM closer to science than other religions? The Buddha taught that everything has causes and that only understanding can yield spiritual freedom. Since the Buddha saw that nothing is unchanging, the "Supreme Scientist" rejected the idea of divine creation. He insisted that faith without knowledge cannot make one free and advised his students to examine everything, especially his own words; to rely on their own reason and experience, not on authorities; and to pursue happiness by practicing what they knew to be true.

Scientific interest in Buddhism reflects this rare fusion of science and transcendence. Unlike Western science, which adopted materialist views that throw out the soul with the bathwater of church dogma, Buddhist science is equally critical of both theism and materialism. Like most religions, Buddhism is critical of the materialist denial of transcendence and the claim that mind is an accident of matter. Yet the Buddha's critique cites evidence rather than scripture. He observed that human language gives us more freedom than that of any lower life-form; and that, however much mind depends on the body, it has causes and effects whose continuity, like energy, is neither created nor destroyed. His "middle way" between theism and materialism is radical in the West, where spirituality is caught in a crossfire between science and religion. Despite new disciplines such as psychoanalysis, we moderns

are so far from a truce that we tend to insist that Buddhism must side with either theology or with mechanics.

The liveliest discussion in this crossfire concerns the idea that every intentional act—karma—has a developmental effect, and that effects not felt in this life must be experienced in future ones. While Westerners accept karma facilely, most find the theory as fantastic as the creation account of Genesis. Although scientists now view "self" as a hand-me-down from parents' genes, the Buddhist idea that personal development is a process continuing from life to life is equally incredible to them. Karma theory reconciles evolution with creation by showing how life creates itself through action and reaction. One of the many meditative powers the Buddha reported was remembering acts in past lives that helped bring about his enlightenment. He even recalled being a monkey king whose self-sacrifice saved his subjects. Karma became a speculative theory organizing such observations into "laws of moral development" (*karma-niyama*). These laws postulate heavens and hells, but not in order to show divine retribution. Rather, envisioning death and rebirth serves to rehearse how the mind shapes embodiment and environment, awakening us to our ability to recreate our lives.


Karma is a time-tested remedy for fatalist views, from one extreme which posits that mind comes to nothing to the other extreme of the soul's eternity. Nagarjuna prescribes karma as a correc-

tive lens for such black-and-white vision: "The Buddha taught the truth of the conservation of intentional action: 'openness' means it is not annihilated; 'evolution' means it is not eternal. As a master may artfully make a creation, which in turn creates another creation, so the actor resembles a creation who creates another creation, and his evolution is what he creates." Perhaps this old Indian prescription can open our eyes to a tolerance equally lacking in Yáhwah and Darwin. Recently the Dalai Lama was asked about the creation/evolution debate. "Since Tibetans believe we descend from a monkey mating with a god," His Holiness laughed, "we see both sides." ▼

Joe Loizzo, M.D., M.F.A., is a psychiatrist and Founder and Director of the Columbia-Presbyterian Center for Meditation and Healing. He lives in Manhattan.

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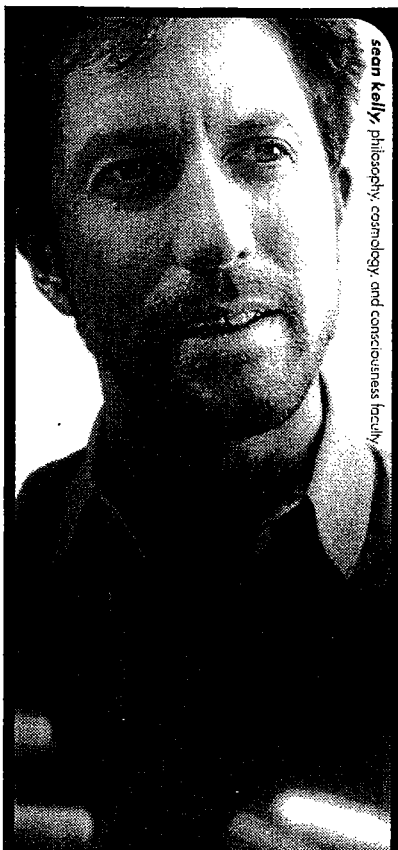
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THE SCIENCE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Medicine for the Cancer of the Mind

JOE LOIZZO

MY INTRODUCTION to Tibetan psychotherapy (*lojong*) occurred during an encounter with the late Serkhong Rinpoche, His Holiness the Dalai Lama's philosophy tutor. Serkhong's brow wrinkled up in a smile that made him seem like a giant, red-faced Yoda, the gnomelike teacher in *The Empire Strikes Back*. When I brought him home to meet my family, the Rinpoche was visibly moved upon meeting my mother, who greeted us at the door. When he lifted her outstretched hand up to his cheek, tears filled his eyes as if she were a long-lost child. For years I'd been inspired by the Buddhist teaching of recognizing every living thing as kin, but what had seemed a great idea suddenly hit home as a profound way of being.

After meeting Serkhong, my medical education was never the same. Behind every hospital wristband loomed a lost relative. Every cell I studied weaved humanity closer. It seemed to me that even mitochondria, the tiny lungs of our cells, were unraveling their RNA like an emerald lifeline reaching back, breath by breath, across the entire sea of evolution. Yet Serkhong's lesson did not stop there. To my ears, evolutionary theories in medical anthropology sounded like repetitions of an ancient Buddhist truth: We evolved from mammals who took caring and sharing to radical lengths. The latest medical breakthroughs became echoes of Buddhist precepts as well. Self-alienation, hostility,

and attachment, the Buddha's "three poisons," do make us prone to disease. Self-analysis, self-disarmament, and self-transcendence, the "three elixirs," are the essence of contemporary mind/body medicine. Finally, I learned that psychoanalysis, like Tibetan psychotherapy, reawakens the parent-child dynamic to help break destructive habits.

Is this empathic ability to heal otherworldly? Or something that only monks and nuns can feel? Is it religion or medicine, magic or therapy? Although selflessness has been a key to Buddhism all along, it was especially stressed in the



Plain Air, Dove Bradshaw, 1991

COURTESY SANDRA GERING GALLERY

later Mahayana teachings designed to bring the spiritual science of the renunciate life into the heart of the domestic sphere. The healing power of these teachings stems from how they unite insight and kindness in unconditional compassion, what the Indian sage Nagarjuna called "the profound, awe-some practice of enlightenment, the openness that is essentially empathy."

Used to this day, Geshe Chekhawa's *Seven Point Psychotherapy*, compiled in the twelfth century, deals surgically with the cancer of self-alienation. His precept, "Drive all blame into one," turns the habit of blaming others on itself, pointing the finger at the enemy within—our alienating self-will. Self-alienation is like a time bomb, easily triggered into reactive hostility. Once disarmed, its energies can fuel humanity: "Cultivate great kindness towards all." The rest of the seven-point process unpacks the twin facets of self-disarmament and self-transcendence. In "giving and taking" (*tonglen*) we combine these facets by learning to take responsibility for others and to offer loving aid. The practice is effective when we "mount giving and taking on the breath." Every in-breath becomes an opportunity whereby we take others' needs into ourselves and transform hurt into care; every out-breath is a chance to share that caring energy with the world. Increasingly, current medicine proves that this ancient diagnosis can be life-saving; relatedness, self-disarmament, and caring generally help to treat people with cancer or heart disease to live twice as long. The ancient psychotherapy of Tibet is state of the art: "Transform adversity into a path to enlightenment; abandon any hope for results; apply the prime practice right now; don't wish for thanks." ▼

Joe Loizzo, M.D., M.F.A., is a psychiatrist and Founder and Director of the Columbia-Presbyterian Center for Meditation and Healing. He lives in Manhattan.



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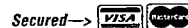
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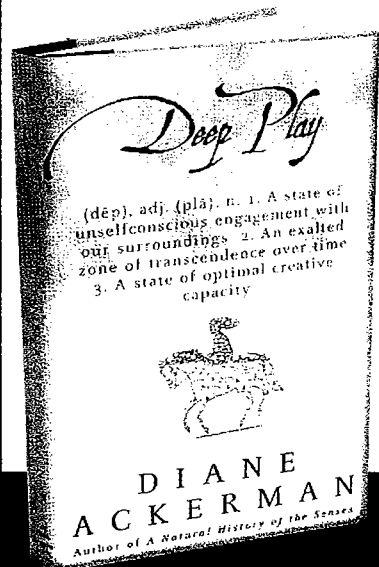
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THE SCIENCE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Revolution in the Moment

JOE LOIZZO

MINDFULNESS IS DEFINED in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “the state or quality of being mindful; attention; regard; memory; intention; purpose,” but it is not listed in *Stedman’s Medical Dictionary*. Its recent usage as a technical term in the area of Buddhist meditation, however, has breathed new life into this archaic noun. *Mindfulness* is fast becoming a household word as well as a key term in medicine, psychotherapy, and neuroscience.

In its classical sense, *mindfulness* means the ability to hold one’s full, impartial attention from moment to moment on whatever one experiences in body and mind. Although this mental muscle is natural, its function is so vital to meditative learning that its constant care is the foundation of Buddhist practice. Mindfulness practice is crucial for freeing us from the instinctive bias that normally restricts our ability to see the world more objectively. This may be why Western practitioners have used the term to designate the whole practice of “insight meditation,” in which analysis is used to liberate our natural clarity of mind from habitual blocks.

I am not fond of machine metaphors, but in teaching the basics of meditative self-healing I have found them especially helpful as illustrative of the power of mindfulness. In our normal habit-driven mode, our brains are like the computer-run spaceship in Stanley Kubrick’s *2001: A Space Odyssey*—however useful it is to leave

routine functions on automatic pilot, when it comes to the immediate quality of our lives we *must* be able to shift into manual override. In mindfulness mode, we are free to deprogram and relearn the misguided habits that drive our minds and brains into self-defeating ruts.

Solid evidence for the mental and physical benefits of mindfulness are found in recent studies on stress, pain, and disease conducted by Jon Kabat-Zinn. In his Mindfulness-Based Stress-Reduction and Relaxation Program, Kabat-Zinn, himself a biochemist and a longtime Zen meditator, has distilled the essential principles of mindfulness from several traditions. His program focuses particularly on the mindfulness of breath. The technique has proven effective in helping Americans cope with a range of health problems. Eschewing the disease-targeted format of Western medicine for the more self-reliant approach of Buddhist practice, Kabat-Zinn’s program has outperformed conventional treatments for chronic pain, anxiety, and depression. He explains that mindfulness practice is effective for so many life problems because it develops a “discipline of attention” that is required to change habits.

The success of Kabat-Zinn’s program inspired Zen practitioner Dr. Marsha Linehan to apply mindfulness to one of the toughest problems in mental health: borderline personality disorder cases. Even seasoned therapists typically avoid taking on those who have been so seriously abused as children that

they persist in self-injurious behavior. Building mindfulness education and skills into her Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Linehan has achieved unprecedented success in reducing symptoms and lessening the need for continued hospitalization.


Another area where mindfulness has expanded our horizons is that of brain research. Neuroscientist Francisco Varela has shed new light in this field by drawing on his own Buddhist practice. Varela exposed a blind spot in the ongoing debate among neuroscientists, philosophers, and psychologists about how to make sense of the brain. Citing evidence that says disciplines like mindfulness make us more objective observers of our own nervous systems, he argued that all camps in the debate were missing the forest for the trees. By dissecting the brain from the outside in, Varela points out, neuroscientists have failed to see it from the inside out, as a living tissue of active learning. He coined the term *enactive neuroscience* to distinguish an approach that would enhance one-sided data by gathering first-person perspectives of multiple observers experienced in mindfulness practice.

The impact of mindfulness in these diverse fields is more than enough to explain why so many people are talking and writing about it. And yet, as radical as such scientific breakthroughs may be, they only skim the profound changes I see repeatedly in my own clinical work. Recently an older gentleman, a computer analyst, spoke of having had the presence of mind to override his habitual defensive behavior at work to remain open-minded instead. He said, "This mindfulness practice has really revolutionized my work." What makes mindfulness so potent a medicine is not the power of a single cataclysmic event, but the imperceptible way it permeates the everyday activities that shape our lives. ▼

Joe Loizzo, M.D., M.F.A., is a psychiatrist and founder and Director of the Columbia-Presbyterian Center for Meditation and Healing in New York City.

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