

## THE OZZEN WAY

(Study Program for 2021 and beyond)

### 1. Introduction

This is an overview of the OzZen Way and our study program for 2021. OzZen is affiliated to the Ordinary Mind Zen School (OMZS), established by Joko Beck and her dharma successors in 1995.

#### *Purpose Statement of the Ordinary Mind Zen School*

The Ordinary Mind Zen School intends to manifest and support practice of the Awakened Way, as expressed in the teaching of Charlotte Joko Beck. The school is composed of her dharma successors and teachers and successors they, as individuals, have formally authorised. There is no affiliation with other Zen groups or religious denominations; however, membership in this school does not preclude individual affiliation with other groups. Within the school there is no hierarchy of Dharma Successors.

The Awakened Way is universal; the medium and methods of realisation vary according to circumstances. Each Dharma successor in the School may apply diverse approaches and determine the structure of any organisation that s/he may develop to facilitate practice.

The Successors acknowledge that they are ongoing students, and that the quality of their teaching derives from the quality of their practice. As ongoing students, teachers are committed to the openness and fluidity of practice, wherein the wisdom of the absolute may be manifested in/as our life. An important function of this School is the ongoing examination and development of effective teaching approaches to insure comprehensive practice in all aspects of living.

May the practice of this School manifest wisdom and compassion, benefitting all beings.

OzZen is dedicated to maintaining the spirit of Joko Beck's teaching and Barry Magid's vision of a psychologically minded Zen practice adapted to the needs of Australian students practicing in the context of their everyday lives. The OzZen Way is an attempt to do a preliminary sketch how we fit into the larger pantheon of global Buddhism and then how we fit into Western Buddhism and what kind of western Buddhist project we are cultivating - to become more conscious and intentional of this. One of the exciting aspects of participating in the on-going co-creation of OzZen - is how we are creating history. Let's hope we leave behind a hopeful and inspiring legacy to the next generation!

Our teacher's teacher, Barry Magid, has been at the forefront of integrating Zen and Psychotherapy, what Ken Wilbur calls the "fourth turning" of the dharma wheel: growing up and waking up. OzZen is also committed to Barry Magid's vision that the Dharma can be fully practiced, realized, and transmitted in the midst of lay life. We also affirm that OzZen is dedicated to valuing and appreciating *this life*, and for our practice to be dedicated to the cultivation of a compassionate Australian culture, to create the requisite conditions for all people to experience happiness and peace in this time and place.

OzZen welcomes people from different religious backgrounds or people with a more secular/humanist background with a genuine interest in personal and social transformation through Zen and ethical practice. There is no requirement to identify as a "Buddhist". However, the Ordinary Mind Zen School is nonetheless grounded within the larger Soto Zen Buddhist tradition of shikantaza, or just sitting and of course Soto Zen is grounded in the tradition of Buddhism. As with other Buddhist organisations, at some stage in their practice, friends of OzZen are encouraged to become members and participate in the governance and leadership roles of the Sangha (community of practitioners).

2. The OzZen Way study program is designed to support your commitment to personal and social transformation to create a more compassionate world. The path of Zen Buddhism involves taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. The Buddha simply means the one who is awake or awake awareness. It points to the Buddha within you and the Buddha as embodied, however imperfectly, in our Teachers. And this life provides us with many teachers, not just Zen teachers! The Dharma is reality itself and the teachings. The sangha is a community of practitioners dedicated to maintaining and cultivating a

culture of awakening to the reality of impermanence, interdependence and no inherent essential self and maintaining and developing teaching appropriate for this time and place. Reality itself, however, always evades our attempts to conceptualise it. Hence the importance of non-conceptual awareness in Zen (this is also a debatable point).

OzZen subscribes to an open and pragmatic approach to dharma teachings – there is no one school of Buddhism that has the “truth” – and what counts is what works for you!

### **3. Dharma Study Program founded on the first turning of the dharma wheel:**

- a. Based on the teaching of the Four Noble Truths or *Tasks* (There is Dukkha, Dukkha is arising, there is release from Dukkha by following the Eightfold Path):
  - i. Complete View
  - ii. Complete Thought
  - iii. Complete Speech
  - iv. Complete Action
  - v. Complete Livelihood
  - vi. Complete Effort
  - vii. Complete Mindfulness
  - viii. Complete Concentration
- b. The Four Practice Principles are a re-wording of the four truths or tasks.
- c. Stephen Batchelor’s rewording:
  - Embrace life.
  - Let go of what arises (non-attachment)
  - See its ceasing.
  - Act!
- d. The path falls into the three trainings common to all Buddhism:
  - i. Ethics
  - ii. Meditation (Concentration and Mindfulness)
  - iii. Wisdom

### **4. Buddhist Metaphysics and Ethics (The Cultivation of Character)**

- a. Four seals: Dukkha, Impermanence, No-Self, Nirvana
- b. Karma – neutral description of cause and effect – interdependence and interconnection of everything. That’s why Buddhism doesn’t focus on rules. Our

compassionate response flows spontaneously from our practice in harmony with the situational context.

- c. Buddhist ethics is therefore focused on intention and aspiration rather than rules, duties or rights and responsibilities. Cultivating character so that we move from reactions which generate suffering to responses which express compassion.
- d. Theravada Ethics:
  - i. The Four Divine Abodes
- e. Mahayana Ethics:
  - i. The Precepts. Diane Rizzetto authored a book on the precepts called *Waking Up to What You Do*.
  - ii. *How to Lead an Awakened Life* (Santideva).
  - iii. The Six Paramitas (Perfections). Diane Rizzetto recently authored a book on the Paramitas called *Deep Hope*.
- f. Precepts study group (via Zoom) commences on Wednesday 17 March. Meeting every second week from 7pm-8.30pm. The required reading is Dianne Rizzetto's *Waking Up to What you Do*.
- g. Precepts are a "beacon light" to focus our attention on our conduct in body, speech and mind.
- h. Encouragement to keep a precepts journal – working on one precept per fortnight. Graduates of the precepts group are encouraged to make a presentation of some aspects of the precepts work during the end of year retreat. This could be in the traditional form of a 15-minute talk or alternative forms of expression such as a video, or music or poetry.
- i. Participation in the Ju-kai ceremony (to receive the precepts) is optional. Some students are already intending to participate in the ceremony other are not sure. There is no requirement to participate in a Ju-kai ceremony. This is a personal decision. Participation in the precepts group can help to clarify this for you.
- j. Involvement in Social Justice Issues
  - i. Poverty and homelessness
  - ii. Support for the Uluru Statement from the Heart
  - iii. Eco-Dharma projects
  - iv. Equality and Non-discrimination

- v. Friends and members of OzZen are encouraged to share the various ways in which they practice social engagement through contributions to the OzZen journal.

## 5. Meditation Practices:

- a. Four Foundations of Mindfulness (Satipatthana Sutta)
- b. Counting or following the breath
- c. Just-Sitting: objectless meditation/open awareness/leaving everything alone
- d. Mu (Who?) Koan practice
- e. Metta Practice
- f. Guided Meditations
- g. **OzZen Guided Meditation Research Group.**

During this year Andrew will be co-researching Zen Guided Meditation practice with two co-Facilitators: Dr Jed Blore and Dr Rhys Price-Robertson. These guided meditations are held every Tuesday Morning.

- h. Chanting and Recitation (see Sutra Book)

## 6. Wisdom (Insight into Emptiness):

- a. Buddhist Philosophy
  - i. Pali Sutras (Indian)
  - ii. The Dhammapada
  - iii. The five skandhas:
    - 1. Rupa (Body)
    - 2. Sensations (Feeling Tone)
    - 3. Perceptions (Mental discrimination)
    - 4. Dispositions (Affects/Relational Patterns)
    - 5. Consciousness (Discernment and Conceptions)
  - iv. Abhidharma (Indian)
  - v. The Seven Factors of Awakening
  - vi. Heart Sutra (Chinese)
  - vii. The Two Truths
  - viii. Nagarjuna and anti-realism (Indian)
  - ix. Yogacara School (Indian)
  - x. Taoism (China) *Lao Tzu*

- xi. Platform Sutra (China)
- xii. Koan Collections
- xiii. Dogen Studies
- b. Recommended Modern Zen Teachers:
  - i. Joko Beck and Barry Magid and other OMZS teachers
  - ii. Maezumi Roshi (Soto and Rinzai Zen) was Joko Becks' Primary teacher
  - iii. Shunryu Suzuki (Soto Zen)
  - iv. Shohaku Okumura (Soto Zen)
  - v. Stephen Batchelor (Secular Buddhism)
- c. Western Philosophy
  - i. G.W.F. Hegel
  - ii. Karl Marx
  - iii. Ludwig Wittgenstein
  - iv. Martin Heidegger
  - v. Richard Rorty
  - vi. Martin Hagglund
- d. Inquiry Practice (Individual or Group)
  - i. From Koan to Inquiry practice – living in the question.
  - ii. Everyday Koans
  - iii. Meditation on direct realisation of Emptiness
  - iv. Self-Inquiry/Unfindable-Inquiry
    - What does it mean to be human?
    - What is self and no-self?
  - v. Guided Meditations and Group Inquiry
  - vi. Dwelling in emptiness (Non-attachment)

## 7. Commitment to Teacher/Teachings and Sangha

- a. One of the reasons why *some* Zen teachers form sangha's is to preserve and maintain the tradition. As friends and members if we identify with a sangha we develop on-going relationships with teachers and sangha members.
- b. There are two levels of authorisation in becoming a teacher. The first level is called *Denkai* – this gives authorisation to teach and to also give the precepts. The teacher remains under the supervision of their primary teacher. The second level

is called *Denbo*. This means the teacher is now independent and is also able to authorise other teachers.

- c. *Not all Zen teachers form sangha's*. Barry Magid encourages people to find unique ways of doing this. The late Marc Poirier was a law professor and Zen teacher, he introduced law students and legal practitioners to meditation, and encouraged them to deepen their practice in the context of their professional lives. Malcolm Martin is a professional artist and Zen teacher and volunteered for a number of years as a Buddhist Chaplain in Prisons before creating a local UK sangha. It is also possible to be a chaplain in Australia in schools and prisons. Other teachers have organised Peacemaker events and so on. One could work as a therapist and teach secular mindfulness programs.
- d. *Ju-kai ceremony* (public commitment to practicing Zen Buddhism)  
Prior to Ju-kai, students undertake an in-depth study of the precepts, including what it means to them to practice as a Zen Buddhist.
- e. *Relationship with Teacher (Shoken)*
- f. Students are encouraged to explore different teachings and teachers. But at some point in your journey it is recommended you enter into a primary relationship with one transmitted teacher in the Ordinary Mind Zen lineage, if OMZ is where you want to be. This primary teacher-student relationship is traditionally called *shoken*, which literally means “seeing one another.” The shoken relationship in OzZen is not meant to be exclusive. Shoken students can continue to study with other teachers in the OMZ lineage. In some Zen Centres shoken is formalized in a private ceremony between you and your primary teacher, however this is less formal in OzZen. *If you feel you are at a stage in your practice where you would like to commit to a primary relationship, then please discuss this with the teacher.*
- g. *Practice Interviews (Dokusan)*  
Regular Individual Practice Interviews (Dokusan) via Zoom are held with the teacher commencing on Wednesday 10 March from 7.00pm to 9.00pm. These are limited to 15 mins and are focused on *your* Zen practice. *Please email me to make a booking and I will send you the Zoom link.* Meeting once per month is recommended for those students who wish to develop a primary relationship with the teacher (shoken).
- h. Membership of OzZen: **Membership Forms Available** from OzZen Secretary
- i. Leadership Roles in the Sangha:

- i. Ino (Zendo and Retreat Manager)
- ii. Chant Leader
- iii. Sangha Management and Governance via Committee Office Bearers and General Members
- iv. Journal Contributions
- v. Student Talks
- vi. Facilitating Guided Meditations
- vii. People with on-line media and publication skills are always welcome.

## **8. Integrating Psychotherapy with Zen Buddhism**

What is the difference between psychotherapy and Zen? Is there a difference? What is the common ground? This a big topic and many books have now been written on it. A good place to start would be with Barry Magid's first book: *Ordinary Mind: Exploring the Common Ground of Zen and Psychology*. One possible difference is that most Zen Buddhists would describe Zen as a religious practice (it does not necessarily follow that Zen Buddhism has a belief in the supernatural). Buddhism teaches that suffering arises because of our attachment to a non-existent essential/permanent self. Seeing directly into the impermanence or emptiness of a permanent self is therefore the main aim of Buddhist meditation, inquiry, and philosophical practice. On the other hand, psychotherapy is generally secular in orientation, (some people do practice as Christian Psychotherapists or Buddhist psychotherapists) and is focused on the personal goals of the patient/client who are usually seeking some kind of symptom relief. Rather than seeing into the emptiness of self, psychotherapy works to heal relational trauma through strengthening the sense of self and working to create a self-narrative that is supportive of greater psychological well-being.

Perhaps the most important point is what can psychotherapy offer to the Zen teacher? The project of bringing a "psychologically minded" approach to our Zen practice is central to our OzZen practice. One of the reasons why this is central to our practice is that the experience of direct seeing into our true nature does not necessarily guarantee ethical conduct. All Zen teachers will have their unconscious blind spots, and psychotherapy can be a great way to explore this. Seeing into the emptiness of self does not mean the self is an illusion. It simply

means that the self only exists conventionally because it is contingent and interdependent, changing from one moment to the next.

Zen teachers also need to be “trauma informed”. For example, at some stages of practice, it might be wise for a student to give more time to psychotherapy than sitting intensive retreats. The Zen teacher must also be just as conscious of the importance of the relationship, and not re-traumatizing a client/student within the context of the relationship. Compassion and Loving Kindness (Metta) practice forms a bridge between psychotherapy and Zen.

**a. Buddhism and Psychotherapy Research Group**

Not yet started. Planning underway to commence next year to discuss the on-going project of integrating psychotherapy and Zen practice. The group will be for psychotherapists/counsellors who are members or friends of OzZen, who identify as Buddhist practitioners and are currently practicing as psychotherapists, counsellors and/or social workers.

**9. Expressing the Way through Cultivating an Aesthetic Appreciation of Life**

- a. Zen Buddhists aesthetics found in China and Japan (mono no aware)
- b. Art & Crafts, Music, Poetry.
- c. Members and friends of OzZen are encouraged to share their unique forms of expression through contributions through the journal or performances at various times in the zendo.