

Recognizing, Retraining, Returning
(continued from page 1)

increases disconnection is it closer to fear reactions, the anger/futility or some thing else? Do you know the main thoughts that hold this pattern in place? This is recognizing.

As things begin to flow together in experiential awareness, we sense the physical and spatial interconnectedness of life...

Now for retraining. After recognizing the pattern, we make a conscious decision not to let it keep running, either inwardly as thoughts, or outwardly in words or actions. This isn't denial or repression, because we're conscious of what we're retraining from indulging, through recognizing.

Immediately after retraining, we return, coming back to the physical reality of the present moment:

- First, feeling any physical residue or disconnection's present in the wake of the disconnecting patterns. Check for a body sensation that you'd like to avoid, and feel into it for a few breaths. If nothing stands out, sense the overall body feeling.
- Next, feel the breathing sensations, and let them provide company for any unwanted physical feelings that remain.
- Now, include the environment's ambience, feeling the air temperature, and allowing the sounds in all directions to invite awareness to open into the spaciousness that's always right here.

Now we're back in the moment, with the dual awareness checkpoints of breathing and environment

to remind us of what's present, even if it has been muted out.

Sometimes an ease or painful thing arise. When this occurs, we can put the reactions on "call waiting" for the time, and gently let the unpleasant bodily feelings that remain be felt, along with the breath. In the chest or near—the heart's breath—and then return, as above. Recognizing, retraining and returning is a whole lot alternative, whenever some familiar patterns take to pull us away from reality.

We know that when we try to stuff it, or "just let go," it bounces, and the painful thing will bounce back with a vengeance—a bit like a small child who has been ignored for too long—and what's needed is compassionate attention. Recognizing, retraining and returning can be engaged for a short time on our most hot seat, or in bed's pauses during daily life.

With some practice, the process allows old emotions to dissolve into the mix of breath and environment. As things begin to flow together in experiential awareness, we sense the physical and spatial interconnectedness of life, without needing words like normality or oneness. So instead of being compared to think our practice, we can experience life at night.



Please do not e-mail this form

APPLICATION FOR 2010 SENSING

ZEN CENTER OF SAN DIEGO • 2017 Alvar St. • San Diego, CA 92109 • 619-275-3444

Please print clearly to avoid delay in processing your application, and please fill out this form completely

Name _____ Age _____ Gender _____
 Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Home phone _____ Work phone _____
 Emergency contact (name) _____ (phone) _____
 e-mail _____ (ZCSO has no overall address, but volunteers may contact you by e-mail).

Circle the session for which you are applying:
 Please note: Applications cannot be considered unless a check for session fee is included

Date	Member	Nonmember	Make/Due
June 6/10-6/13	90	105	Apr 10
August 8/10-8/15	150	175	Jun 10
Oct 10/29-11/1	175	200	Aug 15
Dec 12/26-12/31	150	175	Sept 26

Have you ever attended sessions at ZCSO? Yes ___ No ___

This will be my ___ 1st ___ 2nd ___ 3rd ___ + session at ZCSO

Date of last session of your most recent session _____

Mail in forms no earlier than the mail-by date above, marked Attention: Sensing Coordinator. The postmark will be honored as the application date. Please wait to make air reservations until your application has been confirmed. We will notify you as soon as decisions have been made. If you haven't heard from us exactly one month before the session begins, please call the Center.

Arrive by 6:30 pm the first night. ** Last day will end about 3:00 pm. Allight snack will be available for first evening. **New comers please arrive early for orientation. Orientation begins at 4:30 pm

Work SMIs (tools): cooking, shopping prior to session, dentistry, carpentry, painting, computer, gardening, sewing flower arranging, job prior to session, other _____

Physical condition limiting participation _____

I agree to maintain a daily sitting practice from the time of this application through the session. I will participate in the entire schedule, including instruction, sitings, meals, work, and any assignments. I will be on time for all activities. I understand that my physical, mental, and emotional well-being are my own responsibility. Zen practice is not a substitute for therapy. I am capable of undertaking the rigors of a session at this time. I am seeking medical or therapeutic treatment for any condition(s) I have and have avoided all pertinent information on this form. I will sign a waiver releasing ZCSO from accident and injury liability.

Signature _____ Legibly printed name _____

ALL BLANKS ON APPLICATION BELIEVED BY ___ Yes ___ No

Zen Center

O P S A N D I E G O

July 2010 Newsletter



Announcements

All Day Sitings

There will be All Day Sittings on Sunday and Sunday, July 10 and 11. The sign-up and schedule is on the kitchen table.

August Sevens

Applications are now being accepted for the five day August Sevens (Aug 10-15). Although priority will be given to those who apply for the whole sevens, if you can't come for all five days you can apply for the first or last three days.

Practice Period

Practice Period will be from Oct 9 through Nov 6. More information will be available online and in future newsletters.

Questions Sevens

Due to the limited space at Quashawa, we will be prioritizing those applicants who regularly come to sevens during the rest of the year.

Schedule

Dawa Sittings

Wednesdays, Monday- Friday 6:00-7:00 am

Tuesday Evening

Two Sittings, 6:30-8:00 pm

Wednesday Evening

Two Sittings, 6:30-7:40 pm

Practice Seminar follows (until about 8:20 pm)

Thursday Evening

Two Sittings, 6:30-8:00 pm

Saturday Morning

8:30 am Work Practice

8:45 am Introductory Workshop for newcomers

Follow up instruction for those who have attended last production

9:00- Noon Three Sittings, Dharma Talk

First Sunday Morning Each Month

Three Sittings, 9:00-11:00 am

Parking is Free

Please park at least 2 blocks away and please be mindful of our neighbors.

Zen Center San Diego

2047 Felaper St.

San Diego, CA 92109-0561

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July 2010 Newsletter

Zen Center

O P S A N D I E G O

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Recognizing, Refraining, Returning

Elizabeth Hamilton

The purpose of Zen practice is to awaken the real self, and to live openly and fully grounded in reality. As the last line of the Practice Principle says, "Being just this moment, compassionate."

This requires cultivating present-moment awareness, as well as seeing how our skewed perceptions and ego-driven block reality. This is not about taking ourselves to be better than most, or better than we are. It is about seeing our limitations and our delusions, and we find that there's plenty of room to encompass whatever delusions and confusion arises, and to see through it clearly and objectively. However, an interesting phenomenon often occurs when we discover how incomplete and inaccurate our old sense of self is. It goes into a high gear, as if the inclusive self that's emerging is a threat. So, up comes resistance, and perhaps the fear that practice is too hard, the script of the ego trying to say in charge. This is predictable, even if we know that, as

the Practice Principle tell us, staying caught in this "self-centered dream"—sometimes closer to a nightmare—blocks the genuine happiness of waking up to what our life really is.

The ingredients in our ego-combo-palooza of selfhood seem to be the main barriers to equanimity and compassion: self-image, attitude, and behaviors. Some familiar ones are clinging to old negative self-images, focusing on what's wrong, blaming others for how we feel, dwelling in hopelessness, being easily triggered or chastised—what's yours?

We know that it isn't refreshing or healing to dwell on these things, yet our relationships, work experience, and even Zen involvement are often impacted by them. These familiar patterns might seem comforting in the short term, yet over time our suffering escalates. Because our equanimity is so perturbed, equally persistent efforts are required to wake up. We need to distinguish between *insider efforts*, which are gentle and persevering, and *outsider efforts*, which are closer to struggle, and can worsen the original attitude that's already on board. One helpful *insider effort*, when the old mind tries to take over, is recognizing, refraining, and returning.

Because our ego-identity is so persistent, equally persistent efforts are required to wake up. We need to distinguish between tender efforts, which are gentle and persevering, and tough efforts, which are closer to struggle, and can worsen the fatigued attitude that's already on board.

our patterns, refraining from indulging them unconsciously, and returning to the unfolding moment. Here's how it works: bring to mind some painful attitude or reaction that you know blocks openness and