

## NWBR Newsletter

**Welcome, friends!**

We are so happy to bring you the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of our NWBR newsletter! This is where we can catch you up on past events, events we are planning, introduce you to NWBR and the people behind the scenes and leave you with some parting Dharma to bring into your practice. We hope you check out the extended versions of our articles and reviews on our website, and keep checking our meeting list for new meetings in your area! We wish you joy and peace as you walk this path with us!



## NWBR 2015– Winter/Spring events

*Here is a peek at what you may have missed!*

### “Meditation for Recovery” Workshop

January 24<sup>th</sup> - Seattle Area Support Group  
Community Center [www.sasgcc.org](http://www.sasgcc.org)

April 25<sup>th</sup> - Seattle Buddhist Center  
[www.seattlebuddhistcenter.org](http://www.seattlebuddhistcenter.org).

This workshop was created to support those on a recovery path in developing a regular meditation practice. We go over some basic meditations designed to bring us back to the present in moments of crisis or when our addictions are triggered, then move on to body scan meditation, mindfulness of breathing and end with a traditional “metta” meditation. These workshops are held regularly throughout the year, and are for beginner and experienced meditation practitioners. More information at [www.nwbuddhistrecovery.org](http://www.nwbuddhistrecovery.org)

## Spring/Summer Edition 2015

**Saturday, February 14<sup>th</sup> -**

**Loving-kindness –**

**The Heart of the Buddhas’ Teachings**



With Jude Rozhon  
Seattle Insight Meditation  
Center

[www.seattleinsight.org](http://www.seattleinsight.org)

Once again, Jude brought her special heart to our

community in this wonderful collaboration between the Seattle Insight Meditation Society and NWBR. Jude created a beautiful Dharma talk about the practice of loving-kindness or “metta” meditation, and led us in heart opening meditations and chants. SIMS provided the gorgeous venue and Jude opened our hearts with her teaching. We stayed and visited after the event, acknowledging her years as a guest teacher at SIMS and expressing our gratitude for her teachings.

Visit Jude @ [www.easeandjoy.com](http://www.easeandjoy.com).

### March 21<sup>st</sup> NWBR

**Facilitator Training Workshop**

Seattle Buddhist Center

[www.seattlebuddhistcenter.org](http://www.seattlebuddhistcenter.org).



This workshop on how to start and run a Buddhist Recovery meeting is offered to anyone who wishes to start their own meeting. Once again we had an enthusiastic group of people who were walking the path of recovery and Buddhist practice, and

wanted to share their experience with others. This workshop is held as needed by new meeting facilitators, check [www.nwbuddhistrecovery.org](http://www.nwbuddhistrecovery.org) for upcoming dates and venues.

## Winter/Spring events cont...

### May 7th Dharma talk with Kevin Griffin

Seattle Insight Meditation Center



On his way to Cloud Mountain to lead a five day meditation retreat, Kevin kindly agreed to come to Seattle and talk to us about bringing joy to our practice, and read from his new book “Recovering Joy-A

Mindful Life After Addiction”.

Kevin is always appreciated for his spontaneous, warm and insightful talks, and is well known for his unrehearsed and personal presentation of the Dharma.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**These are some events we are working on for the fall/winter of 2015. Please go to our website @ [www.nwbuddhistrecovery.org](http://www.nwbuddhistrecovery.org) for information about specific events or to pre-register.**

### August 2015 – Potluck Social Gathering

Come celebrate your recovery and share your practice with other meditation practitioners, Buddhist recovery meeting facilitators and surprise guests. Bring a vegetarian dish or yummy treat to share, and have fun in the sun with others in our Buddhist recovery community.

### September -NWBR First Annual fundraiser

This will be a month long multi-faceted event to help us raise money to complete projects and fund future events. Do you have any ideas? Are you called to volunteer with us? Contact Debra @ [debra.nwbr@gmail.com](mailto:debra.nwbr@gmail.com).

### October - Refuge Recovery event w/ David Smith

Come join NWBR and Refuge Recovery Northwest in welcoming author and guiding teacher at the “Against the Stream Meditation Center” in Nashville, for a Dharma talk and weekend meditation workshop.

### Nov.21-23 -Valerie “Vimalasara” Mason-John

Co-author of “*Eight Step Recovery-Using the Buddhas’ teaching to overcome addiction*”.

Dharma talk and weekend non-residential retreat.

### December -Winter Solstice Event

This event will celebrate the light within us all, and help us to dispel the wet, Seattle winter blues! We envision music, food and fun with our “friends on the path”!



## 2015 NWBR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Calico Cook** – President, Website Administrator  
*Calico has been a software developer for over 25 years and has an active interest in helping non-profits thrive online. He is also an artist, a musician, a waterman, a lover of nature and a caring father. His introduction to Buddhist practice was with Buddhist Recovery, with this practice and within these meetings he found the recovery support and stress-management tools he needed to thrive versus just survive. As president of NWBR and meeting facilitator, he is working to grow the Buddhist Recovery community in the Pacific Northwest. Calico co-founded NWBR in 2012 with the creation of the NWBR website.*

**Debra Greenfield** - Secretary/Treasurer  
*Debra has been a Dhamma student and practitioner of Buddhist meditation since 2005. She currently leads “Meditation for Recovery” and “NWBR facilitator training” workshops and facilitates events.. Her published works include the quarterly NWBR newsletter, facilitator training workbooks and assorted articles on Buddhism & Recovery. Debra founded NWBR in 2012 with the goal of bringing together the local Buddhist Recovery Community with a resource website and sponsoring events with Buddhist recovery authors and teachers. She currently lives and practices in a tiny cabin on a mountain pass with her husband in Sumas, WA.*

**Rebekah Reineke** – Membership & Community Outreach Coordinator  
*Rebekah is the newest member of the NWBR board of directors, enthusiastically handling all of the meeting communication and supporting new meetings. Rebekah used Noah Levines’ teachings and the Dharma Punx community here in Seattle to gain her sobriety. Now 5 years later she is facilitating a Refuge Recovery group and handles the Northwest Chapter of Refuge Recovery. She also facilitates an “Eight Step Recovery” group (based upon the book of the same name) as well as a “Mindful Grief and Loss” support group each week. She is currently writing her own book with the help of a 12-step Buddhist Recovery author.*

## INTERVIEW WITH A TEACHER -

by Debra G.



### A conversation with Zen Monk, addiction recovery worker and Buddhist chaplain, Ven. Thay Kobai Whitney of the Plum Mtn. Buddhist Community.

I became curious about Ven. Thay Kobai Whitney after reading about his work with recently released inmates at his Plum Mountain Buddhist Community, his Buddhist Recovery meeting in Aberdeen, and his blogs about integrating his own 12-step program work with his Buddhist path.

*NWBR - If you could choose the core teachings of the Buddha that you share with those suffering from addiction or dealing with incarceration, what would they be and why?*

**VK** - I think Buddhism has a really good way to explain about the nature of addiction. Buddhism also has its own 12 steps—the Four Noble Truths and Eightfold path. Also the “Three Poisons” of greed, hatred and delusion, really the whole of Buddhist teachings, cover what is going on when we are using, with our constant attempts to hold on what we have or to push away people, places and things we don’t like. The Teachings also provide a blueprint in the Four Noble Truths for how to live, outlining practices of lifelong projects like “right livelihood” or “right speech” that can lead us to a more ethical life with less suffering. What I would like to tell the readers is that this path is a *practice*. We have to just keep at it. It’s like if you want to be really good on the violin or the piano, you have to practice every day. That’s what we have to do. All the Buddha taught and promised was contentment *in this lifetime*. If we want that we have to practice with the contemplative *and* the ethical components. We need to encourage each other and to keep at it.

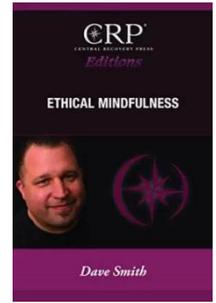
END

To read the full interview, or learn more about Ven. Kobai and the Plum Mountain Community, go to our website @ [www.nwbuddhistrecovery.org/nwbr/interview-with-a-teacher](http://www.nwbuddhistrecovery.org/nwbr/interview-with-a-teacher).

## E-BOOK REVIEW –

by Rebekah R.

### Ethical Mindfulness by David Smith



In the book “Ethical Mindfulness”, Dave Smith shares his story of recovery and uses it to show us how the simple foundations of Buddhist practice can help us where ethics are concerned, stressing the importance of balancing our meditation practice with an ethical lifestyle. After suffering many devastating losses at a young age, he turned to drugs, alcohol, sex and prostitution. Eventually he found the Twelve Steps and the community therein, along with mindfulness meditation, which he attributes to saving his life.

The intention of his e-book is to help the reader “respond to the ups and downs of life without creating unnecessary suffering”. Dave has dedicated the last six years of his life to the Buddhist path and uses the core teachings of Buddhism as a kind of map to navigate the mind and heart.

There are two main concepts he focuses on in this book. “Ethical- being the development and maintenance of intentions that hold non-harming of self and others as a core value, and “Mindfulness”- being the ability to objectively monitor the arising and passing away of thoughts, emotions and sensations within the framework of present-time awareness. He describes between “Secular” mindfulness, which is associated more with what we know as Mindfulness-Based Stress reduction (developed as a strategy for pain management), and “Classical mindfulness”, using meditation as a part of the direct path to liberation from suffering in this world. He also goes into how emotions and emotional intelligence play a part in our path to freedom from suffering.

Dave does an extraordinary job of packing a lot of great information into a small book, definitely worth your time.

*Dave Smith is a Buddhist meditation teacher, addiction treatment specialist, experienced speaker, and published author, trained to teach Buddhist meditation by Noah Levine. He has extensive experience bringing meditative interventions into jails, prisons, youth detention centers and addiction treatment facilities. He is a guiding teacher and program director of the “Against the Stream Nashville Meditation Center” and teaches over 300 meditation classes and workshops a year. He has provided direct services for mental health agencies, public libraries, and speaks nationally at Addiction and Behavioral Health conferences.*

For the full book review, go to our website @ [www.nwbuddhistrecovery.org/nwbr/ethical-mindfulness](http://www.nwbuddhistrecovery.org/nwbr/ethical-mindfulness) - and keep checking the website for an upcoming visit to Seattle by David in the fall, sponsored by Refuge Recovery Northwest and Northwest Buddhist Recovery!

## Living Dharma - Experiencing Impermanence with Ease

by Debra G.

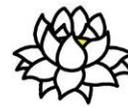
Recently, my husband and I experienced a sudden and dramatic event that forced me to look at our practice, and how we integrate it into our daily lives. It's pretty easy to be mindful when everything is going along just so. We wake up and sit with our tea every morning- starting our day empty as we go off into our little routines. Knowing everything is impermanent, but forgetting that even this, the life we carefully nurtured and built for ourselves could one day be taken from us in an instant. So, our little world was rocked to its core, and we woke up to find ourselves a few months later in a new home, a new job, and a completely foreign way of living. Gone is my Buddhist Sangha, my Spiritual center, and my friends. No busses run along this mountain pass, less than 8 miles from the Canadian border, and forget about internet access or a good mocha! Everything is strange and beautiful and quiet, and my mind wants to say "I miss my life". But, this IS my life, THIS is what we are doing- chopping wood and carrying water and sitting on the floor of our little cabin in the woods that has been my dream for as long as I can remember.

I am listening to the rain on the tin roof as the wood stove keeps us warm, feeling like we were hit by a tornado that plopped us here like Dorothy's house landing in Oz. This is how it happens, not with a whimper but a loud cry, change descends upon us and whisks away our comfortable day to day-ness, forcing us to think about how we cling to our routines, possessions and relationships. What is really important, what do we really need, and what would happen if it was all taken away from us?

"Change is inevitable"- we hear this all the time in the Buddha's teachings. After almost 10 years of studying Buddhist Dharma, meditating and helping others to learn the benefit of this path, when unwanted change came to my world, I cried, I stamped my feet, I curled up in a fetal position and cursed those who brought about the change. But who was I cursing? How many times have I chanted "all formations are impermanent" thinking I understood the meaning behind the words, only to have my years of practice fly out the window when confronted with the true nature of this human life? Even more than death, (which although painful, most of us can understand the necessity of), un-controllable life changes can shake us to our core, and force us to take a good hard look at what we really need to be deeply happy.

Tomorrow we get the U-Haul and go down to pick up our "stuff" out of storage, to sully up our beautifully empty space with our (well, mostly my) junk, and maybe sort out what we really want to bring here and bless others with what we don't. All of those things I surrounded myself with - my artwork, my crafts, my books, my pretty nic naks- are faded in my memory as I learn how easy it is to live without them.

So, what have I gained from this? I know that even in times of hardship, if we can look past our attachments and let go of how we think things should be, we can open ourselves to the beautiful experience of living life in the moment. By understanding our connection with all beings, seeing the importance of allowing others to perform acts of kindness, compassion and generosity and letting go of the illusion of control, we can find beauty in impermanence, grace in acceptance, and joy in the simple act of going with the flow.



(no) END

Read the full version of this article on our website at [www.nwbuddhistrecovery.org/nwbr/living-dharma](http://www.nwbuddhistrecovery.org/nwbr/living-dharma).

**Our Mission Statement:**  
**NORTHWEST BUDDHIST RECOVERY**  
*is dedicated to providing resources for those seeking supplemental support with their recovery from addictive behaviors using traditional Buddhist meditation techniques and study of Buddhist teachings.*

### Contact us:

For information relating to our website, please contact Calico @ [seattlemindfulrecovery@gmail.com](mailto:seattlemindfulrecovery@gmail.com).

For information regarding volunteering contact Debra @ [debra.nwbr@gmail.com](mailto:debra.nwbr@gmail.com).

For information regarding current meeting listings or starting a meeting, contact Rebekah @ [rebekah.nwbr@gmail.com](mailto:rebekah.nwbr@gmail.com)