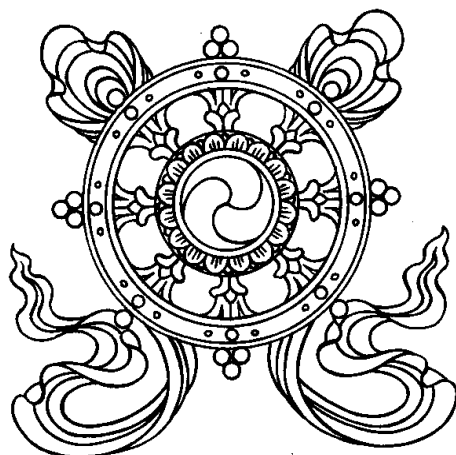


Mondo ZenTM

EGO DECONSTRUCTION KOANS
EMOTIONAL AWARENESS INTERVENTION KOANS

TRAINING MANUAL
2016 VERSION



Deepest gratitude
to all Sangha, Sisters and Brothers,
who have contributed to this Mondo Zen Training Manual.
This has been a collaborative adventure.
Our many voices together
created this Mondo dharma teaching.

*Jun Po Denis Kelly Roshi
Abbot, Hollow Bones Zen*

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***Remember:
Ordinary Mind (Clear Deep Heart/Mind) is the way!***

CONTEXT AND INTRODUCTION

There is a huge amount of unnecessary suffering in the world—unnecessary because it does not arise directly from our life circumstances, but from the conditioned way in which we react to our own memories, stories and beliefs. From the ego’s perspective, emotions such as anger, shame, depression, and anxiety appear to be involuntary and automatic. We seem to be “at the mercy” of these emotions. But, in fact, they are not just emotions, but reactive forms of violence, directed against self and others. Because of our ego confusion, we waste tremendous amounts of time and energy in self-defeating emotional patterns.

In order to alleviate this suffering, we need deeper insight into and understanding of our minds. We need to access our deeper feelings and understand the information contained within our deeper feelings. We need to see through our ego and experience our true nature. We need to meditate long enough and deep enough to experience/realize our *Clear Deep Heart/Mind* (also called Zen, Ch’an, Dhyana and meditative mind). We will then experience the fear, sadness/grief, and concern that underlie all of our habitual, negative emotional reactions. To accomplish this, we need to change our philosophical understanding and experience genuine insight. Once we change our understanding and realize this truth, we will be able to recognize violence expressed as anger, shame, disconnection and other self-defeating patterns as confused immature emotional reactions masking our deeper feelings of fear, sadness and genuine concern. In this way, through the Mondo Zen koan practice, we can transform negative emotional reactions into wise, compassionate responses and alleviate suffering.

Our angst becomes our liberation.

Jun Po Kelly Roshi
Abbott, Hollow Bones Zen

HISTORY

The historical Buddha was a man named Siddhartha Gautama, born in the sixth century BCE. He was an Indian prince who renounced his throne and his wealth to find wisdom and liberation that transcended power, money, or egoic satisfaction, all things he had been handed at birth. He abandoned his family, studied and practiced yoga for eight years, and then asceticism for four more. After twelve years, frustrated with his inability to liberate himself from his own suffering and mental delusion, he sat down in meditation and vowed to stay in meditation until he found the truth. Legend holds he sat for forty days. However long he really sat, it was long enough to awaken from the dream of his own suffering. Siddhartha is remembered with the name “Buddha,” which simply means “awakened one.” He awakened from the dream of a permanent self that had kept him, like so many of us, in bondage. He awakened to discover the deeper truth and cause of our reactive emotional nature. Once he awakened, he founded his own yoga school. He taught the philosophy and practical disciplines that he had used to liberate himself and end his ego suffering. Remarkably, he taught for about fifty years, traveling around northern India teaching with his disciples. The Buddha taught that a new view was essential. He taught that we must first understand these three truths: impermanence, suffering, and selflessness.

Impermanence: When we truly *realize*—understand and embody—*impermanence*, we no longer grasp and cling to that which is eventually going away no matter how tenaciously we cling. This realization brings gratitude as we now fully experience, appreciate and radically accept the ephemeral nature of this life, this very moment, this fleeting gift.

Suffering: One understanding of this truth is that when we truly *realize* that the *pain* we experience in sickness, old age and death is an unavoidable and natural part of living, we come to radical self-acceptance. We no longer try to flee when pain inevitably arises. We work with it. We discover the delightful truth that, while physical discomfort is inevitable, psychological *suffering* is always optional.

Selflessness: When we truly *realize selflessness*, we experience the deeper pure empty nature of our deepest consciousness. We experience our ego’s thinking and feeling as just temporary sensing at the mind’s surface and not as a permanent fixed self. At last we experience genuine insight and know who we really are - Buddha!

These three truths must become realizations, not just philosophical concepts! Not just another book for your coffee table.

Cleaning up our language—Philosophical reorientation

We use the term “ego” to identify all activities of the superficial self-referencing mind – all thoughts, feelings, emotions, and memories, both positive and negative. We consider the ego to be a wholly-

conditioned process or function, an ego structure that arose in infancy, formed in an empty unobstructed mind.

In Mondo Zen practice, we relate to our thoughts and emotions as just another sense, the same as smell, touch, taste, sight and sound. Our emotions have the same function as our other senses; they bring us information.

We have been taught and have chosen to believe that our ego is permanent, and all we really are. But we are not just our thoughts, feelings, memories and emotions. At a deep level, we intuitively know this, and we subsequently long to understand our deeper nature. Evolution has its own mysterious timetable. Now is the time to evolve! Our time!

You sit *there*, I sit *here*. We seem to be two. This temporary experience of a separate self naturally and continually arises. The error in logic causing this is simple – “I think, therefore I am.” But is it possible that “I think, therefore I am” is not deep enough? Is it possible that it is an upside down view? If something arises in my mind, I assume there must be a separate subjective self experiencing what arises. But is it not more accurate to say: “I am, therefore, there is thinking,” since we remain “ourselves” even when no thoughts arise?

Conceptually, it is important to recognize that the ego changes over time; it disappears in deep sleep; it loses the ability to access memory in old age; it can become demented or neurotic, and eventually dies when the body dies.

The problem of ego, this self-maintaining illusion, is that it formed within us before our brains were developed enough to consciously recognize our deeper nature. One way to understand this truth is by going through an ego time regression, going back through time recalling your adolescent, your young child state, then to your infantile state into unconditioned mind, where you experienced only instinctual reactions like hunger and discomfort. Here you had no words, no names, and no signifiers for anything, not even *mama* or *dada*. You are unable to walk or control your bowels. You are *in* a state of mind with no distinction between inside and outside, no self and other. You are just naked consciousness – empty of ego.

Reversing this process, as you grew out of infancy, at some point you became aware of “the world out there,” creating a “self in here.” A temporary construct – *you* – grew at the surface of fundamental empty witnessing awareness, creating the self-illusion. You were conditioned by your culture, by your parents, or whoever reared you, either mimicking or rejecting their patterns. Over time, your preferences and reactions became habitual, memorized and ingrained, as neurological brain structures.

These programmed memories, stories and beliefs, all formed in reaction to your genetic makeup, animal drives, psychological and cultural conditioning. You now live through the beliefs and stories you

remember and continue to believe and then project onto the world. Your ego constantly references and reacts to these memorized patterns. Concentration/meditation practice allows us to actually witness this process, so that you can begin to see where your conditioned, reactive patterns are arising.

It is only because deeper meditative mind – Pure Awareness – exists that ego mind has a place to arise and continue to arise. Ego mind is at the surface of deeper mind. Without a deep pure empty mind, ego cannot arise.

It's important to remember that your temporary ego, this sense of "me" that you have constructed does not need be annihilated and is not "bad." You must develop a strong and healthy ego to function in this world. Liberation comes when we see through the delusion of an ego as a permanent, separate self. In Mondo Zen Practice we deconstruct the ego, re-inform it and reconstruct a new ego that includes the realization of its essential empty nature. Because our ego is a *wholly-conditioned process and not a separate self*, it can and must be *reconditioned* to become liberated. When we experience genuine insight and realize who we truly are we can answer the knock at our door. Knock, knock! Who's there? Nobody!

*I have lived on the lip
of insanity, wanting to know reasons,
knocking on a door. It opens.
I've been knocking from the inside.*

~ Rumi

What is enlightenment? Enlightenment is awakening to the pure consciousness within us that is deeper than our thoughts, emotions or feelings. Enlightenment is experiencing and understanding emotional feelings as information. Enlightenment is the experience of the deep truth of clarity and unconditional loving compassion within the human psyche. Enlightenment is not an experience of angels or devils, heaven or hell, mystical visions, bells and whistles, or subtle lights and sounds. Enlightenment is not a belief or a sustained, transcendent, blissful *experience*. A moment of spiritual bliss is the *beginning*, not the end, of spiritual practice. Experiences come and go. States come and go. Views come and go. Blissfulness comes and goes.

Remember, to continue existing, the ego must continually reference itself – me, me, me, me, me, me, me -- with an ongoing stream of thoughts, feeling and emotions. If you stop this self-referencing, as we are training ourselves to do in concentration meditation practice, you will "die upon your cushion" and discover the truth of emptiness (Shunyata). Do you think you can be reborn without dying?

If you are truly willing to allow for the *possibility* that your deep mind is purely aware, never blinks, never turns away, never reacts and that your emotional feeling, like all of our senses, is actually a process informing consciousness, you have taken a huge step towards liberation.

Why does all this matter? It matters because meditation with an incorrect understanding not only limits our insight but can lead to suppression of feelings, rigid self-identification, ego-inflation, mania, nihilism and spiritual materialism. Having various “spiritual experiences” or “insights” is only the beginning of true and sustained Enlightenment. Having a strong and consistent meditation practice is one of the most important steps you can take to awaken. But knowing exactly *why* you are meditating, having the right philosophical context is just as important.

As Jun Po Roshi says: “*If you have a bad script for your life, fire your scriptwriter! Hire a new one.*” Through this Mondo Zen process you write a new “script.” We call this shift in understanding moving your perspective from egocentric to Buddha-centric, or to be more precise, Buddh-centric (Awareness-centric)!

ABOUT MONDO ZEN

Are you aware that as conceptual beings, the language we use defines - and limits - our experience? We embody our thoughts. At the foundation of our egos lie core beliefs about who we think we are. The language we use in this manual engages a process of philosophical re-education to enlighten a confused ego-view. This new view cannot be merely *understood*. That’s philosophy. It must be experienced. This is what we call *realization*. In this way we experience how a disciplined awakening mind actually thinks and feels. This change in view, as reflected in the language we use, is essential if we are going to interrupt our ego’s immediate, habitual reactivity.

Incorrect philosophical understanding blocks insight and realization. We are trapped. Our beliefs translate and limit our experiences. Put simply, there is a thinking/feeling memory problem that is preventing you from just awakening right now, in this moment.

For this reason, we ask that you temporarily set aside your ideas and beliefs and freely experience what arises without immediately filtering it through a religious or philosophical context. You might consider yourself Christian, Muslim, Jew, Scientific Materialist, Buddhist, Atheist, Hindu, or Wiccan. We ask that you become a temporary agnostic during this practice, to be open to the possibility of discovering a deeper, more encompassing truth in which these contexts arise.

Allow yourself the freedom to *experience directly*. Temporarily surrender any preconceptions you might have about what is *supposed* to happen. Openness (agnosticism or “beginner’s mind”) permits un-programmed experience, unconstrained by previous concepts. During this process we ask that you leave old beliefs at the door with your hat and shoes. You can always pick them up again on the way out, if they still fit!

Mondo Zen Koan Practice

The word “Mondo” translates into English as “the way of dialog.” The word “Zen” we translate as *Clear Deep Heart/Mind* – a knowing of our consciousness deeper than our thinking, feeling and sensing mind. The word “koan” means an enigmatic question designed to bring your rational thinking mind to one point – a question that points to a deeper truth.¹ When we put the words “Mondo Zen Koan Practice” together, we are referring to a dialog practice that uses enigmatic questions to awaken one to *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*, our deepest self, as well as to unconditional compassion.² At first, these concepts and koans may seem confusing to you. Know that they are meant to challenge you, to deconstruct your current philosophy, to induce insight and establish a new philosophical understanding. To answer these koans, you must *realize* the answers, not just have an intellectual or speculative understanding. This experience transforms the ordinary way in which we understand ourselves and our world.

Please know and remember that throughout this Mondo Zen Dialog ***you are your own teacher***. You are led in Mondo to new insight experience, and ***you claim these insights and experiences*** as your new understanding.

No one can do this for you!

¹ ***Facilitator’s Note:*** *Mondo dialog incorporates four divisions of koan study from our Rinzai school: insight, spontaneity, verbal articulation and precept koans. Our emotional koans are an addition to the traditional precept koans. During this dialog, confused answers to koans must be challenged to be sure there is correct understanding.*

² ***Facilitator’s Note:*** *The Mondo Zen dialog practice works like this: (1) We help to deconstruct the participant’s current philosophical view, which leads to insight, (2) Standing within this insight, they can see how they have been blocking realization of their true nature by holding a confused, illusory and ignorant view, (3) This insight transforms their understanding of the nature of our mind, (4) With this experience confirmed as their foundational perspective, they construct and choose a new, liberating philosophy, and (5) They then, through their emotional koan practice, integrate this new understanding into their everyday lives.*

In the Buddhist tradition, we refer to this sharing of an insightful conscious state as “transmission.” The truth is that this teaching transmission travels in both directions—from student to facilitator as much as from facilitator to student.³ Let us now take our first step together!

“Virtuous Ones, do not use your minds mistakenly. The great sea does not need more dead bodies... You yourself raise the obstructions that impede your minds. When the sky above has no clouds, the bright heavens shine everywhere.”

~ Master Rinzai

³ **Facilitator’s Note:** *It is important to recognize and remember that the Mondo Zen process is a full, heart-mind collaboration between “student” and “facilitator.” The facilitator will need to remain deeply grounded and present in Clear Deep Heart/Mind. From Clear Deep Heart/Mind, the facilitator invites the participant to join in and remain in this state of clarity throughout the dialog. A vital function of the facilitator is to transmit the state we are investigating and hold the integrity of the container, keeping everyone from getting lost in philosophical chatter or attempting to do therapy. **Do not do any therapy!** Do not wander off into shadow work, voice dialog, etc. The koan process is distinct from all these approaches. **The koan process is an awareness practice.** Also, as facilitator, be sure to monitor your teaching skills using the TRUCK method: Did you **Transmit** the koan? Did they experience **Realization** (insight)? Did they **Understand**? Did they **Claim** this understanding by articulating it? If so, you both **Know!***

THE KOAN PROCESS, PART I:

MONDO ZEN

EGO DECONSTRUCTION/RECONSTRUCTION KOANS

A ZEN TRANSMISSION

An ego insists upon its view. It must. This is how it preserves its identity. We live through the story we remember, continue to believe and project into the world. It is important to understand that, at a very deep level, there is a part of us that is absolutely afraid to change our stories, and we will resist change even while we believe we want it. How many times have you set out to change your life only to find some subconscious, shadow part of you resisting and sabotaging what you have declared you want?

Have you suffered enough? Are you finally willing to change your mind?

To our ego, this is simply a matter of survival. What precious part of us are we truly willing to let die? How can we surrender who we think and believe we are? When will we finally be willing to die, to be reborn, to update and enlighten our stories, dramas, traumas, our roles as victim or villain, hero or heroine? ***Here we are.*** Realize that this may very well be your time to awaken more fully from the confining dream of ego-as-a-permanent-self!

Absolute Commitment – Open, Honest and Vulnerable⁴

To move forward, we need at least temporary permission from the part of you that makes decisions, that part of you who decided, for example, to engage in this very process. We need permission from the “you” who decides what information to let in and what information to reject, for example, what you like or dislike (food, music, poetry, who to love, etc.) This is a dialog that can change your life but only if you allow it.

Are you willing to enter this dialog?

For this to work, we must agree to make a commitment!

“As your facilitator, I am willing to make this commitment.”

Are you willing to commit to being open, honest, and vulnerable?

⁴ ***Facilitator’s Note:*** *Speak directly to the person – call them by their name – “Can we have a life or death commitment?”*

Our ego's great fear is that we will lose control of our emotions, our sense of self, our body or our life. This fear of letting go is perfectly understandable and perfectly sane. But it also, unfortunately, prevents you from experiencing things as they actually are. You are probably suspicious of this very process and insist upon holding onto what you believe. Do you have a sense of this?

Our Mondo dialog requires a mutual agreement to complete honesty, vulnerability, and openness. In order for Mondo to be effective, you must be willing to engage the koan questions fearlessly and completely. Are you **willing** to engage in this? Are you willing to stay right here, engaged, taking all of this in and speaking out if you don't understand or if you have a concern? To be willing, you must have volition (you must choose), and you must also be willing to let go of your current perspective to try on a new perspective.

We recognize, respect and honor your ego and invite your ego to partner with us in taking on a broader outlook and a more inclusive liberating vision.

Concentration/Meditation

We will begin our Mondo dialog koan process by listening to the sound of a ringing bell and repeating the word "Listen." With each in-breath, silently recite the word *listen*. **Listen more deeply than you ever have listened.** Every time the bell is struck, follow the sound of the bell into absolute silence.⁵ With each out-breath, silently with passion recite the word *listen*. Throughout our dialog, remain aware of and connected to this deeper listening. With each in-breath, draw deeper into pure silence. With each out-breath, bring this consciousness forward. Listen from and as perfect silence.⁶

⁵ **Facilitator's Note:** *At any point in this process, when you (or they) lose deeper awareness or become overly conceptual, emotionally distracted, or tongue-tied, remember to stop the dialog and ring the bell to drop in. When you give instruction and sit in silence, transmit the state of deep listening. Do not just mouth the words. Maintain clear eye contact throughout this dialog.*

⁶ **Facilitator's Note:** *We begin the Mondo Zen dialog with guided concentration/meditation. In our tradition, meditation has three parts. First, we concentrate the mind on one point (Dharana). When we achieve this perfect, one-pointed concentration, we realize Dhyana mind, our deep meditative mind in which, at the surface, concentration is taking place. When we experience, realize, understand, and claim this depth of mind, we smile. We finally transcend, see through our ego and experience genuine insight and freedom. This realization brings compassion, and unreasonable enjoyment (Samadhi). We could use any of our senses (we include thinking and feeling as senses) to concentrate our mind. In this case, we use the sound of the bell and the word "listen."*

Facilitator: Ring the bell, sit two minutes in silence and then read:

Master Lao Tzu says:

Empty your mind of all thoughts.
Let your heart be at peace.
Watch the turmoil of beings,
but contemplate their return.

Each separate being in the universe
returns to this common source.
Returning to the source is serenity.

If you don't realize this source,
you stumble in confusion and sorrow.
When you realize where you come from,
you naturally become tolerant,
disinterested, amused,
kindhearted as a grandmother,
dignified as a king. (*Emotionally liberated*)

Immersed in the wonder of the Tao (*Now*),
you can deal with whatever life brings you,
and when death comes, you are ready.

Now may I have permission to talk with the “you” who is absolutely resistant to change, the one who is humoring me right now? Will you open up and allow a shift in your understanding?⁷

Now may be your time to awaken! Know that your ego won't be asked to go away but to expand and experience a more enlightened view. (You'll get more cookies!)

The Buddha said: “Do not trust teachers, teachings or institutions. Trust only that which is true in your own experience” (see the *Kalama Sutra*). We invite you to experience this truth for yourself by

⁷ ***Facilitator's Note:*** *If they say no, or seem reluctant, find out what they would need to commit. One way is to ask them to speak up if, at any point, they are in disagreement with what's being said, don't understand, or are humoring you. You can always remind them at any point in this process that they have agreed to be “open, honest, and vulnerable.” Remind them of this, and ask them if they are still committed to it.*

temporarily giving up all of your limiting beliefs, ideas and concepts. Embrace Beginner's Mind and discover what this truth can mean for you as we investigate these koans together.

Facilitator: Ring the bell, sit two minutes in silence and then read:

First Koan: Is it possible to just purely listen? Can you listen without an opinion?⁸

You have listened as deeply as you can to the ringing sound of this bell. Reflect and connect to this depth of listening. Is it possible to listen with no agenda, no opinion?⁹ Is there a depth of just pure listening? Is your mind deeper than the thought, "listen"? Is there a deeper listening than the sense of "I am listening"? Is this mind deeper and more spacious than what arises within it?¹⁰ Is this mind deeper than the sensations, thoughts and emotional feelings that are experienced within it? Is there pure un-opinionated listening?

Explanation: With this koan we realize, identify and claim this awareness that transcends whatever is arising within this awareness, this Clear Deep Mind.

We prevent realization of ever-present, selfless Clear Deep Mind – this Pure Listening - by having an incorrect philosophical understanding, using confused language, persisting in an immature psychology and not going deep enough meditating. Once we change our understanding and have this realization experience, we have begun to Awaken. This may be your first point of realization of Clear Deep Mind or a ripening of seeds already growing. This un-opinionated listening is Pure Awareness, also called Dhyana, Meditative Mind and Zen mind. **Understand the difference between conceptual listening and meditative listening.** With this koan realization, we directly experience pure awareness for ourselves.

Enough, these few words are enough!
If not these words, this breath!
If not this breath, this sitting here!
This opening to life we have refused again and again, until now!
Until now!

~ *David Whyte*

⁸ **Facilitator's Note:** *Their first answers to these koans may be intellectual. That is ok. If answers seem more thought than felt, have the participant slow way down to (hopefully) experience this deeper listening.*

⁹ **Facilitator's Note:** *If they do not have the experience of this deeper listening, ask them if it is at least philosophically possible that there could be un-opinionated awareness within us. Can they accept this as a possibility and move on? The rest of the koans will help bring deeper experience.*

¹⁰ **Facilitator's Note:** *If they are having difficulty, ring the bell and instruct them try to stop the sound from going deeper than their relative mind. "Go on – stop the sound. Try really, really hard – stop the sound. Keep it out." Whether your ego likes it or not, the sound is penetrating right through your ego mind into silence.*

Facilitator: Ring the bell, sit two minutes in silence and then read:

Second Koan: Where is this deeper listening located within your body?

Slow waaay down! Listen deeply, scan your physical body. Where is the center, the locus of this deepest awareness within you? Point to or touch this center of listening.¹¹

Describe the qualitative difference in feeling – both physically and psychologically – between surface ego/head listening (“overstanding”) and deep heart/embodied listening (“understanding”).

Explanation: It is very enlightening to discover that most people respond to this question by pointing to their heart.¹² When we ask where the ego listening is, they point to their heads. After experiencing the clarity of pure awareness, we now add the word “Heart” to Clear Deep Mind. We acknowledge deeper listening from *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*.

Now you have located and identified this deeper awareness, this unity of clarity (wisdom) and caring (compassion), this *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*. For the rest of this process, listen and respond from this deeper awareness. Keep your *Clear Deep Heart/Mind* open.

Master Bassui says:

Who is hearing?
Your physical being doesn't hear,
nor does the void.
Then what does?
Strive to find out.
Put aside your rational Intellect,
Give up all techniques.
Just get rid of the notion of self.

¹¹ **Facilitator's Note:** Most people locate deeper listening at their heart. If they do not feel the sound in their heart, invite them to breathe the sensation into their heart to see if they can feel any difference. Ask them to listen with their heart as a felt-experience. It is not absolutely necessary for them to feel the sound in their heart. If they cannot feel it in their hearts, let them work within their own experience. If they cannot listen from their heart, take their “heart” to wherever their particular locus is. What is most essential is to feel and understand the difference between ego listening (“head listening” or “overstanding”) and deeper listening (“heart listening” or “understanding”). We can literally listen with our hearts, not just as a mental concept but as a felt reality.

¹² **Facilitator's Note:** With this koan, we learn to associate a physical location with Clear Deep Heart/Mind. Locating this physical location establishes the physical reality of Clear Deep Heart/Mind.

Facilitator: Ring the bell, sit two minutes in silence and then read:

Third Koan: Who are you, who am I, who are we, within this deep, heartfelt listening?¹³

This koan reveals our ego confusion, our disconnection from our deeper self. At this depth of mind, we do not know who we are. At this depth, we are *nakedly aware* and *silent*, not opinionated. We are simply Pure Witnessing Awareness. Pure Witnessing Awareness doesn't know anything! In not-knowing, there are infinite possibilities. We are finally getting nowhere! Has listening ever spoken, ever said anything? Pure Listening has never spoken! From the ego's perspective, not-knowing is scary. From Clear Deep Heart/Mind, it is simply the Truth, the root of unbounded, peaceful freedom. From this depth, you are simply "not-knowing." Paradoxically, when you finally realize that this depth of mind has never spoken, there will be much for the ego to say.

At this depth of mind, the answer is: "I don't know."

Explanation: You are not just your thoughts, feelings and emotions, which means your ego doesn't know what it is — and has been running from this insight your whole life.

*No eye can see It, no ear can hear It – then by what name can It be called?
The man of old said, "To speak about a thing is to miss the mark."*

~ Master Rinzai

Facilitator: Ring the bell, sit two minutes in silence and then read:

¹³ **Facilitator's Note:** *The only valid answer is, "I don't know." They may need coaching to get to this answer. If necessary, let them answer incorrectly several times. They will always answer with a thought, feeling, story, or sensation. For example, if they answer with "love" or "bliss," simply remind them that these are feelings that come and go, not the fundamental truth of who they are. Invite them to listen more deeply. Even if they respond with a seemingly correct answer such as "pure awareness" or "emptiness," remember that their expression is "a finger pointing at the moon," but we also need the moonlight. They may be coming from conceptual ego, evaluative mind, and not connected with this state of consciousness. For example, if they say "I am pure awareness" with an emphasis on the "I," they are likely coming solely from conceptual ego mind. Always remember, we are looking for the state of consciousness that is underneath the spoken words! They must be speaking from the realization, through the ego and not just from the idea of the realization. If they do not arrive at "I don't know" on their own, suggest that, at this depth, perhaps they do not know who they are. When they admit this, agree with them: "At this depth, I don't know either. Finally, we're getting nowhere!"*

Fourth Koan: What is the difference between “I Don’t Know” and “Not Knowing”?¹⁴

“Who are you?” I will ask you this several times. First, answer, claim and say “I don’t know” speculating from your ego, your head (overstanding). Emphasize the word “I” when you answer. Raise your open hand then clench a fist as you answer, to embody this answer. Feel the contraction in your physical body and psyche.

Now, get in touch with *Clear Deep Heart/Mind* – with the part of you that was, just a moment ago, listening without an opinion.

Now when I ask you “who are you?” remove the pronoun “I”! Claim and reveal the embodied state of not-knowing, of empty not-knowing-being. Drop any ego identification with the pronoun “I” and say “not-knowing” while staying connected with and speaking from *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*. Open your fist as you answer from your heart, saying “not knowing.”¹⁵

Now, this time when I ask you “who are you?” alternate your answers between “I don’t know” (clenching fist) and “not knowing” (opening fist). We will do this several times.

Can you feel the opening and relaxation within your body and psyche when moving from your ego to *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*? Now describe the difference in your physical and emotional experience when you respond from these two locations.

¹⁴ **Facilitator’s Note:** Ask them “who are you?” several times. The first few times they should answer “I don’t know” from their heads (overstanding) and clench their fist. The next few times they should answer “not knowing” while connected to *Clear Deep Heart/Mind* and opening their fist. Finally, ask them “who are you?” and have them alternate between the two answers, feeling the difference between ego contraction and the open receptivity of *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*. As facilitator, you are looking for an opening and relaxation within their body and mind. See if you can observe the difference between “not knowing,” speaking through their ego, versus speaking merely from the opinionated and value-weighted ego.

¹⁵ **Facilitator’s Note:** From your position of close rapport, notice how the person says this. If they are still exclusively in their head, but saying the words “not knowing,” you should be able to feel their ego contraction and sense their concern to get it right. If the answer is really coming from *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*, there will be a clarity and confidence that you can see, feel and hear. Oftentimes they will lean towards you if they are in *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*. If in a group, ask the others in attendance to report their own experience of sensing and sharing the participant’s expression of *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*. With sensitivity and humor, ask the group, “Do they feel this? Do they believe you are connected and speaking from this depth?” Remember, you must demonstrate this experience and transmit this state.

Explanation: This koan realization allows you to experience the visceral difference between the intellectual process of *knowing* versus the pure receptivity of *being*. From this depth of awareness, to say either “I do know” or “I don’t know” are the same, just relative dualistic thoughts and statements. In time, and with enough practice, we eventually experience and integrate these two locations, the head and heart, as one locus. We now can have the amazing experience of actually speaking through our ego, connected with *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*. In *not knowing* there is freedom and infinite possibility.

Master Rumi says:

Not Christian or Jew or Muslim, not Hindu,
Buddhist, Sufi, or Zen. Not any religion

or cultural system. I am not from the East
or the West, not out of the ocean or up

from the ground, not natural or ethereal, not
composed of elements at all. I do not exist,

am not an entity in this world or in the next,
did not descend from Adam and Eve or any

origin story. My place is placeless, a trace
of the traceless. Neither body nor soul.

I belong to the Beloved, have seen the two
worlds as one and this one call to and know,

first, last, outer, inner, only this
breath breathing human being.

~

There is a way between voice and presence where information flows.
In disciplined silence *this* opens. With wandering talk *this* closes.

Facilitator: Ring the bell, sit two minutes in silence and then read:

Fifth Koan: What are you like, what are we like, at this depth of consciousness?

Describe our mind at this depth. Drop into this depth of awareness, this purity. Describe this depth with single words, signifiers, adjectives. When answering, do not describe what arises and falls away within your consciousness—what you think or feel.¹⁶ Remember: things that come and go are not *This!* Describe and present *This* state of *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*.¹⁷ Use simple words and reveal/present this state of “not-knowing.”

May I lead you with a few questions that address other important signifiers? Are we time-bound here? Are we irritated here, no matter what may be going on out there? Are we constricted here? Do you *have* awareness, or *are* you awareness itself? Are we afraid here? Are we angry here? Are we noisy here? Are we aware here? Are we aware with an opinion or just purely aware?

In describing this depth of consciousness, we accept and require the following terms or synonyms: **silent, vast, timeless, empty, fearless, imperturbable, aware, peaceful, still, eternal.**¹⁸ These words describe this state of awareness, not what arises within this awareness. This awareness is Dhyana.

Do you realize that within this koan realization, you are claiming your fearless compassionate heart? This deep heart within each of us can never be broken. Your ego thought that this heart could be broken. This heart opens infinitely and compassionately to the pain of this world. It is critical that you experience this. This heart does not deny feeling. This heart does not close down or turn away from

¹⁶ **Facilitator's Note:** *As facilitator, you are looking for them to describe their immediate experience. What is this depth of mind like? Not what arises in this depth of mind. This can be tricky. For example, sometimes people will answer with a word like “love.” If this occurs, you can explore this answer with them to discover whether they are talking about the emotion, love, or if they’re really experiencing the deep selfless, unconditional compassion that arises right out of emptiness. Either way, invite them to go deeper.*

¹⁷ **Facilitator's Note:** *When they say a word like “silent,” slow way down, lean in and ask them, “How silent?” Remember, as facilitator, you must transmit these subtle realizations. For example, when you say “silent,” everything within you comes to rest. When you say “fearless,” you are compassion embodied. Once they start to experience and understand awareness at this depth, ask them: “Do thoughts and feelings disturb this depth of mind? In truth they have never disturbed, this deep clarity of our mind.” Remember to ask them to articulate their new understanding at moments of insight. Have them repeat their chosen words and feel the connection to this state. Do this several times. Remind them that they can remain aware of this ever-present Clear Deep Heart/Mind.*

¹⁸ **Facilitator's Note:** *These descriptors are accurate state descriptors of deeper awareness within our mind that cannot be violated. In other words, the words they choose must accurately describe a state of deep awareness that cannot be violated, divided, qualified, or quantified. For example, you cannot violate, divide, or quantify silent, vast, timeless, empty, fearless, etc.*

the pain in your life, nor does it neurotically drag it around weeping. From here, compassionate intelligence overrules emotional reactivity.

Understand that within this depth of mind, you are **just aware**, not aware *with an opinion*. To be *opinionated* is an ego view. To be **just aware** is to be in empty/selfless mind. Do you realize that within this insight you are describing a Buddha, an Awakened One, and claiming your deeper consciousness?

Explanation: This koan realization establishes words, injunctions, signifiers that directly point to and call forth *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*. We are learning through experience that we can speak using our in-the-world ego while staying aware of and being informed by *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*.

Quietness
By Master Rumi

Inside this new love, die.
Your way begins on the other side.
Become the sky.
Take an axe to the prison wall.
Escape.
Walk out like someone suddenly born into color.
Do this now.
You're covered with thick clouds.
Slide out the side. Die,
and be quiet. Quietness is the surest sign
that you've died.
Your old life was a frantic running
from silence.
The speechless full moon
comes out now.
Do this now.

Facilitator: Ring the bell, sit two minutes in silence and then read:

Sixth Koan: Express your new insight with a silent gesture of embodied consciousness.

Now silently through your eyes and with a body gesture, show me: “Who are you?”

Express your new insight with a silent expression of embodied consciousness. Use your body and especially your eyes to express this understanding in a non-verbal way. It can be a small gesture or something more dramatic. Move spontaneously, informed by *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*, expressing through your ego but not exclusively from it.

Now, once again, demonstrate this depth of realization, with and through your body. “Who are you?” Show me.¹⁹

Explanation: With this koan realization, you realize you can be awake and connected to the deeper truth of pure awareness (*Clear Deep Heart/Mind*) while engaging, seeing and moving the body. Awareness is embodied!

Facilitator: Ring the bell, sit two minutes in silence and then read:

Seventh Koan: Choose a signifier and then your name to recall Clear Deep Heart/Mind. Respond as this awareness.²⁰

First, pick one of the descriptors that we used to describe this Mind (e.g., vast, silent, empty, still, etc.). Pick the descriptor that most resonates with you.

I will now call to you as that name.²¹ Respond from *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*. This time respond using words, including the expression through your eyes and your chosen physical gesture.

¹⁹ **Facilitator’s Note:** As facilitator, you will see that they have “gotten it” in their eyes, when you see pure awareness, a depth of awareness, infinity, staring back at you. There will be a release of the contraction, the barrier that someone has when their ego is active. You’ll feel resonance with this Awakened Mind, this single expression of awareness. They will move spontaneously – a spontaneous expression of insight. Oftentimes, they’ll lean in, their eyes will sparkle or get bright, and a smile and look of playfulness will come to their faces. Remember, being awake is playful, fun, light, and deeply, deeply curious! If they are not embodying this depth of awareness, demonstrate for them with your own embodied gesture, but don’t rush it. Remember, you transmit, transmit, transmit!

²⁰ **Facilitator’s Note:** Ask them to select one of the signifiers: silent, vast, timeless, empty, fearless, imperturbable, aware, peaceful, still, eternal.

²¹ **Facilitator’s Note:** If they choose the name “Vast,” you say, “Hey, Vast!” Look for them to respond from Clear Deep Heart/Mind. Oftentimes, they will lean in. Look for their body to open. Look to their eyes for confirmation. Don’t be afraid to be playful and fun in this koan. For instance, you can ask them, “How Vast?”

Wouldn't it be transformational to have your given name, your common name, evoke *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*?²²

I will now call to your given name. Respond from *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*.

Now that you have had the experience and have words (signifiers) that connect to this depth of consciousness, you can use these signifiers, including your own name, to access and recall *this* mind.

Next, call to yourself using your given name and respond from *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*. Do this several times. Respond using words, the expression through your eyes, and your chosen physical gesture.

Imagine how helpful it will be to respond to your given name from this fearless depth? Who shows up when you respond (vastness, fearlessness, silence, timelessness, Buddha)? Before you can react, you must stay awake and clearly discern what is actually happening.

Explanation: With this koan realization, we have established a pathway and vehicle to access our *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*. After experiencing, defining, and naming this state of consciousness, we have established a pathway to access this state of consciousness. We can train our egos to call forth *Clear Deep Heart/Mind* in the thick of life when it matters most. Remember, your ego is a wholly-conditioned process, which means it can be *re-conditioned*. Anytime someone calls your name, you can touch your true deep nature. Your name is now being used in service of the process of Awakening!

*Every day Master Zuigan used to call to himself, "Master!" and would answer, "Yes!"
Again, he would call, "Stay awake! Stay awake!" and he would answer, "Yes! Yes!"
"Don't be deceived by others, any day or any time."
"No! No!"*

~ Mumonkan CASE 12: Zuigan Calls Himself "Master"

Facilitator: Ring the bell, sit two minutes in silence and then read:

²² **Facilitator's Note:** Whenever they hear their given name (e.g., "hey, Jane!") they can choose to enter Clear Deep Heart/Mind. Their given name can now become a signifier to access Clear Deep Heart/Mind. Know that all verbal response comes through the ego, but in this case, it will be transformed – consciously informed by Clear Deep Heart/Mind.

Eighth Koan: Does this Clear Deep Heart/Mind come and go?²³

Who comes and goes? Get in touch with your deepest Self. Feel this *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*, this openheartedness, in your body. Does *this* come and go?

No. *Clear Deep Heart/Mind* does not come and go.

Any doubts?

Consider this: If we were to regress back down the timeline to our infantile, unconditioned state of mind, we would realize and remember a pure unconditioned awareness with no ego story, no words, no language, no inside, no outside, no self, no other. When, from a mature perspective, we awaken to this depth of mind, we discover ***this is our Buddha mind***. Claim your awakening!

“You”—your sensing, feeling, thinking ego—comes and goes. Your ego awareness of this depth of mind comes and goes. It is good to remember that your ego vanishes every night when you enter deep, dreamless sleep, and reappears when you wake up in the morning. When you die, whatever may or may not persist, your sensing, feeling, thinking ego will cease. All sensing, including thought and feeling experienced through physical form will dissolve and return into emptiness.

Wherever there is sentience (the ability to perceive, think or feel) there is *This* consciousness. Mental forms cannot arise without empty awareness of mind in which they arise. Feel into this. Do you understand this, experience this, realize this? This *Clear Deep Heart/Mind* does not—cannot—come or go.

Dhyana mind has no eyelids, never blinks, never sleeps, never turns away. Wherever you are, no matter what is arising within you, this awake, silent, empty, fearless *Clear Deep Heart/Mind* is always here. Do you recognize that in owning this truth you now can claim your freedom? Do you understand the significance of this truth in your life? Ask your scriptwriter: “Are you willing to remember this and add this realization to your story?” Claim your Awakening!

Explanation: With this koan realization, we claim and stabilize our insight. Clearly articulating this insight and philosophical understanding, we are no longer bound to deny this imperturbable presence. Within this realization, we experience that nothing can destabilize, frighten or overwhelm our conscious awareness. Our ego remains intact and still functions but can now be re-educated and transformed. We now know this depth of consciousness.

²³ **Facilitator’s Note:** *From the ego’s perspective, Clear Deep Heart/Mind appears to come and go. But, in reality, it is the ego’s awareness of this depth of mind that comes and goes. For many of us, it is very difficult to admit that our ego view – the way we have been living our lives – is entirely and utterly illusory, transitory. This koan is the beginning of a fundamental shift in understanding and is what the spiritual masters have been telling us, throughout all of the ages, over and over again. An ego can be informed and transformed by Clear Deep Heart/Mind realization.*

One instant is eternity;
eternity is the now.
When you see through this one instant,
you see through the one who sees.

~ Wu-Men

Facilitator: Ring the bell, sit two minutes in silence and then read:

Ninth Koan: How do you know that Clear Deep Heart/Mind is Real?

You now *know* from the **experience** of insight that this depth of consciousness is here. Are you sure? Have you just experienced this insight? Are you **absolutely** certain?

Of course, Clear Deep Heart Mind is real because it is here, now! You have just had this insight! You are the one who located deeper, compassionate listening within your body. You are the one who described what we are like at this depth. You expressed your insight with a silent gesture of embodied consciousness. You know this truth within your own experience. You know *Clear Deep Heart/Mind* to be real.

Explanation: This koan realization establishes an important truth: Enlightenment is real and we can only know this inside of our own, immediate experience.

I went everywhere with longing
in my eyes, until here
in my own house
I felt truth
filling my sight.

~Lalla

Facilitator: Ring the bell, sit two minutes in silence and then read:

Tenth Koan: What must you do to bring this realization forth right now and at any time in your daily life?

Remember *This*. Claim *This*. Choose *This*.

First, you must remember this truth. You – your ego – must **claim** this understanding. You claim your own insight! You—only you!—must **choose** to live this truth. *You* must develop genuine insight. *You* must release your attachment to, and change your understanding of, the nature and structure of *your* temporary ego. Only you can take your seat. It will not be given to you. Only when you choose to live this way, with absolute resolve, will this Awakening manifest and bring meaning to your life.²⁴

Explanation: You must *choose* to live in this truth. We choose our new seat in insightful understanding, knowing and claiming the ego as just a temporary wholly-conditioned figment of imagination at the surface of our aware being. How amazing! The ego can *choose* to become less self-absorbed! The ego can become conscious of its own conditioning! The ego can accept that it is not permanent or separate. Therefore, it can choose to take a seat in Dhyana, pure compassionate awareness and be informed from *this* mind. Recognize this choice. Ego is then informed by and transformed by spiritual insight and experience. This is a philosophical reorientation, a huge change in understanding, a kind of death and rebirth, a transformation. Are you willing to choose this path right now?²⁵

Facilitator: Ring the bell, sit two minutes in silence and then read:

***Eleventh Koan: What feeling arises when you actually experience this insight and understanding?*²⁶**

The integration of genuine insight requires both will and surrender. Awakening includes a willing surrender of ego and willful presentation of insight and new understanding. With genuine insight and

²⁴ **Facilitator's Note:** *We must make a choice to awaken. Be wary of any hint of the highly sophisticated victim mentality, where we passively sit around and wait for the day awakening comes. At the end of the day, after we have had this insight experience, we must make the additional choice to live in this truth. Eventually, with enough practice, we automatically respond from this awareness.*

²⁵ **Facilitator's Note:** *Many people struggle with the idea of having to choose this reality. If this happens, ask them to choose based on their own insight experience. When they are in agreement, ask them, "Any doubts?" If they have doubts, explain that this is their ego's escape clause. Be ready to challenge them dramatically and playfully.*

²⁶ **Facilitator's Note:** *Some people have a difficult time answering this question with a feeling. If that happens, ask them to rate their feeling on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being "lousy" and 10 being "delightful."*

correct understanding, a sense of radical self-acceptance and compassionate equanimity becomes constant.

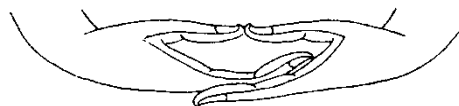
Explanation: This realization can induce divine laughter. This is the joy and bliss of Samadhi, seeing not exclusively *from* the ego but *through* your newly-informed ego. Within this koan realization, you finally “get the joke” and feel the stability of *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*, the unconditional love—the compassion—that is always right here. This good feeling is Samadhi!²⁷ Through this recognition, you identify and claim your freedom and insight. Eventually, with enough meditation and emotional koan practice, this state of freedom and enjoyment becomes constant, no more coming and going.

*Ten thousand flowers in spring, the moon in autumn,
A cool breeze in summer, snow in winter.
If your mind isn't clouded by unnecessary things,
This is the best season of your life.*

~ Wu-Men

The truth is that this Heart can never be broken.

~ Jun Po Roshi



²⁷ **Facilitator's Note:** *Samadhi is Unreasonable Enjoyment, not caused by anything other than the realization of Clear Deep Heart/Mind. Relative happiness is conditional and therefore transient. Samadhi is unconditional happiness that is boundless. Samadhi is experiencing and radically accepting the gift of life, all of it, the so-called “good” as well as the so-called “bad.” True happiness is all-inclusive and does not rely on external circumstances. It is a state of awareness that transcends and includes relative happiness and unhappiness.*

Articulate Your Understanding: Review the Koans

1. Is it possible to just purely listen? Can you listen without an opinion?
2. Where is this deeper listening located within your body?
3. Who are you, who am I, who are we, within this deep, heartfelt listening?
4. What is the difference between “I Don’t Know” and “Not Knowing”?
5. What are you like, what are we like, at this depth of consciousness?
6. Express your new insight with a silent gesture of embodied consciousness.
7. Choose a signifier and then your name to recall *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*. Respond as this awareness.
8. Does this *Clear Deep Heart/Mind* come and go?
9. How do you know that *Clear Deep Heart/Mind* is real?
10. What must you do to bring this realization forth right now and at any time in your daily life?
11. What feeling arises when you actually experience this insight and understanding?

Check in for new understanding

Now, please, slowly and carefully articulate what you have realized. What have you learned? What is new in your understanding? How will this realization help you? Be sure you recognize and own the significance of this exercise.²⁸

You have just confirmed how this new koan understanding has changed your view. Do you realize that you have access to this freedom all the time? Do you choose to enrich your view? Will you add this new experience and understanding to your tool box? Will you remember this reality and what you’ve just experienced?

²⁸ **Facilitator’s Note:** *If you are working with someone who is in their head or getting philosophical, let them explain at their own pace. Once they’re finished, ask them for a bumper sticker take-away. What is one phrase they could use to remind them of this experience and insight? You can then remind them of this phrase in the second half of the Mondo Process.*

For most of us, just a moment of insight is not enough to accomplish lasting transformation. We must first, clearly understand and change our philosophy; second, construct emotional koans; and third, actually embody these koans in our daily lives. The most important part of Mondo Zen practice is for you to take your koans out into the world. This is our Dharma, the practical teaching of the Buddha. In order to fully embody and express awakening in your daily life, it is important for you to be able to communicate and facilitate this Mondo Zen process with others, for both your benefit and theirs. Until you can authentically share this teaching with others, you do not clearly understand your realization. You may not be called to teach this in any formal way, but until you are *capable* of teaching, you will have difficulty owning and living this truth. Learn, share and teach by embodying this Dharma! Live these realizations!

Please know and remember that, to maintain and utilize this understanding, most of us will need a strong and consistent concentration/meditation practice. Through your concentration/meditation practice, you become aware of and cultivate awareness of your deeper mind, develop the ability to remain non-reactive in the face of threat or insult, and have time to stop unconsciously reacting and consciously respond.

Ten Thousand Idiots

By Master Hafiz

It is always a danger
To aspirants
On the
Path

When they begin
To believe and
Act

As if the ten thousand idiots
Who so long ruled
And lived
Inside

Have all packed their bags
And skipped town
Or
Died.

Facilitator: Ring the bell, sit two minutes in silence and then read:

THE KOAN PROCESS, PART II:

MONDO ZEN

EMOTIONAL AWARENESS INTERVENTION KOANS

A ZEN TRANSMISSION

Meditation in Action

When you have cut through the surface noise – the sensations, feelings, thoughts, stories and self-referencing streams of ego, this is *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*. When you have penetrated into your deepest truth and directly experienced vast, empty, silent awareness, this is *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*. This naked awareness is pure, clear mind unadorned by emotions, thoughts, stories, or beliefs. From this clarity, you see what is happening without any emotional and conceptual filters.

The second part of our Mondo Zen protocol is designed to allow us to recognize, enlighten and transform our habitual destructive emotional reactions into conscious compassionate responses. A well-trained Zen student's life is an expression of the marriage of wisdom (clear discernment) and compassion (unconditional love). Wisdom, the ability to remain present and aware in *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*, is only half of the work. To complete the work, to embody compassion, we must change our philosophical understanding of the nature and function of feelings and emotions and act from this new understanding.

In Mondo Zen, we consider feeling to be no different than our other senses. With meditative insight, feeling is experienced as sensing that brings information, no different in function than seeing, hearing, smelling, touching and tasting. From this depth of witnessing, a strong feeling is no different than a bright color or loud sound. It is essential that we recognize and understand this. Consider the freedom of relating to feeling in the same way that we relate to our other senses.

Feeling is information. In order to consciously respond rather than habitually react, it is essential that we experience and get the information within our feelings – those deeper feelings that lie underneath our habitual emotional reactions. From this clarity, we can see that the deeper emotions of fear, sadness and care lie beneath the reactive emotional patterns of anger, shame and disconnection. With enough insight, we realize that reactively emoting creates unnecessary suffering. Through emotional koan practice, we consciously choose intelligent, compassionate responses to our deeper feelings instead of unconscious, defensive and counterproductive habitual emotional reactions.

To transform our habitual reactions, we must change our understanding, and through meditation training, develop the ability to remain AWAKE in the face of perceived insult or danger, and even intense pain (both physical and emotional). This allows us to slow down and experience the entire cognitive emotional process, including the deeper feelings of fear, sadness and care. Once we experience these deeper feelings and understand the information they are providing, reactions like anger, shame, disconnection, jealousy and envy become wonderful opportunities to awaken. In this way, *our angst becomes our liberation!*

An ego *insists* upon its view. It must. We live through the stories we remember, continue to believe, and then project onto the world – the *hysterical-historical*. We don't realize that we are unconsciously, habitually reacting.

Are you finally, now, today, right here, willing to change your mind? Would you like to awaken and have a more conscious relationship with your feelings and emotions?

Zen practice in the midst of activity is a million times superior to that pursued in silence.

~ *Master Ta Hui*

Facilitator: Ring the bell, sit two minutes in silence and then read:

Twelfth Koan: Has anyone or anything ever made you angry, shamed you or made you disconnect, shut down?

No one can make you angry, shame you, or make you disconnect, shut down. Your emotional reactivity is not *caused* by anyone or anything else – even if it is *triggered* by them, **you** can choose to live in freedom or choose to live in reactive emotional patterns. You **choose** your habitual, emotional reactive patterns. Of course, this choice is very difficult to see.

You have confirmed for yourself that Clear Deep Heart/Mind is real and accessible, that Clear Deep Heart/Mind does not come and go, that Clear Deep Heart/Mind cannot be disturbed, and that it is possible to stay consciously present (Awake) in the face of anything that arises. Knowing this truth, how can anyone or anything ever make you angry, shame you, or make you disconnect, shut down?

Explanation: By slowing down the emotional cognitive process and examining it more closely, we can see that our violent emotional reactivity offers us an opportunity for greater depth of insight into our lives, to experience and understand the deeper feelings of care and compassion underneath the surface emotional reactivity.

Violent emotional reactivity (what, in Mondo Zen, we consider to be a “surface” or “superficial” emotional reaction) is expressed as a contraction in the body and mind. The ego is not yet conscious of the compassionate care that is underneath. Violent emotional reactivity can take the form of physical violence,²⁹ yelling a profanity, using sarcasm, being passive-aggressive, and other actions that happen without awareness. Violent reactivity, for example, has many faces. Three common ones:

1. Anger - Violence against others
2. Shame - Violence against self
3. Disconnection (turning away and shutting down) - Violence to relationships, including relationship to self

Shame and disconnection may not be as dramatic as an explosive or angry outburst, but they are just as violent and just as destructive. We need to hear the voice of shame as a question of our integrity, not a trigger of old beliefs.

Know that with enough practice and insight, it is possible to experience anger as powerfully grounded and non-violent. Anger can be experienced simply as intense clarity of mind.

You have always consciously or unconsciously chosen your emotional reactions. Reactive violence expressed as anger (towards other), shame (towards self), or disconnection (from relationship), is a **choice**, even though it is experienced by most of us, as an automatic “knee-jerk” reaction. A choice point does, however exist. Developing a regular concentration meditation practice creates more space, more time, so we can witness our emotional reactivity as it arises, then consciously intervene, and choose a different, more intelligent response.

Consider this ringing phone analogy. Emotions are telephone calls bringing us information. Answer this phone when it rings. Do not refuse to answer the phone (depression). Do not drag the phone around jumping up and down shouting “the phone is ringing” (anxiety). Do not hit someone with the phone (anger), or blame yourself for its ringing (shame). Do not run away from the phone, or get so intoxicated, busy or stressed that you cannot hear it ringing (disconnection, denial). Answer the phone! Experience your deeper feelings, get the message, the information in the feelings, and then hang up the phone. Understand, and choose your response. Stop *mindlessly, unconsciously reacting* to the phone’s ringing. Use your new insight and *respond* mindfully when the phone rings.

Too often we assume that we are “victims” of our emotions. Our confusion is apparent in the language we use. Out of ignorance we say things like, “He made me angry!” In fact, *we* are doing this to

²⁹ **Facilitator’s Note:** Sometimes forceful action (what we commonly refer to as “violence”) is necessary, as when we must set a strong boundary or use physical force for protection. Yet even with this forceful action, when the ego is informed by Clear Deep Heart/Mind, there is also compassion. Physical force does not equal emotional violence. It is possible to use physical force without closing down, without turning away, without putting on armor, without violent reactivity.

ourselves. No one makes us angry. This is an unconscious emotional reaction we are choosing. We have a difficult time seeing this choice because our untrained relative mind reacts so quickly and automatically. With concentration meditation training and emotional koan practice, we develop the ability to slow way down and stay present so we can choose our response rather than just react. This allows us to transform our reactive emotions. Being unaware of our deeper feelings, we are conditioned to react unconsciously, superficially and destructively. The noise level of our emotional reactivity overrides and overpowers our innate feeling intelligence. This blocks both our insight into our true nature and our ability to experience compassion.

*Are you choosing to be the puppet or the puppet master of your emotions?
You can only make a conscious compassionate choice when the lamp of your precious ego
is burning with the clear light of pure awareness.*

~ Do Shin Roshi

Let your
Intelligence begin to rule
Whenever you sit with others
Using this sane idea:
Leave all your cocked guns in a field
Far from us,
One of those damn things
Might go
Off

~ Hafiz

Facilitator: Ring the bell, sit two minutes in silence and then read:

Thirteenth Koan: What deeper feelings are underneath reactive anger, shame, and disconnection?

Slow way down! Look!

Can you find the fear and sadness beneath your negative emotional reactions of anger, shame, and disconnection?

Can you really feel the fear/sadness? What are you afraid of? What are you sad about?

Now, what is underneath, what is driving the fear and sadness?

Drop into Clear *Deep Heart/Mind*. Can you feel the deep compassionate caring that lies beneath the fear and sadness, compassion for self and other? What do you care about?

When you experience a negative emotional reaction like anger, shame, or disconnection, can you feel the deeper fear and sadness, and beneath that, the deep compassionate caring? Have you ever, in your entire life, been angry about something you did not care about?³⁰

Think about the last time you got angry. Can you experience the feeling of deep care?

Slow way down and get this. When you're *really* angry, you *really* care! When you're angry at a loved one and strike them or insult them or storm out of the house or numb out to protect yourself, you *really care*! Do you want to be contracted, upset and separate? Of course not! You want closeness and connection. You feel deep caring and yet, because of conditioning, you're driven to do something that has the opposite effect. Even though it may be unconscious, you are choosing to express deep care with violence!³¹ How sad! How foolish and counterproductive this choice has always been. It's *always* the wrong choice because it never gets you what you want — closeness.

Can you feel the freedom in this realization? Are you willing to remember this and actually transform your life?

Explanation: Whenever you experience anger, shame, or disconnection, you deeply care about something.

³⁰ **Facilitator's Note:** *If they have a difficult time relating to anger, simply replace the word anger with shame, disconnection, jealousy, depression, anxiety, lust, etc. – whatever emotional reaction they most relate to.*

³¹ **Facilitator's Note:** *You have always had a choice, but due to conditioning (parents, teachers, culture) and genes and hormones, it has not felt like a choice.*

Facilitator: Ring the bell, sit two minutes in silence and then read:

Fourteenth Koan: Now that you have experienced and understand the deep care that drives your emotional reactivity, can anyone or anything make you unconsciously react without choice?

Nooooooooo! (Interrupt the reaction, the contraction.)

Know. (Listen more deeply. Get the information in your deeper feelings.)

You now know that no one can make you angry, shame you or make you disconnect, shut down. You now know that deep care lies beneath your emotional reactivity. You can now choose to live in freedom, or you can choose to live in reactive patterns. Which do you choose?

Explanation: We have always chosen our reactions. Violence, expressed as reactive anger, shame or disconnection, is an ignorant choice. The same goes for envy, jealousy, false pride, depression, anxiety, lust, and many other so-called negative emotions.

Philosophically reoriented and standing in meditative mind, we are free to make other choices. We must realize and then remember that no one can shame us, make us angry, or make us disconnect. No one makes us jealous, fills us with envy, or makes us lust after them. We unconsciously or consciously choose these reactions to feelings.³²

Anger clearly understood and experienced is *intense clarity* and *deep caring*. Anger is not violent. **Fear** is just *excitement* and *opportunity*. It is not collapsing. **Depression, anxiety** and **disconnection** are philosophical problems, not just emotional ones. With depression, anxiety and disconnection we refuse (or are unable) to experience the deeper feelings and get the information within them.

Acting out negative emotional pattern prevents awareness from getting to the real information. Stop. Break your reactive patterns, recognize your deeper feelings, take responsibility for your choices, and live in the freedom of choosing. Stop promiscuously reacting, stay with what is arising, be curious and investigate.

³² **Facilitator's Note:** Some people are confused by the words "unconsciously...choose." With this teaching, we ask them to understand that deep caring is at the root of emotional reactivity. With this new understanding comes great responsibility to consciously respond with clarity and compassion, and not unconsciously react with emotional violence. There is always a choice point.

The Guest House
By Master Rumi

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing, invite them in*
*(*liberate yourself, transform them)*

Be grateful for whoever comes
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

Facilitator: Ring the bell, sit two minutes in silence and then read:

Fifteenth Koan: Show me silently, through your eyes and body, the awareness and clarity that are always present before an emotional reaction begins.³³

To act consciously and compassionately, we must learn to recognize and remain in deep awareness. There is more time between sensing and reacting than we ever imagined. With enough meditation practice, it is possible to stop the reaction, release the contraction and experience the whole cognitive emotional process, get the information and ***consciously choose*** a response.³⁴

So, let's play with anger for a moment. Silently, through your body, show me the intense clarity of mind and the deep caring that are always present before reactive anger.³⁵ Think of a moment recently when you were angry, or imagine something that might make you experience anger. Drop deeper than the emotional reaction, and show the purity – the awareness – that is always present. Use your eyes. Now, lean forward show me this pure awareness with a silent gesture.³⁶

Now show me *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*.

Now show me the awareness that is always present before reactive anger.

Do you recognize this is *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*?

Now stay in this awareness, allow the anger to arise, and slowly repeat after me: "I'm extremely angry. I have intense clarity. I care deeply. But, I choose not to be violent." Are you in touch with your deep caring as you say this?

³³ ***Facilitator's Note:*** *This is Clear Deep Heart/Mind! Look for it!*

³⁴ ***Facilitator's Note:*** *One extreme example of people consciously choosing a response is masochism. We do not recommend masochism as a practice, but it is interesting to note that the masochist's choosing a pleasurable reaction to pain is indeed quite a different choice than most people make.*

³⁵ ***Facilitator's Note:*** *This process may be extremely difficult for some to understand, particularly for those people who are not in touch with their anger. If that is the case, simply replace the word "anger" with "shame," "disconnection," "jealousy," "depression," "anxiety," whatever their pattern is.*

³⁶ ***Facilitator's Note:*** *As facilitator, look for their eyes to open wide, for them to lean in, for their body to open up, and for a pure witnessing quality. There will be an instant of "getting big" before they react, even if it's only for a microsecond. That's where you want them to focus their attention. Point out the intense clarity which is arising, which is the same as Koan 6 (silent expression) and Koan 7 (call and respond). If necessary, demonstrate this for them. Repeat this several times. Be sure that they clearly understand. This is Dhyana, Clear Deep Heart/Mind. Non-violent anger (intense clarity and deep caring) is an expression of Clear Deep Heart/Mind! This must be understood. (This process works with any negative emotional reaction.)*

We will now practice the Know/No koan (see p.48). “Know”- I know better. “No” to the reaction/contraction.

Explanation: With this realization, we experience and understand that there is always time to interrupt a negative emotional reaction.³⁷

With training, you can *transform* your negative emotional reactions. There is a choice point, where you can *consciously choose* to respond instead of habitually react. For most of us, the choice point is not immediately obvious.³⁸ To discover the choice point, we must become aware of our conditioning through concentration meditation practice. Just *noticing* our reaction/contraction is the first step. We must stabilize our witnessing from *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*. With stable witnessing, we can see our emotional reactivity; we can actually choose a conscious response instead of a habitual reaction. Developing this capacity is the embodiment of true compassion.³⁹

The truth is that we have been getting lost in the noise of our “surface” emotional reactivity, unaware of this intense clarity. We can now slow way down, stay with the intense clarity of mind, and experience the arising of fear, grief and concern and consciously choose a response. This intense clarity of mind is our meditative mind, our *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*!

If I am truly compassionately awake, violent anger, shame, disconnection, jealousy and all other negative emotional reactions become inconceivable. We are free at last.

***Anger, shame and disconnection do not equal violence.
Anger, shame and disconnection do not demand violence.
Anger, shame and disconnection begin as intense non-violent awareness.***

~ Jun Po Roshi

³⁷ ***Facilitator’s Note:*** *One way to physically experience the truth of this koan is to engage in the No-Know Kata. If you have time practice the Katas here.*

³⁸ ***Facilitator’s Note:*** *This choice point may not be conscious, at least in the beginning. As one example, it is almost impossible to track the fight, flight or freeze process because it shuts down the thinking brain. It’s extremely difficult to witness this happening. This is where concentration meditation training is essential. We need to develop the ability to stay intelligently, compassionately awake, present in the face of anything. If they cannot see this choice point, ask them to simply hold it as a philosophical possibility. Ask them to continue to work with this koan. The next time they experience violent emotional reactivity, ask them to take time to deconstruct their reaction to see if they can slow the process down and recognize a choice point. With enough concentration/meditation and emotional koan practice, they will experientially know the truth of this teaching.*

³⁹ ***Facilitator’s Note:*** *Point out that you may become aware of your negative reaction as it arises, in the middle of it, or afterwards. Whenever you become aware, you still want to follow the same steps. Our meditative practice is enabling us to stay present and be aware of it as it arises.*

Facilitator: Ring the bell, sit two minutes in silence and then read:

Sixteenth Koan: Are you willing to find a negative habitual reaction and transform it into a conscious compassionate response?

This is your emotional koan.⁴⁰

Drop deeply into and stay present in *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*.

Visualize a pattern in your life where you habitually react with anger, shame or disconnection or some other negative habitual emotional reaction. Choose something very specific that will happen again soon, in the very near future.

Feel and recognize your physical and emotional contraction. Concisely describe it.

Release your contraction, (to the degree that you can).

Feel into and listen to the information in your deeper feelings of fear, sadness and deep caring. Succinctly describe what you now understand.

What will you do, what really needs to happen in this specific circumstance? If you cannot see what to do, go deeper into *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*, look again until you see what to do!

Now slowly and carefully describe exactly what you will do. How will you consciously respond with intelligence, wisdom and compassion?

How might they respond to your new response? How would you consciously respond to their response?

When will you do this?

Congratulations! You now have your emotional koan. When you meet this situation in your life, the reaction/contraction is now your wake up call. Remember this truth and consciously respond.

Do you realize, if you can consciously respond to this situation, you can consciously respond to all similar situations? Do you understand the significance of this?

Now, we will practice the *Katas* (see p.39), to transform the physical contractions that accompany our habitual emotional reactions.

⁴⁰ ***Facilitator's Note:*** If they are having trouble selecting a situation or answering the questions used to set up the emotional koan, be silent and give them extra time to do so. At appropriate times ask questions. If at all possible, avoid giving advice or sharing your relevant experiences. Do not, at this time do any voice dialog, inner child work, shadow work or any other psychological work with them. This is an awareness practice not a psychological process.

This is the practice of Zen, the marriage of wisdom and compassion - the wisdom to stay present in *Clear Deep Heart/Mind* while compassionately responding to circumstances that arise. Wisdom is the ability to remain nonreactive so you can see what's really happening. Compassion is the ability to choose a response from the information contained within the deeper feelings. Our reactivity prevents both of these things.

Explanation: This koan realization enlightens and transforms your philosophical and emotional understanding. You now know the truth that all violent or other troublesome emotional reactions can be transformed. After you have changed your understanding, you can find the information in your deeper feelings and respond. Your habitual emotional problems have become exciting opportunities. In this way, we use our psychological suffering to find freedom! Our angst has truly become our liberation! Finally, conscious, compassionate responses replace ignorant, habitual reactions.⁴¹

Those who practice only in silence cannot establish their freedom when entering into activity. When they engage in worldly activities, their satori will disappear completely.

~ Master Hakuin

Slowly and carefully articulate what you have experienced. What have you learned? What have you realized? How do you feel as a result of this insight?

Remember, this is a life *practice*. You may not succeed at first. Keep practicing. Get support. This is the path of awakening. *Emotional contractions are numberless. Now you can choose to make each reactive contraction an Emotional Koan. Your angst is your liberation! Dharma gates are numberless!*

~ Doshin Roshi

⁴¹ **Facilitator's Note:** *It is not necessary to know all of the details of **how** you established an immature, ignorant reaction. However, it is necessary to be aware of the deeper feelings and get to the information. We have found that the violence of reactive anger is the easiest to see. The violence of shame directed inwardly is more subtle and sometimes difficult to see. The violence of disconnection affecting relationships is even more subtle and can be the most difficult to see. We also know that you can't fix what you can't see. You can't transform what lies outside of your conscious awareness. Psychotherapy, shadow work, voice dialogue or trauma work can be helpful to bring issues into your awareness. Once you see it, congratulations! You can now make it into an emotional koan. The result is "Real reincarnation, Mondo style." With enough concentration/meditation practice, and by actively engaging these Mondo Zen Emotional Awareness Intervention Koans, you will be liberated. Wake up, Grow up, Show up! Suggest that they ask that their reactions be pointed to when recognized by the other person involved in relationship. This can be a gesture or a word.*

Articulate Your Understanding: Review Koans 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16

12. Has anyone or anything ever made you angry, shamed you or made you disconnect, shut down?
13. What deeper feelings are underneath reactive anger, shame, and disconnection?
14. Now that you have experienced and understand the deep care that drives your emotional reactivity, can anyone or anything make you unconsciously react without choice?
15. Show me silently, through your eyes and body, the awareness and clarity that are always present before an emotional reaction begins.
16. Are you willing to find a negative habitual reaction and transform it into a conscious compassionate response?

Emotional Philosophical Reorientation

The Truth about “Negative” Emotions

Let us be sure to understand what we just experienced. The root of the problem is not our superficial negative emotional reactions but our beliefs. We actually believe that someone or something else is responsible for our emotional reactions. It is our ignorance of our deeper feelings and failure to understand the information within these feelings that causes our reactive suffering.

To say “You make me angry” is simply untrue—it reveals a depth of confusion and ignorance of the deeper truth and nature of emotions. The deeper truth is that we are feeling fear, grief and concern and unconsciously choose to react with violence. We are intervening, attempting to control the world and relieve discomfort. With this new understanding, anger expressed as violence is just one possible response to fear, and not a very good one. Before we react emotionally, there is always awareness and energy present and available. After we change our understanding, we will be able to recognize and experience this clarity and intensity of awareness as it arises, and we can then choose to use it mindfully to alleviate our suffering and experience emotional freedom.

An Awakened Mind—one abiding in *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*—experiences anger not as a violent reaction but as *intense clarity of mind and deep concern*. An Awakened Mind experiences shame as a false belief that I am inadequate, worthless and invalid. An awakened mind hears and differentiates shame and healthy guilt. Guilt is experienced as a wake-up call, an integrity check, exposing something I have done that I will take responsibility for. An Awakened Mind experiences disconnection for what it is - a missed opportunity to respond, to communicate, solve or resolve a situation. An Awakened Mind experiences fear not as a reaction but as *excitement and opportunity*. In an Awakened Mind, intelligence, interest and compassion override, transform and replace the voices of all negative reactive emotions.

Eventually, with *Clear Deep Heart/Mind* realization, philosophical reorientation and emotional koan practice, depression, anxiety, anger, shame, jealousy, envy, disconnection and other pain-filled or pain-denying reactions to feeling become inconceivable. Having experienced this freedom, why would we ever make those choices? When the phone rings, we answer it, get the message, choose our response with intelligence and compassion then hang up the phone.

Siddhartha Gautama taught that there is an end to suffering - philosophical suffering caused by a misunderstanding of the nature of ego, and reactive emotional suffering. Mondo Zen practice is this realization, this teaching, this liberation, this Dharma!

*With each moment's arising flash
Of our normal feelings and thoughts,
We will simultaneously recognize within us
A field of pure awareness, wisdom
Compassion and skillful means.*

***Awakened One's Vow
~ Master Torei***

Know-No Kata, an Emotional Transformation Embodiment Practice

When we face situations in our lives and emotion arises, there is also a physical reaction, a habitual contraction triggering us to fight, flee or freeze. When we retrain ourselves to recognize and interrupt that contraction, we discover we have other options. Emotional feelings are visceral, and in many cases unresolved feelings are stored in the body. To resolve these we need a physical outlet. Feeling is saying show me, release me.

We will now perform a Kata, a physical interruption and transformation of this physical/emotional contraction that we previously experienced as violent anger, shame or shutting down.

First round: ANGER

Stand in complete stillness, Wu Chi.

Conjure up the feeling in your body of reacting to fear with violent anger.

Slowly bring your hands in front of you and begin to make fists as if you were about to fight.

Stop! Change directions.

Open the hands and press your palms away from you at chest height, fingers extended and pointing up as you release the contraction.

Slowly and with absolute clarity and understanding, softly shout the word *Know/No*.

I know better than this and *no to the reaction*.

Feel the clear boundary, fear, sadness and truth of deep caring.

Ask out loud, "What next?"

The fear energy that arises before your anger reaction is sacred. Violent behavior is a choice. Make your choice.

Second Round: SHAME

Return to complete stillness, Wu Chi.

Conjure up the feeling of shame as you feel shame's heaviness begin to weigh you down.

Stop! Change directions.

Slowly push your palms towards the ground and slightly behind your hips, as if your palms were pressing your torso forward.

Open and press your chest forward and open your eyes wider as you feel your power and release the shame contraction.

Slowly and with absolute clarity and understanding, softly shout the word *Know/No*.

I know better than this and *no to the reaction*

Feel the clear boundary and deep caring beneath the shame. Shame is the introjection of some other's voice, blaming you. Your shame was a choice.

Feel the caring. Hear the question, "Are you in integrity?" Don't abuse yourself, answer the question.

Ask out loud, "What next?"

Third Round: DISCONNECTION

Return to complete stillness, Wu Chi.

Conjure up the feeling of checking out, avoiding and disconnecting.

Turn yourself (head, body) away towards one side, and slightly lean back.

Stop! Change directions.

Slowly bring your hands up to your head with your palms facing your ears as you lean forward into the present moment.

Open your eyes, feel the power of your presence, and face whatever you were avoiding.

Slowly with absolute clarity and understanding, softly shout the words Know/No.

*I **know** better than this and **no** to the reaction*

Feel the clear boundary and deep caring. Disconnection, the escape through denial, the turning away from what is, was a choice.

Return to stillness, Wu Chi.

Use the energy and lean back into (your relationship) life.

Ask out loud, “*What next?*”

Fourth Round:

Return to complete stillness, Wu Chi.

Feel deeply the freedom of your new choices.

Smile, throw both hands up above your shoulders and shout “Swaha!” (Yes!)

Let this swaha take you right into a round of sacred laughter.

Swaha..., ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, haaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa...

Celebrate your new understanding and experience.

Remember, it’s celebrate, not celibate!

Sacred Laughter

Now let us explore **Sacred Laughter** together. In the past, we disconnected or reacted to fear with violence as anger, shame, jealousy, envy and the like. Now instead, we will practice responding with laughter.

First Round - Remember a recent incident where you (unconsciously) chose to react to fear with anger or shame, and laugh with the realization of how foolish and counterproductive this choice has always been. It is *always* the wrong choice. Admit it. This is amusing. Get the joke! With this laughter, release and let go of any residual tension felt in your physical/emotional body (these two are not separate).

Second Round - Close your eyes and imagine a future incident where you would normally react to fear violently with anger or shame or you would disconnect. Feel the physical contraction. As the feeling arises, recognize the empty clear mind in which this feeling is arising. Feel the concern within that clarity. Stay connected with the feeling. Slowly open your eyes, inhale deeply, and as you begin to exhale, express this not as shame or anger or shutting down but with laughter.

Experience the difficulty and strangeness of responding with laughter instead of reacting habitually. This is practice in the face of insult. Release the physical emotional contraction. Observe the quality of your consciousness during and after the process. Enjoy yourself! Get the joke! No one has ever shamed you, made you angry or made you disappear. You have unconsciously *chosen* shame, anger or disconnection.

Third Round - Laugh from the depth of your being for no reason other than joy. Start with a subtle smile connected to your realization of the fearless core of your being, and let it build and release naturally and completely.

Demonstrate the release of the physical/emotional contraction, choosing laughter as the alternative expression. Understanding is incomplete until the physical/emotional contraction is released. Emotion is visceral.

Intention: To practice a skillful method that transforms negative reactions into positive, enjoyable responses. ***Feeling is just information!*** Feeling is sensing, and sensing brings information. This information deserves a conscious response, not a habitual reaction. We do not need to react habitually, foolishly, violently or immaturely. We do not need to repress these wonderful, rich energies. We need neither fear nor deny them. We can use them to hurt or to liberate, to be violent or loving. Through this practice, ***our angst is our liberation.***

Facilitator reads:

Laughter

What is laughter? What is laughter?
It is God waking up! O it is God waking up!
It is the sun poking its sweet head out
From behind a cloud
You have been carrying too long,
Veiling your eyes and heart.

It is Light breaking ground for a great Structure
That is your Real body - called Truth.

It is happiness applauding itself and then taking flight
To embrace everyone and everything in this world.

Laughter is the polestar
Held in the sky by our Beloved,
Who eternally says,

"Yes, dear ones, come this way,
Come this way towards me and Love!

Come with your tender mouths moving
And your beautiful tongues conducting songs
And with your movements - your magic movements
Of hands and feet and glands and cells - Dancing!

Know that to God's Eye,
All movement is a Wondrous Language,
And Music - such exquisite, wild Music!"

O what is laughter, Hafiz?
What is this precious love and laughter
Budding in our hearts?

It is the glorious sound
Of a soul waking up!

~ **Master Hafiz**

Reacting vs. Responding: Changing your cognitive process

1. Circumstances arise
2. Sensing excitement begins; interest
3. Habitual memory and body-memory follow
4. Physical/Emotional Feeling arises

Then

5. Unconscious habitual reaction
6. Information is blocked
7. Ignorance prevails

OR

5. Mondo Koan Awareness Intervention
6. Genuine fearless concern is experienced
7. Information is understood
8. Wisdom and Compassion prevail

REACT *mindlessly*

unconscious, conditioned, habitual
reaction

RESPOND *mindfully*

conscious, intelligent, compassionate
response

KEY CONCEPTS

Properly understood and experienced, our angst is our liberation.

Vulnerability is our greatest strength. It is our open heart which, in truth, can never be broken.

We require a free, rich, honest, disciplined emotional body. It's not about denying feeling. It's about staying conscious in the face of feeling.

There must be an Empty Mind in which sensing arises, for sensing to occur. This Empty Mind is not disturbed by arising content, regardless of the content.

Mondo Zen provides tools that allow us to choose our responses to emotion. This practice accelerates and facilitates the completion of psychotherapy.

Pain is unavoidable. Psychological suffering is optional.

Uninformed, unrealized, we remain entangled in suffering mind, confused mind, angry mind, shamed mind, depressed mind, jealous mind, envious mind, muddled mind, twisted mind—*Samsara*. We falsely believe ourselves to *be* this Samsara. Because we believe it, it becomes so. The Buddha said: "With our beliefs we create our world." This is the delusion that can confuse us for an entire lifetime. This is the human melodrama. From *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*, how interesting!

***Anger and shame do not equal violence.
Anger and shame do not demand violence.
Anger and shame begin as intense non-violent awareness.***

~ Jun Po Roshi

Consider this ringing phone analogy: emotional feelings are telephone calls bringing information. Answer this phone when it rings. Do not refuse to answer the phone (depression). Do not drag the phone around jumping up and down shouting "the phone is ringing" (anxiety). Do not hit someone with the phone (anger), or blame yourself for its ringing (shame). Do not run away from the phone, or get so intoxicated, busy or stressed that you cannot hear it ringing (disconnection, denial). Answer the phone! Experience your deeper feelings; get the message, the information in the feelings. Stop *mindlessly, unconsciously reacting* to the phone's ringing. Utilize your new insight and *respond* mindfully, then hang up the phone.

An emotionally immature mind requires discipline - not the discipline of denial, but the discipline of truly feeling and hearing, consciously understanding and responding to the information within our deeper authentic feelings.

From *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*, emotional feeling is simply sensing. It is identical to smell or sight or taste or touch or sound. Feeling brings us information. What is that information? Do not react until you clearly understand. Then respond.

No one has ever shamed us, made us angry or made us disconnect, disappear. We have unconsciously or consciously chosen these reactions. Because this is true, when we finally take this to heart, no one can ever shame us or anger us or “make” us disappear ever again.

***Deep caring is the root. Fear, sadness and genuine concern are the feelings.
Anger, shame and denial are examples of needless, ignorant habitual reactions.
Your freedom from these reactions is a matter of awareness and choice.***

~ Jun Po Roshi

Mondo Zen is the path from egocentric to Buddha-centric (Awareness-centric)!

Genuine concern is the feeling beneath all our negative reactions. Fear can be experienced for what it actually is - excitement and opportunity. Shame can be experienced for what it actually is - internalization and belief of another’s judgments. Anger can be experienced for what it actually is - intense presence, clarity and deep concern. Disconnection can be experienced for what it actually is - an escape from responsibility.

Anger never requires violence. Strong emotions are just energy until a choice is made.

All powerful emotions can call to *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*—as can pure listening.

In *Clear Deep Heart/Mind* realization, intelligence overrides emotional reaction and produces intelligent response.

Clear Deep Heart/Mind is Zen: open mind, fearless mind, vast mind, creative mind, unreasonable love mind, laughing mind, get-the-joke mind, ***Samadhi!*** Our deepest nature is *This, Samadhi.*

Realization of impermanence brings gratitude. Realization of the inevitability of pain brings the end of suffering. Realization of emptiness brings ego transcendence.

Zazen Concentration/Meditation practice is fearless presence—*Clear Deep Heart/Mind*. True meditation, once found, is with us forever, pervading every aspect of our lives. True meditation never began and never ends.

***Remember, life’s design is erotic, not neurotic!
In the end, as in the beginning, it is all about love—unconditional love!***

~ Jun Po Roshi

HOLLOW BONES ZEN TRAINING ELEMENTS:

FIVE PRACTICE MIRRORS

These Five Training Element practices are our awakening, our genuine insight. Practice *is* realization. Realization *is* practice. Through Concentration/Meditation, new philosophical understanding, emotional koan, physical awareness and sacred stewardship practices, we awaken. The Five Training Elements stand like mirrors, allowing us to see for ourselves how these core practices transform our lives. We achieve a personal freedom only possible with deep spiritual realization and discipline. Integrated Five Element discipline is our awakening. Our Mondo Zen practice is our Enlightenment!

Sacred Stewardship: We accept our intimate interdependency, our oneness with the environment, the universe and all sentient and non-sentient beings. We embody this realization and lovingly choose to not create any more suffering in the world. We recognize our responsibility and extend it first to everything within our arm's reach and eventually to infinity.

Philosophical Reorientation: Through study, dialog and practice, we develop a broader and more inclusive philosophy. We become more insightful, and our thinking continues to become more flexible, comprehensive and clear. We open our minds and hearts. We command a new language, accepting and including the truth of the empty nature of our spirit and deep mind as well as the real intention and meaning of our emotions. This new view is seen and felt in our actions.

Emotional Maturity and Integrity: With new understanding and experience of the true nature and real meaning and mechanics of emotion, we are no longer bound to unconscious reactions. We recognize the energy arising as intense clarity and deep caring before reactions. We experience shame as a false introjected belief, not as a threat to self-value, and hear it as a question challenging our integrity. Instead of unconsciously reacting, we respond consciously and skillfully. We experience disconnection as a confused choice and turn back to relate and communicate. We transform our painful emotional reactions into compassionate responses. ***Our angst becomes our liberation!*** Mature emotional responses emerge in the same relationships where immature emotional reactions were once the rule. All violent anger, shame or denial reactions to fear are now experienced as rich opportunities for transformation and eventually become inconceivable.

Conscious Embodiment: Through Qi Gong, Yoga (pranayama and asana), Tai Chi, dance (preferably Argentinian Tango) and other mindfully practiced physical disciplines, we investigate and become more aware of our embodiment. We locate and release the physical contractions associated with psychological tension, including tension resulting from our unconscious shadows and prior traumatic experiences. We become more sensitive, healthy and conscious. We delight in the discovery that *enlightenment is also visceral!*

Genuine Insight: Concentration/Meditation practice is essential.

MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

Meditation practice in our tradition follows the classical forms of the ancient Chinese and Japanese Zen schools. ZEN is how the Japanese translate the word CHAN, the Chinese pronunciation of the Sanskrit word DHYANA. Dhyana means effortless, empty compassionate awareness, *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*. Concentration/Meditation leads to the realization and experience of this awareness and compassion. The fruit of this practice is Samadhi, Unreasonable Enjoyment.

*Enough, these few words are enough!
If not these words, this breath!
If not this breath, this sitting here!
This opening to life we have refused again and again, until now!
Until now!*

~ **David Whyte**

Concentration/Meditation

An ego is a temporary process arising in a field of pure consciousness, “a figment of imagination.” When meditation practice is properly understood and practiced, we develop insight into the clear empty nature of our deeper mind; hence, ego-deflation, openness and compassion occur naturally. The insight within this practice must come from an actual realization, not just an intellectual or speculative understanding. After this profound visceral realization, we can transform our ordinary way of understanding ourselves and our world.

It is critical to have a correct view and understanding before engaging in meditation practice because engaging in practice without a clear understanding can cause ego reinforcement and rigidity (“Zen disease”) or nihilism (where the ego is seen as something that must be destroyed).

Buddhist meditation has three stages: Dharana (concentration), Dhyana, (insight realization) and Samadhi (unreasonable enjoyment).

Dharana concentration, the first stage of meditation practice, brings the mind to an experience of absolute silence. When we realize this pure silence, we can experience the second stage of meditation practice, Dhyana (insight).

Dhyana meditation is the second stage of meditation training. This insight realization is a knowing of ourselves deeper than our thinking, feeling and sensing mind. Dhyana is a state of silent non-opinionated, imperturbable, empty, compassionate awareness - *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*.

Clear Deep Heart/Mind does not react superficially but sees clearly everything as it is while remaining imperturbable (in equanimity), responding compassionately to our ever-changing circumstances. After this realization and clarification of understanding, compassion and right action naturally follow. The deconstruction of our ego, and consummate experience of fearless emptiness, effortlessly reveals great compassion. This state (*Clear Deep Heart/Mind*) is not to be confused with dissociation, denial of life experience or manic bliss.

Keep in mind: it is generally necessary to continue a disciplined Dharana/concentration practice in order to stabilize a state of Dhyana/insight.

Samadhi, or unreasonable joy, is the third and final stage. Here we experience the delightful quality of an awakened ordinary mind. Samadhi is “unreasonable” because it is not caused by any thought, feeling, or sensing experience. Samadhi is “enjoyment” because, within this realization, we experience a subtle state of joy. This joy comes with the gift of life. After realizing this, we consciously and compassionately embrace all of the experiences in our lives, not only the so-called “good,” but also the so-called “bad.” This Samadhi allows us to be fully engaged in life while aware of our True Nature. This realization is the fruit of mature practice.

ORDINARY MIND (AWAKENED IN CLEAR DEEP HEART/MIND) IS THE WAY!

~ Jun Po Roshi

Meditation Form

Sit with your spine comfortably erect. If on a cushion, sit with your hips elevated slightly higher than your knees, weight on your sit-bones, hips tilted slightly forward. Let your eyes be softly open. Drop your gaze to the floor a few feet in front of you. Blink when necessary.

If you cannot comfortably sit perfectly still for thirty minutes, it is essential that you look deeply into your psychology and practice conscious embodiment to discover what limits you. Your body is telling you something! The body is naturally very comfortable sitting still. Your ego is interfering.

Place your hands in your lap, thumb tips touching and form the Dhyana mudra (the gesture of meditation) or place your hands palms down on your thighs or knees, thumb and tips of index fingers touching in the Gyan Mudra (the gesture of Self-knowledge). We call this two-hands-on-knees form the ***Mondo Mudra***.

Soften and deepen your breath. Drop your chin. Rest your tongue lightly on the upper palate just behind your teeth. Allow your attention to follow the flow of your breath effortlessly.

Follow our Rinzai Zen tradition. Begin the concentration “Insight” phase of koan meditation practice with the Chinese Zen master Zhaozhou’s Wu Koan: “Does a dog have Buddha nature?” Zhaozhou answered “Wu!” (“Mu” for the Japanese, “No” in English). We practice this koan alternating the words *Know* (know your deeper self) and *No* (to distraction).

With your in-breath, silently recite the word KNOW. Follow the word into the pure receptive silence within the center of your heart. On your out-breath, silently recite NO. Every time your mind wanders off with distracting thoughts, feelings or sensations, firmly bring it back to the sensation of breath and the heart-centered awareness in which the sensations and the words Know and No arise. This is concentration (Dharana) and meditation (Dhyana) practice. Do not struggle against or interfere with the arising of feelings or thoughts. Simply return attention to the breath, repeating Know on the in-breath and No on the out-breath. When you find you have wandered away, smile and realize that you are back. This practice is the foundation of your awakening. Stabilizing your conscious mind, realizing the openness, silence, fearless imperturbability, freedom and ultimate emptiness of mind is Dhyana, *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*. Inevitably, this NO! becomes KNOW! and then YES! Samadhi!



GLOSSARY

Anger: Normally a chosen, violent reaction to fear about a situation and/or person(s). Within *Clear Deep Heart/Mind* realization, anger is experienced as deep caring and intense clarity of mind, not violence.

Anxiety: A state of angst caused by an ignorant inability or unwillingness to hear, understand and respond to the information contained within our feelings.

Clear Deep Heart/Mind: Zen mind, Dhyana meditation mind, pure awareness.

Dana: The exquisite paradox in Buddhism is that the more we give—and the more we give without seeking something in return—the more abundant we become. By giving, we destroy those acquisitive, grasping and needy impulses that ultimately lead to further suffering.

Depression: A state of angst caused by an ignorant inability or unwillingness to hear, understand and respond to the information contained within a feeling.

Dhyana: *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*. This is Zen. This is the second of the three stages of meditative awareness practice: concentration, pure awareness and unreasonable enjoyment—Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi.

Disconnection: Reacting to fear by disappearing emotionally.

Eight-Fold Buddhist Path (traditional Buddhist practice):

1. Correct view/understanding
2. Precise purpose, thought/feeling
3. Honest speech
4. Compassionate action
5. Conscious livelihood
6. Great effort/determination
7. Deep concentration/meditation
8. Liberating Samadhi

Emotional Koan: Protocol that transforms negative emotional reactions into compassionate responses.

Fear: Excited energy, arising from deep caring, about a situation before we consciously or unconsciously choose a reaction. Within *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*, fear is experienced as excitement and opportunity.

Five Training Elements (Hollow Bones Mondo Zen expression of the Eight-Fold Buddhist Path):

1. Sacred stewardship
2. Philosophical reorientation
3. Emotional maturity and integrity
4. Conscious embodiment
5. Genuine insight

Four Noble Truths of Buddhism:

1. Suffering
2. Cause of suffering
3. End of suffering
4. Eight-fold path to end suffering

Guilt: The useful realization and acceptance of responsibility for an error, a mistake made in ignorance.

Insight: Direct experience of absolute clear empty mind and its expression through relative ego mind.

Kleshas: Three main poisons.

1. Passion
2. Aggression
3. Ignorance

Koan: An enigmatic Zen question, a kind of riddle that can only be answered with a realization experience and then clarified through articulated intellectual understanding. Examples: Is it possible for you to just purely listen? Is there *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*? What is the real feeling that underlies anger? Who are you?

Meditation: Three stages: holding the mind in concentration is Dharana; recognizing the mind in which the concentration is taking place, effortless *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*, is Dhyana; and enjoying the truth and freedom of realizing the emptiness and compassion to be found within is Samadhi.

Mondo: Zen dialog (which may be public or private) between a so-called *teacher* and so-called *student*. Our form is designed to elicit, anchor and clarify a genuine realization experience and requires a high level of commitment and presence from all those involved.

Shame: A painful emotional reaction, a confused and ignorant belief regarding one's self-worth.

Three Marks of Existence, the three core realizations:

1. Anicca – impermanence (all is burning)
2. Dukkha - physical suffering (sickness, old age and death) and psychological suffering
3. Anatta – selflessness (Dhyana, Clear Deep Heart/Mind)

Zazen: Sitting Zen meditation. Za- is the sitting position; Zen is meditative awareness (Dhyana).



Come, come, whoever you are.
Wanderer, worshiper, lover of leaving
Ours is not a caravan of despair.
Come, it does not matter
If you've broken
Your vow a thousand times.
Still, come, and yet again come!

~ **Master Rumi**

To support your awakening, we encourage you to:

First: Participate in a 70 day cyber sangha practice group.

(www.mondozen.org: *Training, Mondo Zen Training*)

Second: Join a Mondo Zen™ community that is committed to practicing meditation and Mondo Zen™. It is easier to wake up and grow up together.

(www.mondozen.org: *Our Community, Locations*)

Third: Attend many retreats. The door is always open. There is nothing that will do more to invigorate this practice than attending a Mondo Zen™ retreat.

(www.mondozen.org: *Retreats and Events, Calendar of Retreats and Events*)

Fourth: Train and become a Mondo Zen™ Facilitator and share this delight with others. If you want to really learn something, then practice teaching it.

(www.mondozen.org: *Retreats and Events, Calendar of Retreats and Events; attend a Teacher Training*)

Fifth: Further develop your skills with Emotional Koans by enrolling in advanced trainings.

(Being developed through Integral Zen, www.integralzen.org, a branch of Hollow Bones/Mondo Zen)

May all beings be happy!
May all beings be loved and well fed!
May all beings awaken and find their ways!
Especially us!

~ **Jun Po Roshi**

