

Taking the Leap Meditation Book Group Meeting 1
Saturday, February 4, 2012

Welcome to our exploration of movement, meditation & Pema Chodron's Taking the Leap: Freeing Ourselves from Old Habits & Fears.

You are welcome to visit my web-site <http://dharmaworks.net/DharmaTouch/> to review a summary of what we cover in each class, find the home work suggestions and other resources you might find helpful.

The following outline is a list of suggested homework. Please try to realize the benefit of mindfulness by practicing some or all of these steps every day.

1. Homework Suggestions

- a. *Get 8 hours of sleep (or the number of hours you need to feel truly rested)*
- b. *Create a meditation space & time to include components that foster regularity in practice*
- c. *Meditate for 10 minutes in the morning & evening*
- d. *Create some form of mindfulness bell or anchor that will remind you to pause and take 3 conscious breaths.*
- e. *Reflect on this week's reflection questions & try some or all of the exercises*
- f. *Consider journaling*
- g. *Suggested reading*
 - i. *Taking the Leap, Chapter 2, 3 & 4*

2. Reflection Questions & Exercises: Chapter 1

- a. *Pema teaches that we all have the potential to disentangle from old habits and to love and care about each other. She retells the story of the two wolves fighting in our heart. Observe your interactions and activities throughout the day and notice how the two wolves compete for your attention and time. Which wolf are you feeding? What are the consequences to your self, to others, to our earth home?*
- b. *Pema boldly states that working on our selves, becoming more conscious about our minds and emotions may be the only way to find solutions to address the welfare of all beings and the survival of the*

earth. How is self-awareness linked to your ability to care and act in the world?

- c. If you agree that it is time for each of us to “take the leap and do what we can to turn things around” in our world, where are you willing to leap in your own life?*
- d. Pema advises that the first step in letting go of old habits and fears is to be honest with ourselves in recognizing we are getting “hooked” and acknowledging that we can consciously choose how to behave. Recall an exchange when you got “hooked” or “worked up”. Were you aware of your state of being? How did you choose to respond?*
- e. This path of conscious living entails three essential qualities of being human: natural intelligence, warmth and openness. Pema says that our natural intelligence is always accessible if not blocked by our hope and fear. Consider your past of experience of natural intelligence in every day life. Next, consider what blocks your natural intelligence.*
- f. Natural warmth is our shared capacity to love and the “heart” qualities of empathy, humor, gratitude, love and tenderness. Consider past incidents in which natural warmth arose spontaneously in your life. Pause for a moment and take in the feeling. How often do you extend it to your self and others? How does it feel when someone extends it to you?*
- g. Natural openness is the sky-like spacious quality of our minds including the “mind” qualities of expansiveness, flexibility and curiosity. Pause now for three conscious breaths. Were you able to stop? Did you experience a thought free moment? How did it feel?*
- h. Experiment with the practice of pausing and observe your willingness and resistance to doing it. See if you can use the pause during the next potential conflict to give your natural intelligence the opportunity to arise.*
- i. Notice the next time you feel impatient. Stay with the feeling. Does it resemble a wolf? Pema says it is simple the feeling of not wanting to be fully present. Which wolf are you choosing to feed?*