

The Ethical Guidelines Of the Bozeman Zen Group

*Based on previous BZG version and
the Red Cedar Zen Community*

*Being aware of our actions in body, speech, and
mind.*

All visitors, members, and participants in Bozeman Zen Group events agree to abide by the following ***Ethical Guidelines*** of our community. These guidelines encourage us to become more aware, to learn about our minds, and to open our hearts to kindness and generosity. If you experience difficulty in following any of these guidelines, or if you feel that others are not following them, please seek guidance and support from a teacher, board member, or EAR Committee member (see attachment for description of the EAR Committee).

Clear Communication Process, the second document in this series on ethics, is a guide to working with interpersonal challenges. It gives specific suggestions for self-inquiry and *skillful means* in exploring a conflict and approaching the person with whom you disagree, and, finally, ways to reconcile and plan for future interactions.

This document also includes Zoketsu Norman Fischer's suggestions for "**Listening Deeply**" and a further explanation of mindful communication techniques. Finally, it contains a resource list of books relating to communication, conflict, and the Zen precepts.

Notes on the Bodhisattva Precepts

The path of mercy for all existence

The ***Ethical Guidelines of the Bozeman Zen Group*** are based on the 16 Bodhisattva Precepts of Soto Zen. Provided is some background information on the Precepts. Precept study is a recommended part of Soto Zen training. All who follow our *Ethical Guidelines* are welcome to practice with us, regardless of their relationship to the precepts or other Zen Buddhist teachings.

Note that the Bodhisattva precepts were expressed very simply in the negative case in the original Chinese and Japanese. For example the first precept is simply the characters for “no” and for “killing.” Do not kill. As we have studied the precepts in English in our cultural context, translations have been made which include the affirming, positive, side of each precept. “I vow to protect life, not to kill,” for example.

The Precepts consist of the Three Refuges, the Three Pure Precepts and the Ten Clear Mind Precepts. For the Clear Mind precepts, the suggested wording of the precept is by Zoketsu Norman Fischer of Everyday Zen; the Sangha guidelines and the Teacher guidelines are sourced from Red Cedar Zen Community. Under “Comment,” we offer and additional two versions of each precept one from San Francisco Zen Center and another from an earlier version of the BZG Ethical Guidelines. Lastly, the narrative commentary for each precept is also from Red Cedar with our gratitude.

The Three Refuges

We take refuge in Buddha.

In taking refuge in Buddha, we acknowledge the Buddha Nature of all beings. We recognize that everyone is equally the expression of Buddha Nature: the possibility to awaken. These *Ethical Guidelines* and our suggested *Clear Communication* process calls on us to see all beings as Buddha as best we can.

We take refuge in Dharma.

In taking refuge in Dharma, we acknowledge and rely upon the wisdom and compassion of the Buddha's teaching and the Bodhisattva's life. We aim to embody, express and make accessible this teaching as conveyed to us through the Soto Zen School of Buddhism, brought to the West by Shunryu Suzuki Roshi. Realizing that Buddhism has many lineages, we acknowledge and respect all lineages of Buddhadharma.

We take refuge in Sangha.

In taking refuge in Sangha, we acknowledge the central role of community life to our practice. We aspire to create an inclusive environment for everyone's engagement in the Bodhisattva Way. When our diversity appears to separate us, our practice is to recognize, understand, and appreciate our differences. In so doing, we affirm, respect and welcome all genders, ages, races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, political beliefs, and physical abilities and appearances.

In creating an inclusive sangha, it is essential that we encourage open, ongoing communication among all sangha members, and that ethical concerns, communications challenges, and conflicts that arise are

fully heard and addressed by the Bozeman Zen Group in an appropriate forum. To facilitate this, Dharma students are encouraged to study fundamental teachings of Buddhism and Zen, to understand the organizational structure of our sangha, and to take responsibility for their own actions of body, speech, and mind by studying and following the precepts.

The Three Pure Precepts

The Three Pure Precepts are the aspiration of every bodhisattva. Reminding ourselves of these three fundamental tenants whenever we consider a course of action is crucial.

I vow to avoid harmful conduct.

To avoid harmful conduct means to refrain from causing harm to oneself, to others, to animals, to plants, to the Earth, to the waters and to the air. To practice this precept commits us to a life of learning more about the interconnections among all things. Much harmful conduct is inadvertent. When mistakes are made we commit to responding whether by feeling our regret, apology, confession, or atonement.

I vow to do beneficial conduct.

To do beneficial conduct means to act from the loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity of our awakened nature. This precept commits us to understanding the incredible power of our actions of thought, word, and deed for the good.

I vow to live for and with all beings.

To live for and with all beings expresses opportunity to discover and express the awakened nature of all being. In creating this opportunity we recognize the importance of maintaining a balance between an individual's negotiation

of the Way and the sangha's collective needs. When there is a perceived conflict between these, the process of open communication and clarification is a practice of "saving all beings."

The Ten Clear Mind Precepts

The Ten Clear Mind Precepts express Buddha Nature in our relations with each other. They provide the basis for our specific guidelines for wise and skillful behavior. For the practice at Bozeman Zen Group, each precept has a guideline for the sangha, for the teacher, and additional versions with commentary.

Clear Mind Precept 1. I vow to protect life, not to kill.

Sangha guidelines. Do not bring weapons to the Dharma Hall; do not threaten others; do not kill the spirit of our sangha's goal to offer a safe place for spiritual practice with derogatory speech in person, in email, or with body language.

Teacher guidelines. Be aware of the power of position and do not misuse status or authority to achieve special consideration or to diminish or manipulate others.

Note: Sangha teachers are expected to follow both Sangha and Teacher guidelines listed.

Comment

A disciple of Buddha does not kill but rather cultivates and encourages life.

We take up the path of not killing.

This precept expresses our intent to live compassionately and harmlessly. When understood in its broadest context, not killing means not harming, especially not harming the body or psyche of another. Physical violence and abusive behavior (including physical threats, extreme displays of anger, and maliciousness) are "killing." In cultivating life, we seek opportunities each moment to encourage light and growth. We also acknowledge our role, directly or in complicity with others, in the killing of other forms of life. Realistically and humbly, we acknowledge that there is no living without killing and that difficult choices must be made. This precept encourages us to choose wisely, nurture life, and reduce harm. In Sangha life this precept includes a careful look at power relations and institutional structures.

Clear Mind Precept 2. I vow to receive gifts, not to steal.

Sangha guidelines. Do not take or borrow sangha resources or materials for personal use without checking with a Board member, a Bozeman Dharma Center staff, or the teacher; do not manipulate or influence others for your own gain; practice generosity with time, money, and personal energy as much as you can, but do not pressure others to give.

Teacher guidelines. Do not assume any special status regarding access to sangha resources; practice seeing and appreciating the depth and richness of our opportunity to practice together.

Comment

A disciple of Buddha does not take what is not given but rather cultivates and encourages generosity.

We only take what is freely given, and we embrace generosity.

This precept expresses our commitment to cultivate a generous heart. At a personal level, greedy behavior harms the person who steals; on a community level, stealing harms the opportunity and the environment for Zen practice. Those who handle sangha funds or other assets have a special responsibility to take care of them and avoid their misuse or misappropriation. We recognize that the misuse of authority and status is a form of taking what is not given.

Clear Mind Precept 3. I vow to respects others, not to misuse sexuality.

Sangha guidelines. Practice awareness of how words and gestures can have a sexual connotation for others; practice clear communication if you feel inappropriately addressed in a sexual way, seeking support as needed; do not engage in sexual activity of any kind at sangha retreats and events or at Bozeman Zen practice place at any time.

Teacher guidelines. Do not initiate sexual contact with any sangha member you are in a teacher-student relationship with; do not use the authority of position to influence the sexual feelings of any sangha member toward you or toward others.

Comment

A disciple of Buddha does not misuse sexuality but rather cultivates and encourages open and honest relationships.

We do not misuse sexuality.

Sexuality is as much a part of the field of practice as any other aspect of our daily lives. Acknowledging and honoring

our sexuality is part of creating an environment where conscious, mindful and compassionate relationships can be cultivated. Special care must be taken when people of unequal status or authority enter into a sexual relationship. Everyone coming to practice at Bozeman Zen Group in any capacity has the right to be free from sexual harassment. Expression of sexual interest after being informed that such interest is unwelcome is misuse of sexuality. Remember that signals of sexuality are easily misinterpreted.

Clear Mind Precept 4. I vow to be truthful, not to lie.

Sangha guidelines. Do not mislead others in the sangha by what is said or what is withheld; when communicating with others, consider the adage “Is it true? Is it the right time? Is it helpful?” If you are unsure of the truthfulness of your own view or another’s, ask questions.

Teacher guidelines. Remember the weight of your words, actions, and body language, and practice gentleness and truthfulness; hold confidences from practice discussion/dokusan very carefully, making absolutely sure that you ask the student for permission if there is a need to consult with other teachers in a way that involves sharing a confidence.

Comment

A disciple of Buddha does not lie but rather cultivates and encourages truthful communication.

We speak the truth as well as cultivate and encourage it.

The precept “not to lie” is particularly important for community life. While ethical transgressions can involve

any of the precepts, deceit is often involved. Lying to oneself, to another, or to one's community obscures the nature of reality and hinders the intention of bodhisattva practice. Within our community life, lying can also entail the deliberate withholding of information. Open and direct communication is essential in our work and practice together. We are each entitled to straightforward, complete information when we request feedback regarding our behavior, standing, or performance within the community.

Clear Mind Precept 5. I vow to maintain clarity, not to intoxicate self or others.

Sangha guidelines. Study the many ways the mind can be intoxicated by substances, views, power, and passionate ideas. Be aware that harm comes easily when there is intoxication of any kind. In particular, never attend any sangha event or enter the Dharma Hall having used any intoxicant, even a moderate amount, unless you have arranged a meeting with a teacher to seek help. Understand that addictive impulses and behaviors are a powerful and important opportunity for study and practice.

Teacher guidelines. Remember the responsibility to model honest and skillful approaches to addictive impulses; be honest with students requesting support outside of regular practice times – if you have used intoxicants, call them back later.

Comment

A disciple of Buddha does not intoxicate self or others but rather cultivates and encourages clarity.

We avoid using substances to cloud our senses.

Bodhisattva practice occurs within the context of a clear mind that is not conditioned by intoxicants of any sort. When clarity is lost it is all too easy to break the other

precepts. It is our intention that the center to be an environment that supports those who are attempting to live without intoxicants. The sangha is encouraged to educate themselves about skillful ways of helping themselves and others in the face of addiction. And because denial is frequently a symptom of addiction, the Sangha is encouraged to support addicted persons in recognizing their need for help.

Clear Mind Precept 6. I vow to speak kindly, not to speak ill of others.

Sangha guidelines. Study your communication and recognize how easily it is to denigrate others, especially with joking or careless talk; consider saying less about others and seeking a positive quality to focus on. It is not our job as sangha members to point out the faults of others; seek help from teachers and friends when judgmental thoughts dominate the mind, and see this as an opportunity for practice.

Teacher guidelines. A teacher's job is to support others in understanding their karmic tendencies, *not* to straighten them out. Be very careful of the use of criticism; see also dokusan/practice discussion guidelines around confidentiality (4th precept).

Comment

A disciple of Buddha does not slander others but rather cultivates and encourages respectful speech.

We do not slander others.

This precept arises from a bodhisattva's efforts to build social harmony and understanding. False, malicious, or thoughtless statements about others are acts of separation and division. Where intention to slander does arise, the

effort to understand its roots is a wise expression of this precept.

Clear Mind Precept 7. I vow to maintain modesty, not to praise self at the expense of others.

Sangha guidelines. Seek opportunities to offer support to others and study your own needs. We all need love and support, but how easily it turns to praise seeking or self-aggrandizement; study the needy mind and be aware of what you are trying to “get” from sangha life. Always be encouraged to ask for support.

Teacher guidelines. Remember that being a Zen teacher does not make you special in any way; use the power of position to remind the sangha our shared awakened nature and never indulge in the idea that you know something others don't.

Comment

A disciple of Buddha does not praise self at the expense of others but rather cultivates and encourages self and others to abide in their awakened nature.

We endeavor to not praise ourselves at the expense of others.

While rejoicing in one's wholesome qualities and deeds is a time-honored Buddhist practice, praising oneself or seeking personal gain at the expense of others arises out of a misunderstanding of the interdependent nature of self. Within sangha life it is sometimes necessary to offer feedback to individuals or groups, but this should be done with great care and a supportive spirit. In considering the human need for support, be aware of seeking praise; remember the Lojong mind-training slogan “Don't expect applause.”

Clear Mind Precept 8. I vow to be generous, not to be possessive of anything.

Sangha guidelines. Study desire and greed in the mind as a natural part of our practice; educate yourself about sangha decision-making bodies and participate in sangha volunteer life as your circumstances allow; practice gratitude and recognize that the work of many beings that makes our practice center possible.

Teacher guidelines. Don't be possessive or obscure about the use of power in the sangha: practice accountability and transparency when in a decision-making leadership role; also take the time to explain to others the parameters of the role you are holding (which "hat" you are wearing).

Comment

A disciple of Buddha is not possessive of anything but rather encourages mutual support.

We are non-possessive.

Bozeman Zen Group has both physical and human assets, which support everyone's practice of awakening. Neither the resources of the sangha nor any position within it are the possession of any one person. In the spirit of non-possessiveness, decision-making bodies at Bozeman Zen should make decisions cooperatively and accountably; with a wholehearted effort to consider various points of view. Our finances, decision-making structure, and minutes of major decision-making bodies should be made available in an accessible and understandable form.

Clear Mind Precept 9. I vow to be loving, not to harbor ill will.

Sangha guidelines. Study anger and ill will in the mind as a natural part of practice; learn about and consider using the *Clear Communication* guidelines when heat arises for you in sangha life.

Teacher guidelines. Recognize the incredible power of anger, studying it in yourself and seeking support when it clouds your vision in sangha life.

Comment

A disciple of Buddha does not harbor ill will but rather cultivates loving kindness and understanding.

We cultivate and encourage loving kindness and understanding.

Anger and strong emotion are natural, but the harboring of ill will is a poison in individuals and for the community. Even more corrosive is the harboring of ideas of revenge. Sangha members having conflicts or tensions with others or with decision-making bodies should attempt to explore and, if possible, resolve them in the spirit of honesty, humility, and loving kindness.

Clear Mind Precept 10. I vow to cherish and polish the Three Treasures.

Sangha guidelines. When feeling discouraged by Zen or Buddhist teachings, or our sangha's way of expressing those teachings, find constructive ways to express concerns and be careful of the toxicity of complaint. Investigate discouragement and doubt as a further opportunity for study.

Teacher guidelines. As teachers this precept is central to every action in our lives inside and outside of the Dharma Hall. All we do should be an expression of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Continue to study the Buddha nature of yourself and all things, the Dharma teachings, and the rich unfolding of Sangha life and your place in it.

Comment

A disciple of Buddha does not abuse the Three Treasures but rather cultivates and encourages awakening, the path and teaching of awakening, and the community that takes refuge in awakening.

We honor the Three Treasures.

The Three Treasures are inseparable from one another: awakening informs our practice and our community life, practice informs community life and our awakening, and our community life informs our awakening and our practice. To abuse any one of the treasures harms the other two. We acknowledge our transgressions, seek reconciliation, and renew our commitment to the precepts as the working of Buddha nature.

Clear Communication Process

With acknowledgement and gratitude to Red Cedar Zen Community for this practice.

Being together, and seeing together, the truths of our differences.

In the context of practice, differences can be opportunities to explore our minds and hearts and to develop ways to communicate clearly. Working together in our practice and volunteer roles, we usually find that our interactions are positive and beneficial, but sometimes we discover that we have opposing needs or goals. When this happens, the frustration we can feel may lead to misunderstanding, even to feeling affronted or threatened. We may react defensively or angrily without understanding why we are upset. A conflict can ensue.

Conflict is felt internally, but we can believe it is caused entirely by something or someone external to us. However, although an event or action has *triggered* a negative reaction in us, it has not actually *caused* our reaction. Because we so closely associate our feeling with what triggered it, we can mistakenly believe that the other person is solely responsible. Depending on our own personal history and experiences, our egos can be aroused and lead us to believe we are not safe, not welcome, not important, not loved. When these fears occur, it is important for us to look deeply at ourselves, to understand what causes and conditions we bring to the situation. Buddhist teachings are very helpful here.

In the context of sangha, we can use miscommunication or conflict as an opportunity to examine our needs and how better to fulfill them. Talking honestly and listening deeply to each other allows us to grow in wisdom and compassion. We can come to understand why we have reacted as we have. We can learn about the needs and reactions of others. With the new awareness we find together, we can better support each other, strengthening our individual practice as well as deepening our trust in sangha.

The tools and models offered here for resolving differences are *skillful means* to help us treat disagreements seriously, along with some lightness. Following is an outline of suggested steps to take when conflict arises and we feel the need to explore a situation.

Looking at Options for Resolution

Part A. Before Taking Action, Reflect on Your Part in a Conflict

1. Self-Observation. To understand your present state of being, sit in zazen:

- ❖ Notice emotional states – if you feel angry, see if you can identify feelings *under* the anger, and if so, make an effort to acknowledge and experience those feelings.
- ❖ Notice the sensations in your body.
- ❖ Notice thoughts coming, going. Notice if and how they change.
- ❖ Be curious about why this situation is so important to you.

2. Self-Inquiry. To determine what you want to do about the conflict, ask yourself:

- ❖ What specifically is the dispute, difference, or conflict I am experiencing?
- ❖ With whom do I have this difference? What do I know about this person?
- ❖ When did the conflict arise and under what conditions did I experience it?
- ❖ What specifically triggered my reaction?
- ❖ What need do I have that is not being fulfilled because of this difference/dispute?
- ❖ Do I want to resolve these differences? (Am I ready to talk to the other person without blaming?)
- ❖ Can I resolve this dispute in a kind and respectful way?
- ❖ Which precepts apply to this situation, my needs, agendas, goals, or intentions?
- ❖ Given these reflections, do I still have a problem that I want to resolve?

3. Help for Further Self-Exploration. If you would like help in understanding your reactions and feelings, you can speak with:

- ❖ An EAR (Ethics And Reconciliation) committee member. This is a designated sangha member authorized to facilitate the resolution of conflicts within the sangha, who may help you to explore your feelings further.
- ❖ A sangha teacher, who may help you find ways to explore the difficult feelings as a practice of “turning toward,” rather than away from, difficulty.
- ❖ A sangha friend, who may listen objectively and help you process your feelings.

4. Choosing to Reconcile with Another. To ensure a positive experience and outcome from a conflict resolution meeting, it is important to approach the other person as a dharma friend. In order to foster a willingness to learn together:

- ❖ Sit in zazen together at one or more of our regular zazen sessions.
- ❖ Spend informal time, at the zendo or in a casual setting, with the person without discussing the difficulty yet.
- ❖ Think about what you have in common and also what you like or admire about the person, so as to soften a little any anxiety and negative feelings.
- ❖ Wait until you feel ready, but don't wait forever, to initiate a meeting. When you feel able to speak respectfully with the other person, plan how you will ask to meet her/him, and then invite the person to meet.
- ❖ Tell him/her what you want to talk about, but don't go into detail or use blaming language. For example, say, "I'd like to talk about how we can share our volunteer job more equally," or "I'd like to discuss the disagreement we had last week. I've had some further thoughts."

If you need help contacting the person, ask an EAR committee member to set up the meeting and even facilitate it if you feel that will help you. If you (or the other person) choose not to address the issue together, you can still gain a lot by continued self-reflection.

You can explore other ways in which you can get your needs met. You can work with a teacher or steward to help you practice with your experience. In any case, return to Step 1 and observe over time the quality of your relationship with the other person—how it changes, what improves it, what makes it worse. Much can be learned from being attentive to the other person as well as to your

own feelings. The key is to take responsibility for your own experience.

Part B. Exploring the Conflict: Meeting Together

A conflict exploration meeting has three stages: 1) stating and listening to the facts of the situation, 2) restating what each person has heard (and correcting any errors in what was said or heard), and 3) resolving the problem together by reconciling and planning for needed changes in behavior.

1. Stating the Actual. The first task is to express and understand the facts of the situation so that everyone starts from the same place.

Because we don't really know the causes and conditions of another person's behavior, in order to resolve a disagreement, we must first state and review all the facts. Only then can we begin to develop a solution together. Follow these steps to begin the communication process:

- ❖ Each person, one at a time, describes the situation leading to the disagreement, stating who, what, when, and where the problem/situation occurred, e.g., "I believe I was assigned to do the orientation Wednesday evening, but when I arrived to do it, you were already doing it."
- ❖ Each person, one at a time, describes his/her feelings about the situation.
- ❖ Avoid blaming or accusing the other person.
- ❖ It is best not tell the other person what to do (later you will work together to make a plan for the future).
- ❖ Speak only for yourself. Use "I"- statements, e.g., "When I found my work had been changed, I felt confused and discounted." "I thought my role was to clean the altar, so I felt I wasn't being trusted to do my job when I found it had already been cleaned."

- ❖ Follow the Buddha's advice about beneficial communication: "It is spoken at the right time. It is spoken in truth. It is spoken affectionately. It is spoken beneficially. It is spoken with a mind of goodwill."

A member of the EAR committee can coach the parties individually before the meeting to help them prepare I-statements. Or he/she can also coach them during the meeting if needed. The EAR committee member can also coach them in "Dipping" and "Looping" techniques (see *Resources for Communication and Ethical Conduct* for a description of this process).

2. Listening Deeply. While each person is stating what they believe is the actual and their feelings about it, the other person is "Listening Deeply," which allows a situation to unfold in affection and mutual respect. To listen deeply:

- ❖ Stay focused on listening rather than on preparing your response.
- ❖ Practice non-attachment to your experience and the experience of the other person.
- ❖ Listen to yourself when you speak (your tone of voice); observe your body language and the energy behind your words.
- ❖ Keep "beginner's mind" and "not knowing" foremost.
- ❖ Keep your sense of inquiry, exploration, and curiosity working. Spontaneous insight needs some freedom from discursive thought in order to arise.

3. Restating What You Heard. To avoid making assumptions, interpretations, and judgments about what was said, it is important to check that each person has correctly heard what the other has said:

- ❖ Each person, one at a time, briefly restates what the other has said or what was heard, allowing the

restatement to be rephrased or corrected so that the speaker agrees that it is complete and accurate.

- ❖ If a member of the EAR committee is present, he/she can also state what he/she heard from each person and check if that is what was intended.

Take the time needed for this step, as it becomes the first instance of agreement between the two people, laying the foundation for change. Also, be prepared for the possibility that you won't agree right away and that you may need to meet more than once.

4. *Reconciliation and Action Planning.* Having discovered and acknowledged how each person has contributed to the disagreement, each person can share any further reflections, as appropriate and desired:

- ❖ Be specific about the words and deeds you may now wish to change.
- ❖ Ask yourself, "When I consider there is no fundamental difference between myself and the other person, do I still have a conflict with him/her?"
- ❖ If appropriate, offer an apology and ask for and receive forgiveness.
- ❖ Discuss and agree upon a plan for how you will communicate together in the future.
- ❖ If appropriate, set a future time to review your roles and relationship in order to continue on course together.
- ❖ If possible, conclude with gratitude toward each other (and the EAR committee member).

The Practice of Communication and Ethical Conduct

More on *Listening Deeply* – Zoketsu Norman Fischer

Listen with full presence and with as few preconceptions or desires as possible.

Listening takes radical openness to another and radical openness requires surrender.

Listening is magic: it turns a person from an object outside, opaque or dimly threatening, into an intimate experience, and therefore into a friend. In this way, listening softens and transforms the listener.

Listening requires fearless self-confidence that is not egotism. It is . . . faith in yourself . . . to learn something completely new.

To listen is to shed, as much as possible, all of our protective mechanisms.

Simply be present with what you hear without trying to figure it out or control it.

To listen is to be radically receptive to others.

You are aware of all your preconceptions, desires, and delusions; all that prevent you from listening.

Listening is dangerous. It might cause you to hear something you don't like, to consider its validity, and therefore to think something you never thought before, or to feel something you never felt before, and perhaps never wanted to feel. Such change in ourselves . . . is the risk of

listening, and this is why it is automatic for us not to want to listen.

To really listen is to accord respect. Without respect no human relationships can function normally.

So much of what we actually feel and think is unacceptable to us. We have been conditioned over a lifetime to simply not hear all of our own self-pity, anger, desire, jealousy . . . our “adult response” is no more than our unconscious decision not to listen to what goes on inside us.

From *Taking our Places: The Buddhist Path to Truly Growing Up* (HarperOne, 2004)

Dipping and Looping: A Mindful Communication Technique

Mindful listening is giving your full moment-to-moment attention to another person with a nonjudgmental mind, and every time your attention wanders away, gently bringing it back.

Looping is checking back with the person to see if they have listened and understood the other person correctly. Looping is a collaborative project in which both people work together to help the listener fully understand the speaker.

Dipping is checking in with ourselves. We do not listen to others because our own feelings and internal chatter, often in reaction to what the other person said, distract us. Just notice and acknowledge them. Know that they are there, try not to judge them, and let them go if they are willing to go. If feelings or other internal distracters decide to stay around, let them be and just be aware of how they may affect your listening. You can think of dipping as self-directed mindfulness during listening. Dipping is also

useful when we speak. We can see what feelings arise as we speak. We may talk about them, or if we prefer, simply acknowledge them, try not to judge them, and let them go if they are willing to go.

So we listen and dip, and then loop. Listen, dip and loop. To listen and dip at the same time, we need to develop a skill, which is similar to central and peripheral vision. Focus on the listening (central vision) and be aware of your feelings and internal chatter (peripheral vision).

From webpage, *The Tao of Wealth* –
www.thetaofwealth.wordpress.com

More Resources

Books on Sangha, Communication, and Conflict Resolution

- Norman Fischer. *Training in Compassion: Zen Teachings on the Practice of Lojong*.
Especially see Chapter 7, “The Discipline of Relationship,” pages 95-123.
- Norman Fischer. *Taking our Places: the Buddhist Path to Truly Growing Up*.
- Thich Nhat Hanh. *Joyfully Together: The Art of Building a Harmonious Community*.
- Douglas Stone, et al. *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*.
- Marshall Rosenberg & Arun Gandhi. *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*.

Books on the Zen Precepts

- Norman Fischer. *Taking Our Places: The Buddhist Path to Truly Growing Up*.

- Robert Aitken. *The Mind of Clover: Essays in Zen Buddhist Ethics*.
- Reb Anderson. *Being Upright: Zen Meditation and the Bodhisattva Precepts*.
- John Daido Looi. *The Heart of Being: Moral and Ethical Teachings of Zen Buddhism*.
- Diane Eshin Rizzetto. *Waking Up to What You Do: A Zen Practice for Meeting Every Situation with Intelligence and Compassion*.

Handouts / Local Documents

- Levels of Communication— definitions for good listening and conflict resolution.
- Sangha Conversation July 31, 2013 Notes—excellent suggestions by sangha members about what to include in our communication and conflict resolution resources.

Online

- Dharma Rain Zen Center (Portland) has comprehensive vision and mission and philosophy statements that support a detailed process for good communication and conflict resolution. Documents are available at <http://www.dharma-rain.org> under “About Dharma Rain.” Most pertinent to our purpose is their six-step Grievance and Reconciliation Process.

Bozeman Zen Group is a 501(c) non-profit organization.

The Ethics and Reconciliation Committee

From Boundless Way Ethics Code

In the course of daily sangha interactions, disagreements, conflicts, misunderstandings and/or unethical behavior can occur. Sometimes the ethical boundaries involved are not obvious or clear. The Ethics and Reconciliation (EAR) Committee will be formed as a standing committee of Bozeman Zen Group to assist in resolving conflicts as well as to pursue a resolution of more serious complaints. Members of the sangha are encouraged to bring concerns to any member of the EAR Committee for consultation, support, and advice or to file a written complaint if they believe that unethical behavior or misconduct has occurred.

The BZG Board of Directors, the founder and the abiding teacher determine the number and membership of the EAR Committee. Members are appointed by consensus of all three. Tenure is for two years and members' terms will be staggered so that there is always at least one member on the EAR Committee serving a second year. The names of the EAR Committee members will be posted on the BZG website.

Confidentiality

We understand confidentiality to be a reasonable assumption of privacy. However, it is not a strict code of secrecy. A central part of our practice is spiritual direction. There is a right to a reasonable sense of

confidentiality regarding what is said in dokusan or similar interviews. However, it is the practice of this community that the senior Dharma teachers and transmitted teachers consult with each other and hold confidentiality among themselves rather than alone. Personal details disclosed during interviews not relevant to practice in the judgment of the teachers are not shared.

When complaints are made or concerns are expressed to a member of the EAR Committee, one should not expect these things to be held in secret. The matter will be brought to the attention of the whole EAR Committee.

Professional Conflicts

Some participants of the Bozeman Zen Group may be psychotherapists, coaches, physicians, attorneys, contractors and others who may offer services to other members of our sangha. It is important to be mindful of the complexities that can arise in dual relationships, and while we do not discourage these relationships, we ask all to be mindful of potential abuses. Teachers, psychotherapists, ministers and other professionals are expected to abide by the ethical codes of their professions. Teachers and others in authority in Bozeman Zen have a responsibility to anticipate and avoid potential conflicts of interest. All matters of a financial nature among members of the sangha should be engaged in with open hearts and clear heads. If there are questions or concerns about conflicts of interest, it is appropriate to bring these to a member of the EAR Committee.

Raising Concerns

We are human and so contain within our hearts and minds all the possibilities of being human. Something may happen within our sangha that causes concern. Ideally we can approach one another and speak of any such concern. This informal approach is strongly encouraged as a first step. Sometimes this doesn't feel comfortable or right, or perhaps, even safe. If so, a process is in place to guide the way toward reconciliation and/or resolution. Should an ethical concern arise, the sooner one can consult the EAR Committee, the better.

An EAR Committee member will immediately inform the other EAR Committee members whenever any matter of concern or a complaint has been brought to them. Details of such matters will be handled with discretion as far as possible within the guidelines of the informal and formal procedures.

Informal Procedure

When disagreements, conflicts, misunderstandings, and miscommunication occur, it is strongly recommended that the individuals involved seek a resolution through discussion and dialogue. However, when this proves difficult, the EAR Committee can facilitate reconciliation or resolution informally.

A first step may involve a meeting between the member with a concern and a single member of the EAR Committee, who will first offer a listening ear and counsel. Through this conversation matters are sometimes clarified and resolved. Perhaps additional consultation with the full EAR Committee may be

helpful.

If a satisfactory resolution of the concern is not possible through consultation, the EAR Committee may offer to facilitate a dialogue between the parties. This could involve a face-to-face meeting of the parties with one or more members of the EAR Committee.

If consultation or dialogue between the parties is not possible or does not lead to a satisfactory resolution in a timely manner (typically no longer than 45 days), the EAR Committee may decide to conclude the informal procedure. Thereafter, one or more of the parties involved may choose to engage the formal procedures discussed below.

Because this informal procedure is strictly optional and is not intended to be used in cases of alleged unethical behavior or misconduct, no records, minutes, or notes of the discussions or activities involved will be maintained by Bozeman Zen.

Formal Procedure

Matters involving significant unethical behavior or misconduct, inappropriate sexual conduct, abusive behavior, harassment, incompetence, or the use of position for personal gain or exploitation should quickly be brought to the whole EAR Committee as a formal complaint. Formal complaints must be submitted to the EAR Committee in writing. The complaint must be signed and dated by the complainant and should describe the alleged behavior, a history of any attempts to resolve the matter informally, and a general statement about the desired consequences. Typically, formal complaints cannot be made on behalf of another

person or persons, but only on behalf of oneself.
Anonymous complaints will not be accepted.

The following are exceptions in which a complaint may be submitted that does not concern one's own self. Anyone aware of the following matters should bring them to the attention of the EAR Committee immediately by submitting a formal written complaint: misappropriation of funds, gross incompetence in leadership or teaching, or anything that a therapist or minister would be mandated by law to report, such as suspected abuse or neglect of a child, an elder, or a disabled person.

Due to the internal nature of our codes and ethics, we have a concern about possible collusion if there is intimidation, coercion, severe unethical behavior, especially by a leader – that a complaint to the EAR committee may feel insufficient or even dangerous, so bringing concerns to law enforcement with possible civil suit action is a citizen's right and a course to be aware of. Any behavior, which is suspected to be in violation of the State of Montana law, must be reported to local authorities, by filing a police report and full cooperation by the Bozeman Zen Group's EAR Committee, the Board of Directors and leadership who have no conflict of interest will be given to any ensuing investigation.

This formal procedure is for the broad community engaged in Zen practice with Bozeman Zen Group. Therefore, any participant in BZG activities may use this process.

When a formal written complaint is received, the EAR Committee has sole responsibility for two specific decisions (by majority vote): (1) determining whether or

not the alleged unethical behavior or misconduct has occurred, and (2) if it concludes that unethical behavior or misconduct has occurred, to determine any consequences, excluding sanctions against the transmitted teachers and expulsion from the sangha.

(If the EAR Committee decides that interviews are appropriate it must interview all parties.)

In cases involving transmitted teachers, if the EAR Committee determines that sanctions should be imposed, it will forward its recommendation to the Board of Directors. In cases that do not involve transmitted teachers, if the EAR Committee determines that the consequence should be expulsion, it will forward its recommendation to the Board. Final decisions will be made by the Board of Directors, and when appropriate, in collaboration with the guiding teacher.

There are many possible consequences to a complaint. While healing and reconciliation is the goal, this is not always possible in a manner that satisfies all parties. Among the possible responses by the EAR Committee are a finding of no unethical behavior or misconduct, suggesting a mediated resolution, a reversal of an administrative decision or action, a private and mediated apology, a private reprimand, follow-up meetings with affected parties, a public apology, public censure, reparation when possible, a recommendation for psychological counseling or similar program, a period of probation, expulsion from the sangha, and suspension or dismissal from a leadership or teaching position.

A written complaint to the EAR Committee under this

formal procedure may be submitted to any member of the EAR Committee. Anyone who submits a complaint with the EAR Committee must be given a written acknowledgment of receipt of the complaint and a copy of the Bozeman Zen Group Ethics Code within 30 days of the submission of the complaint. The EAR Committee must notify the complainant in writing of its decision regarding the complaint and any consequences within 120 days of submission of the complaint.

Either party involved in a complaint may appeal an EAR Committee's decision to the Board.

The EAR Committee will retain the complaint and related documents, including written decisions, for such period, as it considers appropriate. The EAR Committee must create minutes of its meetings during which the complaint is discussed and the Committee will also retain these minutes.

Procedures Outline - Summaries

Informal Procedures (optional):

Discussion and dialogue between the parties involved.

Consultation with a member or members of the EAR Committee.

A meeting between the parties involved facilitated by the EAR Committee. Formal Procedures:

A written complaint is submitted to the EAR Committee.

Within 30 days - the EAR Committee acknowledges receipt of the complaint in writing and provides a copy of the Bozeman Zen Group Ethics Code to the complainant.

Within 120 days - the EAR Committee informs the complainant and the subject of the complaint of its decision regarding the alleged conduct and the consequences if any.

In no case will the complainant be informed of the results of the complaint longer than 120 days from the submission of the complaint.