

The Village

eView

September 6, 2017

Colette Hoff, Editor

Spiritual practice is not just sitting and meditating. Practice is looking, thinking, touching, drinking, eating, and talking. Every act, every breath, and every step can be practice and can help us to become more ourselves.

Thich Nhat Hanh

PRACTICE

Every discipline has a set of activities that requires mindful attention. Anything routine in life can be supported when you label it a practice. Practice is defined as:

1. *the actual application or use of an idea, belief, or method as opposed to theories about such application or use: repeated exercise in or performance of an activity or skill so as to acquire or maintain proficiency in it.*
2. *repeated exercise in or performance of an activity or skill so as to acquire or maintain proficiency in it.*
3. *perform (an activity) or exercise (a skill) repeatedly or regularly in order to improve or maintain one's proficiency (verb).*

All this really means is that now is the time to put the intentions we claimed at the Human Relations Laboratory into practice. Perhaps you started a new behavior like meditation and trying it on your own it is more difficult. Instead of giving up in disgust with yourself, gently remember your intention and begin again.

This week Mike writes about practice and the article which follows is from an on-line weekly

On-Line News of the Goodenough Community System:

The American Association for the Furtherance of Community

Convocation: A Church and Ministry

Mandala Resources, Inc.

Sahale Learning Center

The EcoVillage at Sahale

Be Mind Full of Good

What's in your mind?

The Practice:

Be mind full of good.

Why?

It's kind of amazing: right now, what you think and feel, enjoy and suffer, is changing your brain. The brain is the organ that learns, designed by evolution to be changed by our experiences: what scientists call *experience-dependent neuroplasticity*.

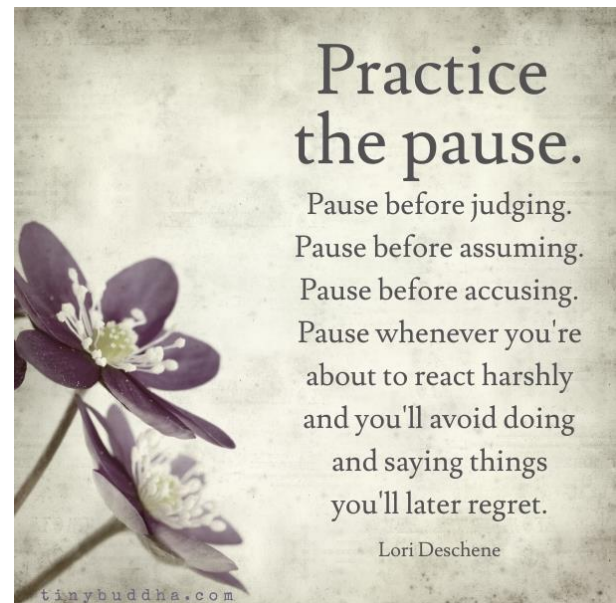
Neurons that fire together, wire together. This means that each one of us has the power to use the mind to change the brain to change the mind for the better. To benefit oneself and other beings.

Using this internal power is more important than ever these days, when so many of us are pushed and prodded by external forces – the economy, media, politics, workplace policies, war on the other side of the world, the people on the other side of the dining room table – and by our reactions to them.

Life is often hard. To cope with hard things, to be effective and successful, or simply to experience ordinary well-being, we need resources inside, *inner strengths* like resilience, compassion, gratitude and other positive emotions, self-worth, and insight.

Some strengths are innate – built into your DNA – but most are acquired, woven over time into the fabric of your brain. These lasting traits come from passing states – experiences of the inner strength – that get *installed* into the brain. You become more grateful through internalizing repeated experiences of gratitude; you become more compassionate through internalizing repeated experiences of compassion; etc.

So far, so obvious. But here's the catch: without this installation – without the transfer of the experience from short-term memory buffers to long-term storage – beneficial experiences such as feeling cared about are momentarily pleasant but have no lasting value. Yikes! There is no learning, no growth, no change for the better.



Meanwhile, your brain is rapidly and efficiently turning unpleasant, negative experiences – feeling frazzled, stressed, worried, frustrated, irritated, inadequate, hurt, etc. – into neural structure. To help our ancestors survive in harsh conditions, the brain evolved a *negativity bias* that makes it good at learning from bad experiences but relatively bad at learning from good ones – even though learning from good experiences is the main way to grow the inner strengths we all need.

In effect, today our brains have a well-intended, universal learning disability because they've been painstakingly built over millions of years for peak performance . . . in Stone Age conditions.

Most of us are pretty good at having beneficial experiences – but pretty bad at installing them in the brain. Similarly, most therapists, mindfulness teachers, coaches, parents, and human resources trainers are pretty good at encouraging beneficial experiences in others, but pretty bad at helping them get installed in those brains; this was certainly true for me.

In effect, most beneficial experiences are wasted most of the time. The result is a learning curve, a growth rate, that is a lot flatter than it needs to be.

Poignantly, because we are not internalizing most of our wholesome, beneficial experiences – authentic moments of feeling relaxed, capable, peaceful, glad, successful, contented, appreciated, loved, and loving – we feel emptier inside than we truly deserve to feel. And we become a lot easier to manipulate by fear, consumerism, and “us vs. them” conflicts.

What can we do?

We can use the mind to change the brain for the better.

How?

Here's the essence: Have It, Enjoy It.

In other words, have a beneficial experience in the first place – usually because you simply notice one you are already having: you're already feeling a bit of ease, relief, pleasure, connection, warmth, determination, confidence, clarity, hope, etc. And it's fine to *create* beneficial experiences, such as deliberately thinking of things you feel thankful for, or calling up compassion for someone in pain, or recalling how it felt in your body to assert yourself with someone who was being pushy.



Then, once you've got that good experience going, really enjoy it: taking 5, 10, or more seconds to protect and stay with it, and open to it in your body. The longer and more intensely those neurons fire together, the more they'll be wiring this inner strength into your brain.

This is *positive neuroplasticity*, the essence of self-reliance: taking in everyday experiences to develop more inner strengths such as grit, confidence, kindness, emotional balance, happiness, patience, and self-awareness.

I don't believe in positive thinking. You're not overlooking the pains, losses, or injustices in life. I believe in *realistic* thinking, seeing the whole mosaic of reality, the good, the bad, and the neutral. Precisely because life is often hard – and because we've got a brain that's relatively poor at growing the inner strengths needed to deal with these challenges – we need to focus on the good facts in life, let them become good experiences, and then help these experiences really sink in.

Practice as embodied knowledge

Practice as a skilful performance with artefacts

Practice as implicit knowledge, as the implicit logic of doing things

(Reckwitz 2003)



Most of the time you take in the good will be in the flow of life, maybe half a dozen times a day, usually less than half a minute at a time. You can also use more structured moments, such as at meals, after exercising or meditation, or just before bed.

Besides being more open in general to beneficial experiences, you can look for those specific experiences that will grow the particular inner strength(s) that will help you the most these days. For example, if you're feeling anxious, look for authentic opportunities to feel supported, protected, resourced, tough-minded, relaxed, or calm. If life feels disappointing or blah, look for the genuine facts that naturally support experiences of gladness, gratitude, pleasure, accomplishment, or effectiveness. If you feel lonely or inadequate, look for the real occasions when you are included, seen, appreciated, liked, or loved – and open to feeling appropriately cared about, and valued; also look for chances to feel caring yourself, since love is love whether it is flowing in or flowing out.

Our beneficial experiences are usually mild – a 1 or 2 on the 0-10 scale of intensity – but they are real. Any single time you let these experiences really land inside you won't change your life. But much as a cup of water is filled drop by drop, you'll be changing your brain synapse by synapse for the better – and your life for the better as well.

And with a mind full of good, you'll have more to offer others. Growing the good in them, too, in widening ripples seen and unseen, perhaps reaching eventually around the whole world.

Knowledge is a treasure, but practice is the key to it.

Meditation practice isn't about trying to throw ourselves away and become something better. It's about befriending who we are already. The ground of practice is you or me or whoever we are right now, just as we are. That's the ground, that's what we study, that's what we come to know with tremendous curiosity and interest.

Pema Chodron

QuoteAddicts.com



The deAnguera Blog: A Weekend of Practice



What should a practice look like? Maybe Ashley drawing "Love Everybody" with chalk on the pavement. Or how about a bunch of us jamming in the Log Building with whatever was available.

Why practice anything? Well, the more I practice, the better at it I get at it. I can write good articles because I have practiced it once a week for several years. It also helps to get feedback on my practice. That's how I know I am on target.

Jamming with Brandon, Ashley and others felt great especially as we got into rhythm with each other. I suspect this is how most bands get started. Playing with things is a really great way to get good at it. It builds synapses or electrical circuits into the brain. That's why it gets easier over time.

The worst aspect of school in my opinion is the grading. Since the GPA is the all-important thing to get into and survive in college it discourages experimentation and playing around. In music you have to audition to get into college. If my audition didn't make it would I still want to practice?

The best reason to practice anything is just because I love it. Any other reason is a betrayal of myself and probably won't be me at my best. The reward has to be in the skill itself. That's even true for meditation. Here the reward is a sense of calm allowing a retuning of myself to take place.

I jammed with a bunch of friends and was good at it from the very first moment. I messed around with some drums and other noise makers including a rain stick. The feedback we gave each other might encourage me to try out other instruments. Doing anything with others feels much better than doing it alone.

This was Labor Day Weekend, a time most folks like to spend being couch potatoes (It is getting harder to travel around in traffic). We spent it WORKING! Can you believe that?

Our Workaways added a nice artistic touch to the door of the garbage can storage area beside the new storage shed. They drilled holes in the door and put a marble in every hole. Other examples of their artwork include the "Sahale" sign right on the ground beside the hot tub. It was done with arranging stones in a pattern.

Sahale is itself a practice in serving each other. Whether it is in serving meals, gardening, laundry, or cleaning the hot tub it keeps us working at making our community work. What would life be like for each of us without Sahale?

A bunch of us came out here for Labor Day Weekend. Would we have done that if we were still going to Seabeck? Seabeck never gave us a chance to sink down roots. It would have been a place just to have Lab. We could never have shared it with other folks like our Workaways.



Looking for salmon. Maybe a bit of meditation?

Our upcoming Pathwork program is another way to sharpen your practices and join with others for a mutually supportive experience.

Pathwork

Joan Valles

Pathwork, a program of Convocation: A Church and Ministry, meets from 7 to 9:30 p.m. on alternate Sundays as an interfaith circle of practice under the leadership of Colette Hoff.

This autumn the Pathwork circle is going to continue working with Lab, partially drawing upon the work of Rick Hanson and his book, *Buddha's Brain*. Anyone who is interested in continuing work begun at Lab or anyone wishing to explore the idea of using your brain to change your mind and move beyond habitual patterns is invited to join. You need not have attended Lab to participate. For those who attended it's an opportunity to enhance the experience; for those who did not, it's an opportunity to learn about this transformative work.

The next Pathwork circle gathering is on **September 10**, with subsequent dates Sept. 24, Oct. 8 and 22; Nov. 5 and 19, and Dec. 3 and 17 in the Community Center in West Seattle. Check the eView for confirmation of these dates or possible changes. For additional information, contact Colette (hoff@goodenough.org).

*Skillful speech not only means
that we pay attention
to the words we speak
and to their tone
but also requires that our words
reflect compassion
and concern for others
and that they help and heal,
rather than wound and destroy.*

*~Bhante Henepola Gunaratana
(1927 to pres., Sri Lankan Buddhist Monk)*

Inner peace can be reached only when we
practice forgiveness!

~Gerald Jampolsky

Third Age: Friday September 8th

We will be meeting at Joan's home in Tukwila!

Kirsten Rohde

Our first Third Age gathering of the fall will be Friday, September 8th. We are planning to watch a showing of Frontline's broadcast on "Being Mortal," the highly acclaimed book by Atul Gawande. This could be the basis for some good conversation!

The Third Age gatherings are sponsored by the Goodenough Community and are for anyone age 60 and older. We gather for a potluck dinner from 6-7pm, main dish provided, and then meet from 7-9pm.

I hope you can join us this Friday.

Regardless of topic we find ourselves laughing and caring for each other. We are always open to newcomers. **This evening only, we will be meeting at Joan Valles' home in Tukwila. For directions and to confirm your plans to come on September 8th, email Joan Valles: joanvalles70@yahoo.com**

I have a dream . . .

Hello friends! I would love if you considered donating to help fund my dream to meet my birth parents. (no donation is too small). <https://www.gofundme.com/maris-birth-family-search>

Outcast Productions, Whidbey Island

A KID LIKE JAKE

by Daniel Pearle

directed by Ned Farley

On the eve of the admissions cycle for Manhattan's most exclusive private schools, Alex and Greg have high hopes for their son Jake, a precocious four-year-old who happens to prefer Cinderella to G.I. Joe.

But as the process continues, Jake's behavior becomes erratic and perplexing, and other adults in his life start to wonder whether his

fondness for dress-up might be cause for concern. The story of a husband and wife struggling to do right by their son, A KID LIKE JAKE is a study of intimacy and parenthood and the fantasies that accompany both.

CAST

Alex - Sommer Harris

Greg - Nate Edmiston

Judy - Gretchen D'Armand

Nurse - Chelsea Matthews-Jensen

September 15, 16, 22, 23, 28, 29 & 30

@ 7:30pm

Sunday, September 24 @ 4pm

Purchase your tickets by credit card at:

<http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3063191>

or email us at ocp@whidbey.com to reserve tickets and pay at the door by check. Tickets are \$14 students/seniors & \$18 adults
Thursday, September 28 - all tickets \$12

Doors open 30 minutes prior to each performance.

Music from Sommer Harris! We all enjoyed hearing Sommer perform in the Swamp this year. Below is a link where you can download some of her music. The link is to *bandcamp*, where you can download music that she has written and recorded! This is a link to just one of the albums, and the older album can be reached by clicking on it on the right side of the screen.

<https://sommerrharris.bandcamp.com/album/in-search-of-a-new-myth>



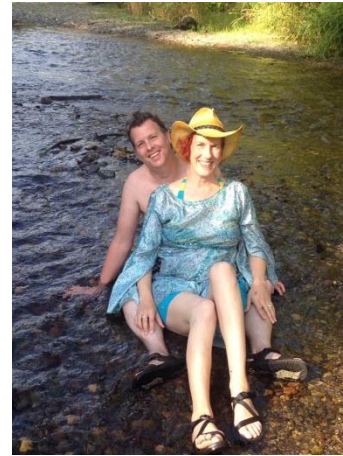
Birthdays & Anniversaries

- **Happy birthday, Barbara Brucker - September 9**
- **Happy birthday, Drai Schindler - September 10**
- **Happy birthday, Claudia Fitch - September 11.**
- **Happy 5th birthday, Cooper Roosevelt Jarrett-Jefferson - September 12**



Observed at Sahale over Labor Day Weekend

Families, cider making, river play...



Notice the cider operation just outside the log building! It worked very well and was very easy to clean up. Cider is good too.



South Sound Women's Drum Circle

Friday Sept. 8, 2017 7 - 9pm
The State Capital Museum COACH HOUSE
211 **22nd** Ave. SW; Olympia, WA 98501

Let us gather to celebrate the harvest season
and abundance of our lives. Let us lay our prayers upon the drums.

In gratitude we drum, sing and dance our intentions and prayers with our
Medicine Drum, *OTTER WOMAN* and sing our songs of peace with *TURTLE HEART SONG*.

All Women Welcome - No Experience Necessary
Plenty of drums, rattles & rhythm instruments to share and bring your own
This is a drug and alcohol free event

Calendar of Programs and Events, 2017 - 2018

What makes community meaningful and fun?. The richness of life in community comes in many ways – getting together informally over a meal ... celebrating a significant birthday with long-time and newfound friends ... working together in a creative endeavor ... collaborating in a work party ... thinking deeply with others about what it means to be fully alive and connected with ourselves, each other, and Spirit ... and more.

In the Goodenough Community, we recognize such ways to connect as expressions of living life fully and in communities of all kinds. Throughout the year we offer programs that help you participate in your own development, learn about relating well with others, and discover your potential to have a good time in life and with others.

We welcome your interest and your participation, and hope that you will join us at any – or many! – of this year's events. More information about programs and upcoming events can be found on our website: www.goodenough.org



The Third Age: Those of us age 60 and older have been gathering every other month, Friday evenings in Seattle. The first gathering this fall will be Friday, **September 8** in West Seattle, from 7-9 pm with potluck dinner at 6 pm. Newcomers are welcome. Contact Kirsten Rohde for more information:

krohde14@outlook.com . September 8th only, we will be meeting at Joan Valles' home in Tukwila. For directions and to confirm your plans to come on September 8, email Joan: joanvalles70@yahoo.com

The women's program is a long-established and ever-growing way for women to enjoy each other's company, learn about themselves as women, and even perhaps to experience the Divine Feminine. Contact Hollis Guill Ryan for more information and directions to our West Seattle community home: hollisr@comcast.net
Fall dates: Saturday 10 – 2 in West Seattle: October 7 and November 4.



The men's program is an expression of the best wisdom men have gathered from their life together—about what is a good man and how he could best express that in his own life. The fall gathering at Sahale will be combined with the white tent take down and continue into the rest of the weekend as a men's gathering. **October 6-8 at Sahale.** Contact Bruce Perler for more information: bruce_perler@hotmail.com



Pathwork, a program of Convocation: a Church and Ministry. On alternate Sunday evenings an **interfaith circle of practice** meets between 7:00 and 9:00 p.m. under the leadership of Colette Hoff. This is a time to learn together about our personal development, to talk out our chosen practices for the development of a spirit filled life, and to learn the skills of joining with others in service.

In the spring of this year, we studied the religion of Islam in our desire to understand this major world religion that is in the news so much. Our intention in studying Islam has been to help counter the negativity sometimes expressed towards Muslims by gaining understanding of their faith.

Fall gatherings on Sunday evenings in West Seattle are: August 27, September 10, 24, October 8, 22 and November 5.

Contact Colette Hoff for more information: hoff@goodenough.org

Work and Play Parties throughout the Year.

Traditionally, the Goodenough Community sponsors work parties over Memorial Day weekend (**May 25 – 28, 2018**), as well as other times throughout the year, to express gratitude for the presence of our beloved retreat center, Sahale, and to experience the satisfaction of playing and working together. One below is....



Labor Day weekend: September 1-4 at Sahale. Sahale is an open weekend on the Labor Day weekend so we will be enjoying the end of summer and you are welcome to join. This is also a great time for those who attend the Human Relations Laboratory to reconnect. We will have good meals together, relax, and possibly do some early

harvesting of apples or other produce depending on what is ripe. To confirm your plans to come out to Sahale contact: Colette Hoff, hoff@goodenough.org



Summer Camp for Youth, June 24 – 30, 2018

A wonderful opportunity for children 9 to 12 to have a full camp experience in a beautiful setting with loving leadership.
Contact: Irene Perler, Irene_Perler@hotmail.com



Human Relations Laboratory, August 5 to 11, 2018

This intense and joyous week-long event is a communal experience of personal growth, and has been presented annually and is now in its 48th year! Contact: Colette Hoff, hoff@goodenough.org



True Holidays Celebration, Saturday, December 2, 2017

Be part of this fun-filled family-oriented evening, and prepare yourself for the winter season (whatever faith tradition you follow) that fills your heart.
Contact: Kirsten Rohde, krohde14@outlook.com



Winter Solstice Bus Trip, Saturday December 16, 2017

Board a bus, play in the snow, shop in Leavenworth, have a horse-drawn sleigh ride and enjoy an abundant dinner.
Contact: Colette Hoff hoff@goodenough.org



New Year's Eve at Sahale, 2017 – 2018. Sunday will be New Year's Eve and Monday will be New Year's Day. This is a time to honor the year's passing and the new year to come. It is a combination of playing and reflecting together. Games, poems, music, good food, laughter, relaxation, and thoughtful conversation are all usually part of our time at Sahale as the new year arrives.



Annual Organizational Weekend at Sahale: March 2018 This weekend is foundational to all programs and events within the community. **Come and be curious!** Please contact Kirsten Rohde krohde14@outlook.com for more information.

The **Goodenough Community Council** meets alternate Monday evenings in Seattle to discuss the day-to-day activities of the community and engage in planning, evaluation, and more. Contact Colette Hoff if you are interested: hoff@goodenough.org
Council meetings are August 28, September 11, 25; October 9, 23; November 6.



Quest: A Counseling and Healing Center

Our belief is that mental and emotional health is a prerequisite for spiritual well-being, collaboration, and the expression of compassion. Quest’s counseling and education programs, open to all interested individuals, focus on empowering individuals, couples, and family groups to be happier and more effective in relationships.

Call Colette (206-755 8404) or at Sahale – 360 275-3957. In Seattle, Colette meets with clients at the community center, 3610 SW Barton Street, Seattle 98106, as well as at Sahale.

“PRACTICE MEANS TO PERFORM, OVER AND OVER AGAIN IN THE FACE OF ALL OBSTACLES, SOME ACT OF VISION, OF FAITH, OF DESIRE. PRACTICE IS A MEANS OF INVITING THE PERFECTION DESIRED.”

MARTHA GRAHAM

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