

# *Mondo Zen*<sup>TM</sup>

EGO DECONSTRUCTION KOANS  
EMOTIONAL AWARENESS INTERVENTION KOANS

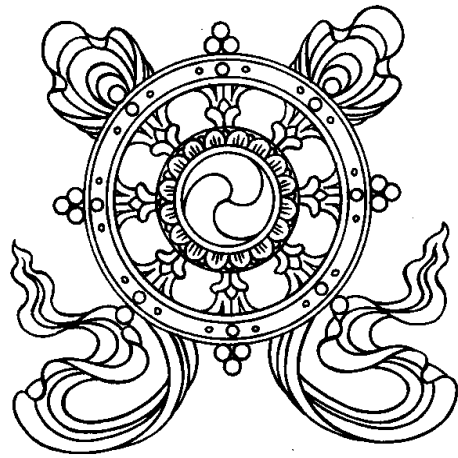
TRAINING MANUAL

SEPTEMBER 2009

**HOLLOW BONES ZEN/FRIENDS OF ZEN**

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

## 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 misunderstood inner feelings. Anger, shame and other painful emotional reactions are really forms of violence, directed against self and others. Because of this confusion we also waste tremendous amounts of time and energy in depression, self-judgment, envy and jealousy, and other self-defeating patterns.

In order to alleviate this suffering, we need deeper insight into and understanding of our minds, as well as the deeper nature and purpose of our emotions. We need to see through our ego and experience our true nature. We need to meditate deeply enough to experience **Clear Deep Heart/Mind** (also called Zen, Ch'an, Dhyana) as well as the love and concern that underlie our habitual, negative emotional reactions. To accomplish this, we need to develop genuine insight and change our understanding of many things. Once we experience this truth and change our understanding, we will be able to transform our anger, shame or any other painful emotional reaction into an expression of genuine concern. In this way, through our Mondo Zen practice, we bring Wisdom and Compassion to the world and alleviate suffering.

*Jun Po Kelly Roshi*  
*Abbott, Hollow Bones Zen*

## HISTORY

Siddhartha Gautama, the 6<sup>th</sup>-century BCE Indian prince we now call Buddha, renounced his life of ease to study and practice yoga and asceticism for twelve years. He then Awakened and founded his own yoga school. He taught the philosophy and practical disciplines that he had used to liberate himself and end his ego suffering. He taught that we must first realize and understand three truths: impermanence, physical 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 and appreciate the ephemeral nature of this life, this fleeting gift.

**Suffering:** When we truly realize that the *pain* we experience in sickness, old age and death is an inevitable and natural part of living, we no longer try to flee when pain

inevitably arises. We discover the delightful truth that, while discomfort is real, suffering is always optional.

**Selflessness:** When we truly realize *selflessness*, we experience the pure empty nature of our mind and spirit. We experience our ego's thinking and feeling as just temporary sensing, not a self. At last we experience genuine insight and know who we really are.

### ***Cleaning Up Our Language—Philosophical Re-indoctrination: Correct Understanding is the first step upon the Buddha path***

**Ego** simply means all activities of self-referencing mind—all thoughts, emotions and emotional reactions, both positive and negative. It is more accurate and liberating to view ego as a temporary figment of imagination. Why? Because the ego comes and goes, it changes with time, it disappears in deep sleep, it can become demented or psychotic, and it eventually dies. The problem with our ego, this self-maintaining illusion, is that it formed within us before we were developed enough to consciously recognize our True Self, our deeper nature. So we identified with the workings of ego, and came to believe that it was all we really were. But it is only in the deeper nature of Pure Awareness that our ego arose and continues to arise. No deep pure empty mind, no location for ego to arise. Thus ego mind proves the presence of deeper mind, and it is through ego mind that we return to Dhyana—**Clear Deep Heart/Mind**. You can now confirm this truth for yourself.

Philosophically, it is important to understand that your ego is not “bad,” or something you need to destroy or get away from. You need a strong and confident ego to function in the world, and that does not change. Liberation comes when your ego is deconstructed, *re-informed*, and reconstructed to include the realization of its essential emptiness and deeper emotional nature. To do this, you need to release your *attachment* to, and change your understanding of, the nature and structure of your temporary ego. Our practice of Mondo Zen is an efficient path to this realization and re-indoctrination. Enlightenment does not mean that your ego disappears; it means it has been retrained, re-educated, re-indoctrinated into this deeper Truth.

Buddha taught that the temporary self-referencing activity of our ego, the interplay within consciousness of our thoughts and emotional feelings, is a temporary sensing phenomenon. He taught that we are, at the core of our being, now and eternally, empty of any permanent abiding self-nature. If you look deep enough you know this is true: what part of your small individual self, of your conditioned mind, could possibly be permanent and eternal? If we are honest, the answer is “none.” Realizing and understanding this truth is the first step to freedom.

The Buddha taught that anyone willing to follow a practice-path including correct philosophical understanding, concentration, meditation and emotional clarification will eventually realize this truth and become liberated from ego suffering. This means being liberated from destructive habitual emotional reactions such as anger, shame, jealousy and envy. With practice, we enlighten our philosophy, transform our psychology, develop genuine insight, and can finally live life in awe-filled appreciation for the sacred gift that it is.

The first step upon this Buddha path to awakening begins with our ego gaining a Correct Understanding. It is not sufficient to just practice concentration and meditation. We need to change our philosophy because our conditioned view prevents realization from occurring. Put simply, we can only experience as true what our philosophy says we can experience as true. So an incorrect philosophical orientation actually blocks our awakening. This is why we will ask you to set aside your beliefs for a few moments and freely experience what arises without putting it into an orienting philosophy. You might consider yourself Christian, Muslim, Jew, scientific materialist, Buddhist, atheist, Hindu or Wiccan. We will ask you to become a temporary agnostic during this practice, to allow you to find for yourself a deeper and more encompassing truth.

We need to remove the philosophical barrier to insight created when we personify the dualistic function within the process of perception. 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." If something arises in my mind, I assume that there must be some separate person experiencing that arising. We are misled by the reflective aspect between sensing and consciousness within the purity of our awareness, and define this function as a separate subjective self. Is it possible that the idea that you are a separate self is actually a misunderstanding? Is it possible that "I think, therefore I am" might not be accurate? Is it possible that this self-referencing is only temporary and transient?

**Why does 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 or nihilism. Having a sitting practice is one of the most important steps you can undertake to awaken. But knowing exactly why you are sitting—having the right philosophical framework—is just as important.

## ABOUT MONDO ZEN

Mondo Zen is based on Japanese and Chinese Zen, updated for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Mondo Zen transcends the hierarchical/authoritarian, gender-biased and constraining monastic aspects of traditional Zen in favor of practical, experiential “in the world” engagement. Relying only on direct personal experience—as taught by the Buddha himself—it does not allow mythic constructs to complicate its philosophical orientation. This includes ideas such as reincarnation, soul as personality, bardo realms, past lives, a creator deity, and other faith-based beliefs. It is important that in our practice of Mondo Zen we consciously choose to set aside all such ideas at least until we have experienced, tested and evaluated for ourselves a simpler and stronger way of knowing. Why is this important? Because these beliefs and concepts force our immediate experience into a container of pre-defined understanding. This robs us of the experience of deeper insight. By letting go of our attachment to our beliefs and mythologies, at least while we are actively doing this practice, we remove a barrier to insight caused by our attachment to those views. Leave old concepts at the door with your hat and shoes—you can always pick them up again on the way out, if they still fit!

Our Mondo Zen protocol is designed to accomplish the first step upon this ancient, updated and renewed path of awakening, a transmission of Correct Understanding. The Koan questions asked in our dialog at first can be confusing, because they are designed to deconstruct your current philosophy, create a new philosophical understanding and awaken you into **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**. With this two-fold understanding—experiential and philosophical—we will experience the openness and fearless stability within our ordinary mind. We will acquire new language, language that will allow us to access, recognize, realize and maintain awareness of **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**.

### ***Koan Dialog Practice***

Mondo *per se* is an ancient Chinese Koan dialog practice. A Koan is a special kind of inquiry, an enigmatic question designed to awaken one to a deeper truth. To answer a Koan we must have an actual realization experience, not just intellectual understanding of the puzzle. Koans are designed to break through the philosophical language barrier, allowing you to experience the **Clear Deep Heart/Mind** within you, to Enlighten you.

Our Mondo dialog incorporates four divisions of Koan study from our historical Rinzai school: insight, spontaneity, verbal and precept. Our Mondo Zen Koan dialog is comprised of twelve Koans. The first ten are insight, spontaneity and verbal Koans. The

eleventh and twelfth Koans are precept Koans, emotional Koans. These emotional Koans provide a way of transforming our habitual negative emotional reactions. Koan answers will be challenged for additional clarification and to ground your new understanding.

Our modern Mondo Zen dialog dialectic practice works like this:

1. We help you to deconstruct your current philosophical view, which leads to insight.
2. Standing within this insight, you will witness how you have been blocking realization of your true nature by holding a confused, illusory and ignorant view.
3. This insight transforms your understanding of the nature of mind.
4. With this experience confirmed as your foundation, you construct and choose a new, liberating philosophy.
5. We then help you to integrate this new understanding into your everyday life.

***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 this experience*** as your new understanding. ***No one can do this for you!*** In the Buddhist tradition, we refer to this sharing of an insightful conscious state as “transmission.” We describe this process as “intersubjective” because the experience exists in a conscious container formed by all present. The truth is that this teaching transmission travels in both directions—from student to teacher as much as from teacher to student.

### ***Benefits of Mondo Zen***

- Liberates us to experience a more joyful, compassionate presence: Samadhi!
- Allows us to take another seat: a more enlightened seat, a fearless seat.
- Provides an integrated “under”-standing rather than an egocentric “over”-standing.
- Transforms our emotions. ***Our angst becomes our liberation!***
- Creates a fully informed, deeply feeling, disciplined, fearless, non-violent emotional body.

## **Essentials**

There are three essential practices required to be able to fully experience and understand the Mondo Zen Koan dialectic process. They are *insight, philosophy, and emotion*.

**Insight** – A lack of insight is the only reason people don't realize their true selfless nature. A proven solution is Zazen Koan Concentration/Meditation practice. ***What is most essential is the practice of Dhyana, meditative mindfulness, Clear Deep Heart/Mind which enables us to experience the Absolute Purity of our deepest nature and to hold that transpersonal truth in the complexity of our personal lives!***

**Philosophy** – Your current philosophical understanding is blocking your realization. The thoughts and language you use to define reality have programmed you to allow only certain experiences to happen or to be believed when they do happen. We are trapped by a pre-existing conceptual structure, which both defines and is defined by our beliefs. In other words, we can only accept what we already believe and have named/labeled. Openness—agnosticism or “beginners mind”—permits true experience. Mondo Zen is designed to elicit such genuine experiences. Agnosticism allows free experience unconstrained by previous concepts. Then a clear philosophical articulation of the meaning of our insight allows us to integrate that meaning “beyond the cushion” and into daily life. Put simply, there is a thinking problem that is preventing your Awakening and integration. Our solution for this is Mondo Zen Ego Deconstruction/Reconstruction, Philosophical Re-indoctrination practice. This includes study of certain classical Buddhist teachings: the Three Marks of existence, the Four Noble Truths, the Heart Sutra and the Eightfold Path. Since this is a living tradition, we also include more recent teaching and insights from disciplines such as psychology and neuroscience. (See chapter on “Sixty-Day Mondo Zen Practice” for suggestions) ***A clearly articulated philosophical understanding is crucial, and this correct understanding will manifest as wisdom and compassion throughout our lives.***

**Emotion** – Your experience and understanding of your emotions may be creating tremendous suffering in your life and the lives of those around you. From **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**, emotions are no different from your other senses. Their function is simply to bring information to your consciousness. We must realize that we have always chosen our reactions to our feelings, either consciously or unconsciously. In order to extract the real useful information that is in each moment's feelings, we need to drop limiting beliefs about the nature and intent of feeling. In this way, we can allow our angst to become what it actually is, the door to our liberation. In this way emotional discomfort becomes a gift, tool and resource:

- Angst is a reminder to use the skills we are mastering, to transform ignorance and delusion into wisdom and right action.
- Angst provides an opportunity to witness this transition with delight and appreciation.
- Angst effortlessly transformed is an ongoing affirmation that this is truly a wonderful world.

Reacting negatively to our emotional feelings is primarily a philosophical problem. The unpleasant problematic emotional reaction comes because of a confused philosophy. Our solution for this is Mondo Zen Emotional Koan, Awareness Intervention practice. ***Never doubt the imperturbability of your True Pure Awareness! Never doubt the invincible compassion of your True Pure Heart!***

### **Collaboration**

At this point, it is important to recognize and remember that the Mondo Zen process is a full heart-mind collaboration between “student” and “teacher.” In particular, the facilitator will first ensure that he or she remains deeply grounded and present in **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**. A vital function of the facilitator is to hold the integrity of the container, keeping everyone from getting lost in chatter or concepts and strongly on track. From that place, they will invite in the participants, and help them to remain there throughout the dialog.

Our hope is that you will enjoy a profound, integrative experience that will change your life in ways you want, starting right now! Our primary intentions for this session are:

- Correct understanding of the deeper nature of mind.
- An actual taste of the liberating experience of no-self; (Dhyana) **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**.
- An opportunity to practice with plenty of support and feedback as both understanding and experience evolve.
- Koans to help you carry this practice back home, build it into your own life, and then share it with others.

Let us now take our first step together!



# 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 it, and project into the world. It is important to realize that, at a very deep level, there is a part of us that is absolutely afraid to change and 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 part of you resisting and sabotaging your evolution?

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

### ***The Controller Within***

To move forward, we need at least temporary permission from your Controller. The Controller is the deepest part of your ego; its greatest fear is that you will lose control—of your emotions, or your sense of self, or your body, or your life. Can you feel that part of your mind that Controls?

Your Controller is a faithful, necessary and loyal part of your ego that also, unfortunately, prevents you from experiencing things as they actually are. It is probably telling you to be suspicious of this very process, and to hold onto what you already know. Do you have a sense of your Controller? Can you understand and feel how, without that part of yourself, you would be overwhelmed?

Our Mondo dialog requires a mutual agreement to complete honesty and openness. In order for Mondo to be effective, we must be willing to engage the Koan questions fearlessly and completely. Your answers to these Koans will be challenged until you experience genuine insight and express clear understanding. Are you willing to engage in this?

At the end of this exercise your Controller will be invited to take on a bigger and more inclusive job description.

For the following guided Concentration/Meditation part of this deconstruction protocol, we could focus the mind in concentration using any of our senses (we include thinking and feeling as senses). We choose sound, and the thought "listen."

### **Concentration/Meditation**

We now begin with a ten-minute Concentration/Meditation where we will listen to the sound of this bell. During this meditation, with each in-breath, just purely listen. ***Listen more deeply than you ever have listened*** and follow the sound of the bell into absolute silence. With each out-breath, silently repeat the word *listen*. Every time the bell is struck, follow the sound within and listen from a deeper place. Listen from a perfectly silent place.

#### **Facilitator: After five minutes 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 the common source.  
Returning to the source is serenity.

If you don't realize the 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.

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

**Facilitator: After 10 minutes of sitting, continue:**

Now let's talk with the *real* Controller, the one who is absolutely resistant to change, the one who is humoring me right now. Will you, the real Controller, open up and allow a shift in your understanding? You can have a better, larger, more important, and inclusive controlling job. You won't be asked to go away, but to expand and experience a more Enlightened view.

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, and to temporarily give up all your ideas and concepts. Join us in Beginner's Mind, and discover what your experiences tell you as we move along together.

***First Koan: Is it possible to just listen, to just purely listen?***

We have listened as deeply as we can to the ringing sound of this bell. Is it possible that there is just pure listening? Is your Mind deeper than the awareness of sound arising within it, 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? Is this mind deeper, larger 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 our awareness that transcends whatever is arising within our awareness, this Clear Deep Mind. We prevent realization of ever-present selfless Clear Deep Mind by not meditating, ignoring a fundamental truth philosophically, using confused language, and persisting in an immature psychology. Once we have changed 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 unopinionated listening is Dhyana Zen mind. Point out the difference between conceptual listing and deep listening.

***Facilitator Guide:*** *The first answers to these Koans may be just intellectual; this is okay. We are building a philosophical neuro-linguistic structure that will help one to experience insight. If answers seem more thought than felt, have the participant slow down to experience this deeper listening. If they seem unable to have or to accept this experience right now, ask if it is at least philosophically possible that there is could be such a place and ability already within us. Can they accept this as a possibility and move on? Even the idea of this truth is enough to carry through the Koans, and they will be able to go deeper as we move along.*

*Remember throughout this process to point out any moments of enjoyment caused purely by insight, and suggest that this delightful Samadhi is where we can choose to live.*

**Facilitator: Sit two minutes with the bell.**

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

Where is this deepest place of listening located within your body? Slow waaay down! Search deeply within your physical body, release your ego's need to know, and just listen. Where is the place within you where you can just simply listen? Point to or touch that place.

**Explanation:** This Koan realization reveals that there is a physical location for Clear Deep Mind listening. Locating this place helps each of us to return and reconnect with Clear Deep Mind—really, **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**, or Dhyana—whenever we want or need to. This heartfelt realization includes an experience of the compassion found within Zen meditation realization. It was very enlightening to discover that almost everyone we have worked with touches their heart. If we release our ego identification and genuinely listen, we naturally find ourselves in our deep-felt compassionate heart.

**Facilitator Guide:** *If they do not drop down out of their head, direct them to listen from their central chest and experience the difference. Be sure to get them to describe the difference in feeling both physically and psychologically between their ego/head listening and deeper heart listening. If they feel the sound in their stomach or solar plexus, ask them if they can breathe the sensation up into their heart. If they continue to feel the sound in their head, guide them in moving the sound down to their chest until they can feel the difference. The area is usually between the upper chest and lower abdomen. Feel free to bring the deep heart listening to wherever it can best be felt.*

**Facilitator: Sit another minute.**

### **Third Koan: Who are you within this deep, heartfelt listening place?**

**Facilitator: Sit one minute with the bell, then read:**

*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.

Who are you within this deep, heartfelt listening place?

**Explanation:** This Koan reveals our state of ego confusion about our deeper self-identity. At this depth of mind we do not know who we are. This realization allows us the freedom of not knowing. In not knowing there are infinite possibilities. We are finally getting nowhere. Through experiencing not knowing, we begin to clarify our deeper identity. At this depth of **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**, we are nakedly aware, not aware of something. We *are* simply pure witnessing Awareness. Lacking this insight experience, we remain exclusively ego-bound, unaware that we can access, speak and live from *not knowing* within **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**. So we live in ignorance and denial of this deeper reality. This *not knowing* is the realization of empty mind or spirit, the selflessness referred to in Buddhist thought: No-Self, Anatta.

**Facilitator Guide:** *The answer we accept and are looking for is, "I don't know"; they may need coaching to get to that answer. Let them answer incorrectly several times; they will answer giving you a thought or a feeling. Accept each answer and then ask them to listen from a deeper place. If they do not arrive at "I don't know," suggest that it seems that at this depth they do not know who they are, true? When they admit this, agree with them: At this depth, I don't know either. **At last we're getting nowhere!***

*From the ego's position, "not knowing" can be frightening. From **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**, it is simply the Truth, the root of unbounded, peaceful freedom.*

**Facilitator: Sit two minutes with the bell.**

### **Fourth Koan: Now we will differentiate “I Don’t Know” vs. “Not Knowing.”**

“Who are you?” I will ask you this several times. First answer, claim and say, “I don’t know,” speculating from the ego, your head. Then get in touch with your heart, and with the part of yourself that was, a moment ago, just listening—not listening *to* anything. Can you feel this part of yourself once again? Now claim and reveal the embodied state of “not knowing,” of empty not-knowing being. Drop your ego identification with the pronoun “I” and say “not knowing” while connected with, aware of and speaking from this **Clear Deep Heart/Mind** that is centered in your heart. After we have done this several times, I will ask you to describe the difference in your physical and emotional experience when you respond from these two locations. Once again, point out the difference between conceptual listing and deep listening.

**Explanation:** This Koan realization allows one to experience the difference between the intellectual processes 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 your ego connected with **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**. In *not knowing* there is freedom and infinite possibility.

### **Contraction/Expansion**

To help with the integration of body and mind and ground the experience through feeling, we will now do an exercise. Close your fist when you answer from your mind, “I don’t know.” Open your fist when you answer with your heart, from “Not Knowing.” Can you feel the opening and relaxation within your body when moving from your ego to your **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**?

**Facilitator Guide:** *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. Often they will lean towards you if they are in their **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**. Have the others in attendance report their own experience of sensing and sharing this expression of Clear Deep Heart Mind. With sensitivity and humor, ask the group, “Do you feel this? Do you believe they are connected and speaking from this depth?”*

*If working with a group attending, have the group pair up and practice both I Don't Know vs. Not Knowing and Contraction/Expansion.*

**Facilitator: Sit one minute with the bell, then read:**

*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 or soul.

I belong to the beloved, have seen the two  
worlds as one and that one call to and know,  
first, last, outer, inner, only that  
breath breathing human being.

There is a way between voice and presence where information flows.  
In disciplined silence it opens. With wondering talk it closes.

**Facilitator: Sit another minute.**

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

What are you really like, what am I really like? What are we all like at *this* depth of consciousness, this depth of awareness? I want you to describe our mind at this depth.

Use simple words that actually evoke this state of "not knowing." Do not merely describe what arises within your consciousness—what you think or feel. You want to present *this* state of heart/mind. Understand that within this depth of mind, you are ***just aware***, not aware *of*. To be aware *of* is an ego view. To be ***just aware*** is to be in Empty Mind, selfless mind, spirit or soul. Do you realize that within this insight, you are describing a Buddha, an Awakened one, your real Self?

**Explanation:** This Koan realization establishes language that claims our experience of **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**. These words construct a neuro-linguistic connection to our deep spiritual nature *and* provide little linguistic reminders that help activate that connection. We are learning that we can speak using our “in the world” ego while staying connected with this realization, and we are laying down a pathway so we can find our way to this place ever more easily.

**Facilitator Guide:** *We accept and require the following terms or synonyms: **silent, vast, timeless, empty, fearless, aware, peaceful, still, eternal, etc.** These words describe this state of awareness, not what arises within this awareness. Reject words that indicate dissociation—“It’s peaceful” versus “I am peaceful.” This state is intimately personal, here and now: not an “it.” If the person is having trouble, do not give them the answers; ask permission to guide them and ask questions like:*

*“Are we time-bound here? Are we irritated here, no matter what may be going on out there? Are we constricted here? Are we afraid here? Are we angry here? Are we noisy here? Are we aware here? Are we aware of something or just aware? Now try and move your awareness from your eyes to behind your eyes, in the darkness there. Do you intuit the infinite emptiness that rests just behind your eyes?”*

*Once they start to get what awareness at this depth of being and consciousness is actually like, tell them: “Thought and feeling do not disturb, have never disturbed this deep clarity of our mind. We can remain ever aware of ever-present **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**. This is our Zazen mind, our meditative mind.” Make sure that they use words indicating vast openness, imperturbable silence and profound peace BUT do not expect or insist that they use your language. Lead them only if necessary.*

**Facilitator: Sit one minute with the bell.**

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

**Facilitator: Sit another minute, then read:**

*Master Rumi says:*

**Quietness**

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 it 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 it now.

Now that you have experienced what we are talking about and have your words to describe this, these signifiers can access and recall *this* mind. But these words, these signifiers, are like fingers pointing at the moon. We want the understanding of the moon in the sky, not just of the finger pointing upwards. *This* mind also includes our body. Now let's consciously integrate this depth of mind and our body. I will ask again, "Who are you?" I ask you to answer in silence from and with your body.

Express your new insight with a silent expression of embodied consciousness. In other words, use your body to express this understanding in a non-verbal way. It can be a small gesture, or something more dramatic. Remember that you move spontaneously, in awareness of your **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**, through your ego but not from it.

**Explanation:** This Koan realization manifests as a consciously integrated physical expression. This awakening includes your body and is enjoyed and revealed in physical action!

***Facilitator Guide:*** *If they are not embodying the gesture, demonstrate for them with your own embodied gesture. (But don't rush it.) Break a group into pairs and have them practice this several times.*

**Facilitator: Sit two minutes with the bell.**

**Seventh Koan: Choose a name for *Clear Deep Heart/Mind*. Call to and respond from this awareness using this name.**

I will call to this name, and I ask you to respond from your **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**. Now call to yourself and respond from **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**. Include your chosen conscious body expression in these responses.

**Explanation:** With this Koan realization, we create a method, a pathway to access our **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**. By giving this state of consciousness a name, we have access to this consciousness.

**Facilitator Guide:** Provide name suggestions for them if necessary. What is important is that whatever name they choose, they associate it with the adjectives describing and their felt experience of **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**. Do this several times. Break a group into pairs and have them practice this.

**Facilitator: Sit two minutes with the bell.**

### ***Eighth Koan: Does Clear Deep Heart/Mind come and go?***

Who comes and goes?

Get in touch with your deepest self. Feel this in your body. Does *this* come and go? “You”—your feeling, thinking ego—comes and goes. Your ego awareness of this comes and goes. It is good to remember that your ego vanishes every night when you enter deep, dreamless sleep, and mysteriously reappears when you wake up in the morning. When you die, whatever may or may not persist, your sensing, feeling, thinking ego will cease.

This **Clear Deep Heart/Mind** does not—cannot—come or go. Wherever there is sentience, the ability to perceive, think or feel, there is *this* consciousness. Mental forms cannot exist without Emptiness of mind in which they arise. You cannot exist without this Emptiness from which you came, and to which you will return. Feel into it. Do you understand this?

Realize that this Dhyana mind, who you really are, never comes and goes. Wherever you are, no matter what is arising within you, this Awake, Silent, Empty, Fearless **Clear Deep Heart/Mind** is also here. Do you recognize that in owning this truth you now can claim your freedom?

**Explanation:** With this Koan realization, we claim and stabilize our insight. Clearly articulating this insight and philosophical understanding, we are no longer able to deny this imperturbable presence. ***This is our Buddha mind.*** We always have been and are this mind. Within this realization, nothing can destabilize, frighten or overwhelm our conscious awareness. Our ego remains intact and will still function, but can now be re-indoctrinated and transformed.

**Facilitator Guide:** *Be mindful throughout this dialog to not get lost or sidetracked into chatter. These Koans are **not** a jumping-off point for conceptual discussions! **Stay on purpose!***

**Facilitator: Sit two minutes with the bell.**

***Ninth Koan: How can you be absolutely certain that **Clear Deep Heart/Mind** is the truth and why will you be able to incorporate this realization and understanding into your life?***

First, you now **know** from experience that this is true. Are you sure? Have you really just had this experience? Are you absolutely certain?

Second, you **claim** this understanding. You must claim your own insight! You—only you!—can take your new seat. This seat will not be given to you. Only when with absolute resolve you claim this new insight and understanding can and will this awakening manifest and bring meaning in your life.

**Explanation:** This Koan realization establishes two equally important understandings. First, you have just had this **Clear Deep Heart/Mind** experience for yourself, and therefore **know** this beyond doubt to be true. Second, and even more importantly, you now **choose** to live in this truth. We choose our new seat in insightful understanding, knowing and claiming that ego is just the surface of our being. This is a philosophical re-indoctrination, a huge change in understanding, a kind of rebirth.

**Facilitator Guide:** *Some people might struggle with the idea of having to choose this reality. First ask their newly informed Controller and then ask the old reactive part of their ego to connect with their true nature and consciously make this choice. When they are in agreement, ask them, **Any doubts?** (If they have doubts, it is their ego's escape clause; be ready to challenge them dramatically.)*

*Throughout this Mondo process, should you or they become confused, remember to ring the bell mindfully to drop back into **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**.*

**Facilitator: Sit two minutes with the bell.**

## ***Tenth Koan: How do you feel when you experience this insight and understanding?***

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 correct understanding, a sense of well-being and enjoyment become constant. We recognize and share moments of joyful insight whenever they arise during this Mondo process.

**Explanation:** With this Koan realization, you “get the joke” and feel the unconditional love—the compassion—that is always right here within us. This good feeling is Samadhi! Through this recognition, you identify and claim your freedom and insight. Samadhi, when experienced, is always expressed and revealed through the eyes—look for it there, and acknowledge it when you see it. Eventually, this state of freedom and enjoyment will become constant: no more coming and going.

***Facilitator Guide*** Throughout this process, we identify and share moments of enjoyment that are caused by none other than realization of **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**. At last, joy comes in an insightful instant through realization and understanding.

### ***Articulate Your Understanding: Review the Ten Koans***

1. Is it possible to just listen, to just purely listen?
2. Where is this deeper listening located within your body?
3. Who are you within this deep, heartfelt listening place?
4. Differentiate “I Don’t Know” vs. “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 name for **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**. Call to and respond from this awareness using this name.
8. Does **Clear Deep Heart/Mind** come and go?
9. How can you be absolutely certain that **Clear Deep Heart/Mind** is the truth and why will you be able to incorporate this reality and understanding into your life?
10. How do you feel when you experience this insight and understanding?

We feel good, very good. Point this out. Share the Samadhi!

Just a moment of insight is not enough to accomplish lasting transformation. We must also be able to understand, clearly explain, and claim our new view. The confused language initially used to answer these Koans reveals where one has been living in ignorance. The new language expressing insight and understanding reveals where one can now be seated in wisdom and compassion.

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 teachings 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 with others, you do not clearly understand your realization. You may not be called to teach this Dharma in any formal way. But until you are capable of teaching this Dharma, you will have difficulty owning and living this Dharma. Learn, share and teach this Dharma by embodying this Dharma!

Now, please, slowly and carefully articulate what have you have realized. What have you learned? What is new in your understanding? What have you realized?

***Facilitator Guide:*** Note that here (or anywhere in this Mondo process) when you or they lose deeper awareness and become overly conceptual or tongue-tied remember to stop the dialog and ring the bell a few times to drop yourself and them back into ***Clear Deep Heart/Mind***.

### ***Check in with the Controller***

You have just told me how this new Koan understanding has changed your view. Would you like to have access to this freedom all the time? Do you choose to enrich your view? Will you add this new experience and understanding of who you really are to your old job description? Will you remember this Truth, and what you've just experienced?

***Please know and remember that to maintain this understanding, most of us require a strong and consistent meditation practice.***

**Facilitator: Sit one minute with the bell, then read:**

## Ten Thousand Idiots

*By Master Hafiz*

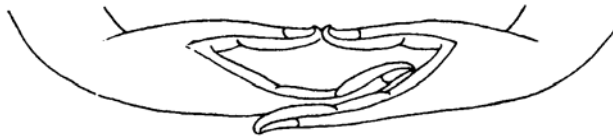
It is always a danger  
To aspirants  
On the  
Path

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: Sit one minute with the bell.**



## THE KOAN PROCESS, PART II:

### MONDO ZEN EMOTIONAL AWARENESS INTERVENTION KOANS, A ZEN TRANSMISSION

#### ***Meditation: Why Bother?***

*Meditation: Why Bother?* is a provocative way to engage the question of where and how the insights of meditation are of greatest value, both on the cushion and out in the world.

The second part of our Mondo Zen protocol is designed to allow us to recognize, enlighten and transform our habitual destructive emotional reactions. A well-trained Zen student's life is an expression of the marriage of wisdom (meditative mind) and compassion (unconditional love). Wisdom, the ability to remain present and aware in **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**, is only half of the work. To embody compassion, we must change and transform our negative emotional reactions. Living in confusion about the true deeper nature of our emotions, we react to them unconsciously, superficially and destructively. This blocks both our insight into our true nature and our ability to experience compassion. In order to enlighten our habitual reactions, we need to change our understanding. This will allow us to experience our whole emotional cognitive process including the true feelings of concern that underlie our superficial reactions. In this way, *our angst becomes our liberation!*

In this school of thought, we consider the mind to have six senses (including thinking/feeling as the sixth sense). Emotional feeling from this depth of meditative insight is just sensing that brings information, no different in function from seeing, hearing and tasting. It is essential that we experience and understand this. Feeling is information. It is wise to not react before understanding clearly the information brought to us from our deeper feelings.

We now ask you to address and transform your destructive or limiting emotional reactions to feelings. With enough insight, we realize that emotional feelings do not dictate who we are, but are wonderful offerings designed to inform and help us in living our lives. Through Emotional Koan practices we consciously choose intelligent, compassionate responses to our feelings instead of unconscious, defensive and hurtful reactions.

**Facilitator: Sit one minute with the bell, then read:**

## The Guest House

*By Master Rumi (with help from Jun Po)*

This being human is a guest house  
Every morning a new arrival.  
A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
Some momentary awareness comes as a visitor.  
Welcome and entertain them all!  
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,  
A gathering of anxieties and angers who violently  
Sweep your house empty of its furniture,  
Still treat each guest honorably  
Because properly understood  
He's clearing you out for some new delight!  
Here they come  
The dark thought, the shame, the malice,  
The regret, the hesitations, the self-doubt.  
Meet them at the door laughing, invite them in.  
Serve them breakfast, make them feel at home  
With organic eggs and fresh-brewed, free-trade coffee.  
Ask them what they want, what info are they hiding?  
Later, get them tipsy with dark cask organic ales,  
Tell jokes, amuse yourself with their marvelous stories.  
Know that they're all ringing phones.  
So answer the phones!  
Answer these phones from and As the Vastness you are  
Answer with Sacred Laughter!  
Now! Take your seat! It will not be given to you.  
Be grateful for whoever comes or calls,  
Because each of these guests, each voice, is sent  
As a guide to inform you, to transform you,  
To delightfully awaken you!

**Facilitator: Sit one minute with the bell.**

## ***Eleventh Koan: When you experience violent emotional reactions like anger or shame, what are you actually feeling?***

Think about the last time you experienced anger or shame. Really drop into it, feel it inside of yourself. What are the true emotions underneath these reactions?

*Anger and shame are not feelings.* They are psychologically violent reactions to deep feelings of fear and sadness. They are interventions attempting to control or defend. Once you identify the real feelings, the feelings of fear and grief beneath the violent reactions, you are halfway there. Now, what is the feeling causing this fear? I am feeling afraid because I ...? How about, "I am afraid because I really care." Let this be clearly understood. Anger and shame are confused reactions to deep caring. Before they can manifest as a violent reaction, they are initially just *intense clarity, presence of mind and deep caring*. Fear, similarly, is really *excitement and opportunity*.

We must come to realize and remember that no one has ever shamed us or made us angry. We have chosen these reactions. *Because this is true, no one can ever shame or anger us again unless we choose it.*

Consider this ringing phone analogy: feelings are like telephone calls bringing information. We need to answer this phone when it rings. Do not become the phone (neurosis). Do not refuse to answer the phone (depression). Do not drag the phone around wishing it would just stop 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 (denial). Answer the phone! Get the message, the information in the feeling, understand, and choose your response. Stop reacting to the phone's ringing. Begin to respond mindfully, using this mind to inform your choices when the emotional phone rings.

Two of our violent reactions to arising fear (anger and shame) are caused by fight-or-flight survival instincts (neurochemical reflexes), and confused social conditioning from unenlightened parenting. Our forebears were well-intended but, ignorant of these deeper truths, they unconsciously passed down the violent reactive behaviors of their own parents. These inherited habits prevent us from experiencing the genuine deep concern that holds so much of our creative energy. Once we understand this and practice Emotional Koans, we will no longer need to act out these ancient, unconscious reactive patterns: ***the historical hysterical.***

Our neurobiology evolved to serve us in a very different world, where stress often indicated a legitimate threat to physical survival. Now that most of us no longer face

ravenous predators and lethal contests for space, mates or food, we are still pulled by the biological programming that allowed us to evolve enough to becoming thinking, aware 21<sup>st</sup>-century humans. The emotional energy of fight-or-flight in our daily lives triggers intense physiological reactions that are asking us to wake up, be aware—to get the information in the feeling. ***We have always chosen our reactions to feelings.*** Violence, shame and other negative reactions are ignorant choices. We can make other choices.

Remember, anger and its inward version, shame, are reactions to fear, always beginning as interest and caring—then fear. Fear is really just interest and excitement. Before a chosen reaction to feeling there is always *interest*. We must learn to recognize this energy and utilize it. We do not deny the intense feeling or repress it. We feel interest, then concern/sadness, then fear, and then finally **choose** anger or shame. It is our conditioning that brings our reactions to feelings. This prevents our experiencing the delight of the interest, and concern, as well as the information and understanding that is the purpose of all our emotional feelings.

If you clearly understand this and are willing, you can now use this arising energy and these old habits as a means of emotional transformation and enlightenment. When immature and maladaptive emotional reactions are triggered again in your life, remember the truth, and transform them! Instead of reacting violently or suppressing reactions, achieving frustration and emotional numbness—the *hysterical historical*—all of this beautiful energy will now be increasingly available to enhance your life and your world.

After we experience this deeper concern and correct our understanding about anger and shame, we will recognize the energy arising before the reaction, and immediately recognize **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**. We will experience *feeling as information*, understand the message in the feeling, and respond compassionately. We will remain non-reactive and open in the face of anything ego perceives as an insult. We will live fearlessly and with an open heart. With anger, before the violent contraction, there is always intense presence, clarity of mind and deep caring. If I am awakened, the fear under the anger is experienced as a state of excitement and opportunity. If I am awakened, there is always time to understand and respond. The practice of meditation is the practice of being Awake. If I am truly awakened, anger, shame or other negative emotions become inconceivable, and feelings never manifest as violent reactions.

**Anger and shame do not equal violence.  
Anger and shame do not demand violence.  
Anger and Shame begin as Intense Non-Violent Awareness.**

***Facilitator Guide:*** Now, have them silently, with the body, show the intense clarity of mind and the deep caring that is always there before reactive anger or shame. Have them use their eyes and lean in. If necessary demonstrate this for them. Repeat this several times until they get the joke. Be sure that they clearly understand. Now, have the group pair up and practice this.

The Buddha once was walking with some disciples. He came into a town where his reputation as a teacher preceded him. A local man ran up to the Buddha as soon as he saw him and spit violently in his face. The Buddha calmly walked on, not reacting in the slightest. When he sat down to eat, one of his disciples could no longer contain himself. "Master," he said, "How is it you didn't react at all to that? Not even a glance or a word?" The Buddha looked at him and smiled. "If a man leaves a gift on your doorstep, and you choose to not bring it inside, whose gift is it?"

**Explanation:** The realization of this Koan reveals that deep caring underlies all destructive emotional reactions to feeling. It reveals that anger and shame are not primal feelings, but violent reactions preventing us from experiencing our deeper true feelings. Anger is a projection, a violent intervention, a reaction to fear. Shame is a violent introjection, a reaction to fear. Under our anger and shame is fear, and under that fear lies grief. Under our grief is genuine caring, compassion and love. When you understand this, you will find it effortless to identify and transform former ignorant superficial reactions to authentic feelings, and to respond with wisdom and compassion. So it is with all difficult emotional reactions.

**Facilitator: Sit two minutes with the bell.**

***Twelfth Koan: Now, visualize yourself transforming a future habitual negative anger or shame reaction into a conscious compassionate response.***

Solve an Emotional Koan: Where in your life do you habitually experience yourself choosing a "negative" emotional reaction? Tell me that story.

***Facilitator Guide:*** Let the participant tell their story. Have them interrupt their habitual reaction and first feel the fear and sadness beneath. Then invite them to go deeper and feel the genuine deep caring causing their fear. Unpack and deconstruct their experience, and slow it WAY down. Remember the phone analogy.

Feel that wonderful intense energy arising before your reaction, and recognize that as your **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**. Who does this energy call to now? (*The name they have already chosen.*) Who did this energy call to before your Ego Deconstruction and Emotional re-indoctrination? (*The reactive self.*)

Get in touch with your **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**. Recognize your deeper concern. What is the message contained within this feeling of fearful concern? What are you really concerned about? Of what are you afraid? Now that you understand, you can respond with compassionate intelligence. Transform your disturbing emotion. Remember, anger and shame begin with intense presence, clarity and deep concern. Fear is first excitement and opportunity.

Now that you have interrupted that old reaction, what is your new chosen response? Show me, tell me. What will you do and say, and what response will you receive?

***Mondo Zen practice accelerates and facilitates the completion of psychotherapy.*** If this is true for you, you now are genuinely free from this reactive pattern. How does this new understanding make you feel? Now, please, slowly and carefully articulate what have you have experienced. What have you learned? What is new in your understanding? What have you realized? Where else will this realization help in your everyday life?

Why will you be able to manifest this reality as your life? (*This is true and I choose this truth.*) You are now free. You are now more Enlightened. Any doubts?

***Facilitator Guide:*** *The answer to any doubts should be an emphatic "NO." If they hesitate at all, they are setting up an escape clause. Do not allow this kind of wavering! Continue to dialog with them until they can take their seat here and claim this new awareness as their own.*

Now once again show me the pure energy that whenever you are challenged in some way always arises before you unconsciously react or consciously respond to a feeling. Present the energy, interest and concern that must arise before a reaction of any kind. Express this with a silent gesture, move your body toward me. Lean in and use your eyes to show me. Abide in this delightful conscious energy, this Dhyana, this **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**.

***Facilitator Guide:*** *Have group members pair up and practice. Have them check each other for the felt authenticity of their responses.*

## INTEGRATING OLD REACTIVE PATTERNS WITH NEW UNDERSTANDING

Let me speak to that deepest Controlling part of you. Are you following this? Would you like to have this clarity and emotional freedom as part of your responsibility? Will you now open to **Clear Deep Heart/Mind** as part of your world? Now, let me speak to the deep sensitive emotional, reactive part of you. You have been here with us taking in all of this information. We need your sensitivity, your vulnerability. Would you like to drop these uncomfortable reactive behaviors and be free? You don't have to try to drive anymore. The Controller will take that on now. If you are willing to join us, is there anything you need to share with your controller? Controller, do you hear and understand this request, and is there anything you need to share in return? (When addressing the reactive part of ego, remember to go slow and invite. This part is usually very young.)

***Facilitator Guide:*** Continue to let the participant dialog with the parts of themselves until they reach a place where they are in collaboration, and have convinced themselves this is possible and agree to work with each other and use these transformation Koans in their life. Be very careful that they do not allow themselves an "escape clause" by using the words "try," "maybe," "I think so," and other qualifiers. To accomplish this, they will need to stay present and awake in the face of challenge. **Remind them that to do this they will need to remain aware and awake. To accomplish this, in most cases, they will need to develop and maintain a consistent meditative practice.**

### **Sacred Laughter**

Now let us explore **Sacred Laughter** together. In the past, we have reacted to strong emotions with anger, shame, fear, jealousy, envy and the like. Now, 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. This is amusing. Get the joke!

**Second Round** - Close your eyes, scan your body, and recall an incident when you reacted to emotion with anger or shame. Feel the physical contraction. As the feeling arises, recognize the empty sharp clarity of mind in which this feeling is arising. Feel the concern within that clarity. Stay connected with the feeling. Now draw your

awareness into your **Clear Deep Heart/Mind** center. Slowly open your eyes, inhale deeply, and as you begin to exhale, express this shame or anger with laughter. Experience the newness of responding with laughter instead of reacting with habitual violence. Release the physical and emotional contraction. Observe the quality of your consciousness during and after the process. Enjoy yourself! Get the joke! No one has ever shamed you or made you angry. You have previously *chosen* shame or anger.

**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 with natural freedom.

**Intention:** To redirect the wonderful energy that arises before we react negatively to our feelings. 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 now know that we have always chosen our reactions to our feelings. 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 brings, becomes and is our liberation.***

**Facilitator, read:**

*Master Hafiz reminds us:*

**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!

## ***Philosophical Reframe***

### **The Truth about “Negative” Emotions**

Let us be sure we understand what was just experienced. The root of the problem is not our superficial negative emotional reactions, but our philosophical beliefs. It is our ignorance of our deeper feelings and failure to understand the information within these feelings that causes our reactive suffering.

To say that I feel angry is absurd—it reveals the depth of my confusion and ignorance of the deeper truth and nature of my emotions. The truth is that I feel concern, fear and grief, and am choosing to react with anger. That seemed like my best way of intervening, of attempting to control the world and relieve my discomfort. With this new view, anger is just one possible reaction to fear, and not a very good one. External conditions do not cause anger; internal choice does.

Emotional feeling is just another sense bringing information to our consciousness. Before we choose our reaction to our feeling, there is always a delightful field of pure energy present and available. When we recognize and experience the clarity and intensity of this awareness as it arises, we can use it mindfully to achieve great things and experience great joy.

An Awakened Mind—one abiding in **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**—experiences “anger” as *intense clarity of mind and deep concern*. An Awakened Mind experiences “fear” as *excitement and opportunity*. An Awakened Mind experiences “shame” as the internalization of the voice of an authority figure, or as a wake-up call to check for an integrity conflict.

Once you have transformed and enlightened your philosophical and emotional understanding, you can live the truth that violent or other troublesome reactions are not emotional problems at all, but exciting opportunities to awaken and respond. In this way, we use our psychological suffering to find freedom! Failure to recognize this deeper truth continues the endless cycle of our habitual emotional reactions. In this way, our angst has truly become our liberation.

Our emotions are a sacred gift. Our feelings—our emotional states of mind—are not to be misused, abused or wasted. We can enjoy the flicker and flow of inner states as much as the waft of flower aromas, the play of ocean waves, the dance of clouds in a bright sky. And in our full awareness, we can embrace these energies, using them to build, to heal, to love and share, and to BE.

Eventually with **Clear Deep Heart/Mind** realization, philosophical re-indoctrination and emotional Koan practice, depression, anxiety, anger, shame, jealousy, envy and the other pain-filled reactions to feeling become inconceivable. Having experienced this freedom, why would we ever make those choices? When the phone rings, you now get the message, hang up the phone, and get on with creating the life you want. A direct way into this realization is Mondo Zen practice.



## Reacting vs. Responding: Adding a step in your cognitive process

1. Circumstances arise
2. Sensing excitement begins
3. Habitual thought or body-memory follows
4. Physical and Emotional Feeling arises

Then...

### *React mindlessly-*

unconscious, conditioned,  
habitual choice

**OR**

### *Respond mindfully-*

*conscious, intelligent,  
compassionate choice*

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

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

## KEY CONCEPTS

*Our angst is our liberation, and our vulnerability is our greatest strength!*

To be whole and real, we require a free, rich, honest, disciplined emotional body.

For sensing to occur, there must be an Empty Mind in which it arises; we have the freedom to return to this center at all times. Empty Mind is not disturbed by arising content, no matter what the content.

Mondo Zen provides tools that allow us to choose our responses to emotion; this practice accelerates and facilitates the completion of all psychological work.

Pain is unavoidable; 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. “With our beliefs we create our world.” This is the delusion that can confuse us for entire lifetimes. This is the human melodrama. How wonderfully entertaining! What fun to play in the game!

The big joke is that from the perspective of **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**, there is neither a self to be attained nor a self to be not-attained: just pure emptiness—*Anatta* and *Shunyata*. So when “stuff” comes up, get the joke and practice Sacred Laughter.

*Anger and shame do not equal violence.  
Anger and shame do not demand violence.  
Anger and shame begin as Intense Non-Violent Awareness.*

Feelings are like telephone calls bringing information. We need to attend to this phone when it rings. Answer the phone! Get the information in the feeling, understand, and choose your response with conscious wisdom instead of reactive habit.

An emotionally mature mind requires discipline: not the discipline of denial, but the discipline of truly feeling and hearing, understanding and responding to the messages delivered through authentic feelings.

No one has ever shamed us or made us angry. We have chosen these reactions. *Because this is true, no one can ever shame or anger us again unless we choose it.*

*Deep caring is the root.  
Fear, sadness and genuine concern are the feelings.  
Anger and shame are examples of needless, violent reactions.  
Your freedom is a matter of choice.*

Positive intent *always* underlies “negative” reactions. Pure listening takes us deeper than ego.

Genuine concern is the deepest true feeling beneath all our negative reactions. Fear, expressed as anger, shame, jealousy, envy and the like, is a construct over that.

Fear can be experienced for what it actually is: excitement and opportunity. Shame can be experienced for what it actually is: internalization of another’s judgments. Anger can be experienced for what it actually is: intense presence, clarity and deep concern.

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

All powerful emotions can call **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**—as can silence, or anything in between. Ever aware of **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**, nothing can make us react in harmful ways.

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

Samadhi is constant, pervasive Unreasonable Enjoyment. Our deepest nature wants to be **as** this—because it already *is* this.

Realization of impermanence brings peace, freedom and gratitude.

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.

***In the end, as in the beginning,  
it is all about love—unconditional love!***

# HOLLOW BONES ZEN TRAINING ELEMENTS:

## FIVE PRACTICE MIRRORS

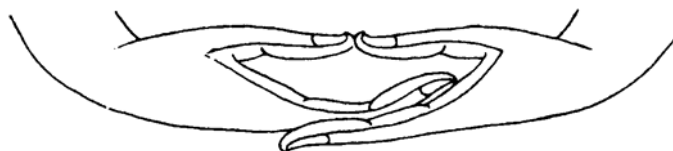
**Sacred Stewardship:** We accept our intimate interdependency, our oneness with the environment, the universe and all sentient and non-sentient beings. We embody this realization, and lovingly choose not to create any more suffering in the world. We recognize our responsibility and extend it first to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

**Philosophical Re-indoctrination:** 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. What is your Philosophical Re-indoctrination practice?

**Emotional Maturity and Integrity:** With our new understanding and experience of the true nature and real meaning and mechanics of emotion, we will no longer be bound to unconscious reactions. We will recognize and experience the energy arising before angry reactions as intense clarity and deep caring. With this new understanding, we will experience shame not as a threat to self-value, but as a question challenging our integrity. Instead of shutting down, we will hear the question and respond truthfully and skillfully. Through Mondo Zen Emotional Koan Awareness Intervention practice, 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 reactions to fear are now experienced as rich opportunities for transformation, and eventually become inconceivable. What are your Mondo Zen Koans, your Emotional Maturity and Integrity practice?

**Conscious Embodiment:** Through Qi Gong, Yoga, dance and other mindful physical disciplines, we investigate and become more aware of our embodiment. We locate and release the physical contractions associated with psychological tension. We become more sensitive, healthy and conscious. We delight in the discovery that *enlightenment is visceral!* What is your Conscious Embodiment practice?

**Genuine Insight:** Concentration/Meditation practice is essential. These Five Training Element practices are our awakening, our genuine insight. Practice *is* realization. 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 our core practices are transforming our lives. We achieve a personal freedom only possible with deep spiritual realization and discipline. Integrated Five Element discipline is our awakening. Our practice is our Enlightenment! What is your Mondo Zen Koan Concentration/Meditation Genuine Insight practice?



## 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.

### **Concentration**

Concentration or Dharana is the first stage of meditation practice in Mondo Zen training. Concentration practice is essential! In experiencing the deepest silence, we will discover our true nature. We concentrate and bring the mind to a "single point." In this way, we can experience silent mindfulness, **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**, mind deeper than whatever is arising within it. But all of our concentration practices, while essential and themselves valuable, are ultimately just preparatory. They deliver us to our deeper goal, the realization of **Clear Deep Heart/Mind** (Dhyana).

Concentration practices without clear understanding can cause ego reinforcement and rigidity. Traditionally, this problem of pride and power has been called "Zen disease." When concentration and meditation are properly understood and practiced, we develop insight into the clear empty nature of our mind. Then ego-relaxation, openness and compassion occur naturally. An example of a confused practice view is that ego is a permanent separate entity that must be annihilated. Such a misunderstanding can lead to the trap of nihilism—or just frustration, since it is through ego that we find and release ego. Our Zen practice view is that an ego is just a temporarily arising self-reference point in a field of pure consciousness: *a figment of divine imagination*.

**Clear Deep Heart/Mind** awareness or Dhyana is the second stage of meditation. When we achieve one-pointed concentration, there is a realization of non-opinionated, imperturbable, effortless, compassionate mind. This insight realization is a knowing of ourselves deeper than our thinking, feeling and sensing. In our meditation practice, we look out from and directly into who we are beyond our senses: no one! Experiencing **Clear Deep Heart/Mind** awareness, we know that our ego is not a permanent ongoing separate entity, but just a temporary point of reference.

This inquiry must accomplish more than just intellectual or speculative understanding. The insight within this practice must come from an actual realization. This profound visceral experience transforms our ordinary way of understanding ourselves and our

world. In time, we ultimately recognize that emptiness is indeed form, and form emptiness.

Our egos are self-generating and self-perpetuating. The apparent continuity of ego is maintained when we constantly refer to our thoughts, feelings and sensations. It is necessary for an ego to maintain this ongoing, exhausting self-reflection in order to persist. In Zen, this view is called “basic ignorance”—not ignorance as lack of intelligence or education, but as a conditioned ignoring of the deeper empty consciousness within us. In meditation, we can experience the unattached, selfless pure nature of mind. When this insight occurs, the ego is “seen through” and understood as no more than a sometimes-useful construct. Through practice, we experience our ego as just a temporary process, a “figment of divine imagination” arising in the pure silent space within us. Each lineage names it differently: Shunyata or Emptiness in Zen, Soul in the mystical Christian and Atman in Vedanta traditions. It is generally necessary to continue practicing Dharana concentration to maintain a stable experience of **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**.

Samadhi or Unreasonable Enjoyment describes “ordinary mind” after experiencing genuine insight, philosophical re-indoctrination, and emotional transformation. There is a new appreciation in experiencing the delightful quality of ordinary mind. Samadhi is called “unreasonable” because it is not caused, altered or confined by any thought, feeling or experience. Samadhi is called “enjoyment” because within this realization, we experience the natural joy that comes with the gift of life. After realizing this, we can consciously and compassionately embrace *all* of the experiences of our lives, not only the so-called “good,” but also the so-called “bad.” **Clear Deep Heart/Mind** makes no judgments, accepting everything just as it is, and maintains imperturbable equanimity as circumstances swirl and change. Within this realization, compassion and right action follow naturally. This state is not to be confused with the dissociation, denial of life experience, or manic bliss. This Samadhi allows us to engage life fully and energetically while remaining ever aware of our true nature. This realization is the fruit of mature practice.

Remember: *ORDINARY **Clear Deep Heart/Mind** IS THE WAY!*

### ***Meditation Form***

Sit with your spine comfortably erect. If on a cushion, sit with your hips elevated slightly above 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 conscious embodiment to discover what limits you. Your body is telling you something!

Place your hands in your lap and form the Dhyana mudra (the gesture of meditation)—hands in your lap, thumb tips touching. 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. Have your tongue rest lightly on the upper palate just behind your teeth. Allow your attention to follow the flow of your breath effortlessly.

Following our Rinzai Zen tradition, we begin the concentration “Insight” phase of Koan meditation practice with the Zen master Joshu’s Mu Koan: “Does a dog have Buddha nature?” Joshu answered “Wu!” (Pronounced “Mu” in Japanese, it means No in English.) We practice this Koan alternating the words *No* and *Know*.

With your in-breath, silently recite the word KNOW. Follow the word into the pure receptive silence within you. On the out breath 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 awareness in which the sensations and the words Know and No are arising. This is concentration and meditation practice (Dharana and Dhyana). Do not struggle against or interfere with the arising of feelings or thoughts. Instead, firmly return attention to the breath, the No concentration and deeper Know awareness practice. This practice is the foundation of your awakening. Stabilizing our consciousness, realizing the openness, silence, fearless imperturbability, freedom and ultimate emptiness of mind is Dhyana, **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**. Inevitably, this NO! also becomes KNOW! and then YES! Samadhi!



## GLOSSARY

**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.

**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.

**Dialog:** In Mondo Zen, we refer to a combination of Socratic dialog and dialectic. In a Socratic dialog, teacher and student test assumptions, one after another, until nothing remains but primal truth or a creative open space. Dialectic is a related process in which a proposition is challenged with a counter-proposition, sometimes leading to a higher truth that embraces the best of both. In Mondo Zen, this higher truth is manifest in genuine insight.

**Ego Deconstruction:** Mondo dialog process that allows one to see through the self-referencing of ego and bring insight into and realization of the empty nature of **Clear Deep Heart/Mind**.

**Eight-Fold Buddhist Path:** Traditional Buddhist practice:

1. Clear 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 to transform negative emotional reactions.

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

1. Sacred stewardship
2. Philosophical and cognitive re-indoctrination
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-step path to end suffering

**Guilt:** The useful but unnecessary acceptance of responsibility for an error, a mistake made in ignorance.

**Insight:** Direct experience of absolute clear empty mind or the real nature of relative ego mind.

**Koan:** A Zen question 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:** An unnecessary and ignorant painful emotional confusion caused by not hearing and understanding an inquiry about one's character, worthiness or ethical behavior.

**Three Marks of Existence:**

1. Anicca - impermanence
2. Dhukka - physical suffering
3. Anatta - selflessness

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



## **SIXTY-DAY MONDO ZEN PRACTICE**

Below are our suggested practice commitments that you can use as skillful means to enter this stream or to enhance your existing practice form.

Recognizing the difficulty of staying on this path alone, it is vital that students form a weekly practice group within the local Sangha or by establishing a weekly conference call with one's practice brothers and sisters, moderated by a teacher or priest.

To firmly establish correct understanding and embody this practice in your life, we find that it is necessary to repeat the Mondo Zen protocols with a teacher until your understanding is perfectly clear. We strongly encourage all students to complete at least eight Mondo Zen sessions with your chosen teacher.

At the end of the sixty-day Mondo Zen practice, we ask for a contribution to recognize the value received and support this teaching.

### ***Sacred Stewardship Practice Commitment***

- Daily enjoyment of local, sustainable organic food at home and in restaurants.
- Manifest sacred stewardship in our world by direct action or by giving of your time, talent or treasure to an environmentally conscious organization of your choice.

### ***Philosophical Practice Commitment***

Read the entire Sutra Book, and attend or personally conduct morning service once a week.

Read the Mondo Zen Training Manual once a week.

Select and read two books from the following list.

#### **Suggested Readings:**

*Integral Spirituality - Ken Wilber*

*Zen Therapy - David Brazier*

*Transformations of Consciousness - Wilber, Engler and Brown*

*God Is Ethics - Mitchell Frangadakis*

*Introduction to Zen Buddhism - D.T.Suzuki*

*The Enlightened Heart - Stephen Mitchell*

*Two Zen Classics - Katsuki Sekida*

*Thoughts Without a Thinker - Mark Epstein*

*After the Ecstasy, The Laundry - Jack Kornfield*

Additional reading list at [www.MondoZen.org](http://www.MondoZen.org)

### **Emotional Koan Practice Commitment**

Practice one daily until transformed and then select another.

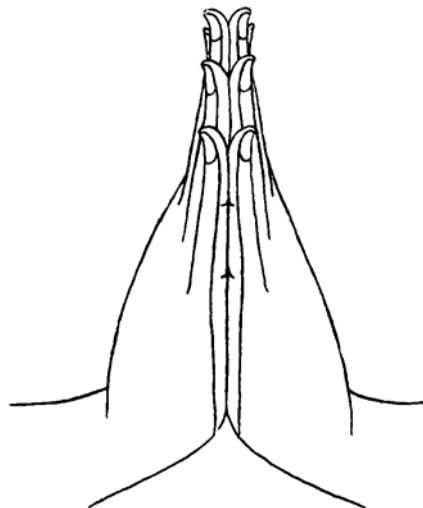
### **Conscious Embodiment Practice Commitment**

Thirty minutes of your chosen form(s) daily.

### **Genuine Insight Meditation Practice Commitment**

One hour Zazen Koan concentration/meditation daily.

Begin each meditation period by reading the Awakened One's Vow; end with a poem from the *Enlightened Heart, Stephen Mitchell*.



*My Sacred Stewardship Practice Commitment:*

*My Philosophical Re-indoctrination Practice Commitment:*

*My Emotional Koan Practice Commitment:*

*My Conscious Embodiment Practice Commitment:*

*My Genuine Insight Meditation Practice Commitment:*

*My support team and practice partners:*

*Master Rumi says:*

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!

## Mondo Zen 60-day practice log for

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12
Day 13	Day 14	Day 15	Day 16	Day 17	Day 18
Day 19	Day 20	Day 21	Day 22	Day 23	Day 24
Day 25	Day 26	Day 27	Day 28	Day 29	Day 30

Mondo Zen 60-day practice log for

Day 31	Day 32	Day 33	Day 34	Day 35	Day 36
Day 37	Day 38	Day 39	Day 40	Day 41	Day 42
Day 43	Day 44	Day 45	Day 46	Day 47	Day 48
Day 49	Day 50	Day 51	Day 52	Day 53	Day 54
Day 55	Day 56	Day 57	Day 58	Day 59	Day 60