

## *A New Narrative*

Last month I attended an International Vipassana Teacher Conference at Spirit Rock Meditation Center. One of the speakers was Bob Doppelt, author of "*Me to We: Five Commitments That Can Save the Planet and Change Your Life.*" Bob runs the Resource Innovation Group, and has been a key adviser to the Obama administration on climate change. He has a warm, optimistic demeanor, but his message was grim: the thing we are afraid will happen is already happening. Climate change is here, now.

For years conventional scientific wisdom agreed that climate change was manageable as long as the carbon particles in the atmosphere remained under 350ppm. In May of this year, we topped 400ppm.

So what can we do?

Individually, each of us can commit to making changes in our use of energy; things like using LED or CFL light bulbs, recycling, turning down the heat or AC, taking public transit. My personal commitments include all of the above, as well as being proactive in educating myself (and others) to become more informed.

- To see the list of commitments the Vipassana teacher community agreed to take on, click here: [Climate Change Commitments](#).
- To stay informed about ways to transform energy and consumption patterns, you can visit: [one earth](#)

And yet...climate change is too big for independent action alone. It requires a collective shift in perspective; a radical revisioning of how we understand who we are and what is possible for us as human beings. Bob described this during the conference as "creating a new narrative:" moving away from the hyper-independent, individualistic model that pervades the Western world, toward the recognition that we are a single, joined-at-the-hip community, responsible for the home we share.

When I first began Buddhist practice over 20 years ago, I was moved and inspired by the archetype and image of the *bodhisattva*. A *bodhi* (enlightening) *sattva* (being) is

*It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied together into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.*

*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

a person dedicated to alleviating suffering; someone devoted to doing whatever it takes to help ease confusion and difficulty--ours, others', the worlds'.

Bodhisattva activity is less about righteousness or even warm-heartedness than it is about insight into the truth of our interdependence. Bodhisattvas understand that we are part of an intimate web of inter-being; that no one of us can be free unless all of us are free; that our well-being as humans is intricately tied to the health and well-being of the planet; that how we care for ourselves is part and parcel of how we care for each other, and for the world.

In the spirit of helping seed this vision as a new narrative, starting this fall I will offer a series of talks to explore what it means to be a Bodhisattva and to walk the Bodhisattva Path. My aim is to introduce language and perspective that allow us to reconsider our individual and collective stories, and to invite us to step into our fullest potential.

In the meantime, I encourage you to be inspired by stories of modern-day Bodhisattvas: a Jesuit priest, a cowboy, a performance artist, and a sushi chef featured in the documentary videos listed below:

- G-Dog: Nothing Stops a Bullet Like a Job
- Buck
- Marina Abramovic: The Artist is Present
- Jiro Dreams of Sushi

Enjoy!

With appreciation,  
Pam

### ***Resources:***

New dharma talks are posted bi-monthly:  
[Recorded Talks](#)

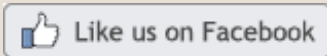
### ***Meditation Retreats in 2013:***

Five-day Vipassana retreat at Spirit Rock with Eugene Cash.

Registration opens August 5: [Spirit Rock](#)  
Dates: December 3-8, 2013

### Featured Links

[Press  
Calendar of Events  
Recorded talks](#)



**Pamela Weiss** is the founder of Appropriate Response. She is a coach, meditation teacher and recognized pioneer in integrating the principles and practices of mindfulness into leadership development and organizational transformation