



*i thank you God  
for most this amazing  
day: for the leaping  
greenly spirits of trees  
and the blue true dream  
of sky;  
and for everything  
which is natural, which  
is infinite  
which is yes.*

*(i who have died am  
alive  
again today,  
and this is the Sun's  
birthday  
this is the birth  
day of life and of love  
and wings:  
and of the gay  
great happening*

## *Generosity, Gratitude & True Happiness*

*If you knew what I know about generosity,  
you would not let a day go by without giving  
away part of every meal.*

*-Buddha*

Buddhist psychology describes generosity as the "proximate cause" or most potent precursor to happiness. This is important because we are mixed up about happiness-what is it, what it isn't, and how we bring it to life in our lives.

We imagine contentment as a state of 24/7, non-stop, pleasurable experience. Left unexamined, this fantasy propels us into perpetually searching, reaching, grasping for more: more money, more stuff, more experiences. It is folly to believe that someday this will lead to fulfillment. It will not. Treading this path is not happy-making; it is endless and exhausting.

If we pay close attention, we discover that true happiness is not about getting. Rather, it is a shift in perspective that often lands as surprise or even disorientation. The Benedictine monk and author Brother David Steindl-Rast has devoted decades to the study and practice of gratitude (to learn more about his work, go to: [www.gratefulness.org](http://www.gratefulness.org).) His pithy description of gratefulness conveys this reorientation. He writes: *If you think happiness will make you grateful, think again. It is gratefulness that makes you happy.*

So if gratefulness makes us happy, what makes us grateful?

We need to be careful here. Gratitude cannot be forced. The heart is a tender, sensitive organ. It knows the difference between compulsory, saccharine gratefulness and the real thing. And fake gratitude (in fact, fake anything) doesn't help. It hurts.

An attitude of true gratitude arises spontaneously from the cultivation of real mindfulness: the willingness to be with things as they are. This means when you are sad or bored or frustrated or disappointed, to allow yourself be sad or bored or frustrated or disappointed. Allowing and "being with" is the essence of generosity, and the simple-but-not-so-easy path to gratitude.

Allowing and being with is not about passivity or apathy. It takes courage, strength and steadiness of heart to meet what arises with receptivity and non-reactivity. As we develop the capacity to be with what comes, we see for ourselves: happiness is not "out there," in pleasing things, people, or experiences; nor is it "in here," in pleasant ideas, emotions, or sensations.

True happiness is more than a pleasant, fleeting feeling. It is part

*illimitable earth.)*  
*how should tasting,*  
*touching, hearing,*  
*seeing,*  
*breathing any-- lifted*  
*from the no of all*  
*nothing-*  
*human merely being*  
*doubt unimaginable*  
*You?*

*(now the ears of my ears*  
*are awake and*  
*the eyes of my eyes*  
*are open.)*

*-e.e. cummings*

*Click here to see a video*  
*presented at Genentech:*  
*"An Attitude of*  
*Gratitude"*

*"Being Human" a*  
*transcript of Pam's talk at*  
*the Gay Buddhist*  
*Fellowship*

and parcel of awareness itself, woven into the very fabric of being alive, revealed each time we relax and notice dappled light pouring through the trees, a smudge of chocolate on the face of a child, the simple sweetness of the breath in the body.

Learning to look, to see, to experience life this way takes practice and dedication and love. But it is possible. And if we are willing to take it up, we may discover, to our surprise and delight, that we are what we have been seeking.

So as 2015 rolls to a close, I offer these blessings:

*May we uncover the generosity needed to meet the pain and sorrow of our tender, aching world.*

*May our generosity open us to gratitude.*

*And may we all discover true, lasting happiness.*

With love and appreciation,  
Pam

[www.appropriateresponse.com](http://www.appropriateresponse.com)

### ***Mark Your Calendar for these Upcoming Events***

#### **May 14, 2016**

##### **Being Bodhisattvas: Waking Up in the World**

A day-long retreat in San Francisco at Against the Stream.

This retreat will explore the archetype of the Bodhisattva, a being dedicated to helping alleviate suffering-in ourselves, others and the world. The retreat will include silent sitting and walking, movement, meditation instruction, dharma talks, interactive exercises are ritual. All are welcome.

Registration opens in 2016.

#### **June 6-9, 2016**

##### **Big Mind, Kind Mind, Joyful Mind:**

##### **Cultivating Bodhisattva Leadership**

This four-day workshop at Tassajara Zen Mountain Monastery will introduce a model of Bodhisattva Leadership. Weaving talks, meditation, reflection, interactive exercises and ritual, we will explore inspiration, aspiration, and the qualities of equanimity, loving-kindness, and delight. You will leave with a clear articulation of your personal leadership aspirations and capacities, and with new practices and perspectives to inspire your path going forward. Open to those in both formal and informal leadership roles.

**Mail and online reservations open:** February 15, 2016

**Phone reservations open:** March 14, 2016

To register: SF Zen Center: 1-888-743-9362 or [www.sfzc.org/tassajara](http://www.sfzc.org/tassajara)

#### **August 10-14, 2016**

##### **5-Day Silent Insight Meditation Retreat with Andrea Fella**

A silent mindfulness retreat with alternating sitting and walking meditation, instruction, dharma talks, work meditation, and practice discussion with the teachers.

Registration opens April 10, 2016.

Your application and \$100 deposit must be received by 5/1/16 to be entered into the lottery. Applicants will be notified in **mid-May** if they have been accepted or are on the waiting list.



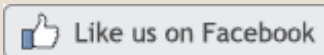
#### **September-December**

##### **Cultivating the Paramis: Experienced Students Seminar**

A 10-week, 6-session intensive seminar for experienced students

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Pamela's 2016 Teaching  
Schedule*

*To learn more about the  
Personal Excellence  
Program (PEP), visit the  
dedicated PEP Website*



taught through SF Insight at the Unitarian Church in San Francisco. The seminar will focus on the cultivation of generosity, ethics, patience, enthusiasm, mindfulness and wisdom, weaving meditation, talks, interactive dialogue and practices for engaging in daily life. Tuesday evenings, 7-9pm every other week: 9/20, 10/4, 10/18, 11/1, 11/15 & 11/29.

Registration opens in 2016.

Registration is by application and is open to students with at least two years of meditation practice and two overnight retreats.

#### **October**

##### **Weekend Meditation Retreat in the Pacific Northwest**

This overnight retreat will be held in the Pacific Northwest. It will include alternating periods of silent sitting and talking, movement, dharma talks and instruction, and is open to both new and experienced students. Space is limited and will be filled on a first-come, first-serve basis. Date: TBD

For more information or to register email: [jeywyder@telus.net](mailto:jeywyder@telus.net)

#### **December 27, 2016 - January 4, 2017**

##### **New Years Meditation Retreat at Spirit Rock**

with Eugene Cash and others

This will be a traditional, silent meditation retreat, alternating periods of sitting and walking with dharma talks, movement and practice discussion with the teachers.

Registration opens in 2016.

**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

awakening **Wisdom** in leadership and life.