



Practicing Living the Transformation September 2009

Dear supporters of *One House of Peace*,

Making money has never been a priority, nor has it been my forte, so naturally I am not a fund-raiser. Despite this I find myself voted into a new role - one of advocating for the financial stability of *One House of Peace* and ensuring its continued growth, not only spiritually, but monetarily as well. Please bear with me as I do my best to communicate what needs to be communicated.

Although I'm not a fund-raiser, I do have a vision, and, it seems to me, that visions are the source of all fund-raising. I write to share a vision of transformation with you. A vision of creating a more conscious world starting with the place that I believe we must begin - with ourselves. It is a vision of transforming the conditioned perspective of I/ME/MY into one of WE. This vision is vital to the growth of *One House of Peace*, along with humanity's evolution as a whole. Mainly I write this so that *One House of Peace* may reach out to the community, not just because we need assistance, but in the hopes that we may join hands in creating an organization that is deeply rooted in this WE perspective.

I've lived in intentional communities my entire adult life. From Innisfree (a community for people with special needs), to Penland (a crafts community), to the Zen Monastery where I lived as a monk, I've always been part of a group. I haven't always known how to live in a way that prioritizes the collective over the individual, however. Learning this lesson has not come naturally to me, and much of my adult life has consisted of fumbling through the on-going process of learning it. This lesson of moving from isolation and separation to a life focused on the realization of our interconnectedness is what I wish to share - a life lived from WE.

We live in a world where we are conditioned to live according to I/ME/MY. Our lives revolve around I/ME/MY. In these economic times, we are not predisposed to think beyond our I/ME/MY conditioning. Instead of such times inspiring us to experience our interconnection and to reach out to each other, we close ourselves off. We become more protective, concerned, fearful. We have been trained to think that it is foolish to think in terms of WE - somehow naive to consider the whole. It is not. In fact, it's what real transformation is all about. Real transformation isn't about finally being the right person or attaining some perfected spiritual state. Real transformation is about getting past I/ME/MY. Real transformation is about living from WE.

At *One House of Peace*, we practice living this transformation.

An example of living a life of WE recently occurred at the *House*. One of the 'regulars' had been out of town for several weeks. When she returned, she handed me a check written to the *House* and said, "This is the sum of what I would have left in the donation basket if I had been at all the group discussions I usually attend." This struck me deeply. It was an action born of WE. Not, "I'll pay for what I am going to get AFTER I have it," but rather, "I see that if sustaining spiritual practice is going to work it's going to take participation, and I want to participate. Not because someone told me I have to, not because I'll be rewarded in heaven, but because I can and because it feels good to do so."

I was similarly affected when another 'regular' spent several hours cleaning the meditation hall and other common areas. She did so at her own request. These acts are inspiring. When we live from a WE perspective we realize our interconnection, we naturally express reverence, care for ourselves and others, and express generosity. We feel called to make a difference, however we are able. When living from I/ME/MY, we tend to approach spiritual practice like consumers, which will not lead to liberation. If we want to be free, we must step beyond treating spiritual practice like a commodity.

We at the *House* have known for some time that monthly support from those who have received benefit from practice here (as well as those who simply want to see this center for consciousness become sustainable) would

erase all our financial woes. We've known that we need to relay our current financial situation. What is more important for me to communicate, however, is what's underneath this request: in truth, it's not about money. It is about an opportunity to create a more conscious world that focuses on our interconnectedness rather than our separation.

One House of Peace began in October, 2008, with Roberta (who owns the physical location) and I putting \$25 each into a checking account. Roberta gifted seven months rent, and I gifted my services as practitioner/teacher/director of the center. We've been steadily expanding ever since, which has been remarkable given that we've not spent a dime on things like publicity or marketing. Despite these troubled economic times we are not in debt, and for this, we are grateful. We pay our bills, and we have the money each month for rent. This is due to your contributions. In a few months we will have maintained a daily schedule of meditation (not to mention all the movement classes, special events and Awareness Practice workshops) for an entire year. So though we may be broke, we're happy - not because we aren't in debt, but because we've been practicing living from a perspective beyond I/ME/MY, and that's a rewarding way to be in the world.

Of course we do live in a physical world with physical realities, and to maintain a center for practice costs money. I've realized that most might not know that I've been deferring a salary and that all donations that come in from my teaching go straight to the non-profit. (I survive on my part-time work for Developmental Disabilities Service Organization.) Also, Roberta volunteers to keep our books each week and our Web-master is a very generous student down the street who donates his labor. We have no stocks. No Swiss bank account. We have \$2,194 in our checking account. Bottom line: according to most people's standards, we're broke.

It's expensive to run this little center. Rent is \$600 per month (I pay for my room separately). We spend an extra \$400 per month on normal household bills: gas, electric, water, trash, etc., along with normal nonprofit bills: insurance, supplies, etc. On average it costs about \$1000 per month just to maintain what we do here. Luckily, our donation basket collects, on average, \$250 per week. So, for this first year, our numbers have added up in a large part due to waived director/teacher recompense. The Board and Creation Team are in agreement that our current situation is not sustainable. The time has come to step up to the next level of sustainability and doing so will be a team effort.

The good news is it costs nothing to practice being conscious. We can choose to do so, moment by moment, for free. So, even if no one decides to contribute to the sustainability of this organization, spiritual practice will continue. Where there is dedication and willingness, spiritual practice cannot be stopped. But what I'm advocating is more than just a donation to a center that facilitates practice, but contributing to the larger vision of moving beyond I/ME/MY into WE. It is a vision that transcends this organization.

So, the Board and Creation Team will be proud. I've finally sent you a pitch for money. Please send us some, regularly, if you are able. We are pleased to have our non-profit status from the IRS, allowing you to receive financial benefit for your support. As someone on the Creation Team phrased it: "If everyone gave *One House of Peace* the same amount that they give their gym each month, or their yoga studio, or even if they simply matched their monthly Starbucks bill, we'd be able to sustain spiritual practice indefinitely!"

Hopefully they, and you, will be more pleased to hear that this is actually a pitch for practice. It's a pitch for getting beyond the worlds we create that keep us isolated, unhappy, and fearful. It's a pitch for remembering that we are a team called WE. For remembering that it's possible to step beyond a mentality of I/ME/MY, giving ourselves to a larger, more spiritually rewarding way to live. It's an invitation to play.

Hope to see you in the game soon.

In Peace,
Caverly

P.S. Oh, I almost forgot - (see, I told you I'm not a fund-raiser!) donations can be sent to: *One House of Peace* 1470 27th Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95822. Let us know if you are interested in being a monthly sponsor: sponsor@onehouseofpeace.org. If you have nothing to share financially now, remember, we each have something to bring to the table and only you will know what it is that you can give. Trades are good. No one will be turned away due to lack of funds. Ever.

One House of Peace

Practicing Consciousness. Creating Peace.