

Reflection Grounded in Gratitude; President's Letter; Upcoming Events for 2014, Reflections on Retreats and Seminars.

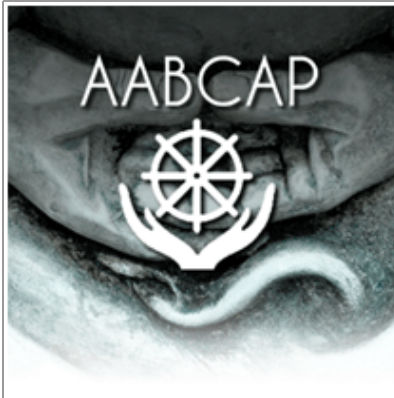
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Nov/Dec 2013 Newsletter of the

**Australian Association of Buddhist  
Counsellors and Psychotherapists.**



This newsletter is our last for the year, with the theme of '*reflection grounded in gratitude*', one always worth revisiting :) As I write this many people are celebrating Thanksgiving and many others are preparing for Christmas festivities, it is the time of year that we reflect on the year gone by, what we have gained and what we have lost, for better or worse. At a recent retreat with Megan Thorpe I was reminded how useful it is to ground self-reflection in gratitude, and nurture thankfulness and contentment as we mindfully remember experience. At the end of a busy year it is easy, in our fatigue, to feel slightly overwhelmed by all there is to do, but with just a little spaciousness, mindfulness or meditation added to the mix, we can re-discover and remember that we each



#### Upcoming Events:

- December 7th, 2013:  
[Mindfulness Meditations & Wisdom Teachings on Reflections on Beginnings & Endings](#)  
- John Barter

#### SAVE THE DATE

Calendar of Events 2014

have everything we need, right now.

*"I am generous when I believe that right now, right here, in this form and this place, I am myself being given what I need." ~ Sallie Jiko Tisdale, "As If There is Nothing to Lose".*

May all beings attain freedom and happiness this holiday season.

Shari Read, Editor.

## President's Letter

*"How can Buddhist ideas or practices reveal a greater understanding of ourselves and others within the vital, subtle context of compassion and inter-being. I see that as your primary question and gift to the psychotherapeutic world!"* Stephanie Dowrick about AABCAP

Dear AABCAP Members and Friends,

We are winding down for the Summer but before we do I want to thank you for joining us this year. And to share an overview of what we have been doing since November's AGM last year, when I became the Acting Interim President. All organisations such as ours are built upon the hard work of their voluntary leadership and following previous leaders I have had a very steep learning curve. My focus has been to strengthen their legacy for the benefit of our association.

My first commitment was to work with your committee to clarify our purpose. In November we developed a purpose paper, which stated **our vision:**

*"to enable as many counselors and psychotherapists across Australia to benefit from Buddhist theories and practices."*

With that in place we could then guide all our activities on **our goal:**

*"to use the teachings and practices of Buddhism to provide innovative educational experiences that inform and guide mental health professionals in their*

- March 16, 2014:  
[Teaching Mindfulness to our Clients](#) - Barbara Jones
- March 14-16, 2014:  
[Mindful Movements the Breathworks Way](#)
- June 13-15, 2014:  
[PACFA Conference](#)
- **August 22-23, 2014:**  
**AABCAP Conference - Men, Mindfulness and Meaning** (Call for papers coming soon)



See also the [Buddhist Council calendar of events.](#)

**Final Call for Applicants**  
Professional Training Course 2014



**Two Year Professional Training Course 2014**

Join this unique course to explore the integration of Buddhist psychology with Western psychotherapy through a balance of theoretical and experiential learning. Gain a deeper understanding of the wisdom tradition from which mindfulness has emerged and develop a network of like-minded therapists.

The course is PACFA accredited and requires a clinical qualification in areas such as psychiatry, psychology, psychotherapy, counselling or social work. Other relevant tertiary qualifications will be considered.

The training is conducted in 10 weekend modules and three retreats and is taught by an experienced

work and in their lives, and to provide an organization that supports the development of a community of Buddhist informed therapists.”

A lofty desire, yet one that your leadership committee, has embraced. With that in mind, our primary focus this year was to build our membership base, further develop our community relations. The aims for this were to increase our opportunities for raising awareness of what Buddhism brings to psychotherapists.

*So, how did we do?*

Step one was to revitalize our impact, increasing participation in our education programs and our professional training. Our goal being to do this, using the feedback given to us by you and the participants in our various programs. It was vital that if we were going to continue to improve our training and education programs that we had systems in place which would enable us to market the programs effectively, in the most cost effective way.

For this we needed to improve our administration and communication systems by bringing in new technologies. We updated and automated many of our functions. This led to the need to further develop our identity, making it more comprehensive. To that end we concluded a tagline “enriching the lives of counsellors and psychotherapists with Buddhism.”

One of our highlights this year was our 2<sup>nd</sup> Professional Training graduation. Led by past president Megan Thorpe and presided over by Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir. It was an inspirational occasion. Another event was our 1st interstate conference, in Brisbane, beautifully organised by Katie McLachan from the Queensland Branch.

Due to the wonderful leadership of Nicholas Tabley, our education event coordinator, we ran 3 Seminars.

And our Training Committee, led by the very experienced Lizzie Turnbull redesigned the 3<sup>rd</sup> Professional Training curriculum. The curriculum brings together some of the most experienced teachers in Buddhist psychotherapy in Australia using

and is taught by an experienced multidisciplinary faculty including psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists and monastics. Training will take place in Sydney and begins February, 2014. Cost is \$3,750 per year, plus retreat fees.

Find out more at:

[www.buddhismandpsychotherapy.org](http://www.buddhismandpsychotherapy.org)

Or register interest at:

[info@buddhismandpsychotherapy.org](mailto:info@buddhismandpsychotherapy.org)

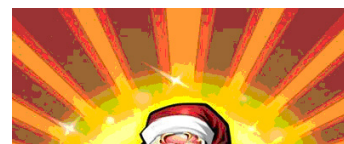


#### **Book Review:**

While this book has been written from the view point of the Christian tradition, I thought it pertinent coming up to Christmas, further, the message of thankful acceptance is one that will resonate with most Buddhists.

From the back cover:

*Mary Jo Leddy's latest book is a meditation on the miracle of the everyday and a guide to discovering what is most real in oneself. That process leads to "radical gratitude" that allows the spirit to soar and experience a great paradox. The freer one becomes, the more one appreciates the earthy things that give true joy and become the path to greater authenticity.*



the most up to date adult education methods.

All part of the incredible achievements of AABCAP this year.

Thank you all for your support in making this possible. Particular thanks goes to our new Treasurer, Trisha Nowland, who is a Buddhist, a psychotherapist and fortunately for us a very experienced chartered accountant.

To top it all off, today I am excited to announce that AABCAP has begun to pull together several chapters of our text book which will be based on our Trainings. Eng-Kong, thank you for your leadership in this enriching opportunity for AABCAP.

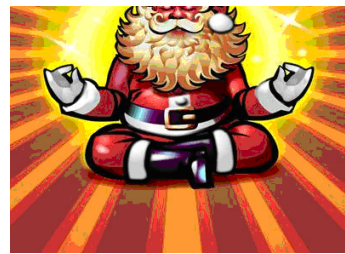
Finally we continued to keep our community commitments with PACFA and the Buddhist Council. And have been developing new connections both here and overseas.

#### *What are the goals for next year?*

I am very pleased to announce that the members of the AABCAP committee have all agreed to stay on for the next term. This continuity is precious for the continued growth and development of our association. While that is the case, we do need your input. I ask that all members here who have ideas for AABCAP consider joining the committee and participating in this wonderful rich conversation between Buddhism and psychotherapy. Your involvement will ensure that we raise the awareness of how Buddhism can enrich therapist's lives.

The outlook for next year is strong too.

We will continue to develop our training and education events. We begin the 3<sup>rd</sup> Professional Training, with new Director of Training, Louise Fisher. Louise's commitment is already proving to be inspiring. Louise, thank you for making the commitment to take it on. What an incredible gift you give us. The course is a vital part of our organisation. It trains Psychotherapists and Counsellors in Buddhist theories and practices, enabling them to deepen self-reflective capacities and increasing their skills as



*May you be gifted  
with great presence  
this Christmas.*

AABCAP would like to say farewell to **Carlene** who will finish up at the end of December.

She has been instrumental in putting administration systems in place which have enabled us to become more efficient in our processes.

Carlene was an incredible support in finding my way in the President's role, always the voice of wisdom and compassion in our year long journey together. Her contact with everyone has been so clear and skillful and she has an incredible ability to work with equanimity and patience despite what may be going on in her life.

Carlene, we will miss you, may the next stage of your journey be filled with joy.

- Genevieve David





therapists. Additionally it develops our future teachers and the community.

**We are continuously working to improve the relevance, quality and quantity of AABCAP and our education events. Next year** a sub-committee will work with a marketing expert to develop a marketing strategy. The goal of the strategy is to enable us to reach as many psychotherapists and counsellors in Australia as we can with educational opportunities and information, to continue to raise awareness of what Buddhism can bring to psychotherapists and counsellors.

**We will reinstate our monthly continuing education meetings** on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of every month starting February 3<sup>rd</sup> in a slightly different format we will call “**Conversations between Buddhism and Psychotherapy**”. The goal is that in an environment of trust, we will have mutual enquiry and discovery as we explore the intersection of Buddhism and Psychotherapy and the opportunities that it brings to our work as well to our lives.

**We will run a Member’s Retreat led by a Buddhist psychotherapist.** We want to help members nurture themselves! It’s an opportunity to bring like-minded therapists together, in contemplation for 2 days.

**We will launch our new AABCAP Journal.**

**And we have our Annual Conference entitled, “Men Mindfulness and Meaning” On Friday 22-Saturday 23 August 2014 at the Australian Technology Park.** We hope this conference will

stimulate much thought and discussion. We will send out a **Call for Papers** in December giving everyone time to write over the Summer.

We are also proud to announce that Louise Fisher, our Director of Training has received First Class Honours for her dissertation entitled, "Searching beyond the lamp-post: A qualitative approach to establishing what works in psychotherapy." [Research Abstract](#). Congratulations Louise. [Read more about](#)



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AABCAP Needs You

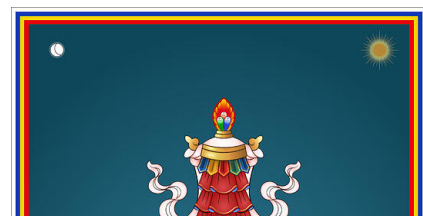


We are looking for a volunteer who would like to work with our marketing and strategy sub-committee to promote AABCAP next year. We would like to continue to raise awareness of what Buddhism brings to psychotherapists and counsellors.

We are looking for someone who would like to put their social media expertise for the benefit of therapists across Australia. The goal next year is to:

- Improve how we integrate our newsletter, Facebook page and website, as well use Eventbrite for our events.
- Develop strategies to improve our content, make it more relevant to our readers.
- Develop relationships with our members and friends where we can begin to cross-share content and connections to websites.

Please contact [genevieve@genevievedavid.com.au](mailto:genevieve@genevievedavid.com.au) if you are interested in making a valuable contribution to our organisation.



[Louise's research here.](#)

I would like to thank our management committee: Eng-Kong Tan, Louise Fisher, Nicholas Tabley, Liz Lobb, Brian Gutkin, Fili Perdikiris, and Wendy Smith, our newsletter editor, Shari Read, our administrator Carlene Stratton. As well our Training Committee: Geoff Dawson, Lizzie Turnbull, Eng-Kong, Louise Fisher and Elizabeth Faria for donating their time away from families, friends and personal activities. Thank you also goes to those that support you at home, while you provide us with your wisdom, commitment, generosity, patience, and kindness. It has been an honour and a pleasure to work with everyone this year. I have learned so much. And to all our members, who feel a connection to our values and goals, I also thank you.

With Metta,  
Genevieve David  
President AABCAP



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## Contact Us

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### **AABCAP Seminar - Mindfulness and Intimacy with Geoff Dawson**

Geoff Dawson's "Mindfulness and Intimacy" was our final AABCAP seminar for 2013. The seminar was well attended with around 40 participants at the Crows Nest community center on 23 November. Geoff's sharing of his work and practice with couples around Intimacy and mindfulness was both gentle and powerful. The seminar was a wonderful contribution to therapist understanding of the complex relationship dynamics between couples and a clear demonstration of how we can work with mindfulness, respect and love. Geoff's work is deeply rooted in Buddhist ethics, and mindfulness. Geoff at one point in his talk made the comment that love within a couple relationship has the capacity to expand beyond its confines, to affect others in an ever widening circle, as we are all embedded in the universal and infinite, "the net of Indra."

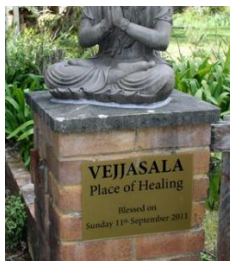
Indra's net (also called Indra's jewels or Indra's pearls) is a metaphor used to illustrate the concepts of emptiness, dependent origination, and interpenetration in Buddhist philosophy.

"Through my love for you, I want to express my love for the whole cosmos, the whole of humanity, and all beings. By living with you, I want to learn to love everyone and all species. If I succeed in loving you, I will be able to love everyone and all species on Earth... This is the real message of love." ~ Thích Nhất Hạnh, Teachings on Love

We are very fortunate to have Geoff present for us again at the 2014 AABCAP conference "Men Mindfulness and Meaning." Don't miss this opportunity to hear Geoff as he presents on the important topic of men finding meaning in relationships.

- Nick Tabley





## WOMENS' SELF-CARE MEDITATION RETREAT

Twelve women gathered at Vejjasala 22-24th November with much anticipation and excitement to attend the women's self-care meditation retreat run by Megan Thorpe. The peaceful environment of Vejjasala, surrounded by majestic trees and friendly wildlife was an ideal setting for facilitating relaxation and self-care.

We were invited on an amazing journey of self-discovery and awakening through reflection, meditation and an awareness of the stillness within us. Various processes including art, story-telling, yoga and massage were also used to help facilitate our growth and self-care. Megan created a safe and sacred space which held our emotional worlds and helped us deepen into our meditative practice. We were able to explore our innermost struggles without judgement and sift through the layers of resistance that normally preclude us from truly understanding ourselves. With gentle encouragement and a light and playful touch, Megan lovingly fostered an environment that supported our connection to one another and ourselves. The message of creating and realising our hopes and moving towards what we aspire was clear and strong by the end of our time together.

Looking around me at the glowing faces of all who were privileged enough to attend this retreat, I feel blessed to have been part of such an amazing group of women and the healing energy created in meditation with each other.

- Fili Perdikaris



## ACBS 11th World Conference Highlights July 2013 UNSW

This year in Sydney we saw the amazing butterfly-like unfolding of the World Conference of the Association of Contextual and Behaviour Science (ACBS).

Starting out as a small group connected to the work of Steven Hayes on Relational Frame Theory (RFT) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), this international group of scientists and their allies has grown to a 10,000 strong community dedicated to building the research base for mindfulness in the lineage of B.F. Skinner and empirical observation. The theory behind their work is as ground-breaking in psychology as the leap from Newton to Einstein was for physics; our minds are troubled, language can harm us, but if we pay enough attention to our experience, it can be a tool to heal. It's all about how we handle the emptiness in between the words.

As a group, these amazing minds form an astonishingly compassionate, self-aware and energetic think-tank. Committed to building a sound evidence base, the ACBS network is set up to share research protocols, and provide points of contact for interest groups ranging from mindfulness-based interventions, supporting prosocial behaviours, ACT and mindfulness-based peer supervision.

Hayes acknowledges the strong parallels in the work to Buddhism, however he is clear that his lineage is Western science, and that the closest point of reference the ACBS has with Buddhism is the invitation of the Buddha; don't believe me, try it for yourself, observe. The task falls to naturally to science, he reasons, rather than religion, to test out the practices.

Hayes is clear and compassionate about the need for this work, and up front about his own experience of anxiety that crippled his career as a psychologist for a time. Mindfulness-

based interventions start with the clinician, the researcher, with compassion for ourselves, our colleagues, for the fragility of the human condition.

Conference highlights included Kelly Wilson, author of Mindfulness for Two, geneticist Eva Jablonka, and Paul Gilbert and Dennis Tirch on Compassion Focussed Therapy. Australians Louise Hayes, Darin Cairns, Russ Harris and outgoing ANZ chapter president Jo Ciarrochi gave a warm and honest local touch. Dubliner Louise McHugh and Niklas Törneke from Sweden shone on Relational Frame Theory. As a non-scientist I felt way out of my depth on the research, however the gentle presence of my AABCAP training reassured me that mindfulness is available to us all, and I commend ACBS as a wonderful online support to clinicians and researchers alike. Jump in, the water is fine...

<http://contextualscience.org/>

**- Carolyn Minchin**

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