

GOODWILL IS NOT ENOUGH

Your good intentions are not enough; you have to be artful. We may be filled with goodwill; we may be motivated by the desire to make the other person happy; but out of our clumsiness, we make them unhappy. Walking, eating, breathing, talking, and working are all opportunities to practice creating happiness inside you and around you. Mindful living is an art, and each of us has to train to be an artist.



FINDING HOME

Every one of us is trying to find our true home. Some of us are still searching. Our true home is inside, but it's also in our loved ones around us. When you're in a loving relationship, you and the other person can be a true home for each other. In Vietnamese the nickname for a person's life partner is "my home." So, for example, if a man is asked, "Where is your wife?" he might say, "My home is now at the post office." If a guest said to the woman, "That meal was delicious; who cooked it?" she might answer, "My home prepared the meal," meaning "My husband cooked the dinner."



OPENING THE DOOR

Once you know how to come home to yourself, then you can open your home to other people, because you have something to offer. The other person has to do exactly the same thing if they are to have something to offer you. Otherwise they will have nothing to share but their loneliness, sickness, and suffering. This can't help heal you at all. The other person has to heal themselves and get warm inside, so that they will feel better, at ease, and can share their home with you

HOLY INTIMACY

Sexual intimacy can be a beautiful thing if there is mindfulness, concentration, insight, mutual understanding, and love. Otherwise, it will be very destructive. When the emotional, spiritual, and physical are in harmony, then intimacy can be very holy. It is easier to practice mindful intimacy as a monk than to practice as a lay person, because it's easier to refrain from sexual activity altogether than to maintain a harmonious sexual relationship. Physical intimacy should take place only when there is mutual understanding and love

CHANNELING SEXUAL ENERGY

The Buddha was thirty-five, still very young when he became enlightened. At this age we have a lot of sexual energy. It's wonderful if we can use this energy for the benefit of all beings, just as the Buddha did. The young monastics in our practice center spend a lot of time chopping wood, gardening, cooking, doing sitting meditation, and practicing walking meditation. They organize retreats, take care of their brothers and sisters, and of the friends who come from far away to spend time at our center and practice with us. They are using their energy in physical ways and living a fulfilling life. This helps them notice and be aware, without judgment, of sexual energy and learn to handle it well.