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<http://carfreeuniverse.org/m/colin/walkingsangha/>

The Walking Sangha & carfree camp: we free people to walk to centers of earthcare and peoplecare (a proposal for a skill-sharing community)

The Walking Sangha I am a part of in Los Padres National Forest supports walkers heading to Quail Springs Permaculture Farm and to other sites between there and Ojai and Santa Barbara. We make our life in the forest itself a practice, keeping time for silence, for trail work or walking, and for sharing. We also help Quail Springs care for their land and community. At least two thirds of our time is spent in roadless areas.

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Location: [World](#), [United States](#), [California](#), [Los Padres National Forest](#), [Quail Springs](#)

Topics: [anarcho- and neo-primitivism](#), [buddhism](#), [carfree places](#), [community](#), [diet](#), [economy](#), [ecovillages](#), [education](#), [elders](#), [employment](#), [fashion](#), [fun](#), [health](#), [herbalism](#), [housing](#), [leadership](#), [live power](#), [monasticism](#), [nomadism](#), [Our Culture](#), [permaculture](#), [primitive skills](#), [route information](#), [spirit](#), [Vision](#), [walking](#)

for us

Abbreviations:

- DPM = Deer Park Monastery
- ITP = Integral Transformative Practice
- LPNF = Los Padres National Forest
- PC = permaculture
- QS = [Quail Springs](#)
- SB = Santa Barbara
- TNH = Thich Nhat Hanh

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I am not sure I will do any of this.

When

When: The first trip will be shortly after the [green anarchy gathering](#) (in the California Sierra Nevada from Friday 7/27 - Sunday 8/5 in 2007). I will spend two weeks in the forest at that time, from Monday 8/6 - Monday 8/20. Either during those two weeks, or immediately after (8/20 - 8/27), we could accompany the first group of hikers from Santa Barbara or Ojai to Quail Springs.

Sangha

Here, *sangha* refers to “community of practitioners,” not necessarily to practitioners of buddhism. The work of Vietnamese buddhist Thich Nhat Hanh is an inspiration for this proposal. From [Practicing at Deer Park Monastery](#):

Practicing as a Sangha

We have come to practice together as a community. We do not encourage isolated practices or solo retreats. We are part of a body--the Sangha body, the community. Our practice is that of inter-being. Our joy and our sorrow contribute to the collective joy and sorrow of the community. Our transformation and realization on the path can nourish us all. The community can also be of great support if our heart is open. Our insight and development must be realized in the community. There is no individual, separated happiness.

I have been doing solo retreats by default on my walks. It costs at least \$25 per day to visit TNH's sangha. We can have our own in the forest, and perhaps spend as little as \$30 per week.

This idea was developed partly because visiting Deer Park Monastery is expensive and because it could be a while before I could visit there for two weeks at a time

due to events they have scheduled. Even so, I could learn a lot from a long-term visit to Deer Park, and I might remain in San Diego until that visit becomes possible. TNH encourages everyone to help build a happy sangha. These are some ideas for a way to do that in the forest.

Practice

Here, *practice* refers to things we do every day or every so often that help us have a better life. For example, at Quail Springs, they share what they are thankful for before meals. During part of our time in the forest we can share practices that help us.

How to participate:

- If you'd like to join the group walk to Quail Springs from either Ojai (40 miles) or Santa Barbara (45-50 miles), email me saying if you have requests or restrictions about where you start from or when you can walk (between 8/6 and 8/27). Put "Walk to QS" in your email subject--see bottom of page for email link, or call 619 582 7583 before 7/23. You might also try calling Cindy at Quail Springs at 805 886 7239, especially if you can't get through to me.
- If you want to be a longer-term part of a walking sangha (what I may like most), let's give it a try.

Note: I'm saying "walk," but these routes start at or near sea level and may go over 6,000 feet and also repeatedly up and down as we pass from one creek's watershed to the next. Many places are hot and dry, and some trails are very overgrown or cut by gravel slides down steep slopes. There are rattlesnakes, bears, mountain lions, coyotes, and deer that will snort at you. I am not a trained wilderness first responder, nor do I carry a cell phone or radio.

Warm-ups & Preparation

We will organize a warm-up trip for people who want to prepare to do the full hike. Starting in Santa Barbara, Ojai, or QS, we will go out for at least Friday and Saturday night.

It might be best that any participant would have recently gone on a three-night hike of about 20 miles, going 8-10 miles on one of the days. However, I want to help everyone go slow in and spend time in the forest, so let me know what your experience is and what you want to do.

Below I have pictures of the [equipment I carry](#).

Mission

Our mission may be:

- To do what contributes to long-term peace of mind within ourselves and others.
- To maintain a schedule supportive of sharing our life practices and the practice of being community.

- To help people use, develop, and maintain walking trails and other motor- and wheel-free routes to places where earthcare and peoplecare are practiced and taught.
- To spend two thirds of our time in roadless areas, learning from each other and from the land.

Behind this vision are my desires:

- (1) To avoid the effects of others' car and machine use and of an infrastructure and lifestyle built around that use.
- (2) To live with and learn from others in person, rather than with their printed words or electronic transmissions.
- (3) To live close to the land, gathering or growing food, water, and energy and constructing tools from resources found in places I walk between.
- (4) Not to pay rent with money, and not to do work for the purpose of making money, which should lead to a more integrated, community-based life.
- (5) To have a healthy way of eating.

This is how the Walking Sangha may get started and what it may do:

--> I have already walked from Santa Barbara to Quail Springs (50 mi, five nights) and from Quail Springs to Ojai (40 mi, four nights), through Los Padres National Forest. There is interest among those who visit and who live at QS in also doing one of those walks.

--> I have benefited from studying buddhism, primarily through TNH, S.N. Goenka, and the nun, monks, and literature at Pine Mountain Buddhist Temple, which is only 15 miles from QS. Since 2002, I have also benefitted from doing the Ken Wilber-recommended ITP, a type of simple yoga, qi gung, relaxation, and affirmation practice intended to develop one's whole being. I learned how to walk primarily from Frank Cook, an itinerant herbalist, and also from Peace Pilgrim, Tom Elpel, Tom Brown Jr., my time in the Boy Scouts, (and the list goes on). My practice incorporates elements from these areas and others. See [practice links](#) for more information. I want to learn about and share in the practices and views which help you live too.

--> You may want to have company on a walk from Ojai or Santa Barbara to QS or Pine Mtn. Temple, and we can develop a routine good for all in the group.

--> From QS to Ojai, I practiced walking as if I had all the time in the world: Since I left QS, I have sat in the morning (or midday, so I could do the hardest hiking early in the day), and in the evening, usually for an hour each time, and on most days did my version of the ITP. I saw only one group (three people with five horses) on the trail--in other words, LPNF is a great place to be with one's self and with others and to develop a practice which consists of sitting still and quiet, of living away

from machines, of learning about plants and animals, of doing meaningful work (many trails need maintenance), and of eating simply and not a lot (you only have what you carry or gather).

--> From Friday, July 27, to Sunday, August 5, 2007, is the green anarchy gathering in the Sierra Nevada of CA. I might find people interested in this idea there. We could walk part of the way back to QS.

--> Finance & Diet: Between trips in LPNF, we may be able to resupply either in SB, Ojai, or QS. I will be working out a good diet based partly on the work of Roy Walford (optimal nutrition per calorie). I believe our food costs could be \$30/person/week or less. I think we could comfortably go two weeks without wanting to resupply (and longer as we learn more skills). If we are at or near QS, we may be able to do work for them and receive food we need. To cover equipment maintenance and cost, we would either need to bring in donations, or to take, perhaps as individuals, occasional work for money. [Below](#) I cover diet in more detail.

--> It might also be possible to establish a “carfree camp” on or near QS that did not have road access, where participants in and visitors to the Walking Sangha could reside and develop shelters and food systems primarily without the use of motors and distantly-imported materials. Or, at the least, we could camp and cook there and do work nearby that supports the land, or walk to downtown QS and do work there.

--> Plenty of time could be spent in LPNF doing simple trail work such as trimming brush.

--> The walking style and routine I might like in a group would at the least allow for an hour in the morning (or midday) and in the evening for me to keep sitting, and for an hour and a half to do the ITP exercises. At the most (only meditation devotees might appreciate the following), we would all be doing something like that, and perhaps maintaining a “noble silence” from evening to morning, during part or all of the meals, and then having time during the day for sharing of practice techniques and knowledge. We could also make things very buddhist and follow something like the five mindfulness trainings of TNH.

--> Another avenue for finding participants would be Pine Mountain Temple and other buddhist sanghas, as well as notes in buddhist publications and websites. An advantage of the Walking Sangha is that its practice could have simplicity, closeness of community, and peaceful settings that sanghas with buildings, money, and nearness to many machines might not. We also do not need to strongly encourage donations (or require fees) from participants and visitors as we would all be carrying our supplies and covering our expenses.

--> We could also advertise on web listings of intentional communities, and on sites or through groups such as CraigsList, Sierra Club, and those having to do with green anarchy; humanistic psychology (e.g., Esalen); integral, new age, neo-indigenous, and neo-pagan

practice; and primitive skills. We could offer a retreat environment that had a base practice of quiet hours in the morning (or midday) and evening, a time for sharing of views and individual and community practices, a time for meaningful work or for walking, and suggested practices for speaking, listening, eating, walking--along the lines of Deer Park Monastery’s [guidelines for practice](#). Within that buddhist framework, people with many different orientations and backgrounds could learn from each other.

What’s the least I need to do to make some version of this happen?

(1) If I tell Quail Springs I’m planning to return by walking, they can announce it in their newsletter and we can find a date and a route when others would walk with me as well. I could probably fit in my practice on that sort of walk, and maybe we’d do some new route-finding.

A carfree camp/hermitage at QS?

(2) I could return to QS whether or not anyone would walk with me that time, and do some new route-finding/making I have in mind. I could see if QS would assist me in living on a car-inaccessible area for a month or two: I might find some way of doing work they would value in exchange for providing some food for that time, or I would give them money to help cover the costs of the food I would take. This way I could experience sort of being a hermit (for better or worse), while having attachment to and opportunity to visit their community, when I wanted to. In that time, I would become a different person--this idea might not matter anymore. Perhaps others would want to participate in the carfree camp, and we could share practices, and form a sub-community.

Why I might not want to stay in downtown QS

Not at peace. . .

Reasons I may not want to be a normal QS intern: I’m not yet at peace with all of their practices, projects, and choices. I have trouble getting myself to work for others unless it is work I clearly feel the value of and also feel effective doing. I may want some distance and more perspective before committing life energy there. The value of some work is clear to me: erosion control, for example. Having done that, if we walked away, the land would be better for it. Even so, I might not like working with or for others on a project I agree has value if I do not feel good with the manner of working (my own slowness and frequent lack of energy might be a factor here, but I’m not sure whether that is physical or motivational).

Too much good food

I have trouble dealing with the abundant, good-quality food they bring in--I just tend to eat too much then. Off,

away from that, I might be more at peace, and then more able to develop self-control for the times I am around abundant, diverse good food. Cooking community dinners also seemed unnecessarily difficult for me--I guess I'd rather be in camp cooking just my own meal on my own schedule, not wondering whether others would eat what I made or wondering how I'd deal with what others might make and when I should be ready to eat.

It is possible that returning after having identified these difficult areas for me I could find good solutions.

Lack of ease with social interaction

In addition, some aspects of daily interaction were hard for me: I tended to let myself get disturbed by their thanksgiving practice (nominally: sharing what we are thankful for before we eat or before a meeting), and by simple things such as many people asking me how I was doing, or even when people expressed appreciation for me.

Since I have left, however, I have noticed I am more likely to express appreciation to others, and that doing so is a good thing. Even though I'm exploring my issues and lack of contentness in this writing, I believe there is wisdom in the ways of Quail Springs that I don't yet fully appreciate.

Whether I'm right that those are the reasons, I might prefer to be a hermit (or a member of a more primitive sub-community) who visits once or twice a week (or once a day?), rather than a daily intern.

Carfree camp, continued

Furthermore, at QS, there may be appreciation for the idea of a more primitive, less-mechanized sub-community that is associated with Quail Springs. Sort of like Earthaven, in a way, has Wildroots, and other associated neoprimitives--such as (at least in 2006) Caelin Campbell (see *The revolution will not be microwaved*). If the neoprimitives wanted modern conveniences such as a clotheswasher, a telephone, internet access, an electric head-shaver, a movie night, or even a ride to town, those could be found in downtown QS. If the downtowners wanted to get away from: dusty expanses created by car and tractor traffic; insect infestations (I am hopeful); machine noise, exhaust, and fuel fumes; amplified, recorded media, and other electricity-powered stimuli such as lights, and spend time in a settlement with the scale and pace of less-mechanized humans that looks like it grew from the land or that is just a simple tent camp, they could come to the neoprimitive and carfree camp.

I might spend more time in the carfree camp--as long as we had sufficient nutrition, water, warmth, and shade.

What needs to be done first to make some version of this happen:

1. Extract self from San Diego
 1. permaculturize/perennialize 4602

seminole garden areas

2. reduce possessions kept here?
2. Design two-week hiking diet following Walford (optimal nutrition) and others
3. Order machete / bushwhacker for trail work. (take hatchet too?)
4. If I actually may do this, communicate with Quail Springs.
5. Stay alive, take care of self, and get back to the forests.
6. Stop writing and publishing.
7. Perhaps advertise walking sangha on ic.org, sb, sd, la craig's lists, permaculture guild email lists. . . indymedia? activist san diego? quailsprings newsletter? pine mtn temple? SB bhodi-something ctr that jourdie mentioned? let clancy help announce it? Jacob? And the J. Krishnamurti organizations in Ojai + Ojai foundation, and other meditation centers there
8. Get this article up, w/ some pictures, link to [google on walking sangha?](#)
9. Consider becoming more informed about safety and hygiene. Read [Where There Is No Doctor](#). Take the [Lake Tahoe Community College Wilderness First Responder course](#).

Diet

When I do the planning, calorie- and nutrition-wise, for the diet for two weeks of hiking, I'll put it here. Without any of that kind of planning this is what I was doing per day on the way to QS:

1 cup raisins
1 cup peanuts
1 cup green lentils, soaked
1 cup white rice
sea salt
spices (mixed ahead of time)
three sun-dried tomato slices
Kombu seaweed (fraction of an ounce)
~2 oz. cream cheese (a quarter of an 8 oz packet, I think)
--

I also had some sunflower seeds, 9-grain cereal, rolled oats, couscous, and butter as extra things. Often I would only cook in the evening. Some buddhists try not to eat after noon. I was eating my main meal at dinner. I usually soaked my oats and 9-grain and, when possible, fermented them. One day on the way to QS, I stayed in camp and read and cooked breakfast and rested until noon.

I expect different people will have different ways they want to eat. One reason I like being on the trail is that my use of food must be more careful and it is limited.

I look for opportunities to add wild foods. This was primarily yucca flowers and pods. I need to learn more of the plants in LPNF!

Walking alone vs. walking with others

I know I like walking alone. I want others to feel comfortable doing that, and also, if we are together, for us to still have some of the good things that come from being alone. And I want to walk with others, or I would not be writing this up. Walking alone is not easy. On the way to Quail Springs there was rapture (when I spent my first night on the trail), there was also tedium, uncertainty, and moments of fear. When I left Quail Springs, walking to Ojai, at first there were times when I was wondering what I was doing. There was also uncertainty, tedium, and fear.

When I'm in the forest with others I know it will be a different experience. I won't have the whole place to myself, and I won't be the only one immediately affected by my decisions. I won't be free to do whatever I like.

As one example, what will happen when we come to a stream that is big enough to cool off in? By myself, I rarely wear clothes in the stream. When we are a group, what will we do? I think this will depend on who's in the group.

Figuring out that and other questions in a group may be where a lot of the learning and meaning of being together comes from.

Equipment photos

These photos show what I carry.



Note the "hobo stove." You can use a large tin can to make one of these. I used an old aluminum backpacking pot.



There are several holes in the bottom of the hobo stove. To use it, I build a small pile of fine to large stuff and hold a candle under it. I make sure the ground around it will not catch fire. If it is windy, I shelter it as much as possible. This system works very well. The biggest problem I've had with it is when I'm not careful about clearing the ground under or around it, and then the fire can spread. "Put fires out with water." Usually I only cook at night. So if there isn't a problem all night, and in the morning everything feels cool, I'm not worried about

leaving embers behind. Often there is only ash in the hobo stove in the morning.

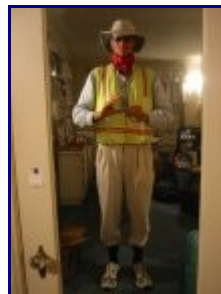
I did get a fire permit.

I do not filter the water I drink that comes from the forest. Only 12% (or is it 30%?) of us are adversely affected by giardia, and the incubation period is two weeks (or is it one week?)--you'll be out of the forest by the time you have a problem (cf. *Participating in Nature* by Tom Elpel).



I use a bivy sack and a tarp, not a tent. After May, I might consider bringing only a bivy sack and leaving my sleeping bag behind. If I get cold I wear all my clothes at night and/or stuff bivy sack with insulation such as leaves, pine needles, grasses. I move the layer of clothes that was next to my skin during the day to the outside, or leave it off. If I start to get really cold, I use survival techniques: body-length trench fire, hot coal bed, debris hut, shared body warmth, sleep in child's pose to help keep feet warm--but as long as it is over freezing I don't worry too much about frostbite, however cold my feet are.

I have a short rectangular tarp, which on the diagonal is long enough to cover me head to toe. My bivy sack is no longer waterproof, and the tarp has other uses. A main function of the bivy sack is to keep bugs out (mosquitos, flies, ants, etc.). In the future I might look for a solution that also has mosquito netting but offers more ventilation (a one-person tent?). The bivy sack has two poles that provide some open enclosed space around the head area.



I do not bring sunscreen. I have work gloves I can put on to cover my hands. I have a bandana (and two extra) I can use to protect nose and face from reflected sun, plus long sleeves, hat, sunglasses.

I don't recommend shorts or short sleeves. There are ticks (at least on the Santa Barbara route), and overgrown trails with brush that will scratch bare skin.

And there is poison oak, especially on the trails near the coast.

I put my pants in my socks because of ticks and ants. My socks are smartwool, not cotton, and they work very well. I can wear them all week without fungus problems, and they dry fast if I walk through a creek. I also have gaiters to keep rocks out of my shoes and for wading through poison oak, but I did not use them on this trip. I hike in running shoes.

My pants are light-colored to better see the ticks crawling up. They are a very lightweight cotton, I think. In general, it can be a bad idea to wear cotton. I usually get thin dress pants and dress shirts from the thrift stores.



I wear that florescent vest because it has big pockets and because, at least at either end of the trail, I'm walking on the road. If it annoys my fellow hikers, I'll find something different!

The hat is a Tilley hat (2nd free replacement, T-4, 8 3/8, khaki with olive green underbrim).

My socks aren't always pulled up that high.

Shoelaces can be tucked and or tied under other laces so they do not come undone.



Toothpaste is baking soda, and H₂O₂ (hydrogen peroxide), if I managed to get any for my little bottle.

I should have a rope for hanging a bear bag. We used mine for hanging a home-made spider piñata for Warren's birthday--it didn't survive that.

I have candles and lighters for fire starting.

A bottom of an old plastic water bottle, cut to measure about 1 cup for rationing out the food.

I have a whetstone. I have two folding knives only because I found one on the way to QS.

The brown camouflaged things above the dry bag are my gaiters (not used on this trip).

The blue thing in the black bag by the shoe is a deteriorating foam pad (nasty stuff). I use it for exercises mostly, and sometimes to have a place to sit. Or rolled up, as part of a meditation cushion (to get my butt high enough so my knees are on the ground). I didn't sleep on it on this trip.

I do have water purification tablets, but maybe I can leave those behind.

I have a can-opener (to the left of the knives, it is small), and a vegetable peeler, which I use sometimes when I'm not in the forest.

Thread and needle for repairs.

Goggles and bathing suit.

A small bit of first-aid stuff--clean bandages and disinfectant creams. . . but like I said I'm not a wilderness first responder, although I am an Eagle Scout, and did first aid stuff for that and I also do basic first aid training for my work on the challenge course.

I have a goretex-type jacket (the white wad to the right). My mom got it for me. Wearing only wool and wearing a cheap rain jacket can also work.

I have three 1-liter nalgene water bottles.

I have another 1-liter plastic water bottle.

A smaller plastic bottle for holding a fermenting culture of soaked grain. . . This culture came from QS's sourdough starter.

The work gloves are also useful for protecting my hands! And I use them as potholders.

In the future I may bring a machete or a bushwhacker and maybe a hatchet for trail work.

I have a small spoon for eating and a larger spoon for cooking with (sort of a luxury, but the longer handle is nice). I may also bring chopsticks.

I bring extra pins and rings for the frame backpack and safety pins and a paperclip or two.

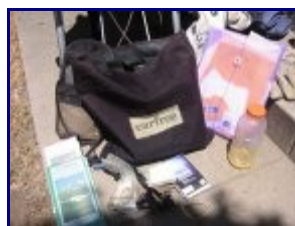
In the drybag I have paper to write on, stuff to read, and maps.

I keep a compass on a lanyard around my neck.

I have dental floss. There is also a teethguard there-- to keep me from grinding away my teeth.

There is a plastic trash bag I use as a pack cover in the rain.

The orange bottle (prescription bottle) has sea salt in it. For a longer trip I might need more than that.



I also have A&D ointment (though olive oil might do just as well or better for dry skin).

A watch. A usb drive. A map of the forest. A map of California. And a smaller bag to carry things in when I've left my pack somewhere.



Clothes I haven't already mentioned:

One top and bottom of long underwear (black).

One pair of underwear (boxers), usually only worn in civilization, and not worn on the trail for better ventilation.

Three warm hats. One very thin, one very thick, one in the middle. They can be layered.

Two wool sweaters. One very thick, one thinner. One long-sleeved dress shirt. I do keep another super-thin dress shirt to have clean and not shredded to wear in civilization.

Various mesh bags for holding things.

One pair of white cotton socks. (maybe not necessary).

Note: I do not carry soap. Ashes and sand work for cleaning, if necessary.

One stuff sack for bivy sack and sleeping bag (or other stuff if no sleeping bag). Also used as bear bag.

I do not carry toilet paper. I do not carry a flashlight. In the winter (12-hour nights!), I might bring a light.

Quail Springs photos



Some Quail Springs caretakers, interns (also called caretakers), and visitors. The people I chopped out you'll have to see in person!



Working on the mulch pit. Iris and her friend helped so they could take the kayak to the pond. I was soaking

cardboard and paper in the kayak. We drained the kayak using the bunyip level as a siphon.



Warren, Cuauhtémoc, Cindy, and others put this in the week before I left, and I helped a bit too. It is on contour, designed to be watered by soak-through from the swale, which should fill from overflow from the small pond below the willow on the left, which fills from the big pond behind Cindy and I. Peppers are planted on the uphill side of the swale (in the ditch). Corn (and beans? or squash?) are planted in the bed. Lettuce is planted on the far downhill edge (the most shaded part). Warren had been reading the *Designers' Manual* and woke up and decided to do this as a change from the Jeavons-like gardening that is going on behind the barn. He used the tractor to help prepare the bed. We are looking approximately south.



The completed mulch pit, looking east.



Looking north from near where my resting place was. I had a spot under a piñon pine--the trees are behind me.



Looking west, from behind the pond I loved to swim in. It is beautiful to be there as the sun is going down, sitting on that strawbale, listening to the water trickle in from that pipe on the left. The pond was one of the first additions made by early Quail Springs caretakers. They used a black pond liner. We eat parts of the cattails. People often played a marco-polo-like game where any verbalization by the it-person must lead to some sort of answer by the non-its. The pond is stocked with fish, and gets at least a meter and a half deep.



Quail Springs has a journal/visitor's log and this was my entry. While there, I was living, and now (and I saw this time coming), I'm writing about having lived, and I suppose this is living too. In any event, the reflection I can do now may help me live better there and elsewhere. It took a lot of contemplation to write that little bit. While at QS I generally avoided reading and writing.

So look in that page and see me laying in the dry stream bed thinking of the words, starting with more words and working my way to less, to what you see there, and even to its form on the paper--the formatting, the spacing.

Having written it, I wasn't sure whether I'd later cringe at or value having written it. But I find it reminds me of important things.

As I walked away from QS, I recited it, making sure I could remember it. It made, for the first time, my affirmation to sit twice a day. Which I have been doing. It recognizes the cycling. Whether I'm doing anything that could be called "growing," I sometimes wonder. Maybe [learning](#) is a better word. I am doing things differently from how I did them before.

Other links related to QS and the PC course

There is also a [video of me talking about the Quail Springs mulch pit](#).

Here is [the only writeup I may make about my participation in the 2007 Quail Springs permaculture design course](#).

[Rafter, who I met at Earthaven](#), resurfaced in Geoff Lawton's New York permaculture course. He's the guy who wins [King of Coppice vs. Fungi Destructi](#).

This whole document is a sequel to [hoboschool](#), about my time at Earthaven Ecovillage in 2003.

Helpful links

Resupply places

- [Tri-County Produce](#) (Santa Barbara) 335 South Milpas Street 805 965 4558
- [Rainbow Bridge Natural Foods](#) (Ojai) 211 E Matilija St. 805 646 4017
- others?

Public transit

- Oxnard to Ojai: [South Coast Area Transit](#) 805 487 4222 / 805 643 3158. Approximately

hourly. \$1.25.

- Ojai to SB? Ojai-> Ventura, Ventura to SB via [coastal express bus](#). 800-438-1112
- [Fillmore has service!](#) (for hiking the Sespe)
- [Ventura / SB county paratransit](#). (it may be possible to get a low-cost ride anywhere in the county)

Regional sites of interest, some of which we walk near, where earthcare and peoplecare may be practiced

Santa Barbara

- [Westmont College](#)
- Old Mission Santa Barbara 2201 Laguna St 682 4713 ([retreats?](#))
- [Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Lotus Land](#)

Ojai

- [\(J\) Krishnamurti Retreat Center](#)
- [Oak Grove School](#) ([Krishnamurti Foundation of America](#))
- [Ojai Retreat](#)
- [Meditation Mount](#)
- [Ojai Valley School](#)
- [Happy Valley School](#)
- [Ojai Christian Academy](#)
- [Krishnamurti Library and Archives](#)
- [Krotona Institute of Theosophy](#)
- [The Thatcher School](#) (the guys on horses probably came from here)
- [Ojai Valley Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Ojai Foundation](#)

Cuyama

- [Pine Mountain Buddhist Temple](#)
- [Quail Springs](#)
- [Los Padres National Forest](#)

Practice links

- [Tom Elpel](#)
- [Tom Brown Jr.](#)
- [Martin Prechtel](#)
- [Thich Nhat Hanh](#)
- [Pine Mountain Buddhist Temple](#)
- [Ken Wilber-recommended ITP](#)
- [Peace Pilgrim](#)
- [Frank Cook, an itinerant herbalist](#)
- [S.N. Goenka \(California Vipassana Center\)](#)
- [Dr. Roy Walford](#) and [optimal nutrition](#)
- [Earthaven ecovillage](#)
- [Wildroots](#)
- Wikipedia on [buddhist meditation](#), [mindfulness](#), and [j. krishnamurti](#)
- [morningsunedcenter.org](#) - (not immediately related) advertised in [The Mindfulness Bell](#)
- [Ajahn Chah](#), the [Thai Forest Tradition](#), [forest](#)

[sangha](#) and [forest monks](#)

- [The Buddha and the Terrorist](#) by Satish Kumar
- [Maxwell Maltz](#) - an american bodhisattva from the 1960s my dad told me about

Quotes or commonplaces

Culture comes from the land.

--Warren and Adam at Quail Springs

When we ride on a horse which is out of control, I think our deepest wish is to stop. How can we stop? We have to resist the speed, the losing of ourselves, and therefore we must organize a resistance. Spending two hours on a cup of tea during a tea meditation is an act of resistance, nonviolent resistance. We can do it because we have a Sanghakaya [community of practitioners]. We can do it together, we can resist a way of life that makes us lose ourselves.

--TNH, *The Path of Emancipation: Talks from a 21-Day Mindfulness Retreat*. [Parallax](#), 2000. 7-9.

Someone who goes with half a loaf of bread to a small place that fits like a nest around him someone who wants no more, who's not himself longed for by anyone else.

He is a letter to everyone.
You open it.
It says, "Live!"

--[Rumi](#) (Coleman Barks, Translator)

I am where I am.

--Colin

What I learned

The land doesn't say "I want to die." It just is, and the people come and go.

[May I help us be at peace.](#)

<http://carfreeuniverse.org/Members/colin/peace/>

"May I help us be at peace." and the complementarity of buddhism and permaculture

There are ways to use or to hold the body-mind to be at peace.

Added by [colin](#) #439 on 2007-06-23. Last modified [2007-07-02 19:32](#). Originally created 2007-06-23. Fo

<http://carfreeuniverse.org/m/colin/walkingsangha/>

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Topics: [buddhism](#), [diet](#), [fun](#), [health](#), [monasticism](#), [permaculture](#), [philosophy](#), [spirit](#), [walking](#): [analysis](#), [important](#), [learning](#), [vision](#)

Do I want my future to be like the present moment?

May I help us be at peace.

We know different experiences of peace.

And there are different paths to whatever it is I am attempting to point to.

If we are not at peace, we can care for our body-mind by doing things such as breathing in on one step, out on the other.

The following may have made sense once.

If we cannot let go of what we studied in the past, we cannot go on to the next step. If you don't let go of the fifth step, you cannot take the sixth step.

--Thich Nhat Hanh in *The Mindfulness Bell*, p. 9, Summer 2007

If you want to know your past lives,
look into your present condition.
If you want to know your future,
Look into your present actions.

--Buddha in *The Mindfulness Bell*, p. 38, Summer 2007

Darling, I am here for you
Darling, I know you are there and I am very happy
Darling, I know you are suffering and that is why I
am here for you
Darling, I am suffering, please help

--[The Four Mantras of True Love, TNH](#)

Try to be mindful and let things take their natural course. Then your mind will become still in any surroundings, like a clear forest pool. All kinds of wonderful, rare animals will come to drink at the pool, and you will clearly see the nature of all things. You will see many strange and wonderful things come and go, but you will be still.

--[Ajahn Chah](#)

To be at peace is to appreciate things without seeking to change them. Permaculture and buddhism may help us to be at peace.

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- How meditation or mental development may work
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- Why not consider increasing our vitality and joy, our meaning, passion, and bliss, and our experience of the full range of life's experiences?
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May I help us be at peace.

To be at peace

To be at peace is to appreciate things, all of which are impermanent and interbeing, without seeking to change them. "Things" include sensations, perceptions, and thoughts.

Mindful action

I act after considering how to help us be at peace, maintaining awareness of things as they are. I *am* acting. I *am* acting to change things. I am acting to help us be at peace. I am acting with awareness that I am trying to change what I believe contributes to lack of peace.

Habit and reflex

As I consider my reflexive ways of acting, I have fewer reflexive ways of acting.

How meditation or mental development may work

By seeking to appreciate things as they are, which may be aided by moving and acting sensitively and gently, by sitting still, by practicing awareness, and by keeping the mind attached to the present moment, I become less likely to act reflexively. I am more likely to spend more time appreciating.

Is appreciation or mental development non-reaction?

I often act to improve my appreciation, just as I continue to modify this writing. It may be better to say I continue to act, but more subtly. Noticing a tingling in my leg, once I may have changed my sitting posture. Now I may make a small change in how I am using my attention.

Seeking peace leads to less harmful action

As I seek greater peace, my actions may cause less suffering. Once, I squished the ant crawling up my arm. Now I do not notice, or I appreciate its walk, or remember to arrange my seat next time so fewer ants crawl on me.

Why not consider increasing our vitality and joy, our meaning, passion, and bliss, and our experience of the full range of life's experiences?

Should I never think about the past or future?

I often consider how to get myself to an imagined better future, based on a good memory of the past, where it may be easier to be in the present. I hedge my bets by learning to spend more time in the present (which, I am finding, isn't so bad) even now.

Should I help organize to stop harmful actions of others?

Permaculturists can help buddhists be at peace

It is easier to be at peace when danger or pain is not there. Permaculture consists of techniques for developing human settlements that provide abundant nourishment, clean water, and comfortable shelter. Permaculture systems can improve: diversity within ecosystems, relationships with neighboring settlements, and residents' ability to live without harming themselves or others.

Buddhists can help permaculturists care for each other

Permaculturists can address "Zone Zero Zero," or the zone between the ears, consisting, perhaps, of both the individual body-mind and the "Thou" or "We." *Thou*, *We* refer to how individuals interact with each other. We can guide body-mind and We in groups developing permaculture settlements. These communities are often refuges for those learning to apply permaculture. We can benefit from instruction in (and space to mutually develop) practices and reasoning that help us to be at peace.

Buddhists have been living in communities (sanghas) for 2,600 years. These communities have also been refuges. Sangha members have developed ways of interacting with each other that help them be at peace. [Beginning Anew](#) is one example.

Permaculturists can also learn from indigenous and other ancient and modern wisdom traditions as they develop practices for their land and people.

Walking Sangha possibilities for practice

This is primarily an HTML version of "Practicing at Deer Park Monastery," which is on the DPM website as a .doc and a .pdf. This also contains "Beginning Anew" from the DPM website.

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Location: [World](#), [United States](#), [California](#), [Escondido](#), [Deer Park Monastery](#)

Topics: [buddhism](#), [monasticism](#), [personal](#), [walking](#)

The original "Practicing at Deer Park Monastery" can be found as [a .doc or .pdf at the bottom of the About Us page at the DPM site](#).

I refer to this document in [walkingsangha](#) and [peace](#).

If this sounds as good to you as it does to me, let's get together and do this.

Questions I have:

- The First Mindfulness Training: "I am determined not to kill." There's some nuance I'm not yet understanding. It contrasts with an [essay by Bill Mollison I value](#).
- "no sexual practice": I may understand the importance of no sexual conduct to the buddhist path. We could have sex-free days.

Regarding gathas, "Breathing in I calm my body / breathing out I smile," immediately improved my life. It led to less-verbal practices (e.g., [S.N. Goenka](#), [Serene Reflection Meditation](#), how the buddha lived). Here is a gatha for lap swimming: "Pushing off the wall, I am free."

While walking, one might: attach steps to breath; remain a constant distance behind the person in front of you; practice in a way that does not disturb others.

That last possibility brings to mind: "If you offer your beloved something she does not need, that is not maitri" ([tnh](#)), as well as, "If you are skillful, you can avoid making yourself suffer, and making the other person suffer" ([tnh](#)).

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- [Observing Noble Silence](#)
- [Listening to Dharma Talks](#)
- [The Foundation of Our Being Together](#)

- [The Five Mindfulness Trainings](#): (Aware of the suffering caused by . . . , I . . .)
 - [The First Mindfulness Training](#): " the destruction of life
 - [The Second Mindfulness Training](#): " exploitation, social injustice, stealing, and oppression
 - [The Third Mindfulness Training](#): " sexual misconduct
 - [The Fourth Mindfulness Training](#): " unmindful speech and the inability to listen to others
 - [The Fifth Mindfulness Training](#): " unmindful consumption
- [Beginning Anew](#)

PRACTICING at Deer Park Monastery

"I have arrived.

I am home"

These two lines are the essence of the practice of the Plum Village tradition taught by Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh. It is the practice of dwelling happily in the present moment. We are no longer grasping at the future, regretting the past or being swept by our feelings of despair and anger. We have arrived at our true home, our true self, no longer seeking to be something else.

BREATHING Consciously

To breathe in consciously is to know that the air is entering our body, and to breathe out consciously is to know that our body is exchanging air. Thus, we are in contact with the air and with our body and, because our mind is being attentive to all this, we are in contact with our mind, too; just as it is. We only need one conscious breath to be back in contact with our inner self and with the wonders that surround us. Breathing consciously with mere attention can be very nourishing and healing. (Recommended book: *Breathe! You are Alive; Sutra on the Full Awareness of Breathing*)

STOPPING for the Wonderful Sounds

The sound of the temple bells, the telephone and the clock chimes are all wonderful sounds to help us to practice. When we hear them, we can stop what we are doing and, at the same time, we can stop talking and even stop thinking. We just stop and become aware of the present moment by following our breathing. Enjoying three in-breaths and three out-breaths is the best way to listen to these wonderful sounds.

WALKING Meditation

Whenever we are not standing, sitting or lying down, we are moving. We can learn to move and to walk with awareness. We do not need to rush. We have arrived with each step in the present moment; we can step in the Pure Land or in the Kingdom of God. When we are

walking from one side of the room to the other or from one building to another, we can be aware of the contact of our feet with the earth and of our in and out breath. As we breathe in we can say “in,” as we breathe out we can say “out” silently. We are aware that we are alive with each step, not carried away by our thoughts and emotions. We can train to practice walking meditation all day long. It is a wonderful practice which we can do anywhere and at any time; therefore, it has the capacity to transform our everyday life. (Recommended book: *The Long Road Turns to Joy*)

PRACTICING the Gathas

One way to help us dwell in the present moment is to practice reciting gathas or mindfulness verses. When we recite the gathas silently to ourselves, our mind comes back to the present moment and our thoughts are guided by the deep wisdom of our ancestors. Our actions of body and mind are poetically filled with understanding and love. There are many gathas for different aspects of the practice. We can begin by memorizing one or two and learn more over time. (Recommended book: *Present Moment, Wonderful Moment*)

Hearing a Bell:

Listen, listen (in breath)
This wonderful sound (out breath)
Brings me back (in breath)
to my true self. (out breath)

Joining Palms, Meeting Others:

A lotus for you (in breath)
A Buddha to be. (out breath)

Walking Meditation:

I have arrived, I am home (in breath, out breath)
In the here, in the now (in breath, out breath)
I am solid, I am free (in breath, out breath)
In the ultimate, I dwell. (in breath, out breath)

EATING Meditation

We are very fortunate to have food to eat and we are even more fortunate to have the opportunity to eat with a community of fellow practitioners. Eating in mindfulness can benefit our spiritual life and physical health. We allow our body and mind to be at ease while we eat. We do not rush to finish, but enjoy every morsel with awareness. We become aware of the rain, the sun and the green earth as we chew slowly. We are aware of what we are chewing and do not let our mind be occupied by meaningless thinking. We chew every mouthful at least thirty times so the saliva has a chance to aid the digestive process. Our full awareness during the meal is a way of showing gratitude for the nourishment and for the countless supporting conditions that have come to sustain us. We can look at each other from time to time with compassion and smile. We take time to enjoy our meal as a community,

as a family. We wait for the whole community to be served before the bell is invited three times to start eating. The first 20 minutes we eat in silence. After a double sound of the bell we may converse or serve more food.

SITTING Meditation

The time of sitting meditation is not to achieve anything. Please do not try so hard. There must be enjoyment right in the very time of sitting. We are not sitting for some future happiness or enlightenment. Just sit to sit. Do not rush the ripening of your mind. We follow our conscious breathing and become aware of our body and mind, returning back to our breathing when we find our thinking has strayed. If your sitting position seems uncomfortable or incorrect, please ask for advice. If you experience discomfort in your sitting position, you can change it mindfully and quietly. After a short period of sitting meditation, there may be a session of walking meditation. You will be guided at that time on this practice. (Recommended book: *The Blooming of a Lotus*)

PRACTICING as a Sangha

We have come to practice together as a community. We do not encourage isolated practices or solo retreats. We are part of a body--the Sangha body, the community. Our practice is that of inter-being. Our joy and our sorrow contribute to the collective joy and sorrow of the community. Our transformation and realization on the path can nourish us all. The community can also be of great support if our heart is open. Our insight and development must be realized in the community. There is no individual, separated happiness.

OBSERVING Noble Silence

A period of deep silence is observed starting from the end of the evening sitting meditation until after breakfast the next morning. This is very healing. We allow the silence, the calmness and the energy of the Sangha to penetrate our being. We return to our tents or dormitory slowly, aware of every step. We breathe deeply and enjoy the stillness. We refrain from talking unnecessarily. This is a very deep practice that can bring us a lot of nourishment. We may like to go to bed right away. Lying on our back, we can practice Deep Relaxation. In the morning, we move mindfully and silently, taking time to breathe, to use the bathroom and then to proceed immediately to the meditation hall. When we see someone along the path, we can join our palms and bow, allowing him or her to enjoy the morning the way we do. The best time for talking is during a Dharma discussion, where the sharing is conducted with much respect and trust. We learn to speak and listen deeply. The rest of the day we really do not need to talk very much.

LISTENING to Dharma Talks

The expounded teachings can be like a Dharma rain watering the seeds of our store consciousness. If our conscious mind is trying too hard to remember, to compare and to understand something, it becomes like the hardened earth; thus the Dharma rain can not reach the depths of our mind easily. So let go and enjoy the rain. If we relax and enjoy listening during the talk, our concentration will arise naturally. We will be alert and attentive. Please arrive on time for the talks. Enjoy your breathing before the talk begins and during the talk. Out of respect for the teachings and the teacher, you are asked to sit on a cushion or in a chair at the back during the teachings and not to lie down. (Recommended Books: *The Miracle of Mindfulness*; *Peace is Every Step*; *Being Peace*; *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching*; *Old Path White Cloud*; *My Master's Robe*, *Transformation at the Base*)

THE FOUNDATION OF OUR BEING TOGETHER

Everyone who comes to practice is requested to observe the Five Mindfulness Trainings that are the very foundation of our being together here as a Sangha. They are the guidelines that help us move in the direction of goodness and beauty. No smoking, no drinking and no sexual practice are allowed on the grounds of the monastery. Please respect the community's effort in this observance.

THE FIVE MINDFULNESS TRAININGS

The First Mindfulness Training

Aware of the suffering caused by the destruction of life, I am committed to cultivating compassion and learning ways to protect the lives of people, animals, plants, and minerals. I am determined not to kill, not to let others kill, and not to support any act of killing in the world, in my thinking and in my way of life.

The Second Mindfulness Training

Aware of the suffering caused by exploitation, social injustice, stealing, and oppression, I am committed to cultivating loving kindness and learning ways to work for the well-being of people, animals, plants, and minerals. I will practice generosity by sharing time, energy, and material resources with those who are in real need. I am determined not to steal and not to possess anything that should belong to others. I will respect the property of others, but I will prevent others from profiting from human suffering or the suffering of other species on Earth.

The Third Mindfulness Training

Aware of the suffering caused by sexual misconduct, I am committed to cultivating responsibility and learning ways to protect the safety and integrity of individuals, couples, families and society. I am determined not to engage in sexual relations without love and a long-term

commitment. To preserve the happiness of myself and others, I am determined to respect my commitments and the commitments of others. I will do everything in my power to protect children from sexual abuse and to prevent couples and families from being broken by sexual misconduct.

The Fourth Mindfulness Training

Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful speech and the inability to listen to others, I am committed to cultivating loving speech and deep listening in order to bring joy and happiness to others and relieve others of their suffering. Knowing that words can create happiness or suffering, I am determined to speak truthfully, with words that inspire self-confidence, joy and hope. I will not spread news that I do not know to be certain and will not criticize or condemn things of which I am not sure. I will refrain from uttering words that can cause division or discord or that can cause the family or community to break. I am determined to make all efforts to reconcile and resolve all conflicts, however small.

The Fifth Mindfulness Training

Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful consumption, I am committed to cultivating good health, both physical and mental, for myself, my family and my society by practicing mindful eating, drinking and consuming. I will ingest only items that preserve peace, well-being and joy in my body, in my consciousness and in the collective body and consciousness of my family and society. I am determined not to use alcohol, any other intoxicants or ingest foods and other items that contain toxins, such as certain TV programs, magazines, books, films and conversations. I am aware that to damage my body or my consciousness with these poisons is to betray my ancestors, my parents, my society and future generations. I will work to transform violence, fear, anger and confusion in myself and in society by practicing a diet for myself and for society. I understand that a proper diet is crucial for self-transformation and for the transformation of society.

Mindfulness is the heart of Buddhist meditation. To practice the Five Mindfulness Trainings is to practice mindfulness in each moment of our daily life, not just during sitting meditation hours. The practice helps one to protect oneself, one's family and society. The practice of the Five Mindfulness Trainings ensures a safe and happy present, and a safe and happy future.

The practice of Buddhist meditation is impossible without the practice of the Five Mindfulness Trainings. We urge everyone who has confidence in the practice of Buddhist meditation to receive, study and practice the Five Mindfulness Trainings with the support of a local Sangha, a community of practice.

The practice of the trainings is also the practice of the Three Refuges, because it is a concrete expression of one's appreciation and trust in the Buddha, the

Dharma and the Sangha. That is why the trainings always go together with the Three Refuges. The equivalent of the Five Mindfulness Trainings and the Three Refuges can also be found in great spiritual traditions of the world. No matter what one's spiritual tradition, the practice of the Trainings and the Three Refuges helps one to be rooted more deeply in one's own tradition.

*If you are interested in receiving the Five Mindfulness Trainings, please contact the monastery.
(Recommended book: **For a Future to Be Possible**)*

[Deer Park Monastery](#)

in the great hidden mountain

The following is from the DPM page on [Beginning Anew](#). [Google on "beginning anew."](#)

Beginning Anew

To begin anew is to look deeply and honestly at ourselves, our past actions, speech and thoughts and to create a fresh beginning within ourselves and in our relationships with others. At the practice center we practice Beginning Anew as a community every two weeks and individually as often as we like.

We practice Beginning Anew to clear our mind and keep our practice fresh. When a difficulty arises in our relationships with fellow practitioners and one of us feels resentment or hurt, we know it is time to Begin Anew. The following is a description of the four-part process of Beginning Anew as used in a formal setting. One person speaks at a time and is not interrupted during his or her turn. The other practitioners practice deep listening and following their breath.

- 1) **Flower watering** - This is a chance to share our appreciation for the other person. We may mention specific instances that the other person said or did something that we had admired. This is an opportunity to shine light on the other's strengths and contributions to the sangha and to encourage the growth of his or her positive qualities.
- 2) **Sharing regrets** - We may mention any unskillfulness in our actions, speech or thoughts that we have not yet had an opportunity to apologize for.
- 3) **Expressing a hurt** - We may share how we felt hurt by an interaction with another practitioner, due to his or her actions, speech or thoughts. (To express a hurt we should first water the other person's flower by sharing two positive qualities that we have truly observed in him or her. Expressing a hurt is often performed one on one with another practitioner rather than in the group setting. You may ask for a third party that you both trust and respect to be present, if desired.)
- 4) **Sharing a long-term difficulty & asking for support** - At times we each have difficulties and pain arise from our past that surface in the present. When we

share an issue that we are dealing with we can let the people around us understand us better and offer the support that we really need.

The practice of Beginning Anew helps us develop our kind speech and compassionate listening. Beginning Anew is a practice of recognition and appreciation of the positive elements within our Sangha. For instance, we may notice that our roommate is generous in sharing her insights, and another friend is caring towards plants. Recognizing others' positive traits allows us to see our own good qualities as well.

Along with these good traits, we each have areas of weakness, such as talking out of our anger or being caught in our misperceptions. When we practice "flower watering" we support the development of good qualities in each other and at the same time we help to weaken the difficulties in the other person. As in a garden, when we "water the flowers" of loving kindness and compassion in each other, we also take energy away from the weeds of anger, jealousy and misperception.

We can practice Beginning Anew everyday by expressing our appreciation for our fellow practitioners and apologizing right away when we do or say something that hurts them. We can politely let others know when we have been hurt as well. The health and happiness of the whole community depends on the harmony, peace and joy that exists between every member in the sangha.