

Transforming Depression and Anxiety Interview Q&A

1-28-2021

1. **How did you come to teach the TDA and Finding Ease course material?**

It's a classic story of synchronicity. About 6 years ago, I began wondering what was next in my Zen teaching – I was leading a women's Sangha and facilitating workshops at San Francisco Zen Center. At exactly that time, Lee Lipp, a Buddhist teacher and psychologist who created these courses, approached me about co-teaching with her. I was so touched and honored, as I had known, liked and admired Lee, who passed away in 2017 at 79, for many years. She was a bright light, full of energy, deeply committed to helping others, and incredibly warm and fun. I immediately said yes yes yes!

2. **Does the practice of managing anxiety and depression have personal meaning to you that you're willing to share? Or to anyone close to you?**

Yes, it has very personal meaning, as I have needed to learn how to manage my own anxiety and depression over the course of my life, and have benefited from so many teachers like Lee, and my heart teacher Darlene Cohen. I also have family members who self-medicated their depression and anxiety, and was profoundly affected by the devastating results. I'm also fortunate to be close friends with a number of people who are also skillfully managing these lowered and agitated mood states, and it's a joy to share this experience.

3. **What is your personal experience of the value of practicing within a community setting vs. on your own? — In other words, how does sangha = useful support?**

Oh my goodness, where to start about practicing within a safe and trusted community? My experience is that depression and anxiety create a deep feeling of isolation. One of the most rewarding aspects of co-teaching the Transforming Depression and Anxiety workshops and classes is how encouraged people are when they connect and hear each other's experience and learnings, and have the opportunity to express themselves. That connectedness and encouragement combined with practical tools and skills equals useful support and comfort.

4. **What inspires you to create sangha for others around this course material in particular and at this moment in time?**

The inspiration comes from our workshop and class participants, who frequently ask about continuing in community. It also arises from the need I see during the pandemic, combined with profound political and social change and so much unrest. On a personal level, I adore the people who take our workshops and classes and I'm eager to spend more time with those interested in the practice group.

5. **Anything else you'd like to say about the upcoming practice group and what you hope will come from it?**

I hope those who are part of the practice group will deepen their use of the tools and skills they have learned, and continue the positive relationships that began in our courses and workshops. And I have a vision for an ongoing caring and supportive community that emerges from the practice group, which we hope to offer twice a year after an online course, and later live workshops once we can gather indoors again.