



EAST BAY MEDITATION CENTER

Over 10 Years of Radical Inclusivity

THE STORY OF EBMC & THANKING OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The beginning of EBMC...

Excerpts from Larry Yang's new book,
Awakening Together: The Spiritual Practice of Inclusivity and Community

Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote, "Our goal is to create a beloved community and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives." In seeking to create a Beloved Community for all of us, how do we make the qualitative and quantitative changes necessary?

When establishing the East Bay Meditation Center, situated in the middle of the vibrant diversity of downtown Oakland, California, one of the aspects we considered most important as a foundation of the multicultural community we hoped to build was forming as diverse a board of directors as possible from the very beginning. EBMC renamed this governing group the "Leadership Sangha."

...

All the initial organizers of EBMC had their own experiences with the range of meditation centers in the Bay Area. We each brought what we learned and how we were motivated to do things differently.

We found from our own experiences that inviting diverse communities to participate in something as intimate as a collective sacred space must be done with a deep commitment to creating the conditions for inclusivity to flourish.

...

At EBMC, we saw how other meditation centers were not able to bring the practice of mindful awareness into relevance for diverse communities. Because many of us had ourselves experienced the impact of cultural unconsciousness, we learned both from our own personal experiences and from those of the communities we are close to how to bring multicultural awareness and mindfulness into the creation of our Dharma community from its inception. From the very early stages of EBMC, inclusivity of cultures was the highest priority.

... [E]ven before we looked for a physical space to call home, we gathered in several community

meetings to gauge not only community interest but also what the needs of the interested communities were. The data gathered from those meetings indicated to us that a downtown Oakland location accessible by public transportation was paramount. In addition, a majority of respondents felt the importance and need for culturally specific events to create both safety and community. Even before we found a permanent space, we had pop-up events and classes for communities of color and the LGBTIQ communities.

We analyzed the demographics of our practitioner audience and looked at how to include diverse participation from the moment we opened our doors. We designed programs that met the specific needs of specific diverse communities, thereby making the events and the teachings directly relevant to people who [came] in the door. There were consciously programmed events that were culturally specific for communities of color and LGBTIQ-SGL communities (SGL stands for “Same-Gender-Loving”)— with whom we have come to use the affectionate name of “Alphabet Sangha.” As a symbolic gesture, we hung the rainbow flag in the meditation hall even before

we installed the Buddha statue.

“ It was critically important to give diverse communities the experiential sense that they were not only included from the inception of EMBC but also co-creators in developing the center.

...

Once EBMC successfully invited in diverse communities, we realized that there would need to be progressive efforts to keep the environment safe enough for multicultural communities to unfold and flourish. In other words, we needed to follow up our invitations with actions that supported our vision for inclusive diversity. Very quickly in its development, EBMC designed a registration system that could balance the demographic numbers of our diverse communities in the meditation hall for any one event. We found that the single most dramatic factor in creating a welcoming and inclusive space is to have a large portion of the participating audience be diverse

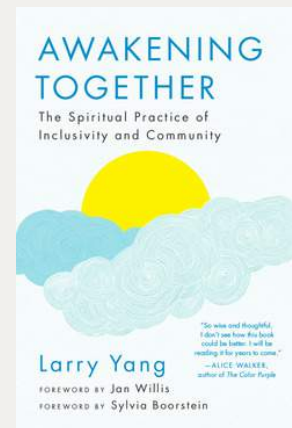
from the beginning. This means that our goal for most, if not all, of our events was to create a space in which 40 to 50 percent of participants were from communities of color. This is a structural and institutional method that EBMC has used to support the full participation of communities that have not received previous attention or care. The implicit message is that diverse communities are equally valued on an equal playing field, regardless of the external conditions of our society, which still promotes disparity and inequity. And it communicates that EBMC is willing to go against the presumed mainstream norm that “more is better.”

“More people in the space brings in more income and more visibility, but this is not the highest priority for EBMC; the highest priority is the quality of diverse cultural experience.

Awareness of the need for diversity itself is not enough to make a diverse sangha happen. In order to truly

create diversity, awareness must be followed by actions and behaviors that actualize the intentions of multiculturalism. Otherwise the efforts toward diversity can feel like always “fixing a problem” rather than composing an art form or weaving a tapestry of building community— bringing together and valuing the multiplicity of our differences and connections. When we start with multicultural awareness, multicultural mindfulness, we have the possibility to prevent further reinforcement of the patterns of cultural unconsciousness in the larger society that lead to so much harm and oppression.

Get your copy of *Awakening Together* at:
wisdompubs.org/book/awakening-together



They said it couldn't be done: Over 10 Years of Gift Economics at EBMC

Ten years ago, sustaining an organization based on generous giving seemed like a radical experiment that might be impossible to achieve. How could a meditation center offering classes, programs, and daylongs without charging fees keep its doors open?

The answer is Gift Economics: a participatory model that relies on everyone giving to the extent that they are able, at the highest level they can.

Today EBMC is leading the way for a gift economics model that promotes accessibility, radical inclusivity, sustainability, proportionality, and transparency.

Why is this the model we chose, which is now looked to by others as a shining example of what is possible?

Gift economics is a radical model that is fully aligned with our values because it:

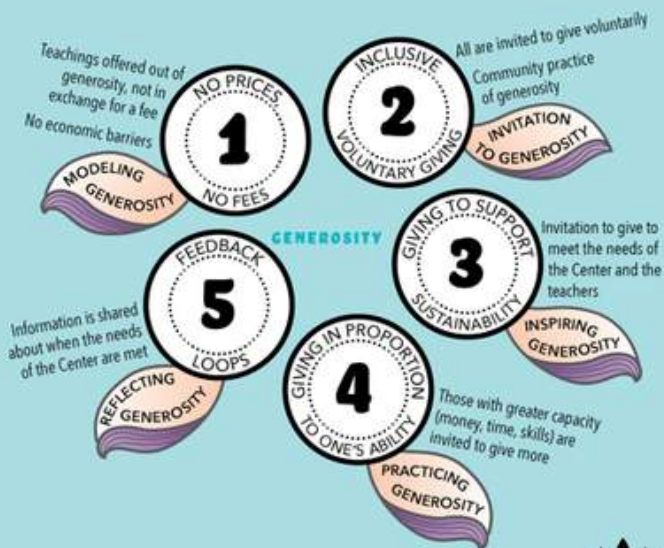
- Promotes the practice of Dana, or generous giving, which is an essential component of spiritual freedom

- Supports radical inclusivity and diversity because everyone is welcome and participation is not connected to ability to pay
- Is grounded in social justice principles of fairness and equity.

What does Gift Economics look like?

- **Accessibility:** There are no fees for any of the programs we offer. EBMC welcomes everyone, regardless of socio-economic status.
- **Inclusivity:** Everyone is invited to give. We see the practice of gift economics as an opportunity to support the inherent gratitude and generosity in one another toward the goal of individual and collective liberation.
- **Sustainability:** The community collectively meets our needs, rather than relying on outside sources of financial support. We seek to collectively give to meet the needs of EBMC and our teachers. When the community meets our needs, we are not reliant on outside support like grants from foundations.

Five Principles of Gift Economics at EAST BAY MEDITATION CENTER



- **Proportionality**: Everyone gives to the level of their ability. We invite those with greater capacity to “pay it forward” and give a higher percentage of their income to balance the giving of others who can give less.
- **Transparency**: We provide information about what we need, what level of giving would meet those needs, and when those needs are met.

Gift economics at EBMC thrives when we all consider to what extent we can each offer generosity to the center. We invite you to use the resources below to learn more about gift economics and play your part to support our vision to promote radical inclusivity in our Sangha.

To see our Suggested Giving Spectrum, visit:
<http://eastbaymeditation.org/generosity/donate>

For more about Gift Economics at EBMC, visit:
eastbaymeditation.org/resources/gifteconomics/



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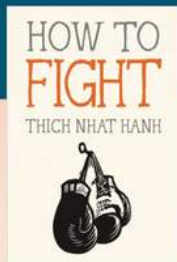
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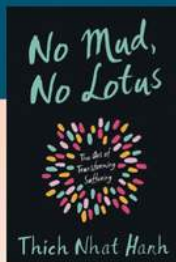
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CONGRATULATIONS EAST BAY
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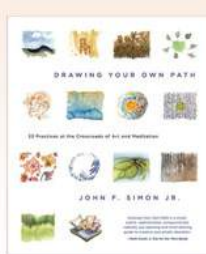
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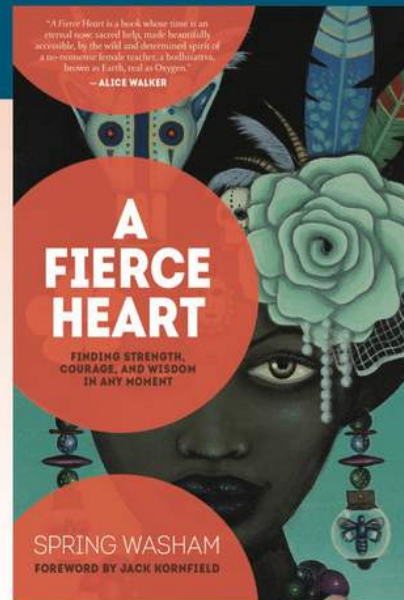


DRAWING YOUR OWN PATH
by John F. Simon, Jr.
flexibind, \$24.95



IDEALIST'S SURVIVAL KIT
by Alessandra Pigni
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Photo by Nina Compkins

"Washam, cofounder of Oakland, California's East Bay Meditation Center, blends personal stories with Buddhist wisdom and a range of other traditions (particularly shamanism) in this forceful invitation to personal transformation... Washam brings energy and passion to the often-staid genre of writing by contemporary American Buddhist teachers... Washam brings considerable gifts for conveying her vision of personal change and offers vivid, inspiring testimony to the power of Buddhism (and other wisdom traditions) to help heal suffering."

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY, STARRED REVIEW

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the work of **East
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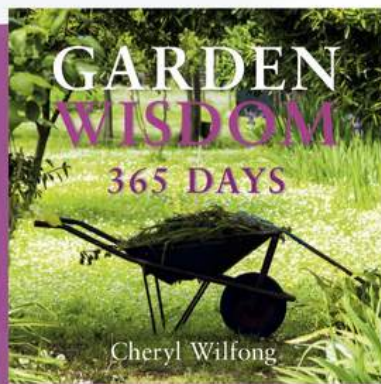
SACRAMENTO DHARMA CENTER
BUDDHA'S WISDOM & COMPASSION IN COMMUNITY

**CONGRATULATIONS TO EAST BAY
MEDITATION CENTER FOR 10 YEARS
CELEBRATING RADICAL
INCLUSIVITY AND LIBERATION
DHARMA**

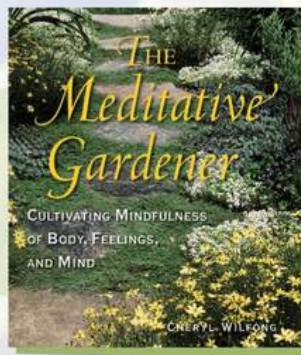
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THE INSTITUTE OF BUDDHIST STUDIES

wishes the East Bay Meditation Center deep congratulations and gratitude on ten years of serving the community. The light of wisdom and compassion illuminates all beings without exception, and it is through community that compassion manifests as wisdom. Your model of radical inclusion, of creating space for all persons to come into contact with the Dharma, is an inspiration. In these times of turmoil and uncertainty, your truly progressive and inclusive sangha is of profound import, and we thank you for your guidance and leadership.

May all beings be happy; may all beings be free from suffering.

In gassho
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"Congratulations, EBMC, on celebrating your 10th year! We are delighted to support you and we cherish the warmth of sharing in community. May you continue to thrive and to enjoy the sweetness of your journey."

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INSIGHT MEDITATION CENTER OF THE MID-PENINSULA

**A heartfelt congratulations for 10 years of East Bay
Mediation Center touching so many lives with the
Dharma. May the beneficial results of the practice
and teachings at EBMC be of benefit to all beings
everywhere!**

**With warm wishes for continued growth, and much
appreciation from the Insight Meditation Center
Community in Redwood City, California**

**Heartfelt congratulations to the East Bay
Meditation Center on 10 years of practicing &
teaching the dharma, & pioneering diversity &
inclusivity in mindful community.**



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Sunflower Alliance congratulates East Bay Meditation Center on ten years of community and leadership.



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We are committed to environmental justice and the health and safety of Bay Area communities threatened by toxic pollution and climate change. Join us in resisting fossil fuel expansion and building an equitable and sustainable economy fueled by renewable energy.

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Congratulations EBMC!

Deep bows of gratitude and all blessings
to you on your 10th anniversary!

We are honored to be comrades with
you in serving the community.



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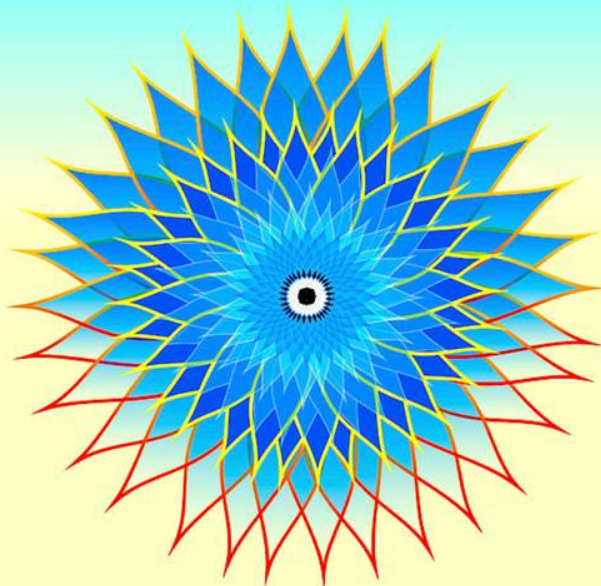
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**We've been inspired by the important, influential
and impactful work EBMC has done over the
past 10 years. Deep bows of gratitude and
appreciation from Against the Stream
Buddhist Meditation Society.**

Congratulations!



**Against the Stream
Buddhist Meditation Society
www.againstthestream.org**



We are so grateful to be in partnership with EBMC,
working together to continue the legacy of Dr.
Martin Luther King and continuing to expand our
Beloved Community! Congratulations on 10
years!!! Thank you for all you've taught us, and for
your service to the world!!!

From your friends at the East Point Peace Academy.



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