

A Time to Talk



There is a time for silence and a time to talk. As we sit in zazen, many things can arise for us: we may notice our conditioned patterns of thinking, our emotional reactions or questions that plague our lives. Then, when we get off the cushion and go about the business of attempting to embody the practice in our everyday lives, we can often encounter obstacles that confuse or frustrate us.

'A Time to Talk' provides an opportunity to express and work through some of this 'stuff' in a **safe, supportive and confidential environment** with people on the same path who may be going through similar experiences and facing similar challenges. It is often comforting to discover that we are not alone in our difficulties. Being able to share our thoughts and feelings openly can provide a welcome release, but when we are truly heard and met with empathy and compassion, it can be a truly healing experience.

John Welwood, author of the "Psychology of Awakening", wrote, "*When we really honour our feelings and go deeply into them and express the truth that is contained within them, then we can let them go*".

As well as offering emotional support, the group also provides an opportunity to connect more deeply with other Sangha members as we share our lives and challenges with each other in an open, supported way. 'A Time to Talk' brings Sangha members together and builds supportive relationships. 'A Time to Talk' is not therapy, it is simply a group of fellow practitioners meeting to talk through whatever is going on for us.

We shall sometime explore themes, such as anger, or fear. Sometimes, the sessions will be un-themed to allow for whatever comes up naturally.

The group will be hosted online by Miranda Wayu and Sarah Kokai, both long-term practitioners and StoneWater Zen monks.

'A Time to Talk' is open to regular StoneWater Zen sangha members and takes place once a month on Sunday afternoons from 4pm to 6pm. Regular attendance is ideal, as it allows trust to build in the group, but you are also welcome to come to the group just when you can. We'd also encourage you to join our WhatsApp chat once you've been to a group or two, to check if there's a particular theme or any changes to the schedule.

Everything that is discussed will remain confidential, even within the sangha. We do let Roshi know who's attending, not the content.

The structure is as follows:

- 4pm start with a short period of zazen (20 minutes)
- Group Session (about 90 minutes)
- The group will be meeting online. It may be possible to have occasional real-life groups at Miranda's Liverpool flat for those who live nearby.

We will leave you with this quotation from American Zen teacher, Norman Fischer:

"Expression is healing. It opens us, propelling us forth into our lives. It's not so much a matter of ideas, even of feelings, for expression is more than a cognitive or an emotional act. Yet somehow the simple act of speaking truly, out loud and to others, inspires us finally to point our prow out to sea as we set forth onward for the journey"

(Sailing Home, Norman Fischer)

If you'd like to attend please email Miranda at mforward61@gmail.com or kokaistonewaterzen@gmail.com for the Zoom link and password.