

BRIGHT WAY ZEN

SUMMARY OF THOMAS BRUNER'S PRESENTATION TO SANGHA MEMBERS' MEETING, 10/8/16

Thomas is a consultant on fundraising and administration for non-profits who has worked with Dharma Rain.

The areas that were brought up by members about what they see happening at BWZ in five years.

- Growth in membership, age range of members, and range of activities offered (possible additional location or facility).
- Working to attract new members.
- Other sangha members involved in activities to take load off Domyo.
- Current space rental is below market, need to be aware of market and work toward solution, a way to stay sustainable, consider purchasing a building at some point. Possibility of a campus, outdoor presence.
- Current facility may not be adequate, how and where to move and how much it will cost.
- Working to make it so that when people walk in the front door, they feel they are in a Zen community.

Responses to a question as to why growth is needed, what is the purpose?

- To respond to a deep need on the Westside for what we offer as more people learn about us and interest grows on this side in mindfulness and its benefits.
- Portland is growing, the Westside is becoming its own "center of gravity" and is growing more progressive, more people are looking for an alternative.
- In a "world gone mad" (police, Middle East, our government and politics), people are going to be looking for something and we will be that something for some of them.

Suggestion from Thomas: Hold thoughts about building etc., take them seriously, do due diligence; BUT keep that subservient to the vision, which is about helping people out here mitigate suffering, that should be the driver. Think about how to approach that as a sangha: deepening practice, developing leadership roles, working with young people. Lead with the vision: the reason you exist, the way you want to contribute to the world being a better, saner place, what that looks like programmatically, how lives are touched, how that could ripple out to the Westside – everything else will flow from that vision.

- Need to focus on both together – need the security of knowing we have the minimal conditions (membership and financial) to allow us to fulfill the mission.

Planning for future financial stability now, not waiting. Here's how to get there.

1. Have conversations about membership. Talk to those who continue to come about membership, and make sure they understand the value and benefits.
2. Annual conversation with members about their financial support. An actual conversation about where the sangha is headed and whether they are in a position to consider increasing their level of membership contribution. People can give in various ways – one-time pledges, multi-year gifts, passing on windfalls.
3. Consider including Bright Way in estate plans. Maybe a bit soon, but think about for future.

4. Keep in mind the ambivalent relationship that Zen centers around the country have with money. Often have a love/hate relationship, feel it's sort of "dirty," not spiritual. That's partly because some people grew up in spiritual traditions that involved a lot of pressure to tithe in order to build, hire staff, etc., and they react badly to the idea of the money part. And there's some naivete, a feeling that we don't have to care about such things. It's complicated, and that's okay, you can bring all those feelings into it, but keep talking about it anyway.