

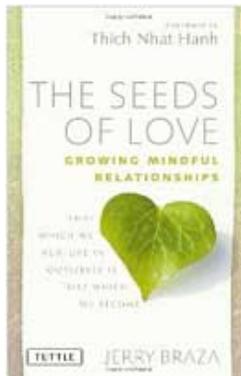


Hello, I'm Patricia Koch, this week's "eyes and ears" at New Renaissance and your resource for all things enlightening, intentional, and uplifting.

"Make it a practice to remember to return fully to whatever you are engaged in at the present moment... By simply remembering to return to what you are doing now, you have already begun to water the seed of mindfulness." ~ Jerry Braza

My husband Chuck and I adore Portland's gardens. We love the formality of the Chinese Garden, the captured wildness of the Japanese Garden, the lushness of the Rose Garden, and even the beauty of the gardens we see on our way to our own plot of vegetables in Frazier Park's Community Gardens. On our way there, we see so many splendid gardens in front yards, back yards, side yards and even in the spaces between sidewalk and street.

So, the metaphor of mindful gardening in Jerry Braza's book, ***The Seeds of Love***, hit a chord in me. Just as we need to weed, water and compost our own vegetable garden, we need to weed, water, and compost our consciousness. Watering the seeds of loving kindness, compassion, equanimity, gratitude, joy and generosity transforms the seeds of doubt, jealousy, anger, and fear into useful compost. In ***Seeds of Love***, Jerry gives us some excellent gardening tools for that transformation and growth.



The core practice is mindfulness. As Jerry says "The seeds of joy, compassion and loving kindness are easily watered when we are truly present to others and their presence in our lives. Our crucial task is to visualize the people in our lives—even those who are just passing through—as a precious garden, to discover which seeds need watering and understand how exposure to negative elements can harm the budding sprouts if they are not tended properly." "Mindfulness, or the practice of being aware of the present moment, can become the greatest tool in your gardening efforts."

Jerry is a mentor and Dharma teacher in the lineage of Thich Nhat Hanh. In fact, it was Thich Nhat Hanh who encouraged Jerry to continue his teaching and writing about the seeds of love and mindfulness. Thus, ***Seeds of Love*** is filled with quotes from Jerry's teacher, themselves seeds on which to meditate.

"Mindfulness - itself a seed - is key to the care of this garden. It is the guide and the practice by which we learn how to use the seeds of suffering to nourish the seeds of

love.” Thich Nhat Hanh.

The other core tool is mantras, simple (not necessarily easy) mantras. Thich Nhat Hanh says “a mantra is a magic formula that, once it is uttered, can entirely change a situation, our mind, our body or a person. But this magic formula must be spoken in a state of concentration - that is to say, a state in which body and mind are absolutely in a state of unity.”

I've found when I practice these mantras they work on my emotional, physical *and* my mental bodies. Two of my favorites are “Breathing in, I am aware of my current perceptions. Breathing out, am I sure?” And the other, “I am here for you. My heart is open.” These mantras, even when uttered silently change the energy in our hearts and echo in the heart of the beloved because of our state of interbeing and interconnectedness.

If you've ever wondered how to bring the practice of mindfulness into your daily life (your garden) you, too, will want to pick up a copy of Jerry's book.



To buy the book, ***The Seeds of Love: Growing Mindful Relationships*** by Jerry Braza [click here](#), \$14.95.

Or, perhaps you prefer the personal touch. Dr. Jerry Braza returns to New Renaissance for a presentation based on his book. Discover with us the secrets to achieving loving and mindful relationships with others and yourself. There will be a book signing session following the presentation at 8 pm.



[Click here](#) to register for Jerry Braza's Saturday August 4th event at 6:30 pm entitled [The Seeds of Love: Growing Mindful Relationships](#).

Until next time.

All my best ~ Patricia

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