

PORT TOWNSEND SANGHA

WEDNESDAY EVENING DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

Thanks for coming and being part of the Port Townsend Sangha!

Our goal during Wednesday evening discussions is to support positive, compassionate, and enlightening conversation among all present.

We work to make these facilitated discussions accessible to everyone, and strive to create an environment that is inclusive, kind-hearted and invites participation.

By holding each other in our hearts as we speak, we expand our awareness and loving kindness beyond ourselves.

By allowing a pause or brief silence between our sharing, we support our ability to listen deeply.

We pause and try to be mindful of those who have not yet spoken; offering enough time between remarks to invite participation by any who have been silent, but yet may wish to share.

To promote participation and unity, we endeavor to speak to the group as a whole, rather than engaging in replies and dialogues between individuals.

Therefore, we exercise restraint in reacting to others, allowing members who have not yet spoken to offer their thoughts.

We do not criticize the comments of others in the group, but strive to ensure ease and comfort for all who attend.

Through the practice of right speech, we try to learn together without causing harm or suffering.

Here are a few words from Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh regarding the path of right speech.

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Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful speech and the inability to listen to others, I vow to cultivate loving speech and deep listening in order to bring joy and happiness to others and relieve others of their suffering.

Knowing that words can create happiness or suffering, I vow to learn to speak truthfully, with words that inspire self-confidence, joy, and hope.

I will refrain from uttering words that can cause division or discord, or that can cause the family or the community to break.