

LIVING WITH DYING



A residential workshop with Irène Kyojo Bakker
8–11 June 2012

One essential characteristic of life is that it is constantly changing. Every organism is in constant transition from one moment to the next. As the Japanese Zen master Maezumi Roshi has said: 'We are being born – dying – being born – dying 84,000 times a minute'. Yet many of us resist this ever changing quality of life and are strongly attached to keeping things the way they are. It is this very resistance that causes us to suffer. To cease our suffering, we need to learn the art of letting go.

When faced with death we face our beliefs and fears. Yet it is an inevitable truth for us all - this life, as we know it, will end. To deny our impermanence will not decrease our fear. On the contrary, the awareness that we will cease to exist in our present form can help us to appreciate and be more open to our life as it is.

When we accompany people who are close to death, the best gift we can give them is the gift of 'no-fear'. The more at peace we are with the basic uncertainty of life and death, the better we can really be present and hold a larger perspective for another human being.

During the first two days of this workshop, we will focus on our relationship with our own impermanence and death. Over the last two days we will look at how we can offer presence and support to others who are dying. We will explore different ways of being fully present for someone who is approaching death.

Insights from both Western psychology and Eastern wisdom will be included in the course.

LIVING WITH DYING



Irène Kyojo Bakker is a family therapist from The Netherlands. She is also a Zen Priest and Dharma holder in the lineage of the American Zen master Genpo Merzel Roshi, with whom she has studied since 1986. In March 2012 she will receive Dharma transmission from Joan Halifax Roshi, becoming a successor in the lineage of Berni Glassman Roshi and a certified Zen teacher.

From 1988 she has been involved in Joan Halifax's training program for health care professionals "Being with Dying" in Santa Fe, New Mexico and was requested by her to continue her teaching in Europe. She also studied with Christine Longaker, former director of Santa Cruz Hospice, California and author of "Facing death, finding hope" and with Frank Ostaseski and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

Irène has been leading Zen Spirit since 2004 - www.zenspirit.nl. She has worked as a therapist with people with cancer and is a spiritual counselor for dying people and their families. She offers workshops and training programmes in Europe and the U.S.A.

Venue : This workshop will be held at Croydon Hall, a beautiful and tranquil property in Exmoor National Park. The nearest town is Minehead, Somerset and the nearest railway station is Taunton. Please see www.croydonhall.co.uk for photographs and further information and directions.

Dates and Times : Arrival at Croydon Hall the evening of June 7. The workshop commences Friday 10 a.m, June 8 and ends on Monday 4 p.m, June 11.

Cost : £440 workshop fee – food and dormitory accommodation
£470 workshop fee – food and twin or double room accommodation
£510 workshop fee - food and single room accommodation

Information and registration: Please contact –
- Erica Witt on +44 (0) 0117 9741548 or
- Kunderke Kevlin on kunderke@gmail.com

LIVING WITH DYING

Pir Elias Amidon, spiritual leader of the Sufi Way, recommends this workshop:

When you finally exhale your last breath, will you be terrified? or will you, in that moment, be able to open with ease into what has been called the "dazzling measureless freedom" beyond your individual identity?

The capacities we need to die a good death – openness, ease, trust, non-grasping awareness and presence – are the same capacities we need to live a good life. Likewise the obstacles we face in dying well are the same obstacles we face in living well: fear, grasping, self-preoccupation, and self-pity.

We might say that the whole point of the Sufi Way is simply to be with and support each other in friendship as we do this work – as we learn to release these obstacles and cultivate openness, ease, trust, non-grasping awareness and presence. As we do so we recognize, in Sufi Inayat Khan's words, "It is death that dies, not life."

The Sufi Way is honored to sponsor this workshop. Irène Bakker is a teacher with great heart. I encourage you to attend. Learning to die well and learning to support in a good way those who are nearing death, and their friends and family, are much-needed skills.

Pir Elias Amidon, Sufi Way