



# *Reflections and Prayers*

## *Nurturing A Life Of Natural Awakening*

*(revised and extended, March, 2026)*

*Simple presence*

*Daily bread*

*Reverence for life, beyond words and symbols*

*May our living serve to deepen awareness,  
Ripen the fruits of wisdom,  
Water the flowers of compassion,  
That we may we bring health and joy to all beings.*

## Preface

*Friends on the path, 'yogis of the natural world', lovers of life in all it's abundance; as I write this preface, news media is filled with depressing images and reports of violent death, genocide, and the dis-integration of many of the social and ecological values and structures that we humans have come to rely on. In the face of all this suffering, I felt the need to re-post these reminders of love and clear seeing.*

Throughout history inspirational poetry has been treasured by those who try to live a life of authentic spiritual practice. Traditions of deepening wisdom and compassion, great and small, are often distinguished by the metaphors and poetic allusions they use. This can inspire way of living that is both wondrous and ineffable: a blossoming of love and clear seeing and an expanding capacity for radical inclusivity in the midst of whatever situation or circumstance is arising. Such a participatory wholeness can leave us tongue tied and mute in a wordless state of reverential awe and wonderment.

The collection of poems and encouragements contained in these pages breathes with the spirit of all that I have tried to teach over the last 50 years. Contemplating these themes, thinking about them, reflecting on them, and then experimenting with ways of creatively putting them into practice in the course of your daily living, will surely help nurture wisdom and compassion both in yourself and in those you meet.

*In the hermitage of life-unfolding,  
these words blossomed in my mind.  
Though still a work-in-process,  
may they benefit many beings.*

Tarchin *(revised and refined, 2026)*

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## A Circle of Blessing

I pray to the wetlands.

I pray to the deserts.

Include me in your embrace.

I pray to the rainforests,

to the grasslands,

to the tundra and the boreal forests.

Bless our families with health, curiosity, and great compassion.

I pray to the coral reefs,

to the tidal fringes,

to estuaries, deltas, benthic depths

and the great oceanic empty zones.

Be firm in the midst of our extending human madness.

I pray to the volcanic hot zones and the boiling mud pools,

to the icy caps and mountain peaks,

to rolling hill country,

rills and rivers, creeks and braided waterways.

Pray care for this adolescent tribe.

Heal our rambunctious self infatuation,

our tunnel vision and above all,

our blinkered pride.

I pray to the living wind and rain,

to the sun, moon, planets and stars,

all my cousins near and far,

Pray wrap us in your solicitude.

My eyes are moist,

this vulnerable stripped bareness;

Remembering communion deep and wide.

How to name it . . . ?

joy? sadness? frustration? awe? confusion?  
reverence? gratitude? love?

We belong with each other.

Feeling your feeling.

Sensing your sensing.

We are woven intimacies, through and through.

We are alive.

We are blessed.

We are spacious and luminous.

We gaze at stars and empty vastness, and feel our fluid bones;  
a great symphonic cry of longing and joy,  
a dancing of solidity, flux and knowing,  
histories revealing, stories concealing.

I care for you all.

Each and every part  
and every moment of every part,  
all included,  
nothing ignored.

We are life,  
praying with life,  
to life,  
for life,  
in all its abundance.

We are a circle of blessing.

We are suchness <sup>1</sup>  
beyond words.

## The Heart of Practice

Love . . . not push  
presence . . . not futureness  
forgiveness . . . not judgement  
humbleness . . . not arrogance  
gentleness . . . not jumpy, twitchy, start/stop  
breathing now . . . not dreaming of elsewhere  
smiling now . . . what else is there?  
simplicity now . . . not frantic-ness fractionating.

Watching the sun rise  
hearing the bird call  
feeling the earth turn  
tending the garden . . . one weed, one plant, one leaf at a time,  
sitting when sitting is good  
lying when lying is good  
moving when moving is good  
flowing with nature  
honouring fullness  
smelling the flower  
savouring the coffee  
answering the phone  
embracing the healing  
this wholeness  
this mystery  
knowing our roots, our 'back-up', the triple ground of being <sup>2</sup>  
contemplating the great mystery of the (so-called) ordinary  
praying for the well-being of everyone.  
Such is the heart of practice.

## Silent Prayer

Left Palm <-----> Right Palm  
gazing at these wondrous hands.

Mind and matter  
form and function  
knower and known  
work and play  
inner and outer  
micro and macro  
self and other  
one and many  
worldly and spiritual  
animate and inanimate  
brain and body  
individual and community  
creature and environment <sup>3</sup>

Contemplating these graspings at reality.

Then,  
sensitively, lovingly, gently and respectfully,  
bringing them together at  
the heart.

Releasing into the mystery of union,  
this unbreakable wholeness of life unfolding,  
with flowing breath and the profound blessing of healing presence,  
we realise our true home.

## Refuge, Life Roots and Profound Sense of Belonging

*(Six verses are offered here. Some are expressed with 'I' and some with 'we'. Two of them employ Buddhist terms thereby honoring roots that have been so important in my own unfolding. Use whichever verse speaks to you most directly. After reciting the words, sit for a while; smiling, breathing, present, appreciating, and offering – settling in the knowing of refuge, exploring life roots and a profound sense of belonging.)* <sup>4</sup>

I take refuge in wisdom, compassion  
and non-clinging awareness.

I take refuge in the full richness of here.

I take refuge in the ever present immediacy of now.

Truth is all-pervading

It is the thusness of this moment,  
the suchness that we are.

My refuge, is to live within the Truth. <sup>5</sup>



We take refuge in the multidimensional ground of becoming.

We take refuge in spacious openness and engaged presence,  
the nature and activity of this ground.

We take refuge in this planet-wide communion of  
life-unfolding.

May we actively cultivate:

generosity, wholesome relating,  
patience, skilled use of energy,  
a continuity of caring and enquiry,  
and profound understanding.

May all beings realise awakening,  
for the sake of everything and everyone.



I take refuge in Buddha;  
pure and total presence.  
I take refuge in Dharma;  
love, compassion and clear seeing deepening everywhere.  
I take refuge in Sangha;  
the diverse ecology of bodhisattva <sup>6</sup> activity.  
Through actively cultivating the six parami, <sup>7</sup>  
may I be the Sangha, practising Dharma,  
realising the innate Buddha mind  
for the wellbeing of everyone.



In the immeasurable expanse of nature-in-process,  
In faith and trust and wonderment,  
We give ourselves to this suchness,  
This seamless mystery of birthing/ dying.

Spacious, loving, with feet solid in the earth,  
We nurture the hints at blessedness,  
The myriad faces and masks of luminous knowing.

Moving as this flow of compassion and deepening enquiry,  
we engage with all beings in ways that support the integrity,  
the stability and the beauty of the entire field of life and living.

Through making this aspiration a living experience, may we support  
the uplifting and unfolding of all beings.



We take refuge in love and clear seeing.  
We live courageously in this world of birthing and dying.  
Our hearts embrace all companions  
on the path of lucidity and freedom.



*Bringing to mind my teachers and ancestors, along with my human and  
non-human companions on this path of life-unfolding,  
– on behalf of all of us –*

I take refuge in the true state of affairs;  
– spontaneously present, timeless awareness,  
– radically inclusive love, blossoming in all it's fullness,  
– vast ungraspable suchness that is this living world / universe.  
This is ever fresh Buddha in action.

I recognize, celebrate and cultivate  
the paths, teachings and encouragements  
that support our realising the true state of affairs.

Day by day and night by night,  
I bring forth generosity, wholesome relating,  
patience, skilled use of energy, a continuity of caring and  
enquiry, and wise understanding.  
This is Dharma put to good use.

Releasing into a profound sense  
of being this continuously gestating mystery of communion,  
I am home.

This is the experiencing of true Sangha,  
the fruition of all refuge practice.

Gradually, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha  
appear to merge and mingle,  
until we realise that each one contains and reveals  
the other two. This is a wondrous three-in-one refuge;  
It's where we all belong.

*Smiling, breathing, present, appreciating, and offering* <sup>8</sup> –  
*Settling in the knowing of refuge,  
exploring life roots and  
a deepening sense of belonging.*

## **Bodhisattva Vow**

However innumerable beings are,  
I vow to meet them with kindness and interest.  
However inexhaustible the states of suffering are,  
I vow to touch them with patience and love.  
However immeasurable the dharmas are,  
I vow to explore them deeply and thoroughly.  
However incomparable the mystery of inter-being,  
I vow to surrender within it fully.

From this moment on,  
with wisdom and compassion as my lamp and staff,  
I dedicate all my life energies  
to the welfare of all beings.

*Resting with this aspiration –  
smiling, breathing, present, appreciating, and offering.*

## Five Wholesome Life Trainings

I will train myself to support and appreciate  
the life of all living beings.

I will live with a sensitive and responsible awareness  
for the whole ecology of life.

I will train myself to dwell more and more  
in the mind of spontaneous generosity.

Daily I will give material support, emotional support,  
and an example to others of awakening in action.

I will train myself to use the senses to further awakening,  
explore Dharma, and to come to know the world  
more profoundly and more compassionately.

I will train myself to listen deeply and speak truthfully;  
to communicate with others  
in a skilful and compassionate manner.

I will train myself to be ever more directly aware  
of how nutriment affects the mind and body.

I will eat and drink and nurture myself and others,  
in ways that support awakening.

*Activating these five trainings –  
smiling, breathing, present, appreciating, and offering.*

## The Wisdom of Embodiment

*(Two forms are offered here. Use the one that speaks to you most directly.)*

This body of mine is composed of atoms born in stars,  
molecules, cells, tissues and organs.

It is a union of uncountable viruses,  
bacteria, fungi, plants and animals.

It is conditioned by families and societies,  
by thoughts and dreams.

It is moulded by sun and gravity  
and the whole of the ecosphere.

It is an inter-being of all these processes,  
from micro to macro.

Wondrous! Transient!

May it teach me wisdom!



Ancient tradition said,

Look at that body,  
foul, corrupt, full of filth,  
a bag of faeces, urine and blood,  
of vomit, gases, fats and oils.

And so they did, those monks of old,  
and came to release all lustful selfish clinging  
to this walking breathing corpse.

Today our teachers say,  
look into this body/mind/community.

And looking in,  
I find the entire universe.

Miraculous voyagings of stardust atoms,

water cycles, chemical cycles, symbiotic  
dancings of plants and animals,  
molecules, cells and organs.

My breath is the breath of the rainforest.

My excretions the banquet of others.

My muscles and tissues, blood and bone are  
the temporary arrangement of carrots,  
fish and herbs on the way to being worms,  
insects, birds and trees.

How vast and wondrous!

And so they do, those contemplative-scientists of today,  
and come to release all self-ish clinging  
to a separated "me".

And take a few more steps  
on the way to home we never left.

*Smiling, breathing, present –  
exploring this constantly evolving mystery of embodiment.*

## **Impermanence: – this birthing/dying matrix of responsive relating –**

Life is a boundless matrix of dynamic relating.

Ultimately, every action reverberates throughout the universe.

I responding to you.

You responding to me.

This responding to that.

That responding to this.

*Smiling and breathing, enter into this contemplation.*

Responsiveness is the living heart of being and becoming;  
atoms, molecules, organs and organisms,  
families and societies;  
entire ecosystems, biospheres, planets and galaxies;  
All shifting, responding;  
constantly changing.

Each birthing of this  
is a dying of that.

Each dying of that  
is a birthing of this.

Responsive change is the very nature and fabric of what is.

Permanence is a mental abstraction.

*Breathing with this deeply.*

Suffering arises through trying to fix, or make permanent,  
what is essentially a seamless fluid process.

*Resting for a moment in silence.*

May we cease grasping at permanence  
and with heartfelt confidence, love, enthusiasm  
and wide awake sensitivity,  
enter fully the great birthing / dying matrix  
of responsive relating;

This ineffable, un-pin-down-able, present suchness of now.

*Contemplating thus –*

*smiling, breathing, present, appreciating, offering.*

## **The Four Immeasurables: Lovingkindness, Compassion, Empathic-joy and Serenity**

May all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness.  
May all beings be apart from sorrow and the causes of sorrow.  
May all beings be filled with joy  
    when sensing the wholesome activity of others.  
May all beings be graced with the serenity of  
    unshakable mindfulness and loving presence.

*Smiling, breathing, present, appreciating, and offering.*

As you breathe, imagine in your heart,  
    a jewel-like flower or a soft globe of light,  
    radiating loving-kindness, compassion,  
    empathic-joy and equanimity,  
To every part of your body / mind / community.

As feelings of easefulness, spaciousness and clarity  
    flower in your experience;  
Send the light of these four radiant states in all directions,  
    touching beings throughout the universe,  
    supporting their health and unfolding.

With each inhalation,  
    invite all suffering to rest in your heart,  
    a heart of love, forgiveness, understanding and reverence.

With each exhalation,  
    share your strength and good qualities with all beings.

*Abiding thus – smiling, breathing, present, appreciating, and offering.*

## Prayers for Eating

*(Three forms are offered here.)*

May this food have been prepared in a state of love,  
And may we receive it in a state of love.



We rejoice in the knowing  
that this food we eat  
nourishes all beings.



This food is an outflowing  
of the living of countless beings.  
May it nurture wisdom and compassion  
for the sake of myself and others.  
Through receiving food with love and deep appreciation,  
my embodied presence becomes rich and tasty.  
Joyfully, I offer my body, speech and mind  
to others as nutriment.  
May all beings be well and happy.

*Smiling, breathing, present, appreciating,  
offering myself without attachment.*

## Essential Practices of Awakening

*(Two forms are offered here.)*

In the natural flowing of whatever is occurring,  
cultivate a continuity of profoundly nourishing ease,  
suffused with serene alertness and vivid discernment.

Whether walking, standing, sitting or lying down,  
allow everything to rest in it's own place.



Recognising that the experience of awakening  
is not something read about in books  
or learned from others,

But something realised and manifested  
in each moment of my life;

For the rest of this day,

I will cultivate the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

*(awareness of body, awareness of feelings, awareness of states of mind,  
and awareness of all other phenomena) <sup>9</sup>*

Frequently I will pause to breathe mindfully  
and recontact a mode of being  
which embodies simplicity, openness, clarity,  
connectedness and caring.

I will endeavour to bring a continuum of  
compassionate awareness  
into all my life's activities.

Frequently I pause.

Lovingly I breathe.

Simplicity, openness, clarity, connection and caring  
flowering forth.

*Sit quietly with awareness of breathing for at least five minutes.*

## **Dedicating to All Beings – Sharing the Merit –**

*(Here are two versions.)*

Being the fullness of the human animal that I am,  
– a continuously morphing collage of sentience.

Abiding in the monastery of a world  
that is utterly and profoundly alive,

I wander forth  
in unpretentious openness,  
wonderment  
and service.



By the power of these wholesome activities,  
may our lives be rich with awakening.

Living thus,  
may we abandon all unwholesomeness.

Through the endless storm of birth, illness, old age and death,  
may we help all beings to be free from suffering.

~ ~ ~

## *Supplementary Contemplations*

~ ~ ~

## Hints from the Heart

*The heart of mindfulness – love and clear seeing – arises out of the life and living that we are. Everything interconnects. Relationship is the foundation of beingness. We are ancient and this world and universe is our mother. Mindfulness is far more than a meditation technique it is a way of wisdom that flowers naturally from the earth of a healthy world. Cultivating mindfulness we reconnect with the wider life of the planet and realise our true home.*

It begins as a stirring,  
a breath of wonder,  
a moment of intuition,  
a quiet knowing of rightness,  
an insight you didn't know you always knew.  
Everything is interdependent with everything.

Awesome!

We sit with the implications.  
We collide with worlds not seeing this.  
And through that painful tragic crashing  
a yearning for refuge  
and a desire to live meaningfully  
becomes strong.

Details proliferate;  
generosity,  
wholesome relating,  
patience,  
skilled use of energy,  
blossomings of caring and enquiry,  
inherent inquisitiveness, precise and playful,  
And we discover a new way of life and living.

Exploring embodiment.  
Exploring *en-mindiment*.  
Dancings of knowings responding  
to and with dancings of knowings,  
Glimmerings of understanding;  
mind and knowing,  
and the inter-being nature of experience.

Dawnings of confidence and capacity,  
solid in beingness,  
perfumed with wise, loving relating.

A life-long journey  
of maturing into humanness,  
releasing into the mystery,  
striding beyond paths and pathways  
Seamless, ineffable, spacious and open,  
this body of dharma,  
compassion unfolding,  
Celebrating the every day  
with lightness and wisdom,  
a blessed ordinariness;  
Our primordially true home.

## **The Heart Breath of Timeless Living**

**for mature practitioners**

*– to be seamlessly sung as a naturally flowing quartet –*

*The phrase mature practitioner refers to someone who is emotionally resilient; has the skills and energy to look after herself or himself at levels of body, speech and mind; has a deep knowledge of, and appreciation for, his or her seamless interdependency with all that is; and has a natural tendency to*

*respond with compassion to the needs of others. For such a being, I offer this practice; a music of contemplation, a naturally flowing quartet, a bare bones glimpse of awakening. May it sing in your depths and act as encouragement to deepen what you already intuit in the fullness of your being.*

## **1. True Refuge**

Now is the place to practice,  
right here,  
just as you are,  
this very moment in all its vastness;  
a continuity of freshness,  
resting resplendently,  
at ease in the fullness and flow  
of what is presently occurring.

Ripening in faith and trust and wonderment,  
letting be,  
this matrix of seamless creativity;  
the miracle of community that you are,  
communing with a community of myriad beings  
living around you and through you.

Beginningless – endless;  
a mandala of unfathomable knowing,  
a mode of experiencing that is utterly inclusive,  
a way of abiding, singing with awakeness  
and capacities for vast engagement;  
a solid ephemerality,  
a fusion of immense presence  
and compassion-filled interest;  
in the great river of Buddhist teaching,

such knowings and experiencings  
are the ground and source of true refuge.

Become skilled in this resting,  
this life affirming freshness,  
this gestating womb of nature becoming;  
deeply belonging,  
profoundly at home;  
where else, and what else, could one be?

## 2. Healing Through Deepening Understanding

Dwelling as rich immediacy and solid presence,  
allow the long learned talents of preference,  
aversion and indifference  
to reveal themselves in the theatre  
of your body / mind / knowing / experience.

In the midst of their occurring;  
look into them,  
feel them,  
reflect on them,  
experiment with them.  
Allow a space for fresh understanding to arise.

Explore the singing of the universe  
giving rise to these tendencies.  
What is actually going on?  
What is going on in the midst of  
you being interested in these experiences?

Look at them in terms of general principles.  
Investigate particular situations.  
What kinds of new possibilities do you discern?

How do these qualities affect your attentiveness;  
the way you engage with other beings?  
How do these patternings,  
and the experiential study of these patternings, further life?  
How does everything connect?

### 3. Creative Activity

As the intensity of preference-ing and aversion-ing  
softens in the glow of understanding,  
and an easeful flowing wonderment with whatever is occurring,  
both within and around you,  
dissolves the paralysis of indifference;  
then,  
use the talents and abilities that have developed  
over the course of your own rich life  
and the evolutionary journey of life-unfolding  
to bring forth beautiful mind-states  
and life enhancing and life affirming environments  
for the benefit of every living being,  
and all of us together;  
a great community of inter-becoming;  
this living earth.

### 4. Union

Refuge, healing and creative activity;  
as these practices gradually reveal themselves  
to be various faces of a vibrant living whole,  
qualities of bliss/ease,  
clarity/awakeness/curiosity,  
and a sense of life as an uninterrupted

creative flow of interdependence,  
will certainly deepen.

Being the fullness of the human animal that you are,  
the thought may occur  
that there is no need to practice or cultivate anything,  
beyond simply, and profoundly opening!

This way of wonderment  
is beyond categorising with words and concepts.  
Impossible to rigorously describe,  
yet intimately familiar;  
there may be a sense of always having known this.

Resting with no-thing in particular to do  
apart from the fullness of the 'doing' that you are;  
Utterly ready and able to help  
when there is opportunity to actually be of service;  
Every action becomes a gesture of worship.  
Every thought becomes an unvoiced prayer.

Refuge, healing, creative activity and union:  
this naturally flowing quartet of bare bones awakening,  
is a life long music.  
It is infinitely refinable,  
mysteriously fulfilling,  
and profoundly humbling.

It is the heart breath,  
the unhidden secret,  
of timeless living.

*These words have spilled forth as a song of friendship. May they touch you  
to your core and reverberate the deep knowing that is truly what we are.*

## We Are In this Together

*I am animate.*

*I am an animal.*

*I am born from life and living*

*And so, dear friend, are you.*

*Everything we experience reverberates with these truths.*

*We exist as a melodic continuity;  
musing music acappell-ing the universe into being,  
weavings of texture, rhythm and timbre  
this kinetic and kinaesthetic presence-ing  
a multi-realmed, multi-dimensional dancing,  
dancings within dancings,  
dancing with dancings.*

Beginning with the fullness of what you are;  
not what you name, describe or explain,  
but what you actually are;  
finding yourself awash  
on a timeless beach of ever-fresh nowing,  
discovering beingness anew.

Feeling the recurring waves,  
Rhythmically similar,  
yet individually unique;  
pushing and pulling,  
filling and emptying,  
covering and exposing,  
secreting and absorbing,  
tumbling and churning,  
frothing and fizzing,

initiating and responding,  
revealing and hiding;  
ungraspable revelation,  
this domain of gestation,  
– a birthing room of values.

What, on earth, is happening?  
What, in mind, is happening?

Dancings of moon and sand and flowing liquids,  
The seamless meeting of wet and dry;  
emotion and detached observation,  
inner and outer,  
self and other,  
knowing, known and knower.

And here, dancing this indescribable omni-process  
involving everything and everyone,

We discover our breathing;  
These flowings of flowings within flowings,  
branchings and giftings,  
this tree of life and living  
connections of all of us.

Stardust to stardust, waves of probability proliferating,  
This breathing of everyone.

How might we call this suchness-in-action?

Looking?

Being ?

Softening?

Dissolving?

Bending?

Blending?

Stretching?

Responding?  
Opening?  
Praying?  
Contemplating?  
Meditating?  
Worshipping?  
Reverencing?

Perhaps we could call it awareness  
or awakening,  
or continual transcendence,  
or whole-ing,  
or primordial healing,  
or deepening understanding  
Or, do we need to call it anything?

Expanding into the gifting fullness,  
living collaborations of sensitive responsiveness,  
Volumes of sentience within volumes of sentience,  
Oceans of knowing in the tiniest drops,  
Creation creating  
Always fresh and anew,  
spacious, open and unpindownable.  
Gratitude sparkling all over.

And what can we do but surrender?  
each one of us,  
all of us,  
new modes of languaging  
celebrating this perennial growing.

Freshly wrought today:  
this beach,

this sand,  
this salty ocean cradled in radiance,  
gestating the universe  
This womb of mystery  
ever preparing  
in love,  
... and we see!

We are brothers and sisters;  
Conceived and gestated and born and nurtured  
and matured by our mother – Wholeness Inter-becoming.

And through our reaching bones and flesh,  
extending and retracting,  
drawn forward in wonder  
and transforming as we go,  
we learn our bodies;  
babies, children, adolescents and adults  
all of us making and remaking the stories of our journey  
life-bards, each one of us  
singing the world into being,  
our mother tongue sounding forth in myriad cultural dialects;  
through movement and gesture  
touch by touch, we know ourselves into the world,  
lives of mystery,  
journeys of transforming understanding.

We are in this together.  
Together we are born,  
together we learn,  
together we thrive,  
together we suffer,

together we grieve,  
together we console and,  
together we die.

By we –

I mean every manner of us:

humans of myriad shapes, flavours, colours and beliefs,

We mammals, we reptiles; we birds, insects and fish,

We trees and flowers, fungi and bacteria;

brothers and sisters all

We are in this together,

whirling round a life giving star,

flowerings of sunlight,

dancing in sunlight,

knowings of sunlight,

fabrics of radiance – bodies and minds

woven from a common source.

Sons and daughters all, singing our stories

celebrating this living creation.

Each one of us belong;

needed and valued,

Each one of us, and all of us together,

mysteries of interbeing

continuously awash on primordial beaches of now

reaching forth with cautious sensitivity and finding ourselves

finger to finger,

heart to heart.

Moons of aspiration

Shedding tears for our forgetfulness.

May our communal heart be firm.  
May our goodness stay firm.  
May our centre – our groundedness – remain firm.

May we remember our *whakapapa* <sup>10</sup>  
    remembrance in the functioning of flesh and bone and action;  
    not this sect or that group,  
    but the great and venerable *whakapapa* that joins and heals  
This journey of all of us.

And through remembering,  
    our continuously transforming ever-fresh communion  
    becomes the womb and mother  
    of unimaginable futures and future beings  
    conceived in love,  
    yet to be born.

May the balms of love and healing  
    and deep understanding,  
    bless us to our core.

## Concluding Reflection

Life is not a journey,  
    we are eternally here.  
Life is not a learning,  
    there is no knowledge to accumulate.  
Life is not a testing,  
    there is no authority to judge.

Dwelling in a space of love,  
    tendrils of curiosity  
reaching forth in all directions;

feeling our way,  
softening and sensitising into the richness of community,  
a living world,  
    within us,  
around us,  
    and through us.

Apprentices of wonderment and awe,  
    probing and questioning,  
        sampling and savouring  
with calm abiding and vivid discernment  
    together exquisitely intermeshed,  
we touch our home,  
    this world,  
of you, and me, and all of us together,  
    precious  
        beyond words.

## Endnotes

1 Suchness, or thusness, *tathatā* (Skt) => This is a Mahayana Buddhist term that refers to the immeasurable expanse of nature-in-process, or put another way, the ever-fresh radically inclusive wholeness of everything and everyone. In a universe of continual movement and change, where every 'thing' or being is inter-dependently inter-being and inter-becoming with everything else, it is impossible to define or accurately name, in a simple positive way, what any particular thing actually is in all its dynamic fullness.

The term suchness (or thusness) is a way of hinting at this immeasurable display of inter-being~inter-knowingness. The *Avatamsaka Sutra* poetically alludes to this with the phrase, '*worlds interpenetrating worlds without obstruction*'.

Suchness is sometimes used interchangeably with the term *dharmadhatu* which Namkhai Norbu Rinpoché once eloquently defined as "the total field of all events and meanings."

For more reflections on *tathatā* see ["Translating Suchness"](#)

2 "Triple Ground of Being" The ground of being/becoming is where our roots find strength and sustenance. Triple ground refers to the ecological ground, the ancestral ground and the ground of inspiration, mentorship and wise guidance. Each one of these three can be found in the inter-beingness of the other two.

To explore this more completely, see ["Touching the Earth in Six Prostrations"](#)

3 We could continue this list: easeful presence and skilled engagement, samatha and vipassana, stillness and movement, coming into being and passing away, explicit and implicit, private and public, free-will and determinism, profound and mundane. For each pair, contemplate one as right hand and one as left hand, bring them together, and then contemplate how they inter-relate as a unity.

4 Many other refuge verses along with a considerable exploration of the meaning and importance of this central contemplation can be found in ["True Refuge"](#).

5 Truth, with a capital 'T' => Ultimate Truth or 'Truth' embraces everything. It is radically inclusive, fundamentally un-pin-downable and utterly beyond concepts and verbal constructs. (For more on this, see *The Samdhinirmochana Sutra*)

6 *Bodhisattva* => *bodhi*: awakening, unfolding + *sattva*: being. In this sense all living beings are bodhisattvas in action.

7 *Six parami* => six perfections: generosity, wholesome relating, patience, skilled use of energy, a continuity of caring and enquiry, and profound understanding

8 Each section of contemplation is followed by a variation of *smiling, breathing, present, appreciating and offering*. Supported by these five, allow the theme of the contemplation to suffuse your currently arising body/mind/community. This is a fundamental practise. A much more in-depth commentary on these five supports can be found in ["This Nectar of Naturalness"](#).

9 For more on these four foundations of mindfulness see ["Foundations of Mindfulness"](#).

10 *Whakapapa* => a Maori word meaning genealogy, family tree or cultural identity. One might trace one's whakapapa back through one's ancestors, all the way back to the land and its biota, its drainage systems and catchments and even back to a mythological time. I sometimes use the term in perhaps a wider sense than the traditional Maori usage. We are composed of many evolving stories: molecular, cellular, ontological, sociological and ecological; many distinct but interweaving lineages, each of which is itself a weaving of myriad other life-lines of histories.