

New Years 2013: Simplify Life with Heart

New Year is coming! Traditionally, in the Western world, New Year is a time to make wishes for the next year and also to pay particular attention to what happened this year. We all know that New Years wishes will seldom come true and also how easy it is to slip from our New Years promises. Nevertheless, there is always something meditative about New Year, as many people in the Western world have their winter vacations during Christmas and New Year time. It gives the mind an opportunity to relax and for a while to stay away from the hectic work life. It's sad that in the Western world we have created such a hustle and bustle about the Christmas presents – it seems that we just don't want to let our minds relax.

Kruu Kade (teacher Kade) is the co-director of New Life and in charge of the New Life program. As New Year is approaching we wanted to talk with our beloved Kruu Kade about the changes that the New Life program has been going through and also about the future goals. Life is changing and the same applies for the New Life program – nothing is static.

Hello Kruu Kade! How long ago did you come to New Life?

(A lot of laughter...) It's difficult to say as I don't remember exactly! But now when I think about it more I suppose it was about two years ago.

When you came to New Life, what was your main goal regarding the New Life program?

Yes, I had a specific goal which was also a very big goal. I wanted this place to become a success in using mindful tools to help people recover from different kind of problems. My goal was also bigger than what we had at the beginning because I wanted New Life to offer help for people suffering from all kind of problems, not just addiction problems.

When you look at it now, have you been able to achieve your initial goal?

This is actually a question I have been thinking about lately, because all the staff had to do a work evaluation. So I was thinking about the objectives we set up for New Life and how well we been able to achieve those targets. For instance, the first mission is to create a recovery community for people who are suffering because of addiction problems, stress, relationship problems and other kind of problems. I think we have reached this goal. But there is also a lot to improve. We have to reach more Thai people, have more Thai staff and develop a Thai program. We have to become a local agriculture development area, as well.

In general, I would say that the success rate of our program is about 70 % but we want to get it better as there are many things to improve.

When I look back, I can see that my approach to create a recovery community was to create a right kind of atmosphere because I come from a background of Montessori education. In Montessori education the atmosphere means the curriculum, the teacher and the classroom. So here at New Life I am also thinking, who is their life coach, who will lead the activities, who is their "model". Another important aspect is the activities we offer to our

residents. Also I believe in love and friendship, even if we have life coaches here I believe we all have to be friends. It is important too to have a nice and beautiful setting for the people trying to recover. I believe this kind of approach can help people.

What were the biggest changes in the New Life program this year?

It is difficult to name any particular change, because it's changing slowly, slowly. We already have the dream for the foundation, so it's actually getting that dream to become true. It's not changing like a boom, more like a little bit every day.

One concrete change that has occurred is the amount of people coming here. It's going up, up, up all the time. Also the number of life coaches is going up. I think one life coach can work with only limited amount of people. Our program has changed a little bit too, as we try to adapt to a variety of people's needs. But the base is the same. It's an open community for people to think and discover themselves.

As you look at the New Life program now, what are the most important things you want to change to make it better or are you satisfied with it?

Yes, I have a long list of things I would like to change or improve! One example is that I would like to have a program to train the staff members also. So the purpose is not to talk only about work in our staff meetings but also to have time to do dialogues together, to have different kinds of meetings like the residents now have, to cultivate joy together. I have also a lot of other ideas: a resident database, to have a fitness trainer, to support people to stop smoking and so on.

(make this one stand out >>)

We all are asking ourselves the question what is the right way of living. In your perspective, what is the most important cornerstone in our path towards the right way of living?

I think you cannot give the right answer as even a right way or a wrong way is impermanent. It doesn't matter if you are happy or suffering, that state is impermanent. But in general I believe in compassion and taking care of the others, to see yourself in others and also to see others in yourself. This is how I live my life, simplify life with heart!
(Laughing...)

(<< make this one stand out)

Is it possible to be free of suffering?

I think suffering is also one path of life, how we can learn from it, not just to be sad, the sadness is also impermanent. Be patient, wait, learn how to be with it in a healthy way. If you can recognize your suffering deeply, then you can also learn to stay away from it. But to do it, you have to be very mindful. As for myself, I was depressed before but now I don't live that way any more. I know what is the cause of it, where it comes from, so I don't have to go back to that area any more. So the way of living is very important, to be aware of your thinking, to create a different kind of lifestyle, don't go back to the same path. Then it is possible.