

Shambhala Survey: the social dimension

A survey prepared for the Shambhala Congress

Is it true that many members of the Shambhala community are already deeply engaged with social issues? In preparation for the Shambhala Congress, President Richard Reoch asked a small number of Shambhala Centres to survey their members to find out. He suggested the following categories of engagement:

- **Health care** (includes mainstream health care, alternative health care, all forms of therapy and counseling, caregiving)
- **Education** (includes all forms: from primary through secondary to post-secondary education)
- **Social work** (includes public and private sector)
- **Political and social activism** (work for NGO, work for community-based organization)
- **Environmental activism** (work for companies, NGOs or other groups, organic farming and eco-forestry)
- **Arts** (all forms of creative expression)
- **Other** (completely open for any response)

Respondents were also asked to answer the question: “Give us a glimpse of the way in which you try to manifest Shambhala vision in your life and work.” The result was a rich feast of personal insights, far too much to include in this short summary. What is presented here is a selection of glimpses that may be helpful in stimulating discussion on this topic at the Congress and more widely throughout the Shambhala community.

AMSTERDAM, The Netherlands

The Amsterdam centre has 127 members. Of these, 17 are engaged in education, 19 in health work, 17 in social work, 2 in environmental work, 2 in political work and 20 in the arts – totalling 77 in all. Other walks of life include: parenting, writing, translating, accounting, journalism and carpentry. There are also architects, philosophers and 21 people listed on the computer as “lovely person”. From the 24 personal responses to the survey, here are some selected extracts:

“**The discovery I made** is that when I'm not absent or busy with my projects, I'm more open, patient, helpful and in general, alert to the possibilities of gentle, loving interaction between people. That's what attracts me most in the Shambhala-vision. For me it's about the discovery that this wisdom and love is not exclusive to any spiritual or religious tradition. It's human. And I think that to discover this first in myself is the prerequisite to helping others.”

“**There are a lot of opportunities to work with Shambhala-vision...** In work and private life I like to remember that people react from their own sore spot. Most of the time it has nothing to do with you personally. There is "a crack in everything, that's where the light comes in": so every real or imagined weakness has within itself an opportunity to open up. In this period of my life I

notice in my personal life that there is a continuing struggle going on between the "poor me" and the part which is taking responsibility for myself. It also involves not feeling responsible for the things others have to deal with. For me it was quite a relief that the ongoing struggle in life is not especially my or anybody's fault, but built on a kind of very human misunderstanding. It helps me to slowly heal myself of some destructive feelings of guilt and imperfection..."

"In my work (psychotherapy), as well as in my private life I become increasingly aware of the 'bodhichitta-miracle': what I can do for the welfare of others, is also the very best I can do for my own growth, and therefore happiness. It is glimpses of this divine self-reinforcing process that is enriching my life. As a person and as a therapist I greatly benefit from vipashyana-meditation, as introspection is a fundamental asset for studying my own mind, as well as understanding the where-about of others. It is a privilege to be a student of a vision that is striving for the ultimate human destiny: an enlightened society!"

"What is social action? When you are getting older the world falls away and you begin to see that things will never be under control. I am reading the biography of Samuel Pepys who lived in the 17th century and there people do things with the same enthusiasm and same social wish to meet with each other. People do not change that much. Only the technics and sometimes the speed in which things develop are different. Those dammed cars for example. I keep up with friends and family."

"I created a group of teacher trainers within our institute that work with the buddhist/shambhala principles in a secular setting. It consists of 12 people. We developed workshops for teachers in general with a spiritual flavour. And sometimes we give workshops to teachers who want to bring more spirituality to their classroom. These last workshops involve meditation and so on. And we influenced the policy of the institute into a more heartfelt approach to teacher training in general."

"How does Shambhala vision manifest in my life as an image-maker (my medium is photography)? I will give an excerpt from a journal entry written recently on the first of September of 2003. 'So really it is a question of focus, of concentration, of connection, of doubtlessness, of fearlessness. Of not being afraid of who I am and what I see- to proclaim that is an expression of dharma- pure perception manifesting on a two dimensional plane.... The world needs people who see light, who see harmony, who see luminous emptiness. The way for me to see it is to practice the dharma, to practice yoga which is meditation in action. No more duality between the different aspects of my life. They express each other, they feed each other, they breath each other, they nurture each other."

"For me Shambhala vision is a moment of genuine contact with another human being. It most of the time is unexpected and feels as a present, as a treasure. As if there is no self consciousness for a split second and as if what follows is humorous and light. It is not goal oriented and still can be very powerful. As an artist I would say: the moment something becomes cosy and comfortable and easy: go for the change. As a woman I would say: work with the unexpectedness of life. As a buddhist I would keep on searching for the truth in daily life, so a small truth..."

“In work I try to help create a social and just approach in our the company towards people. Making money is not the one and only goal of a company... In the sangha most of what I do is inspired by the same feeling: I try to encourage a social sangha, by promoting open communication through our newsletter, and also a critical attitude towards ourselves and the sangha in general... I have worked for many years on the deleg system and conflict resolution. I think every centre should have it's own upaya council. The San Francisco Zen Center has a very good procedure on their website. We need regular sangha meetings, and celebration of nyida days in order for the sangha to be together as a whole, without having to be functional. On an individual basis we need to take care of each other, especially people who are sick, have difficulties with their lives, I think the deleg system is a very good basis for this.”

“What is extremely important is to know that there are and there have always been enlightened and really humane persons that acted from enlightened vision. That you can think of them as an example. For me one of these is the beautiful portrait of a bodhisattva with compassionate expression as I saw in Karne Chöling. So you can encourage yourself and face difficulties and loneliness, for that is the real experience in this very confusing and turbulent world.”

“The social action in which I am and was involved, in which I surely felt and used Shambala inspiration are threefold. Political action with my fellow village-inhabitants against a big depot for severely polluted sludge at Ijsselmeer, north of Amsterdam. By auspicious coincidence we succeeded with a very small action group, called “the angry swan” to stop the project within one year... Prajna made us very alert and well-informed. You need insight in the decision-making process and very good argumentation against overwhelming power. We used the principle of direct experience, so we invited the decision makers to our village to see in reality the beauty of the spacious waters and skies of the Ijsselmeer. Female energy brought a lot of humor and fun. With playful actions, for example swan-cakes for politicians, little swans for the public, beautiful children’s drawings for the minister and officials of Waterstaat, we communicated our arguments against the project. This year the extremely long drought confirmed our argument that the largest sweet-water reserve of Europe should be protected and not be polluted.

There must be a lot of reasons why the treatment of animals in our modern world is not very compassionate, but it definitely has its roots in the history of philosophical and religious ideas.. In 1996 I started an interdisciplinary study group, which published a series of publications under the title *Animals in Philosophy and Science*. We organized an international conference on the subject. The conference was closed by an “opponent” of the animal consciousness position, who said: “it is great that there can be so much excitement and fun in discussing this subject”. It was the not-opinionated openness and the space to reflect and discuss everything which was so inspiring. I am convinced that Shambala vision helped to realize this atmosphere.

I work as a biomathematician in genomics, which is a fast developing and extremely competitive branch of science. There are a lot of fake and fast-tricks thrown over it and there is a big gap of not-knowing between the biologists and statisticians. My task is to bridge that gap and I try to do this by reducing the fear on both sides by clearness, playfulness and lightness (which is not the way of becoming a professor). The Shambhala help is to have trust in (your own) human intelligence (and communicate that to others) and in clear and simple real solutions.”

“Never willing to give up working for a better world. Every drop, little by little, on the stone helps!”

ATLANTA, USA

ACTIVITY		Paid	Volunteer
HEALTHCARE			
	Mainstream	3	1
(Both alternatives were hospice)	Alternative	2	2
	Therapy/Counseling	3	1
Other	Public Health	2	
EDUCATION			
	Primary	3	1
	Secondary	1	
	Post Secondary	1	
Bus Driver/Disable Children	Supplemental Ed	1	1
	Childcare	1	
	Meditation Center	2	
SOCIAL WORK			
	Public Sector	1	2
	Private Sector	2	
POLITICAL/SOCIAL ACTIVISM			
	NGO	1	2
	Community-based		5
ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM			
	Company		1
	NGO		
	Organic Farming		
	Eco Groups		4
ARTS			
Fine Arts, Architecture, Writing, Developmental Theatre, Ikebana		7	14

“**The way that I try to manifest the Shambhala vision** of creating an enlightened society in my life is by connecting with my sangha and the world to learn and communicate the benefits of meditation. For example I helped to spearhead the Shambhala Youth Network after the 2003 Vajra Dawn conference. The aim of this network is to connect all Shambhala youth together so that we can educate, motivate, and inspire each other to identify how we can be of service to our local and international communities. We hold monthly conference call to discuss various topics from how do we create a network to how do we practice. In my work, I communicate the benefits of meditation whenever I get the chance. Recently I attended a CDC training course on public speaking skills; many people from across the agency attended. My main speech, which was recorded, was about the Sakyong's book: Turning the Mind into an Ally. The next day someone from the office of the Director called me to get more information on the book.”

“My job is being a personal assistant to a man who has a terminal brain tumor. I manifest Shambhala by massaging his head during one of his many headaches and tell him it is time to be still and follow his breathing...no talking allowed. When he talks or cries, listening with my heart seems to help him come to terms with the emotions coming to the surface, face the anger, appreciate the borrowed moments of each day of life. Death has become an interesting part of life. It is no longer fearful as it once was. I can truly appreciate meditation practice and practicing being in the moment. I never know what each day will bring, so I am learning to land wherever I go, be aware of the energy, stabilize my mind and then move accordingly. The Sakyong’s teachings have served me well.”

“My job is to help blind and visually impaired people to be independent in their lives by teaching them skills and self-advocacy, providing an ear and encouragement, and referring them to who or whatever will help meet their particular needs which I’m not able to address myself. Right now I’m taking classes to expand my work in this field, so I unfortunately have precious little time to devote to the Shambhala Center. I do practice every day, though - Werma and stroke during the week and Vajrakilaya and Jambhala on the weekends.”

“Riding the energy of windhorse, I endeavor daily to keep my body firm, my mind awake and my heart open....”

“I work to manifest Shambhala Vision on a very small scale. I am the caregiver to only one elderly woman, my own mother-in-law. Daily fresh food is prepared and fresh flowers arranged for her room. Moist heat is applied to her swollen ankles daily for twenty minutes. Care is taken to support her to and from the potty chair. Thought is given to stimulate and uplift her environment. What movies might she enjoy? Is the weather right for her to sit in her wheel chair on the deck? In these ways an attempt is made to lighten the burden of old age and infirmity for one very dear, appreciative, old lady. She reciprocates by giving me a greater appreciation for a functioning human body. She demonstrates the importance of a cheerful attitude.

On another very small scale, I attempt to preserve my immediate environment by organic gardening and providing a wildlife haven. As the city grows and traffic congestion increases, this land as well as adjacent land is under attack from developers desiring to transform it into the highest density allowable. Townhouses surrounded by asphalt, in a city notoriously short of park space, is a profitable formula developers follow. I work to stop this irresponsible development by organizing my neighborhood and interfacing with county government to voice our objections. All of the wildlife attracted isn’t welcome. When I kill the rats in the basement and the copperhead in the garden, I realize my small mind.

For three hours, three nights a week I teach language arts and social studies to eight refugees. They work in minimal wage jobs like cleaning hotel rooms or airport rental cars. At night they study to pass the high school equivalency exam. They dream of becoming journalists, scientists, or doctors. They are survivors who teach limitless possibilities when there is forward vision.

There was a time in my life when working on such small scales would have depressed me, given the darkness of these dark ages. Today, while I still wish I could do more, I’m grateful when I’m of any uplifting service to anyone.”

BOSTON, USA

<i>Category</i>	<i>Total</i>
1. Health Care	17
2. Education	19
3. Social Worker	3
4. Political or Social Activism	2
5. Environmental Activism	2
6. Arts	13
7. Other	
a. Spiritual Publishing/Alternative Bookstore	7
b. Organizational Consultant	4
c. Student	3
d. Computer Programming	5

(membership 176)

“I see my social work practice as having a strong relationship with spiritual practice, as I am working with others' states of mind as well as my own, and have endless opportunities to wake up and help others wake up as they cope with the suffering of old age, sickness and death. I am helpful to the degree that I am able to be present and really listen.”

“Manifesting Shambhala vision: it's always helpful to remember the qualities of the dignities, meek in particular. People appreciate dealing with someone who is genuine and friendly. The college students that I work with don't necessarily know that I'm a practitioner. A lot of what I do with them is just working hard to awaken some curiosity -- a quality I've never had to stimulate in working with dharma students.”

“I am active in a legal organization (the National Lawyers Guild) that takes progressive legal positions on a wide range of subjects--most recently opposing the Patriot Act's infringements on civil liberties, the war in Iraq and its aftermath. I participate, mostly via email, in efforts to elect progressives to office on a local and national level, to oppose US foreign policy in the middle east and elsewhere, and to criticize Israeli oppression of Palestinians. I engaged in all these activities before I became a Shambhala Buddhist—I think my greatest challenge is to recognize the humanity and basic goodness of people whose ideas and actions I detest and to find skillful means to express my views in a convincing way.”

“I do fundraising for the United Way, and I would consider this social service/social action. How I try to manifest Shambhala vision in daily life in my work is to speak to donors from the perspective of encouraging them to manifest generosity, a wonderful virtue that we can all bring forward. I bring my best Windhorse forward to inspire them to engage in the projects we support. Raising Windhorse has been a very effective way to inspire people--not push them, not make them feel guilty, not manipulate them into giving when they don't want to. Rather, to help them bring forward their sense of bounty and wealth. I feel I do this best when I am in touch with my own basic goodness and authentic presence.”

“I try to embody Shambhala ethics in all my affairs. I teach from the starting point of students' basic goodness. My art students learn that form is not solid and isolated from space, and that space is not empty and dead. I often incorporate short periods of sitting or walking meditation into the class process, indicating that the practice is not religious but powerfully spiritual and creative. In my own art works, I use the principles of lha, nyen, and lu, albeit within a contemporary visual art idiom. I raise lungta often in the studio. I am doing my best to be genuine, compassionate, and act with a sense of humor in my work.”

“I work in healthcare and education - one to one tutor and give medications for children with special health and education needs in the school classroom. I assist the classroom teacher to maintain an uplifted classroom environment and maintain the dignity of each child.”

“In terms of 'manifesting Shambhala vision' in my work, I would have to say how amazing it is to me how many people who do this work come to it with a lot of natural bodhicitta. I don't have a lot of it myself, but having been through a certain amount of practice and study, at least I know now it when I see it... A more challenging arena for Shambhala vision is at the higher levels of the hospital and in dealing with government. Moving forward an agenda, or trying to make a shift in someone else's, can be extremely frustrating at times and manifesting a soft and tender heart doesn't always work (though it helps keep me sane). What does work is trying to remember that all the people I am working with also have that and pretty much want to do the right thing if given the space and the right tools and information. (This is not, however, true for the pharmaceutical companies who seem to have no scruples at all.) I try to be like the tiger who can move slowly through the high grass until the moment is right to strike, hopefully with some intelligence, - or to move on. Mostly I try to exercise patience.”

LEXINGTON, USA

We sent this part of the survey to our sangha email list, which includes about 110 people. We also sent hard copies to the small number of active sangha members who do not have email. We received responses from 44 people, which is a response rate of about 35%. Many -- in fact most -- of the people who responded are engaged in more than one social action activity. The number of people engaged in each type of activity is shown below:

Health Care: 24 (54% of respondents)
Education: 28 (64% of respondents)
Social Work: 4 (9%)
Political/Social Activism: 19 (43%)
Environmental Activism: 10 (23%)
Arts: 21 (48%)
Other: 15 (34%)

Activities listed as "Other" included historic preservation, hospice volunteer, nursing home visitor, professional research and writing, animal rescue, animal rights, organic gardening, landscaping, facilitating victim-offender dialogue, mom, dad, child care, teaching meditation at YMCA and prisons, and international student host.

For the glimpse of the ways in which people try to manifest Shambhala vision in their life and work, we did two things: (1) asked a group of people to discuss the question during a recent Great Eastern Sun (Introduction to the Sacred Path) level at our center, and (2) interviewed some of our senior members or asked them to write out their thoughts.

“I was involved in the 1980s with some of the following issues: Nuclear Freeze Movement, opposing US intervention in Central America, Soviet-American citizen diplomacy, another anti-war activities. I chose Shambhala Training as my spiritual path because I needed a practice, a body of teachings, and a sangha that would help me in my work. I have never abandoned this view. A Shambhala warrior must be socially engaged.

Currently, I am teaching meditation in Spanish at the local prison to Mexican inmates. I serve on the Board of Directors for the Lexington chapter of The Interfaith Alliance (TIA). TIA is an interfaith group of clergy dedicated to bringing people from different faith communities together to celebrate our common humanity. It is also dedicated to opposing the so-called faith-based initiatives put forth by the Bush administration, which threaten the separation between church and state. The group is also concerned and speaks out against the loss of civil liberties.

I am a member of the Central Kentucky Council for Peace and Justice. I teach meditation and contemplative arts in a variety of settings in the community: in the University of Kentucky’s Wellness program, at the YMCA, to student organizations. I also do periodic radio programs about the Shambhala Center and give public talks.

I feel as though my practice and connections to the Shambhala teachings permeate my life, and that I bring the teachings and practice wherever I go. At the same time, I find more of an urgency now, more than ever before, to engage with the world in this dark and troubled age.”

“Knowing that most people complicate their lives with needless suffering Kno, although they wish to be happy, we both wish that people could connect with the freedom and sanity of wakefulness. The hope is that our three daughters will be able to enjoy waking up through the practice of mindfulness and awareness and studying the Buddhadharmas. They are all teenagers now and it is obvious that they have good open hearts and genuine concern for others. The sangha has changed. In the early days, when the Vidyadhara was alive, sitting practice was the binding factor and both study and practice was at the forefront of everyone's mind who came through the doors of Dharma Study Group/DDH. "Ransack the kleshas" was the intent -- there weren't as many options. This created an esprit de corps, a tight group on a steep path. Perhaps in some cases we were fooling ourselves but obstacles and setbacks can be stepping stones and fresh insights. Dharma is good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end. Absolutely no regrets. Practice like your hair is on fire!”

“The ground

I try.

I manifest.

I am present.

I am absolute/relative

I am emptiness/luminosity

I am Basic Goodness

with all my neurosis becoming newroses while alive

I live

For Love

With Love

In Love

"and there is no falling"

The path

I intend to be practicing 24/7, which of course, I just can't do - no, I haven't learned it well-enough yet, but I can tell I have more trust/faith than I used to have. So, I wake up and know what I need to know and then I get up and do some little bit of yoga, and then practice shamatha/vipashayana for a little bit, and then eat breakfast, and then return phone calls, and then take a 2 mile walk at a pretty good clip, and then get dressed, and then drive into town, and then see clients until usually about 8pm, and then return phone calls, do deskwork, do filing, leave instructions for the secretary, go see or call Mommy, drive home, sometimes help with dinner, sometimes do it alone, and sometimes get it done for me, and then I pick up email and answer email and, sometimes, I have some time to read before bed. So that's the routine

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but the life of it is the beauty of the earth, and learning how to practice to help all sentient beings to the best I know which is learning how to love and practice the four immeasurables.

My work is not separate - my life seems like a quilt, not like a "patch" here and a patch there. It is whole, and rich, (and that includes the richness of the shit as well). My therapy "modality", psychosynthesis, is completely aligned with Shambhala Buddhism - I do need to continue to pay attention to catch the differences other than just language, so I'm not lulling myself into a "false harmony" that only exists because I ignore the differences.

What is harder for me than anything is primary partner relationship - this is where I seem to have more "stuff" than anywhere else!

So, I also support World Wildlife Fund and the Scott County Humane Society, and Amnesty International, and want to have a lovely environment, inner, outer and secret drala, and have a better connection with the Rigdens!

The fruition

this moment"

“For many years I had to combine work and dharma, concentrating mainly on my own path, on learning meditation, traveling to hear teachers, trying to establish Buddhism and Shambhala Training in our center, and working with our organization and internal relationships. Being now retired from teaching, I have, over the past sixteen years taken my life task from a saying of the Vidyadhara's in the years before he died. “Help others, please” he used to say. I have found that taking his words quite literally as my focus from day to day life has become rich and satisfying. I am endlessly thankful for having discovered on that day in Florida the teachings that were to give new focus to my life. During many years, from 1985, I worked mainly at creating our Shambhala community, while others offered our Buddhist curriculum. I try to share with others what that has meant to me and how we might create the vision that the Druk Sakyong offered of Enlightened Society. Now, with the maturing vision of Sakyong Mipham I am discovering a new dedication in our center from those who have connected directly with him. The recent Kalapa Assembly and Vajrayana Seminary have been extraordinary in their infusions of energy. New members have taken over the burden of administration carried so long by senior people. A warm and accommodating community seems to invite new people to share our vision.”

TORONTO, Canada

Health care *Livelihood:* 16 people (including 4 nurses, 2 doctors, 4 alternative medicine practitioners, 2 massage therapists, a psychotherapist, a medical lab worker, a hospital administrator and a person who grows organic food. *Volunteer:* 6 people

Education *Livelihood:* 11 (including 5 teachers, a teaching assistant, 3 teachers' college students, a corporate training specialist and a university administrator). *Volunteer:* 8 people

Social worker *Livelihood:* 5 (includes 4 social workers, 1 youth home worker)
Volunteer: 5 people

Political and social activism *Livelihood:* 2 (one works co-ordinating volunteers for the Red Cross, another as a union advocate for disabled workers). *Volunteer:* 6 people

Environmental activism *Livelihood:* none. *Volunteer:* 4 people

Arts *Livelihood:* 9 (including 4 musicians, 2 actors, 1 dance teacher, 1 writer, 1 person who works in film/television production. *Volunteer:* 3 people

“**The levels on which I'm engaged in social activism** pertain more to choices in daily life e.g. Trying to be more compassionate to others, trying to be more informed of the injustices and let go of my anger and hatred towards the perpetrators of these injustices. Trying to be more conscious as a consumer. Donating money to causes I strongly believe in that are engaged in social action. Voting for left wing socially conscious politicians. However, I attended the Vajra Dawn Youth Conference and met with others who wanted to educate each other and have a continued dialogue about alternative economic systems and educating our sangha about the severe suffering that is caused by our free market corporate dominated economic systems.”

“**I practice Chinese Medicine** full time at my own clinic in Toronto. Since Chinese medicine recognizes the essential cause of illness to be the confused mind, I will recommend meditation to patients who seem ready on some level. Recent clinical studies have shown clear health benefits for people trained in meditation. I have collected these studies and make them available to my patients.”

“**In my paid work I am openly Buddhist** among staff and other co-workers including those in my immediate workplace and on committees where I represent our agency. I work specifically with homeless immigrants and refugees in terms of both the visible homeless (street homeless) and those who are the invisibly homeless (those who are homeless by definition i.e. in shelters, hostels, motels, temp with family or friends etc.)... I always advocate compassion and change, rather than religion specifically, in terms human behavior and development at all levels of the social spectrum... I have offered to facilitate staff development and healing in terms of meditation, which is something our agency has been considering. I have provided staff with referrals to places where they can seek out meditation opportunities and/or alternative health options in terms of Tibetan medicine and yoga. Although our agency adopts a holistic perspective

in terms of case management, one aspect often not addressed or addressed minimally are the spiritual needs of staff (i.e. especially burn out or care for the care giver) and clients (complete biopsychosocialspiritual support)... It is important to note that in my Shambhala Buddhist perspective I never advocate adherence or access to any one religion, but rather alternative ways of viewing and living in our world.”

“**I am an active singer**, board member and volunteer concert coordinator for the Common Thread Community Chorus of Toronto, an 80 voice, non-auditioned community choir. Our mandate is to promote social justice and community through music as well as empower our singers and our audiences with the idea that everyone can sing and when we join together we make music that inspires us and gives voice to our lives both joys and sorrows. This is a powerful concept where the audience is no longer passive but is encouraged to sing and are given printed lyrics (in Braille as well). We promote fully inclusive environment where different abilities in all areas are given voice and assistance where needed. To this end we have blind singers, physically disabled singers, parents w/kids, grandparents, visible and invisible minorities. During a season we seek out grassroots community organizations and host benefit concerts for them which helps raise money for them and increases their visibility while highlighting current social and political issues they are addressing. Most importantly, this is a caring committed community of singers who are always learning from one another about what it means to drop your judgment about what you think you know and reach beyond your own limits. Listening, sharing, supporting, singing, crying, mourning and rejoicing - the whole package.”

“**I try to be honest** and own my own emotions, desires and thoughts. I choose to work with people who are struggling in some way with their lives. When difficulties arise I try to see them as aspects of the path and not just problems. I try to listen and to open wider, particularly when I feel judgmental. I try to be aware of the space and to respond to needs arising out of that awareness. I try to be patient. I try to see the basic goodness in each person I meet or work with. I acknowledge my broken heart. I try to emphasize the importance of honesty and compassion to my students and to my children. I try to be mindful. I forgive myself when I fail. I try to remember that every situation is workable. I trust the process.”

“**I was concerned with social work and activism** before I was aware of the Shambhala teachings. I don't think my principals have changed so much. However, I generally found it difficult to manage much work on such things: the commitment, organization, and follow-through were lacking. In particular, I think I despaired at the possibility of changing things, so it was difficult to find the energy to work on things. Meditation and Shambhala and other Buddhist teachings have provided for some personal development allowing me to manifest my ideals in action. But furthermore, the Shambhala vision perfectly addresses the issue of accepting and acting in our current situation, bleak or otherwise. So for me, Shambhala vision really makes a significant difference in my ability to work at all to make things better.”

“**I think that in order to move closer to the Shambhala vision** of a secular enlightenment, to permeate a natural sense of sacredness to all aspects of civilization, we need to inspire others. Some hold the view that by just sitting back, society will come to us. Perhaps to some degree this is true. But the greatest organizational, political and even religious movements were not achieved by sitting back. They were achieved by reaching out to others and having plans to achieve their objective.”

“**Working with children**, I find that I am able to remain open to them in spite of their difficult behaviours, whereas it's more difficult to do this with adults. I am trying to extend this patience and understanding to adults in my life, to see that we're all very similar to a 7-year-old who has a tantrum because he/she is afraid of something.’

“**I try to manifest Shambhala vision** in my life and work in the following ways:

1. Provide good material conditions and support for my family.
2. Be kind to my wife and children and help create a happy family environment.
3. Take pleasure in the discipline of work, e.g., getting up early, shaving, putting on a tie etc.
4. Work in an open, honest and generous way with my colleagues at work. Foster team work. Create an environment of support and trust.
5. Treat people who report to me with dignity and respect. Be fair, open and honest. Try to create a working environment that supports their needs.
6. Strive to meet professional standards and create quality work. In education & training, this means developing programs that are "learner-centered" and actually foster learning.
7. Support the activities of the Shambhala Center through membership dues and volunteer activity.
8. Keep the bigger picture in mind...”

“**Do we really want to create an enlightened society?** If the answer is yes, we have to help our sangha at all levels, throughout the world understand how to get there, how to play a part if they so wish. If there is a desire to move more broadly or quickly toward the vision, we need to seek out "Warriors of Influence" - Sangha members that are well positioned politically, socially or financially to inspire others toward the Shambhala vision. By connecting all these dots, across the world, a pattern begins to form, which gains strength and momentum. Eventually, this energy can become self-sustaining and grow exponentially.”