

# Breathworks in 2007



## Breathworks in New Zealand



At the beginning of 2007 Vidyamala and Sona were in New Zealand running a 5 day training retreat for health professionals at a retreat centre close to Sudarshanaloka on the spectacular Coromandel peninsula. This was the first training retreat we had run outside the UK and marked a continuing expansion of the Breathworks' project.

## More Breathworks' Training Retreats

The previous year, 2006, we had run two retreats in the UK for those who wanted to become Breathworks' Trainers as well as those who wanted to learn more about mindfulness-based health interventions in their professional work. In 2007 we ran four such retreats taking the community of Breathworks' trainers to 14 fully qualified with 23 half way through their training by the end of the year. The success of our training programme has been largely due to Ratnaguna's skills and experience gained from many years running Dharma courses at Vajrakuta and other places.

## Breathworks Team in USA and Sweden



Apart from introducing our mindfulness-based pain management and stress programmes to some in New Zealand, we also ran a weekend workshop in Stockholm, Sweden for more health professionals and we continued to attend conferences. The most important for us was the conference *Integrating Mindfulness-Based Interventions into Medicine, Health Care, and Society for Clinicians, Researchers, and Educators* at

the Center for Mindfulness at the University of Massachusetts, where we ran a three hour workshop and presented our research results.

## Core Team Expands

The Breathworks' core team also expanded. We now have a number of part-time workers:

Tracy McLoughlin in Edinburgh is looking after sales of CDs and other merchandise. Narapa joined us before his ordination and immediately represented us at the British Pain Society's Pain Management Programme conference in Southampton in September. He was expecting to run a short workshop for 20 or so people, but over a 100 turned up much to his surprise! Dr Elaine Wetherly-Jones has joined us to oversee our research which we are particularly keen to develop. Prasannavira also helps out planning our health professionals' workshops.

## Living Well with Pain & Stress - More Courses Available

We also changed the name of our two courses this year to make them consistent. They are now: "Living Well with Pain and Illness" and "Living Well with Stress". Some of our trainers are now running both these courses in Cardiff, Brighton, Bristol, Stroud, Blackburn, East London and Leeds as well as Manchester.

## Distance Learning

Another important development was the introduction of distance learning courses run by Caro Edwards. This makes the Breathworks' approach available to people who want one to one coaching, as well as to those who are too ill to get to a class. We hope to expand this aspect of the business in the future.

## Accredited Continuing Professional Development Courses

Narapa's main job is to develop Breathworks as a viable commercial enterprise (we are a Community Interest Company i.e. a 3<sup>rd</sup> sector or not-for-profit organisation). He has mainly been concentrating on finding a university to accredit our courses. Salford in Lancashire (where 3 of the Breathworks' directors live) has a university with the largest number of students studying health related subjects in the UK e.g. nursing, physiotherapy and complementary therapies. Narapa has been developing a proposal to run 'Continuing Professional Development' courses at the university. This will be a very important development as it will allow Breathworks' trainers to offer training to many different types of health professionals as all, or most, health professionals working in the public sector have to maintain their level of competence by attending courses every year to expand and update their knowledge of new developments in health care. A university accredited course will give us the opportunity to bring our approach to mindfulness as a health intervention more fully into the public arena.

## UK Network of Mindfulness Trainers

Narapa and Sona met with a group of other mindfulness trainers in November. This is the second year running we have met up with others who run courses to train trainers to deliver mindfulness in the fields of health and stress. Apart from Breathworks all the other participants are connected with MBSR and/or MBCT - mainly from Bangor, Exeter and Oxford Universities and Scotland. The meeting was hosted by Mark Williams at the Warneford Hospital in Oxford. The purpose of this meeting is to try to bring some kind of standards to how mindfulness is taught and practised by trainers, as well as sharing information about how the different groups and institutions are developing their work. Breathworks will be hosting the next meeting in Manchester in November 2008.

## Breathworks & Physiotherapists



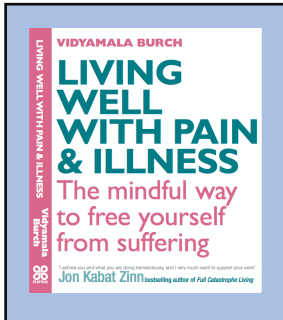
The Chartered Society of Physiotherapists have a magazine called 'Frontline' and in November they featured a substantial article on Mindfulness and pain management, with Breathworks having the highest profile. The cover image was of a huge Buddha which seemed to symbolise how much interest there is in mindfulness as the Buddha's teaching within mainstream circles these days. The article included interviews with Vidyamala and two of our trainers who are physiotherapists working in the NHS.

## Research

Last year we were approached by a researcher working with the Human Pain Research Group at Hope Hospital Salford, to carry out research of people attending our mindfulness-based pain management course. He received a grant in the form of the Francisco J. Varela Research Award from the Mind and Life Institute in the USA (of which the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama

is the Chairman) and intends to use ECG techniques to scan people's brains before and after attending one of our courses. We have no idea what the research will show, but there is a lot of interest in brain scans of people who meditate and practice mindfulness, especially in the States. The research is scheduled to take place early in 2008.

## Vidyamala's Book



Probably the most exciting event for Breathworks in 2007 was when Piatkus (now an imprint of Little, Brown Publishers) signed a contract with Vidyamala to publish her book. She had been working on a book about the Breathworks' approach to mindfulness based pain management for two years, being helped substantially by Vishvapani for the past year. The manuscript will be with the publisher this January when it will go into the production process ready for delivery to bookshops in November 2008. Having her book available will not only make Breathworks and Vidyamala better known, but, more importantly, it will bring our work to those suffering long term pain and illness, as well as stress, in places where we have no trainers,

as well as to those who are too ill to be able to attend a course. Jon Kabat-Zinn as kindly offered to have a very positive quote about Vidyamala and Breathworks on the front cover and Dr. Amanda C de C Williams (senior clinical-psychologist who helped develop the first pain programmes in hospitals in the UK) will write the foreword.

Given that Breathworks is run by a team of directors who only work part-time, we are very happy with what we managed to achieve in 2007.