

## About Dharma Study

Posted on January 28, 2014 by [Nelly Kaufer](#), Lead Teacher Pine Street Sangha

An internet search of Buddhism turned up close to 58,000 possibilities on Amazon, more than you could ever read. How to choose? What to study? Where to begin? The Buddha did not leave a predecessor, Buddhism is constantly transforming as are interpretations of the teachings. What's more there are so many schools of Buddhism and traditions, with overlapping ideas and distinct points of divergence, that support differing translations of the teachings and perspectives on meditation practice. The Buddha used diverse language and metaphor to skillfully speak to whom he was teaching. What language speaks to you?

How might study, meditation, and contemplation interact and lead to deeper knowledge?

Here are a couple of specific examples: At first you are frustrated by a repetitive thought loop, but then you become curious about these thoughts and pick up more about them. Then you understand that your interest increased your awareness or "sati", as it is referred to in the Pali teachings. Or maybe you were thinking about work and, at first, judge this line of thought as too mundane. But then you realize that you are thinking about how to relate more honestly with a co-worker and understand that you're contemplating "skillful livelihood" and "skillful speech" which are on the "Eightfold Path." Then you feel willing to go deeper into this... you know its value. Knowing the "links of the eightfold path" opened this understanding and allowed this meditative choice.

The dharma reflects the truths of our existence and points the way to our deeper development. Our teachers reference dharma as they question you about your meditative experiences. You learn the dharma when it presents itself to you in meditative and in life experiences. This differs from our usual mode of learning where we learn something and try and apply it to our life.

My greatest aspiration is that you fall in love with the dharma.