

self-clinging, they don't realize it." So Roshi emphasized the seeing of buddha in everyone as an important aspect of our practice. And you know, we have a custom here in the temple of bowing to one another as we pass, saying good morning with a bow. Buddha bowing to buddha. But it's helping us to remember to see buddha in everyone and, of course, to see buddha in ourselves. Sometimes we get caught up in our delusions and our irritations or our unhappiness in some way, and we forget that buddha is right here. So let us remember to bow to one another. Let us remember to see buddha in each other. Let us remember to express our buddha nature in our actions of body, speech, and mind.

## JUST BEING ALIVE IS ENOUGH

In 1989 I had a heart attack. As I was leaving the hospital, I stepped out into the sunshine, and I had this sudden realization. "Wow! I'm alive. I could be dead. Wow, the rest of my life is just a gift." And then I thought, "Oh, it always has been, from the very beginning. Nobody owed me this life. It was just given to me. Wow!" And in that moment of waking up, I found what a wonderful, rich feeling it is to be grateful to be alive. Just right now, right here, all the time. I don't have to have anything more special than knowing that just to be alive is enough.

The great poet Emily Dickinson said, "To live is so startling it leaves little time for anything else." And Brother David Steindl-Rast says, "The greatest surprise is that there is anything at all, that we are here." And from Omraam Mikhäel Aïvanhov, "The day I acquired the habit of consciously pronouncing the words *thank you*, I felt I had gained possession of a magic wand capable of transforming everything." So living this life of gratitude has really changed my life. I used to be both quite opinionated and quite ready to criticize anyone who didn't agree with me. Now I recognize that my life depends on all the lives around me. We all support each other. None of us could take care of ourselves in a

world all alone. We're so completely interwoven and interdependent. Our life depends on one another. And as you begin to realize that, you can't help but be grateful.

## RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE GIFT OF LIFE

Along with this gift of life comes some responsibility for supporting life, participating in taking care of this fabulous gift of life on this earth that we've been given. And this is a particularly important point now in our history, as we find that the way we are living is endangering the continuity of life. We see that we have to make some changes in the way we use fossil fuels, because we are in danger of poisoning ourselves and changing the climate of this earth sufficiently to make it uninhabitable, at least by creatures such as we are. There is a responsibility to having received this gift of life, and that is to take care of it in whatever way we can. I heard this quote some time ago: "Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world at once but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach."<sup>4</sup> So we find out where we can make whatever contribution we can to the care of the earth and the other beings with whom we share it.

## GOOD EVENING, BODHISATTVAS

The Dalai Lama's bodhisattva vow is "Every day, think as you wake up: 'Today I am fortunate to have woken up. I am alive. I have a precious human life. I am not going to waste it. I'm going to use my energies to develop myself, to expand my heart out to others, to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all beings. I am going to have kind thoughts toward others. I am not going to get angry or think badly about others. I am going to benefit others as much as I can.'"<sup>5</sup> This is our essential vow as bodhisattvas. And of course, you are all bodhisattvas. Suzuki Roshi always used to