

Dear Sangha,

13 years ago I walked into Village Zendo to study chaplaincy. All these years later I realize that I've been studying myself and my relationship to the world. 13 years, 156 months, 678 weeks, 4746 hours and who knows how many minutes and seconds of studying Me: *Black, Female, Queer* - How DO I fit into the world? What is the world's moment to moment response to Me? What are my moment to moment responses to the World?

Through my Zen practice I found a way to being a member of a spiritual community that felt unavailable to me in my Evangelical Christian upbringing. I could like, *Senjo* (in the koan from the Mumonkan), reunite my halves and become Whole. I began to embody a spiritual practice that saved my life. It did more than keep me alive it gave me a way to see how to, perhaps, live a *better* life, be a *better* person.

Maybe what I've expressed is familiar to You - a search, a need, a hunger to be in community as your Whole Self with others who are also engaged in what is sometimes... A Struggle. I feel much gratitude to Roshi Enkyo and All of the Village Zendo teachers for lighting the path of our journey and to all of the Zen Masters, Women and Men, for the sparks for those lights.

In her Winter Ango letter Roshi Enkyo wrote "For ninety days we personally commit to more zazen, more study, and other practices such as clear awareness of our interaction with others and attentiveness to the precepts." I cannot say it any better. Ninety Days. 90 days or 2,160 hours to study with, practice with and support each other in a moment of time in our world that is particularly fraught with struggle and suffering. How, through our practice, can we relieve even a little suffering - ours and others - and not add to it?

90 Days. 2,160 Hours - I invite **You** - Zendo member or not - to join with me in not wasting a minute of this opportunity we have together.

In Gassho and Deep Bow of Gratitude,

JyākuEn