

A Personal Reflection on Commitment 6

By Lucy Piper, ITP Teacher

I develop my intellectual powers by reading, writing, and discussion. I thoughtfully consider the visions and the readings set forth in chapter 12 and, commensurate with my own best judgment, seek to integrate cognitive understanding into my practice.

When I first read *The Life We Are Given* and began to take on the nine commitments, commitment number 6 was one I thought I really had handled. I had been a philosophy major at the University and had read extensively in the areas of philosophy, science, sociology for all the years after graduation. Other commitments offered more challenge and, I thought, more areas for growth. All my certainty about this should have been a clue to look more deeply, but I was new to the practice.

After several years, I began to reexamine this commitment to intellectual powers and saw that broad areas of reading were definitely missing. One of George Leonard's five keys to mastery is to get a guide, so I got a mentor in the area of poetry and very soon found poetry able to reach parts of me that resisted understanding through left brain analysis and study. I found marvelous poets and opened up in a new way.

A few years later, I found a mentor in the area of fiction. I had given up fiction years earlier feeling it was not "serious" enough. I was immensely fortunate to work with someone who profoundly understood the capacity of fiction to create understanding and compassion for people unlike ourselves. He suggested books both old and new that have led me to a kinder, humbler state of being.

My reading had expanded in unexpected and rich ways, but there were these other two words I started to consider: writing and discussion. Discussing with my mentors about poetry and fiction was helpful and led me to discuss with others. My ITP group was a beautiful place to discuss ideas of evolution, transformation, practice, compassion, and so many areas involved in our integral practice. I especially remember the discussions of the Double Soul that went on for almost a year. My family with grandchildren in graduate school has fascinating discussions that stretch my understanding of the world and of life in general. The area of discussion, like reading, is enriched and enlivened.

The next challenge for me is writing. I have a ridiculous number of journals that mirror my



“resolutions” to begin to journal regularly. This is not a practice that is in place and it is one I resist for reasons unclear to me. All those journals have been abandoned with not many pages filled. My reading continues to broaden and deepen, and needs conscious tending. My discussion is blessedly rich at this time. The adjacent possible for me is writing, keeping a journal.