



**CCARE | Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education**

COMPASSION COURSE | Cultivating the Heart – Live/Online

SELECT READINGS | HEARTFELT ADVICE FOR HARD TIMES BY PEMA  
CHÖDRÖN | THE WAY OF THE HEART WARRIOR BY SHANTIDEVA | WE  
ALWAYS HAVE A CHOICE BY PEMA CHÖDRÖN

## **HEARTFELT ADVICE FOR HARD TIMES**

**By Pema Chödrön, from *When Things Fall Apart***

We think that the point is to pass the test or overcome the problem, but the truth is that things don't really get solved. They come together and they fall apart. Then they come together again and fall apart again. It's just like that. The healing comes from letting there be room for all of this to happen: room for grief, for relief, for misery, for joy.

## **THE WAY OF THE HEART WARRIOR**

**Adapted from Shantideva**

Those who train wholeheartedly in awakening unconditional compassion are Heart Warriors- not warriors who kill and harm but warriors of nonaggression who hear the cries of the world. These are men and women who are willing to train in the middle of the fire. Training in the middle of the fire can mean that these Heart Warriors enter challenging situations in order to alleviate suffering. It also refers to their willingness to cut through personal reactivity and self-deception, to their dedication to uncovering the basic undistorted energy of an open heart. We have many examples of Heart Warriors- people like Mother Teresa and Martin Luther King, Jr.- who recognized that the greatest harm comes from our own aggressive minds.... There are also many ordinary people who spend their lives training in opening their hearts and minds in order to help others do the same. Like them, we could learn to relate to ourselves and our world as Heart Warriors. We could train in awakening our courage and love.

## **WE ALWAYS HAVE A CHOICE**

**By Pema Chödrön**

We can let the circumstances of our life harden us so that we become increasingly resentful and afraid, or we can let them soften us and make us kinder and more open to what scares us. We always have this choice.... An analogy for bodhichitta (open heart and mind) is the rawness of a broken heart. Sometimes this broken heart gives birth to anxiety and panic, sometimes to anger, resentment, and blame. But under the hardness of that armor there is the tenderness of genuine sadness. This is our link with all those who have ever loved. This genuine heart of sadness can teach us great compassion. It can humble us when we're arrogant and soften us when we are unkind. It awakens us when we prefer to sleep and pierces through our indifference. This continual ache of the heart is a blessing that when accepted fully can be shared with all.