

tical self-centered fraud on a power trip and stomps off for good?

No matter what happens (it will), are you willing to try? Then there are no other criteria.

Keeping a local group going is just giving, being there for whomever comes in the door—giving your time and energy to help them deal with their situation. That's all it is—giving, not receiving, just trying to help someone who's probably in pain and hurting in some private way. And maybe sometimes you do start to feel a bit pleased with yourself; maybe the person who got mad at you wasn't 100% off base. Can you see this if it happens and then work on letting it dissolve? When someone comes in hoping for help, it's obscene to turn the helping into some sort of private ego gratification.

Most of the people for whom you make this effort will come once or a few times and they won't be back no

matter how hard you try. Or they'll be very enthusiastic for a while and then quit altogether. If your energy is a function of how big the group is each week, sooner or later it will be a problem. Spiritual practice involves giving without being concerned about what you get back. Setting up a group especially involves giving without asking what do I get back—are you comfortable with that yet?

Find a level of effort that you can maintain over the long haul. Don't make it too easy, but don't decide it's up to you personally to save the world and then get burned out and quit altogether on days when it doesn't seem to happen. Saving all sentient beings is a remarkable process, after all—don't forget to enjoy it.

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## Welcome Relief

Cool night trail  
flashlight eye wandering  
(rattlesnake feeler)  
Low growl somewhere  
flushes fear bubbles  
from the gut  
coming to a chill burst  
in my forehead

Awakened from the nightmare  
of seeming tough

Jan Sendzimir  
Kitkitdizze  
foothills of the Sierra Nevada

## just that

behind the plop/croaking of bull frogs,  
the cycling cadences of summer birds,  
the highway's gray roar  
is more present at dusk  
than dark early morning.

the sharp crescendo of a car  
in the passing lane  
causes hands and feet to tense.

Paul Bloom

## "life is chopping wood"

life is chopping wood/  
hauling water,  
some such—old zen master—  
remember, running the bowen field track  
on a bright january  
sunday afternoon,  
home in time for millie's potluck  
and relax before the speed of monday work,  
thinking of  
february hiking,  
this morning's bright meditation room,  
brunch and errands,  
feel last thursday's  
dark track  
fifteen degree run  
before a late dinner  
while july was seventy-five  
high school kids  
working out  
in the summerschool track program,  
runners all over the field  
heavy with heat of summer energy,  
just now  
the pleasant loneliness  
of cold january sundays  
texture of wood and water cycles.

Paul Bloom