

SNOWFLOWER SANGHA GUIDELINES FOR ITS FACEBOOK PAGE¹

I. PURPOSE OF SNOWFLOWER'S FACEBOOK PAGE.

The purposes of SnowFlower's Facebook Page include the following:

- a. To build sangha by creating an interactive tool that will permit members and other individuals to comment on posts to our news feed, to create a greater sense of community within the sangha, and to use what Facebook offers in order to increase the visibility of our sangha among Madison Buddhists and those learning about Buddhism within the broader Madison community.
- b. To inform SnowFlower members and those interested in SnowFlower about relevant events and opportunities related to our practice, as well as to provide educational materials that can help strengthen the practice of those who follow our Facebook page.
- c. To use Facebook's organizing tools so as to lessen the work of SnowFlower volunteers (*e.g.*, see events planning discussion below.)

II. ADMINISTRATION.

A. Facebook Page Management.

Initially, subject to such Steering Council requirements, decisions or directives as may become applicable, Curt Pawlisch will serve as interim manager of SnowFlower's Facebook page until another volunteer assumes this role. Cynthia Burnson will serve as the page's technical manager with Samantha Sinai offering volunteer support. Curt, Cynthia, and Samantha each have administrative privileges regarding the Facebook page.

The manager will help shape the overall direction of the Facebook page, coordinate Facebook content with SnowFlower's website, and develop policies and resolve conflicts concerning the use of the Facebook page, including the content and tone of any postings.

The technical managers will have day-to-day management of the Facebook page, and their duties include posting content, recruiting volunteers to help with Facebook page, and such other activities necessary to fulfill the purposes of the Facebook page. The technical managers may also assist the manager.

B. Uses Of SnowFlower's Facebook Page:

In using the Facebook page to build sangha, or in fulfillment of the other purposes of the page, SnowFlower Facebook managers and volunteers may take any of the following illustrative actions:

¹ These policies have been modeled on the policies set forth in the document, "The SnowFlower Listserv."

1. Post material consistent with these guidelines. They may post material from or about the SnowFlower website (*e.g.*, SnowFlower blog posts, or they may provide links to other content such as posts from other Facebook or Internet pages. (Linking to the Facebook posts of other organizations will boost traffic to our Facebook page due to Facebook algorithms.)
2. Encourage SnowFlower members to “invite” friends to “like” the page.
3. Use Facebook’s Events functions to organize our own events such as the Fall Retreat. With a small amount of training, event organizers can use the Events function for invitations, RSVPs, and to provide event information such as location and date. Thus, we can use both the webpage and Facebook page to promote the Event, and we can use the Facebook Events function as an events organizing tool.
4. Create a gallery for photos of SnowFlower events, member photos from trips to Plum Village and other related Buddhist-related destinations, or photos that are consistent with Buddhist or contemplative themes.

A tutorial on Facebook page capabilities may be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/business/learn/facebook-page-basics>.

C. Guidelines For Posting On SnowFlower Facebook Page:

1. Unacceptable Posts:

- a. Partisan political posts or posts of original or linked material which are inconsistent with the Thich Nhat Hanh tradition both in content and in tone (*e.g.*, no posting of an article about the Tibetan view of reincarnation.)
- b. Unmindful speech, such as, but not limited to unskillfully-stated expressions of anger, insults, accusations or other venting and personal disagreements.
- c. Advertisements for commercial products and services not directly related to the practice, even if a SnowFlower member offers those products and services. This would NOT exclude opportunities that might be fun or enjoyable and that would lead people to get to know sangha members better, such as, for instance, an open house or an art exhibit of the works of a sangha member.
- d. A Sangha member’s home address, phone number or other sensitive personal information such as bank accounts or status of personal relationships.

2. Acceptable Posts:

- a. Posts about Thich Nhat Hanh, Plum Village, ARISE (formerly called Plum Village Racial Equity Sangha), and the Earth Holder Sangha.
- b. Posts from other leading Buddhist voices such as Sharon Salzberg, Tara Brach, Jack Kornfield, Cheri Maples, Pema Chodron, the Dalai Lama, James Baraz, Joseph Goldstein, Rick Hanson, Stephen Bachelor, Ruth King, Larry Yang.
- c. Links to Buddhist magazines and website articles just as *Tricycle*, *Lions Roar*, and *The Mindfulness Bell*.
- d. Links to news releases or other action statements from other Buddhist groups about climate change and diversity.

e. Posts about scientific findings about Buddhist practices, including postings from [Dr. Kristin Neff](#), [Dr. Dacher Keltner](#), [Dr. Richard Davidson](#) and their respective institutions:

<http://www.centerformsc.org>

<http://greatergood.berkeley.edu>

<http://centerhealthyminds.org/about/founder-richard-davidson>

f. Any announcement pertaining directly to sangha and its functioning, such as meeting times, locations and changes, announcing new items posted on the website and supporting material for council meetings and the Annual Meeting.

g. Any announcement that pertains to direct practice opportunities, such as retreats and seminars, concerning or offering meditation, the Dharma or engaged practice opportunities. Such announcements need not necessarily be offered in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh.

Questions about postings may be directed to Curt Pawlisch at cpawlich1@gmail.com.

D. Screening.

Consistent with the purpose of building sangha, members of the public—not just members of the sangha—can post comments on our Facebook page. Accordingly, we will implement a mid-level of screening. First, we will use a “profanity filter,” as that term is used in Facebook. Second, we will not screen comments before they are posted, but will instead do so after the fact, deleting those that are inconsistent with these Guidelines, that are offensive in tone or language, or that are otherwise expressed in a manner that is inconsistent with the values embodied in the Five Mindfulness Trainings. We believe this approach of profanity filtering and after-the-fact screening is reasonable given that Facebook does not afford the anonymity protections of other social media platforms (*e.g.*, twitter), and approving every comment before it is posted would unduly tax our limited volunteer resources. Should these screening measures prove to be inadequate, we will amend our screening criteria or make further recommendations to the Steering Council as needed.

III. IN CASE OF DISAGREEMENT OR CONFLICT ABOUT WHAT HAS BEEN POSTED OR ABOUT THE ACTIONS OF THE FACEBOOK MANAGER.

It is understood that rules covering every possible posting are impossible and that we must depend on the good judgment of Facebook managers and volunteers to decide about what is or is not appropriate content to post. If a posting causes offense, the Facebook managers may, at their discretion:

- Ask the person posting the offending message to clarify;
- Delete, or cause to be deleted, the offending messages;
- Remove, or cause to be removed, the administrative privileges of a volunteer to post to the Facebook page if the volunteer continues to post offending material;

- Ask the Steering Council to decide on an appropriate course of action (as per the Roles and Responsibilities document) if the conflict persists.

Similarly, if the actions of a Facebook manager or technical manager cause conflict, individuals may ask the Steering Council to intervene.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS.

A. Availability of Guidelines.

These Guidelines will be posted on SnowFlower's website.

B. Amendments.

Future experience, Facebook technology changes, Steering Council decisions and other factors may necessitate that we amend these Guidelines. The Facebook managers will email the Steering Council updated copies of these Guidelines after adoption of any amendment.

C. Effective Date.

These Guidelines are effective immediately.

ADOPTED: August 17, 2016.