

**Questions for Reflection and Discussion**  
Book Study, Summer 2025  
*The Work of This Moment* by Toni Packer

**Session 1**

1. What is your reaction to the book so far?
2. What parts of Toni Packer's life story, as presented by Lenore Friedman, do you find most interesting? What do you learn about the history of Zen in America from Toni's story?
3. According to Packer, How can you listen and look freshly in your life? What gets in the way of listening?
4. How does Toni describe questioning and inquiring? How does this relate to your Zen practice?
5. Toni's focus is on questioning what is going on in the mind. What new approaches does she offer? Do you find the traditional Zen teachings about zazen (stillness, posture, observation of thought, etc.) helpful in questioning and awareness?

**Session 2**

1. What are your thoughts about the letter to Toni and her response (pgs 28 - 30) concerning her abandoning the Zen Buddhist framework? What about her statement "awareness cannot be taught" (p 30)?
2. How can Toni's teaching about attachment to groups help us to skillfully respond to the growing tribalism, violence and division in the world ? (pgs 32 - 34)
3. Toni seems to not be in favor of religion. She counters with: "What I want to find out is: what is peace." How do you feel about her argument? (pgs 38 -40)
4. Speaking about hurts, Toni says "Defense means isolation, the absence of relationship . . . It is not necessary to defend!" ( pgs 44 -45) How do you see this when practicing with your relationships?
5. Is there such a thing as "pure listening"? Is "a patriotic heart" contrary to deep practice?" (pg 48)

(See other side)

### **Session 3**

1. How do the forms we use in the Zendo help you to practice awareness?
2. How does your Zen practice encourage “a free spirit of inquiry?”
3. “Does direct, undivided attention to what is going on inwardly and outwardly need any authority?”
4. What kind of effort do you use in your Zen practice? How much is needed?
5. How do you practice with breaking something or making a mistake?

### **Session 4**

1. In your practice, have you experienced situations where your thinking did not solve a problem, but awareness or “clarity of seeing” did?
2. What does Toni mean when she says, “peacefulness and self-centeredness cannot coexist?”
3. Do you find Toni’s description of anger and her suggestions for working with it helpful?
4. How do you practice with fear of death? What does Toni offer in her talk?
5. How would you summarize your experience of the book study this summer?