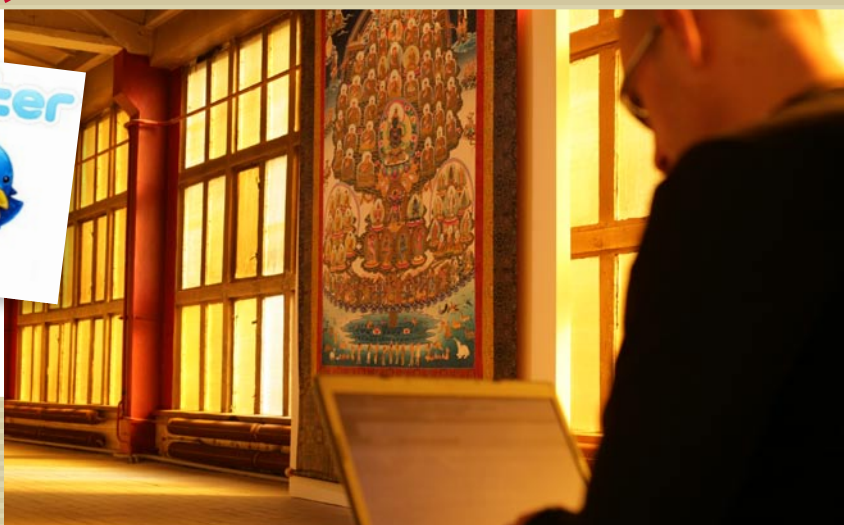




Diamond Way Social Media Guidelines



Official guidelines for social media and networks in connection with Diamond Way Buddhism

Who are these guidelines for?

Diamond Way practitioners who use social media

Why do we need these guidelines?

- to uphold our noble 2,500 year old tradition
- to represent our values in a pleasant and professional way
- to be aware how our online presence can be associated with Buddhism

Tools of transmission

- Spread useful information
- Not a substitute for real transmission

Integrating Buddhist practice into social media

- Cause and effect
- Compassion and wisdom
- Six liberating actions
- The highest view

Responsible speech

- Be clear and keep the reader in mind

Speak respectfully

- Be polite
- Don't react impulsively or emotionally to insults, criticism and different opinions
- Take time to consider before responding

Speak meaningfully and add value

Each sentence published online should inspire or give a deeper understanding

Respect others' privacy

- Don't publish private pictures of people without asking them
- Protect our transmissions (phowa, lungs, initiations, mantras)

Respect others' property

- Ask for permission
- Consider copyright

Keep politics separate from Buddhism

Don't create needless impressions of political associations

Get things right

- You are responsible for what you do.
- Only use social media while clear-headed.
- If you're not completely sure, ask experienced friends and read these guidelines again



Diamond Way Social Media Guidelines



Introduction

Emerging platforms for online communication are fundamentally changing the way we work and interact, offering new ways to engage with friends, sangha members, and the world at large. Social media can support us to keep our relationships alive, even though we know that direct contact and meeting in the centers or at courses is the “real thing”. And the way we take part in online conversations related to Buddhism and especially Diamond Way and our teachers creates and shapes the picture of our activity to the outside.

By social media we mean all kinds of Internet and mobile platforms that allow easy content publishing and sharing with friends – pictures, videos, text, event invitations, etc. Most common are Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Picasa, YouTube, different blogging platforms and for us also Virtual Sangha. As many appear and cease to exist every day we cannot make a complete list here but these guidelines are meant as general best practices that should be universal enough to follow regardless of the media.

Who are these guidelines for?

If you are a Diamond Way student who writes or posts anything online, these guidelines are for you. We ask everyone creating or participating in social media officially on behalf of Diamond Way Buddhism or privately as a student of Lama Ole to respect and follow them.

Why do we need these guidelines?

Our noble tradition stretches back 2,450 years to the Buddha. Whatever is done in its name represents the activity of all our enlightened teachers up until today, and it is our responsibility to uphold its fine style. Once we place something online, it is no longer a private matter—in effect, we are presenting it to the whole world.

Perception is everything, and in social media, the lines between public/private, personal/professional are blurred. Simply because we are identifiable as a Buddhist or as a student of Lama Ole, whatever we say or associate with, even on unrelated topics, may and will also be linked with Buddhism and Diamond Way. The general public, those interested in Buddhism, other Buddhist groups, non-Buddhist friends and also our critics will make quick judgments about us and about our tradition based on what we say and do. Therefore everything associated with us should be consistent with our Diamond Way view, values and principles.

Tools of transmission?

If used well, online tools can be good ways to spread useful information and to make our offer to people as accessible as possible, as well as to engage with friends and the world at large; however, **real transmission happens only through live human interaction.** We don't need to educate or convince anyone online, or try to give a feeling of what it's like to be in the Diamond Way. “Internet Buddhists” are really missing out. As we trust more in direct experience than in second-hand impressions, we encourage people to experience the real thing in our centers and on our courses.



Diamond Way Social Media Guidelines

Integrating Buddhist practice into social media

As Diamond Way Buddhists we use all levels of practice—respecting cause and effect, balancing compassion and wisdom, and keeping the highest view. Online as in real life, we work with the Six Liberating Actions and the Ten Positive Actions. All of these teachings are valid for social interaction online.



Responsible speech

It's a conversation: We should try to talk to our readers as we would talk in real situations: using conversational language, being honest and clear, and avoiding a pedantic or over-composed style. We should stick to our areas of expertise and provide solid perspectives on what's going on in Diamond Way Buddhism and in the world.

What we write is ultimately our responsibility. Participating in online social networking is an opportunity, which we should treat seriously and with respect. Whenever we post a message, we should keep the reader in mind, because they will interpret the meaning of our words, no matter what we intended to say. Remember less can be more! Be a leader. There can be a fine line between meaningful speech and senseless debate or incendiary reaction. We never speak negatively about other Buddhist groups and teachers and we should try to frame what we write to invite differing points of view without inflaming others.

Speaking respectfully: Some topics (e.g. politics or religion) can slide into sensitive territory. If not handled with great skill and experience, they are best avoided. Be careful and considerate. Published words can rarely be taken back and inflammatory discussions can be hard to stop. We should write in a friendly and respectful way. If we disagree with others, we stay polite. Responding to every criticism, insult, or different opinion is unnecessary. We don't always need to respond immediately, and should leave space for the other person to change their mind. Pause and think before posting, but when appropriate respond in good time.

Speaking meaningfully and adding value: The biggest challenge on the Internet is speaking meaningfully. Are we adding value? There are countless words out there; to make sure ours are noticed means to write things that people value. Social media relating to Diamond Way should help others, be thought-provoking, and build a sense of community. If we help people develop a brighter, richer perspective, or improve their understanding of Buddhism—then it adds value. But remember it's still "only virtual", and less meaningful than direct contact.

Making the right impression

Respect others' privacy: After a great course or enjoyable time spent with friends it's natural to want to share the impressions with others, but do take the time to review your photos. Situations such as parties or close blessings are private moments. Think about what impression the pictures create about the people in them. Did they expect the pictures to be made public? Would they be pleased or em-



Diamond Way Social Media Guidelines

barrassed? If in doubt, then don't share them—or at least ask first. Remember that some might take our words and images out of context and then use them to try to make our groups and teachers look strange.

Please also remember that some transmissions such as the lung for ngöndro or other practices should not be recorded. At initiations one can take photos or film friends receiving a blessing at the end, but one should not record movies or sound from the initiation itself. Likewise the powerful impressions of the phowa courses should be kept fresh for newcomers, and so photos of the visualizations, outer signs or recordings of the meditations are not useful.

Respect others' property: Respect proprietary information and content. If using an image created by someone else, ask for permission. Photographers, including those from the sangha, have the right to be credited for their work. If you reproduce text or other content, check if it is subject to copyright.

Keep politics separate from Buddhism: Affiliation with political causes or interests is everyone's free choice, but there is a difference between holding a political view and publicizing it. Using social networking sites results in much personal information becoming public. Announcing one's political opinions through social media while openly associating with Diamond Way Buddhism may create needless impressions of political associations, where in fact there are none.



Getting things right

If we make a mistake, we should admit it. We should be upfront and quick with our corrections: the quicker the better. If we're posting to a blog, we may choose to modify an earlier post but should make it clear that we have done so.

Remember that some social networks and especially Google never ever delete content and uploads. So even if you "delete" it, the data still stays on some servers and can be seen by that company or bought by another company. This as well is a call to our responsibility.

If something makes us pause, then we should pause. If we're about to publish something that makes us even the slightest bit uncomfortable, rather than shrugging it off and hitting "send", we review these guidelines, work out what's bothering us, and then fix it. If still unsure, we should discuss with a friend or an experienced sangha member. It is best to use social media when rested and clear-headed (e.g. not late at night or after a party).

Please note that these guidelines also apply to past activity on social media. Please take some time to remove any unsuitable content if you have uploaded it in the past.

Finally, if you are unsure about any of the guidelines or information in this document, please contact us at newmedia@diamondway-buddhism.org. We will be happy to clarify or give advice.