

Mindfulness of the Hindrances

Anyone practicing mindfulness knows there are forces in the mind that can make it difficult to stay attentive to one's present moment experience. Ranging from weak to very powerful, these forces hamper our ability to remain mindful, develop concentration and have clear insight. They pull our attention away from our efforts to meditate. Even with the best of intentions to stay focused, these forces can propel us into the world of pre-occupation and distracted thought.

Rather than reacting to these difficulties as being "bad," "distractions," or personal failings, it is important to be mindful of them. In that they are happening in the present, they can be a basis for cultivating greater awareness and wisdom. They can become part of the path of practice, rather than a detour.

It is important to investigate the forces of distraction and agitation carefully to understand their nature and how they work. It is easier to find freedom from something when we know it thoroughly. Ancient Buddhist stories tell of Mara, the Buddhist personification of temptation and distraction, approaching the Buddha. Each time Mara arrives, the Buddha simply says, "Mara, I see you," and Mara flees. Recognizing Mara was effective in bringing freedom from Mara.

Of the many forces of distraction, five are traditionally identified as particularly important for people practicing Buddhist mindfulness and meditation. Known as the five hindrances, they are workings of the mind that can hinder our ability to see clearly and our capacity to develop a stable, concentrated mind. The hindrances are sensual desire; ill will; sloth and torpor; restlessness and worry and doubt.

As you can see, the list is actually made up of seven factors, but four are always paired. One explanation for the paired items is that they represent closely related physical and mental factors.

The first two hindrances are related by being opposite qualities. Desire and ill will are both forms of wanting, albeit in opposing ways. Desire wants to have something, whereas ill will wants to push something away. The third and fourth hindrances are similarly seen as opposing tendencies. They both involve levels of energy or vitality. Sloth and torpor are low energy states while restlessness and worry are high energy states.

The fifth hindrance, doubt, is not specifically connected with any of the other hindrances or distinguished into physical and mental aspects. This is because doubt is often entwined with any combination of the other hindrances and can cast its influence in many ways on our whole being.

The wisdom needed for working with the hindrances is discovered through mindfulness of them. This wisdom is acquired slowly, requiring much patience. It also requires an interest in studying the hindrances as they appear. Reading about the hindrances cannot substitute for the time and effort needed to understand how the hindrances operate. As each person has his or her own path through the hindrances, you will have to find yours.

It is best to respect the hindrances and their power. This is not to acquiesce to them, but rather it is a way to overcome their sway. Through developing one's mindfulness, the hindrances begin to lose their power. With the growth of wisdom, equanimity, and concentration it is possible to be free from their influence.

It is also possible to be free of the hindrances themselves; they do not have to be present. One's mind can be hindrance-free. Without the obscurations of the hindrances, such a mind can become clear, perhaps like a translucent pond in which everything is seen clearly.

Buddhism recognizes a hindrance-free mind as a beautiful mind. In fact, for some people this mind is one of the most beautiful experiences they know. Because all other forms of beauty are perceived through the mind, when the mind is clear and peaceful, what we perceive will be perceived within this clarity and peace. It is like having the light turned on after living in the dark for a long time: the marvel of sight becomes more wonderful than whatever is seen.

On the path to freedom, the primary function of a hindrance-free mind is to teach us about non-clinging. When the hindrances hinder it is because we are clinging to something. When the hindrances are absent we are then free of their accompanying clinging. By seeing the difference between clinging and non-clinging we learn that freedom is found in non-clinging. When this lesson is learned well, we understand that clarity, peace, beauty and other experiences on the path to freedom are not the point of the path; they are stepping-stones to more and more thorough degrees of freedom from attachment.

The milestones along this path are measured by release from attachments. In relationship to the hindrances this may begin with letting go of anger, discouragement, or dismay that they are present. A further step is giving up judging oneself negatively because of the hindrances. Another signpost is letting go of any belief that justifies the importance of the hindrances. The most



SANGHA PROGRAMS & NEWS

HISTORIC FIRST SPANISH RETREAT ON THE WEST COAST

The Insight Retreat Center is hosting the first ever residential insight retreat in Spanish to be held in the West Coast, and only the second retreat for the continental U.S. For the growing number of Spanish speakers, it is valuable to hear and discuss the practice in their native language. We are very fortunate to have the retreat led by Rebecca Bradshaw who will be assisted by IMC's Andrea Castillo. Rebecca was trained at the Insight Meditation Society in Massachusetts and is now the guiding teacher at the Insight Meditation Center of Pioneer Valley, MA. For a number of years she has been teaching retreats in Spanish in Puerto Rico. Andrea Castillo has been teaching the Tuesday evening Spanish sitting group at IMC for two years. The dates are June 26–29. We hope this will be the first of other such retreats. Registration begins February 26. Info: insightretreatcenter.org.

IMC OFFERINGS IN SPANISH

I am delighted to announce exciting new projects taking shape in the Spanish-speaking branch of our IMC community. We are creating a stronger online presence with our own IMC-Español website, linked to the Spanish Dharma button on IMC's website menu. This will be a gathering place for articles, information, and audio recordings of Dharma talks in Spanish. Additionally, we will be publishing a biannual Spanish language newsletter—*Nuestras voces, nuestro dharma*. It will debut in January. Its purpose is to make the dharma more widely available in the Latino/Hispanic communities, to be a vehicle for Spanish-speaking dharma voices to be heard, and to shed light upon various aspects of cross-cultural Dharma.

Since first joining the Tuesday evening “Dharma in Spanish” group taught by Andrea Castillo at IMC, I have reflected time and again on the fact that the Latino experience here in the U.S. is one which is in many ways, profoundly different from that of the dominant culture, and that it deserves special attention. In upcoming issues we will gradually explore aspects of Latino reality in the 21st century United States that may have bearing on how the dharma is taught and received by this particular population.

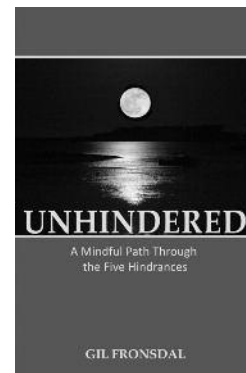
—Carrie Tamburo, Editor

BUDDHISM AND THE 12 STEP SUPPORT GROUP

On the second Sunday of each month from 7:30 to 9pm, Jennifer Lemas facilitates group discussion and study that explores the 12 Step program and the teachings of the Buddha. Each meeting focuses on a particular discourse from the early Buddhist scriptures which contain teachings and stories connected to each of the 12 Steps. The evening includes a 30-minute meditation, short talk and open discussion on a selection of the Buddha's teachings. Everyone is welcome. For more information, jennlemas@comast.net.

PRACTICING WITH UNHINDERED: REVIEW OF GIL'S NEW BOOK

Gil Fronsdal's new book, *Unhindered: A Mindful Path Through the Five Hindrances*, offers clear and practical descriptions and helpful questions for reflection. It is intended to help the reader identify the hindrances, recognize how they operate, and understand how to find freedom with them. Gil observes, “When the hindrances are present the path to inner peace is through them” (p. 20). Having heard teachers point out the importance of investigation, I welcomed this systematic instruction on how to do it.



Each hindrance is examined in turn: sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubt, with reflections and practices following the discussion of each hindrance. As a means to deepen attention and understanding, the book offers plenty of opportunities for deeper inquiry.

Knowing that writing helps me focus my thoughts, I copied quite a few passages that addressed my experience and wrote my responses to many of the questions. I benefitted especially from recognizing bodily sensations related to each hindrance and identifying underlying beliefs that I held—beliefs that clearly were not true. An important practice for me was shifting my attention from the object of the hindrance to my inner experience of it. My exploration held some surprises. At first I thought that ill will was my weakest hindrance, since I do not think of myself as mean and pugnacious. However, as I saw that ill will can include impulses to strike out, push away, and turn away, I wrote several pages examining my attitudes in daily life, ranging from a current political situation to two important relationships. I originally thought that doubt was my strongest hindrance. Yet, after I listed my areas of doubt and questions about practice, I identified the primary ways in which I feel confidence, at which point I noticed that my doubts had lost their power.

In my ongoing examination of the hindrances I am inspired by Gil's observation, “Because all other forms of beauty are perceived through the mind, when the mind is clear and peaceful, what we perceive will be perceived within this clarity and peace” (p. 98).

—Judy Cannon

IRC SOLAR WATER HEATER FUND DRIVE

Many thanks to all who donated to our drive to raise funds to put a solar water heater on the roof of IRC. We raised over \$16,000! We are hoping to raise another \$5000 so we can install the water heater in 2014. It is one further step toward having an eco-friendly retreat center.

Mindfulness of the Hindrances, cont'd. from front page

significant milestones is being released, even temporarily, from the hindrances themselves.

With a strong enough experience of non-clinging we come to a fork in our path. One direction leads to more clinging, the other to freedom. As practice becomes deeper the path of freedom becomes more obvious. At some point it becomes clearly the easier path. When we are new to practice it is clinging that may be easiest, one day it becomes non-clinging.

Freedom supports further freedom. It empties the mind of obstructions and agitation until, in the beauty of the mind's clarity, we are free of ourselves.

This article is an excerpt from Gil's new book, *Unhindered: A Mindful Path Through the Five Hindrances*, which can be purchased on Amazon.com. Click through the Recommended Books page on our website when making a purchase on Amazon, and help support IMC.

THRESHOLD CHOIR AT END OF LIFE

On January 26, from 1 to 2:30pm, we will be graced with a presentation by members of the Peninsula Threshold Choir, a group of women who sing for people as they are dying or very ill. The music is very soft and lullaby-like and is often written by members of the more than 100 Threshold Choirs around the world. There will be a talk on their work and an experience of their singing, as well as an opportunity, for those who wish, to have an individual experience. This is very important and inspiring work. Their music touches the heart and the soul whether the person can respond or not. You can find out more about the Threshold Choir at thresholdchoir.org. Please join us in the meditation hall for this lovely event.

(Sponsored by the End of Life Companions Program)

EARTH CARE PRACTICES

A group of Vipassana teachers recently developed *16 Core Dharma Principles to Address Climate Change*. The first principle on their list is: "Reverence for life: From this point forward climate disruption is the overriding context for all life on earth, including humans. What we humans do will determine what life survives and thrives and in what form and locations."

Two ways to practice reverence for life are:

- Donations towards disaster relief after a natural disaster.
- Avoid pesticide use by finding alternatives, e.g. cinnamon barriers against ants, Have-a-Heart traps for mice, gardening with native plants. More info at Beyondpesticides.org.

—IMC's Earth Care Committee



DANA—All teachings at IMC are offered freely according to the Buddhist tradition of *dana*. Our center and its teachers are supported entirely by your generosity. Thank you.

FIRST YEAR AT THE INSIGHT RETREAT CENTER!

November marked the one year anniversary of offering retreats at IRC. These have all gone remarkably well, with much appreciation from participants. People coming to an IRC retreat for the first time are surprised by the strong sense of community created in the course of our silent retreats. Many retreatants appreciate the smooth operation of retreats, made all the more special by being run entirely by the participants themselves. A sense of generosity permeates our retreats.

Our retreats have become steadily more popular. We are happy people are interested in what we offer and we wish we could accommodate everyone who applies. As IRC continues to develop, we hope to be offering more retreats, and therefore reducing the need for waiting lists.

As we have no paid staff, our ability to offer more retreats is dependent on volunteers who can help with the many aspects of putting on a retreat. The more people who volunteer, the more retreats we can offer. Slowly, a community of volunteers who can serve our retreats is growing. This includes those who can manage, cook, and help register people for our retreats.

The bigger challenge to our all-volunteer, dana-based retreat center is having enough volunteers to help with the maintenance of our building and grounds. So far we do not have enough people to step in to repair a leaking toilet, set up a new speaker system, repair the deck and do regular maintenance. We are eager to meet anyone who might have maintenance skills and interest who can help with this.

Once a month, usually soon before the start of a retreat, we have workdays. These have been happy events caring for our property and preparing for retreats. We encourage everyone to participate in these days. If you haven't seen IRC yet, participating in a workday provides a great introduction to the center.

For more info: insightretreatcenter.org

BREATH FOCUS: ADVANCED PERSPECTIVES ON A BASIC PRACTICE

On Saturday, February 15, 9am to 5pm, Shinzen Young will give a workshop to compare and contrast different approaches to breath practice.

Breath focus is sometimes considered an elementary starter practice. But with a proper understanding, it can lead all the way to Enlightenment. On the other hand, it can sometimes become a dead end; it calms but fails to bring deep insight and purification even after many years of practice. We will explore how to unpack the mechanisms by which breath practice confers its benefits and describe how attending to the breath can be optimized and directed towards liberation. Topics covered will include:

- A clear conceptual model for how breath works as a focus
- A chance to sample several distinct forms of breath focus
- A chance to discuss your experiences around breath with a senior teacher
- Suggestions on how to avoid dead ends
- How breath practice fits into the broader framework of mindfulness

Insight Meditation Center

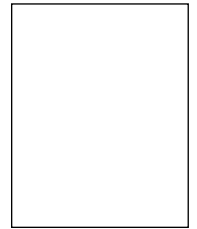
108 Birch Street

Redwood City, CA 94062

www.insightmeditationcenter.org

Email: insightmeditationcenter@gmail.com

650/599-3456



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MESSAGE ABOUT PARKING FROM GIL

I would like to ask everyone who comes regularly to IMC to help us be good neighbors to those who live near our center. On occasion, visitors to IMC park in front of our neighbors' driveways. As you arrive at IMC, it would be helpful if you could look across the street and check to see if there are any cars blocking a driveway. If so, please tell the manager. In addition, if you are able, consider parking further away and leaving Birch Street spaces for residents and those who need to park close by.

Many thanks,

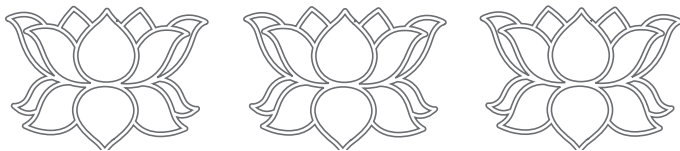
Gil

HELP IRC WHILE BUYING OR SELLING A HOME

Carol Collins is an IMC sangha member and longtime local real estate broker, now retired. If you are selling your home, she can refer you to a realtor who specializes in your area. If you are buying, she can refer you to a realtor who will help you identify properties, areas, loans, etc. Buying or selling, the realtor will make a donation in your name to our Insight Retreat Center.

Carol will be available as your consultant at no charge through the whole process. She has performed this service for sangha members in San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and other Bay Area counties. If you have any questions or would like to discuss buying or selling a home, contact Carol at 408/348-1385 or carolcollins888@gmail.com.

Most teachings given at IMC are recorded and posted online at Audiodharma.org



• GENERAL INFORMATION:

insightmeditationcenter@gmail.com or 650/599-3456.

- **NEWSLETTER QUESTIONS:** Contact the editor at imc.newsletter@gmail.com.

• MAILING LIST OPTIONS & CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

To be added or removed from the IMC mailing list or to update address, phone, or email, contact imc.mailinglist@gmail.com.

• UPCOMING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS EMAIL LIST:

To sign up for our email announcements, go to the IMC website and click the **CONNECT** link, or go to insightmeditationcenter.org/email.



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

January ~ March 2014

WEEKLY MEDITATION AND TALKS

MONDAY EVENING SITTING AND TALK

With Gil Fronsdal or guest teachers, 7:30 to 9pm. A 45-minute sitting and a 45-minute Dharma talk.

TUESDAY MORNING SITTING AND TALK

With Andrea Fella or guest teachers, 9:30 to 11am. A sitting followed by a talk and time for questions.

TUESDAY EVENING DHARMA EN ESPAÑOL

Con Andrea Castillo, 7:30 a 9pm. Meditación y pláticas de Dharma en Español.

WEDNESDAY MORNING HALF-DAY RETREAT

Sitting and walking meditation with Gil Fronsdal or guest teachers, 9:30am to 12:15pm. Bring lunch. Informal discussion afterwards. You may attend any part of the morning.

- 9:30am – Sitting • 10:15am – Walking Meditation
- 11am – Sitting • 11:45am – Dharmette (brief talk)
- 12pm – Temple cleaning

THURSDAY EVENING SITTING AND TALK

With Andrea Fella or guest teachers, 7:30 to 9pm. A sitting, a talk and time for questions.

SUNDAY MORNING SITTINGS AND TALK

With Gil Fronsdal or guest teachers, 8:30 to 10:45am.

- 8:30am – 1st Sitting • 9:10am – Walking Meditation
- 9:25am – 2nd Sitting • 10 to 10:45am – Talk

Sunday Community Tea—2nd Sunday of month at 11am.

Vegetarian Potluck Brunch—Last Sunday of month at 11am.

MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

BASIC MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

- First Monday evening of month, 6:15 to 7:15pm.
- First Thursday morning of month, 10:45 to 11:45am.
- Every Thursday evening, 6:15 to 7:15pm.

INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

• 5 Wednesday evenings, January 8 – February 5, 7:30 to 9pm. The basic instructions in Insight meditation taught sequentially, starting with mindfulness of breathing, followed by mindfulness of the body, emotions, and thinking, then application of mindfulness in daily life. No preregistration. Taught by Diana Clark, Shin Kwan Park, and Jim Podolske

BEGINNERS' PRACTICE GROUP

• 4 Wednesday evenings, February 12 – March 5, 7:30 to 9pm. For beginners who have taken an introductory mindfulness meditation class and would like to take the next step in building and supporting their practice. This is a 4-week series on developing mindfulness practice with a 20-minute meditation, review of basic instruction and introduction to further teachings that support mindfulness practice.

NON-RESIDENTIAL ONE-DAY RETREATS

- Saturday, January 4, 9am to 2pm, **Yoga and Meditation** with Terry Lesser.
- Saturday, January 11, 8:30am to 5pm, with Gil Fronsdal.
- Saturday, January 18, 9am to 5pm, **The Women Around the Buddha** with Rita M. Gross (Sati Center).
- Saturday, February 15, 9am to 5pm, **Breath Focus: Advanced Perspectives on a Basic Practice** with Shinzen Young
- Saturday, March 1, 9:30am to 3:30pm, **Introduction to Mindfulness Meditation** with Ines Freedman.
- Saturday, March 15, 9:30am to 5pm, **How Empty is Emptiness** with Gay Watson (Sati Center).
- Saturday, March 22, 9:30am to 3:30pm, **Paths of Practice in the Buddha's Teaching** with Diana Clark (Sati Center).
- Saturday, March 29, 9:30am to 4:30pm, **Mindfulness of Mind** with Andrea Fella.
- Saturday, April 19, 9:30am to 4:30pm, with Andrea Fella.
- Saturday, April 26, 9:30am to 5:30pm, **Romancing the Buddha** with Ajahn Thanissaro (Sati Center).

RESIDENTIAL RETREATS

AT THE INSIGHT RETREAT CENTER (NEAR SANTA CRUZ)

For more information go to www.insightretreatcenter.org/retreats or contact Debra.Chromczak@gmail.com, 831/421-0876.

- March 28–30, **Insight Retreat** with Ines Freedman and Daniel Bowling.
- April 5–11, **Insight Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal, Andrea Fella, and Nikki Mirghafori.
- May 4–11, **Just Sitting, Clear Seeing: Zen & the Art of Insight** with Gil Fronsdal, Mel Weitsman and Max Erdstein. Registration opens January 5.
- May 30–June 7, **Insight Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal and Adrienne Ross. Registration opens January 30.
- June 20–22, **Insight Retreat** with Ines Freedman and Bob Stahl. Registration opens February 20.
- June 26–29, **Meditation Retreat in Spanish** with Rebecca Bradshaw, assisted by Andrea Castillo. Registration opens February 26.
- July 12–26, **Mindfulness of Mind Retreat** with Andrea Fella. Registration opens February 12.

OTHER RETREATS WITH ANDREA FELLA

- July 20–27, Cloud Mountain Retreat Center, **Mindfulness of Mind Retreat**, with Andrea Fella. Taught in the style of Sayadaw U Tejaniya. Info at cloudmountain.org.
- September 13–October 25, Insight Meditation Society, **Three-Month Retreat, Part 1**, with Joseph Goldstein, Carol Wilson, Andrea Fella, Winnie Nazarko, and Bhante Buddharakkhita. Info at www.dharma.org/meditation-retreats.

SPECIAL EVENTS

THE FOUR TRUTHS AND THE EIGHTFOLD PATH

WITH TONY BERNHARD. **THURSDAYS, JANUARY 2, 9, 16, AND 23, 7:30 TO 9PM.** We will explore the Buddha's key teachings on suffering and dissatisfaction. The series will particularly investigate the path of practice that leads to the ending of suffering.

YOGA AND MEDITATION HALF-DAY RETREAT

WITH TERRY LESSER. **SATURDAY, JANUARY 4, 9AM TO 12:30PM.**

Details under **YOGA.**

BEAUTIFYING THE MIND WITH KIM ALLEN

TUESDAYS, JANUARY 7, 14, AND 21, 9:30 TO 11AM. The path of Buddhist practice includes both letting go of harmful actions and mind states and cultivating wholesome actions and mind states. Each one beautifies the mind and leads it away from suffering. In this series of three talks, we will examine some of the key areas of practice that cultivate the mind—generosity, harmlessness, goodwill, and meditation.

DAYLONG WITH GIL FRONSDAL

SATURDAY, JANUARY 11, 8:30AM TO 5PM. Practicing mindfulness on retreat is one of the foundations for maturing insight meditation. The simplicity, silence and support of retreats contribute to letting go of many of the distractions that get in the way of clear seeing. Retreats also are a wonderful environment for developing a continuity of awareness for an extended period. For those who already understand the basic practice of mindfulness; no instruction will be given. Brief interviews to talk about the practice will be available with Gil. Bring lunch.

MONDAY EVENING SERIES: INTRODUCTION TO CONCENTRATION PRACTICE WITH GIL FRONSDAL

JANUARY 13, 20, FEBRUARY 2, AND 10, 7:30 TO 9PM. After the meditation, Gil will give a four-part series of talks on concentration practice and Samadhi.

DHARMA PRACTICE DAY: MINDFUL STEPS TO AN ETHICAL LIFE WITH GIL FRONSDAL. FRIDAY, JANUARY 17, FEBRUARY 14, APRIL 4, MAY 2, AND JUNE 6, 9:30AM TO 3:30PM. Monthly Dharma Practice Days focus on training in mindfulness and ethical integrity as supports to the path of liberation. We will explore how mindfulness cultivates greater ethical wisdom and how ethical behavior cultivates greater mindfulness. The program will combine guided meditation, teachings, exercises, and discussion. You are welcome to come to any part of the series.

INSIGHT WORLD AID VOLUNTEER MEETING

SUNDAY, JANUARY 19, 11:30AM TO 1:30PM. Please join members of Insight World Aid in a discussion of our local and international projects and find out how you can get involved. No experience necessary. All are invited to attend.

THRESHOLD CHOIR PERFORMANCE

SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 1 TO 2:30PM. A presentation by members of the Peninsula Threshold Choir, a group of women who sing for people as they are dying or very ill. There will be a talk on their

work and an experience of their singing. Sponsored by the End of Life Companions Program. (See *Sangha Programs & News for details*)

THE THREE CHARACTERISTICS: SUFFERING, IMPERMANENCE & NOT-SELF WITH MARIA STRAATMANN.

TUESDAYS, FEBRUARY 4, 11, 18, AND 25, 9:30 TO 11AM. These three conditions characterize all of our existence. To “see things as they really are” means seeing experience in the context of: the impermanence of all things, the presence/unsatisfactoriness of suffering; and the realization that we are not our experiences. This series will delve into the encounter, insight and freedom inherent in the unfolding of these factors in our lives.

BREATH FOCUS: ADVANCED PERSPECTIVES ON A BASIC PRACTICE WITH SHINZEN YOUNG.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 9AM TO 5PM. The purpose of this workshop is to compare and contrast different approaches to breath practice within Buddhism, unpack the mechanisms by which breath practice confers its benefits and describe how attending to the breath can be optimized and directed towards liberation.

INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS MEDITATION DAYLONG WITH INES FREDMAN. SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 9:30AM TO 3:30PM.

An introduction to the basic practice of mindfulness. There will be direction of mindfulness of the breath, body, emotions, thoughts, walking and eating. There will be time for sitting meditation, walking meditation and discussion. Suitable for both beginners and those wanting to review the basics of practice.

DAILY LIFE PRACTICE RETREAT WITH ANDREA FELLA

SUNDAY, MARCH 23, 1:30 TO 5PM; MONDAY-FRIDAY, MARCH 24-28, MORNINGS 7:30 TO 9AM, AND EVENINGS 7:30 TO 9PM; SATURDAY, MARCH 29: 9:30AM TO 4:30PM, DAYLONG RETREAT.

This retreat offers support for the challenging but rewarding work of integrating mindfulness practice into our daily life.

Through daily meditation and Dharma discussion we will explore bringing mindfulness into our everyday life. We begin with a half-day retreat with instructions and discussion on Sunday, and end with a daylong retreat on the following Saturday. During the week we will meet each morning and evening to inspire, encourage and support our daily life practice. If you would like to attend the retreat during the week, please attend the Sunday session.

The Sunday and Saturday sessions are open to all; the Monday and Thursday evening programs are also open to all as usual—the retreat will integrate with these evening programs.

MINDFULNESS OF MIND DAYLONG WITH ANDREA FELLA

SATURDAY, MARCH 29, 9:30AM TO 4:30PM. Taught in the style of U Tejaniya. We will explore a relaxed open awareness with an emphasis on qualities of mind, and the attitude towards one's experience. The schedule will alternate periods of sitting and walking with instructions and discussion. Aside from the instruction and discussion periods, the day will be primarily in silence. Recommended for both beginners and experienced practitioners.

SCHEDULE PG. 3

DAYLONG WITH ANDREA FELLA

SATURDAY, APRIL 19, 9:30AM TO 4:30PM. Alternating periods of sitting and walking meditation, instruction in mindfulness practice, particularly in mindfulness of the body, and a dharma talk. Recommended for both beginners and experienced practitioners. No interviews. Bring lunch.

YOUTH PROGRAMS

DHARMA SPROUTS (K-2ND GRADE) Led by Liz Powell and Carla Rayacich. First Sunday of each month, 11:15am to noon.

Meditations and Dharma practice through stories, songs, art, movement, and games. Parents/caregivers participate with their children. Contact Liz at eapowell@aol.com if you plan to attend.

DHARMA ROCKS (3RD-5TH GRADE) Led by Liz Powell. Second Sunday of each month, 5 to 7pm. Includes fun, interactive, community-building games and crafts, pizza, and a half-hour of practice and Dharma. Contact Liz at eapowell@aol.com.

DHARMA BODHIS (MIDDLE SCHOOL 6TH-8TH GRADE) (Sixth-graders have the option of attending Dharma Rocks and/or Dharma Bodhis). Led by Hilary Borison. Fourth Sunday of each month from 5:15 to 7:15pm. A time to explore how the Dharma can support challenges and opportunities pertinent to middle schoolers through small and large group discussions, mindfulness practice, creative activities, interactive games, pizza dinner, and opportunities for community service. No registration required; RSVPs are encouraged for dinner plans. Contact Hilary, hborison@sbcglobal.net, or 650/575-2052 for info or to RSVP.

MINDFUL TEENS (HIGH SCHOOL) Led by Alicia McLucas, Aaron Chavira, Nirali Shah and Trent Walker. First Sunday of each month, 5 to 7pm. A safe, fun space where teens apply mindfulness to self-discovery, empowerment, and fulfillment. A trusting environment where teens discuss issues important in their lives among themselves and adult facilitators. Contact Alicia, 650/361-8800.

MINDFUL PARENTING SERIES

SECOND FRIDAY OF THE MONTH, 7 TO 8:30PM. January 10: Discussion groups for parents. February 14 and March 14: Guest Speakers will be local dharma leaders/ parents Kevin Griffin and Rebekkah LaDyne, offering talks on the dharma of parenting.

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND FAMILY RETREAT: K-5TH

GRADERS & PARENTS WITH RICHARD SHANKMAN AND REBEKKAH LADYNE. SATURDAY, MAY 24-MONDAY, MAY 26. Jikoji Retreat Center, Los Gatos. Practice together as a family during a relaxed weekend that will offer structured retreat practice and small group sharing with other parents, teens, and children, along with hiking and appreciation of the forest, grasslands, and views from the top of the Santa Cruz mountains. The site features camping and a limited number of shared dorm rooms. Registration will be available on the IMC website beginning in late January. Applications will be due by late March.

SATI CENTER

These events are presented by Sati Center and held at IMC. Contact sati.org for more information.

THE WOMEN AROUND THE BUDDHA: NEW PERSPECTIVES ON EARLY BUDDHIST HISTORY AND MODERN PRACTICE WITH RITA M. GROSS. SATURDAY, JANUARY 18, 9AM TO 5PM.

We will focus on the stories of the important women who were important in the founding of Buddhism.

A warm, humorous and clear teacher, Rita Gross is a renown Buddhist scholar and Dharma teacher in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. She has been one of the great pioneers in the study of gender and Buddhism.

THE MIDDLE LENGTH DISCOURSE STUDY COURSE

WITH GIL FRONSDAL AND DIANA CLARK. 14-WEEK ONLINE CLASS, JANUARY 20 TO APRIL 21. A reading course in the Buddha's teachings from one of the most important collections of his discourses. This online course will entail reading and online discussion of selections suttas supported by study guides written by Gil.

HOW EMPTY IS EMPTINESS WITH GAY WATSON

SATURDAY, MARCH 15, 9:30AM TO 5PM. We will explore ideas and experiences of emptiness, focusing on Buddhist concepts of emptiness from early Buddhism through the later Mahayana and beyond.

PATHS OF PRACTICE IN THE BUDDHA'S TEACHING

WITH DIANA CLARK. SATURDAY, MARCH 22, 9:30AM TO 3:30PM.

Join us as we explore and discuss three important paths of practice and spiritual maturity taught by the Buddha.

OVERVIEW OF BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY

WITH JENNIFER BLOCK AND JAKU KINST. SATURDAY, APRIL 5, 9:30AM TO 5:30PM. Join us for an explanation of this field of service, which is gaining in size and scope in dharma communities.

ROMANCING THE BUDDHA WITH AJAHN THANISSARO

SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 9:30AM TO 5:30PM. Through talks, readings, and discussions, we will focus on understanding Romantic ideas about religious life and inspiration and their influence on modern American Buddhist teachings.

SUPPORT GROUPS

FOR THOSE EXPERIENCING LIFE-THREATENING ILLNESSES WEDNESDAYS 1:30 TO 3PM. (Canceled on New Year's Day).

FOR THOSE EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HEALTH CHALLENGES WEDNESDAYS 3:30 TO 5:30PM. (Canceled on New Year's Day).

At least 4 days before attending either group for the first time, please contact Mick Bennett, hmbennett@sbcglobal.net or 650/368-2518.

BUDDHISM AND 12-STEP SUPPORT GROUP

SECOND SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH, 7:30 TO 9PM. Group discussion and study exploring the 12-Step program and Buddhist practice through Kevin Griffin's book, *One Breath at a Time*. Includes 30-minute meditation, reading, and open discussion. Everyone welcome. Facilitated by Jennifer Lemas, jennlemas@comcast.net.

SCHEDULE PG. 4

YOUNG ADULT PROGRAM

AT HOME IN THE WORLD: DHARMA EVENINGS FOR PEOPLE IN THEIR 20'S AND 30'S. WITH MAX ERDSTEIN.

Third Sunday of the month, 7 to 8:30pm. An open, monthly group addressing Dharma themes relevant for twenty- and thirty-somethings. With meditation, Dharma talks, and discussion.

YOGA WITH TERRY LESSER

Suitable for all levels, including absolute beginners. Bring a large towel and sticky mat, if you have one. Mats are also available.

MONDAY EVENING YOGA

- 6:30 to 7:15pm. Join us for yoga before evening meditation.

THURSDAY MORNING YOGA AND SITTING MEDITATION

- 8:30 to 10:30am.

YOGA AND MEDITATION HALF-DAY RETREAT

SATURDAY, JANUARY 4, 9AM TO 12:30PM. After the holidays, this mini-retreat offers a quiet and grounding place where we can slow down, deepen our meditation, connect with our bodies, and perhaps help clarify what is important for the coming year. Appropriate for beginners and experienced yogis and meditators—you don't need to be flexible to do yoga; you only need to be as you are. Bring a large towel and a yoga mat if you have one, otherwise mats are available for your use.

DHARMA FRIENDS

Dharma Friends encourages spiritually based friendships and a sense of community in our sangha. To receive email updates on upcoming Dharma Friends events, go to the IMC website, click on **DHARMA FRIENDS** and follow instructions to subscribe.

- **Dharma-Inspired Book Group (#1)**—Fridays, Jan 17, Feb 21, Mar 21, 7 to 8:30pm. In January we will start *Awakening to Joy: 10 Steps That Will Put You on the Road to Real Happiness*, by James Baraz and Shoshana Alexander. IMC Meditation Hall. Anne Foster afoster@rawbw.com, 650/591-1285.
- **Creative Writing Group**—Sunday, Jan 19, 11am. All are welcome to attend a planning session to discuss interest, format, where we will meet, how often, etc. Gather at the IMC kitchen after the morning sitting, then to a nearby cafe. If interested but you cannot make the meeting, contact Sydney Reuben at sydneyreuben@yahoo.com.
- **Dharma-Inspired Book Group (#2)**—Fridays, Jan 24 and Feb 28, 7pm to 8:15pm. We will be reading *Unlimiting Mind* by Andrew Olendzki, (Wisdom Publications). Friday, March 28, we will start reading Charlotte Joko Beck's *Nothing Special: Living Zen*. Bill will arrange for the book to be available at Kepler's at a discount. IMC Meditation Hall. Bill Kostura, saddhadhamma@gmail.com, 650/815-1174.
- **Mindful Nature Walk at Pulgas Ridge**—Saturday, Jan 25, 9am. 3 miles, walking in sun and shade; includes walking meditation period. Dress in layers, wear sunscreen. Heavy rain cancels. Carpool from IMC. Ryan Delaney, 650/325-7795.

- **Dharma Friends Steering Committee Planning Meeting**—Sunday, Feb 9, 11am to 12:15pm. Plan events for April, May, June. IMC conference room. Shelly Gordon, sgordon@g2comm.com, 650/856-1607.
- **Dharma Friends Brunch**—Sunday, Feb 16. Gather by the kitchen following the morning sitting. We will choose a local restaurant for brunch. Wendy Alger wendyalger@gmail.com.
- **Sona's Dharma Strummers**—Sunday, Jan 12, Feb 9, and Mar 16, 1 to 2:30pm. Stafford Park (Hopkins Ave & King St, RWC). Rain cancels. Join us as we strum our way to samadhi... with ukuleles! Please bring a ukulele and several copies of music you would like to play. Optional: your voice, music stand, folding chair. Basic ukulele instruction provided, 1 to 1:30pm. Paul Lindenfeld, paul.lindenfeld@gmail.com.
- **Cinema Sanity**—at least 1 film during the quarter. Know of a movie with a Dharma message you'd like to see with some Dharma friends? Contact Jim Podolske, James.R.Podolske@nasa.gov, 650/968-6168.

OTHER LOCAL SITTING GROUPS

BERKELEY VIPASSANA GROUP WITH RICHARD SHANKMAN

Wednesdays 7:15 to 9:15pm at St. Clement's Episcopal Church.

Info at www.mettadharm.org.

INSIGHT MEDITATION SOUTH BAY

WITH SHAILA CATHERINE Tuesdays 7:30 to 9pm. 2094 Grant Rd, Mtn View, www.imsb.org.

COASTSIDE VIPASSANA MEDITATION GROUP

Wednesdays in Montara, 7 to 8:30pm. Info at www.coastsidevipassana.org.

LOS GATOS SITTING GROUP WITH KIM ALLEN

At Yoga Source, 16185 Los Gatos Blvd. Drop-in. Contact Kim at kimall@mindspring.com.

- Meditation and dharma talk, Saturday, 10 to 11:15am.
- Meditation and dharma practice, Wednesday, 12:15-1:30pm.

INSIGHT MEDITATION CENTRAL VALLEY

WITH LORI WONG. Sunday 12:30 to 2:30pm in Modesto, Monday 6:30 to 8:30pm in Stockton, and Tuesday 6:30 to 8:30pm in Modesto. For locations and info, go to imcv.org.

OAKLAND MONDAY DROP-IN MEDITATION GROUP

WITH REBECCA DIXON. Instruction 5:15pm; meditation / discussion 5:30 to 6:30pm. Unitarian Church, 14th/Castro. 510/482-2032.

PALO ALTO DROP-IN MINDFULNESS GROUP

Wednesdays 2 to 3pm at Avenidas (Garden Room), 450 Bryant St. Contact Julie Forbes, 650/323-2601.

SAN JOSE SANGHA

1041 Morse St. Contact Berget Jelane, 408/255-2783, bbjelane@gmail.com, website sanjoseinsight.org.

- Wednesday Evening Sitting, 7:30 to 9pm..
- Half-day retreat, Saturday, Feb 8, 9:30am to 12:15pm. Bring lunch and something to share.