

The Ordinary and the Seven Factors of Awakening

Buddhist practice develops ordinary capacities so that they can serve on the path of awakening. Rather than cultivating new abilities, with this practice we learn to identify, appreciate, and strengthen ones we already have. Doing so we discover that these capacities are treasures within.

The Seven Factors of Awakening are seven mental capacities so valued as part of Buddhist practice that they are known as “inner wealth.” These factors are mindfulness, investigation, energy, joy, tranquility, concentration, and equanimity. While the title “Factors of Awakening” may seem lofty—perhaps disconnected from our ordinary life—they are actually the developed forms of mental qualities used regularly in the midst of everyday activities.

Take driving as an example. As we stay attentive to the driving conditions in the present we are using an everyday form of mindfulness. We maintain this mindfulness by not letting ourselves get distracted by the sights around us or by a conversation with a passenger.

As a factor of awakening, investigation is the ability to clearly distinguish the details of that which we are mindful. It is perceiving simple pragmatic distinctions in our present moment experience. In driving we are making distinctions constantly about the conditions of the road and how to steer, brake, and accelerate. For skilled drivers, doing this can seem natural and almost effortless, but without careful discernment regarding the surrounding traffic conditions, driving would not be safe.

Energy, the third factor, is applying our self to the task at hand. In driving we need to apply some energy to adjusting the steering wheel, staying attentive, and considering our response to what is happening on the road. The habit to do so may be automatic enough we don’t think of the effort as self-conscious work. Energetic effort can combine with investigation to create a delightful sense of interest, for example when we try out driving a new car for the first time.

Joy and tranquility are not always associated with driving, especially if we are driving in commute traffic. However, certain types of driving can be very pleasant and relaxing, for example, a meandering drive on a beautiful country road or a smooth, unhurried drive on a straight, traffic-free freeway. Many people have found delight in the sense of freedom a car can provide. And a few people have discovered how to be happy and calm even in rush our traffic by tapping into a well-being independent of the driving conditions.

Concentration is the ability to be intently and fully focused. In a difficult traffic condition or tricky maneuver we give our full attention to driving while letting go of thoughts and concerns unrelated to the driving. Once the driving challenge is over, the level of concentration can decrease and our thoughts again include other things besides driving.

Finally, while equanimity may seldom be associated with driving, it is often present if we remain relaxed and at ease while negotiating expected and normal traffic obstacles like red lights and incoming traffic. Those times when we are unhurried we may be unperturbed by driving challenges such as a traffic delay, a detour in our route, or a flat tire.

By recognizing these seven factors as mental states operating in daily life we can then understand that meditation relies on ordinary capacities we already have rather than the introduction of new abilities foreign to our experience. In this way we may be able to access these seven mental states as they already live inside of us. Once accessed, we can develop them further.

Just as the seven factors are useful in daily life, they are helpful in meditation practice. In daily life they support a wholehearted involvement with what we are doing. In meditation they support a wholehearted engagement with the practice. The more they are present, the easier it is to be fully engaged with the practice. They help make meditation more satisfying and beneficial.

The seven factors are mutually supportive. For example, we can understand them as developing in a spiral fashion. As mindfulness starts to become established one can begin to investigate, i.e., see ever more clearly what is happening in the present moment. Investigation evokes effort and interest. Interested effort brings joy. The well being of joy relaxes mental and emotional agitation, which brings tranquility. Tranquility supports concentration. And all of these six are conditions for having

Continued inside

EIGHT-MONTH FACTORS OF AWAKENING PROGRAM

With Matthew Brensilver, Max Erdstein, and Nikki Mirghafari

- Fridays: Jan 29, Feb 26, March 25, April, 22, May 20, June 24—9:30am to 3:30pm
- Saturday: July 9—9:30am to 3:30pm

An opportunity to explore and practice with the Factors of Awakening as a support for meditation, daily life and the path of liberation. See the Schedule for more information.



SANGHA PROGRAMS & NEWS

INSIGHT RETREAT CENTER UPDATE

IMC's residential retreat center in Santa Cruz, IRC, continues to flourish with an expanding number of retreats. We are happy to have a growing group of wonderful volunteers who are supporting the center. Over time we hope to have a large enough pool of volunteers familiar with the many aspects of IRC that we have backup available when unexpected help is needed for retreats and the ongoing care of the center. It's surprising how much work it takes to keep the retreat center going.

Landscape and Grounds. In this last year we've had to do some significant tree removal for both fire safety and to remove some unhealthy trees. We are grateful to long-time sangha member, Jack Buktenika, for all his efforts in guiding this important work.

We are now considering an overall design of the landscape that includes drought tolerant, low maintenance California native plants, and adding more walking paths and meditative nooks (as funds become available). We also plan to move our fences to include the grounds of our recently acquired property next door.

IRC Mortgage. In paying off the mortgage for the property next door, we may have given some people the mistaken impression that IRC is now debt free. In fact, IRC still has an \$800K mortgage on the primary property. Because this mortgage has very generous terms, it made more sense financially to first pay off the property next door, which had much shorter terms of payment. We are grateful for the continuing support of our community towards helping us realize our goal of being free of debt.

THE FUTURE OF THE IMC ANNEX

IMC has had the great fortune of having grown so that our weekly schedule is quite full. To accommodate the additional programs we have been renting a 640 sq. ft. office space two blocks from IMC known as the "IMC Annex."

While the IMC Annex has allowed us to expand our programs some, it is too small to meet the growing opportunities and interest we have for new programs.

The lease for the Annex ends in June 2016. We anticipate that the rent will increase substantially. If you know of any opportunities for renting a larger meeting space at a price we can afford, please email insightmeditationcenter@gmail.com.

PRACTICE GENEROSITY WHEN PARKING AT IMC

For those who can, when driving to IMC, please park at least half a block from the center. This will provide more parking spaces closer to IMC for people with difficulty walking, for new people to IMC, and for our neighbors. Also, if you arrive early enough, by parking further away, it will be easier for those who are running late to find a place near the center. Making it easier for others to park is an act of generosity, *Thank you*.

HELP OUR VOLUNTEERS IN JUST 5 MINUTES!

IMC and IRC have been using an antiquated database for our mailing lists, donations, tax letters and event registration. We are now converting to a new, more efficient database! If you haven't already done so, please create a profile on the IMC website so our volunteers won't have to manually transfer your contact information.

It's simple to create a secure profile:

1. On the IMC website, www.insightmeditationcenter.org click "Create an Account" on the lower left, then fill out the form. Make sure to click "Create Account" at the end to submit.
2. You will receive an email with a link to set up your password—please remember to save it!

Thank you for your help!

CHANGES TO THE IMC BOARD

We'd like extend our appreciation and thanks to outgoing board members Rob Hammond, President, and Ed Drury, Treasurer. Liz Powell, formerly the Secretary, is now the Board President. Elaine Salinger is serving as Board Secretary. Lydia Ridgway is the new Treasurer.

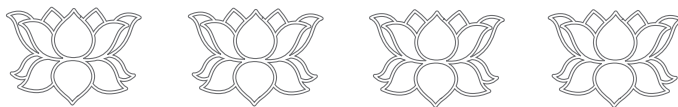
In addition, we welcome Sue Bachman as a new member of the IMC Board.

Many thanks to Rob and Ed for their hard work, dedication and generosity.



MONDAY EVENING DHARMA TALK SERIES: THE FOUR FOUNDATIONS OF MINDFULNESS

Gil's Monday evening talks—from January 11 through February 29—will introduce the classic Buddhist instructions in mindfulness practice. Known as the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, the Buddha's instructions cover mindfulness of the body, feelings, mind, and the important mental processes which either cause suffering or which bring liberation.



AWARENESS OF SCENT AND ITS IMPACT

Some practitioners at IMC are sensitive to scents and chemicals, and may become physically ill from exposure to ingredients in common personal care products.

As part of keeping our community accessible to all, we request that those who attend IMC refrain from the use of perfume/cologne, after-shave, and minimize or avoid personal care and hair styling products containing scents or the ingredient "fragrance". By this compassionate act of restraint, you can help to ensure the health of all who wish to practice here.

THE MIDDLE LENGTH DISCOURSES (*Majjhima Nikaya*) A Sati Center Sutta Study Online Course Taught by Gil Fronsdal. January 18 – May 1, 2016

Please join us for a 15-week online course studying the Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha. The Middle Length Discourses (*Majjhima Nikaya*) is one of the most important anthologies of the teachings and religious practices attributed to the Buddha. These rich and dynamic discourses, which include the circumstances and people that prompted the Buddha's teachings, provide context for better understanding the content and nature of early Buddhist teachings. A careful study of this collection is an indispensable foundation for the study and practice of Buddhism.

The course consists of weekly readings of discourses (*suttas*) plus study guides written by Gil Fronsdal. These study guides function as the lectures for the class, helping to bring the richness of this early literature alive. Participants will have access to Google Drive where the study guides will be located and can participate in weekly online forums in Google Groups.

To promote a sense of community and learning, different discussion forums will be created; one for students who are new to *sutta* reading or who have less time; one for those who have more experience reading *suttas* and have more time and interest in going deeper; and one for those who are primarily interested in the application of the earliest teachings to chaplaincy and spiritual caregiving. Students are welcome to participate in whichever forum they feel the most comfortable.

To register and learn more, please visit the Sati Center website: www.sati.org.

WINTER CLOTHING DRIVE ~ FEBRUARY 8 – 14

Clear some space and share your generosity by donating your unneeded clothing—new and wearable used clothing for men, women and kids—to those who most need it.

Clothing brought to IMC will be donated to PARCA and Samaritan House of San Mateo. For more info joe@insightretreatcenter.org.

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.

Seven Factors of Awakening, cont'd. from front page

equanimity. With greater equanimity, the more mindfulness grows and the spiral of development continues.

The seven factors also work together to find balance between the energizing and the calming aspects of meditation. Investigation, effort, and joy are energizing and can be called on when energy is too low; tranquility, concentration, and equanimity are calming and can be called on when energy is too high. Mindfulness itself is called the 'great balancer' because the clear recognition of imbalance by mindfulness helps bring the other factors into balance.

Because the seven factors of awakening are such a useful part of Buddhist practice it is helpful to spend time becoming more familiar with them. This can be as simple as recognizing them when they are present, even in minor degrees. We may also be able to bring them forth and to support their growth, e.g. by being diligent in the mindfulness practice and then appreciating the presence of the factors as they appear. As we become more familiar with the factors we may be able to call on them and nourish them, they become the leavening of our spiritual practice.

The seven factors are called the "Factors of Awakening" when they provide the clarity, calm, and wisdom that brings "awakening", i.e., being aware without being attached. Because awakening is often seen as a distant ideal, it is also helpful to recognize the significant ways that being 'awake' occurs in our ordinary life. For some people the experience of awakening refreshed from a nap may provide a good example. In waking up clear and relaxed each of the seven factors of awakening may be present. While still laying in bed, our daily concerns may have receded and replaced with a simple mindfulness or open awareness of our present moment circumstances. Relaxed "investigation" may be operating as we study the light coming in through the window or the dancing movement of the curtains in the breeze. While we may not be making any self-conscious effort we may be nicely re-energized in a way that makes awareness easy and clear. There may be simple joy and tranquility as we lay in the bed before getting up. Concentration may be present if we get absorbed in watching the pattern of sunlight on the wall or ceiling. And there may be lots of equanimity as things that bothered us before the nap are now remembered with a relaxed, broad perspective.

All these post-nap experiences can be seen as characteristics of the Buddhist ideal of Awakening. In this way awakening is not something foreign or strange, rather, it is the full flowering of a capacity that we already have some experience with.

In Buddhism full Awakening is being aware without clinging to anything. When the seven factors of awakening are developed, non-clinging becomes more and more natural. The factors provide a sense of inner treasure that is a welcome alternative to all forms of clinging. They help us to grow our ordinary, everyday capacity to not cling so it matures into an experience of liberating awakening.

—Gil Fronsdal

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

Insight Meditation Center

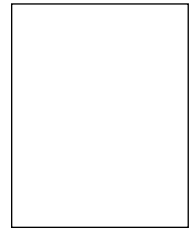
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WAYS TO DONATE

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

CHECK: via mail, or in person at the donation box at IMC.

ONLINE: Visit the **DONATE** page on IMC's website.

AMAZON SMILE: A simple and automatic way to support IMC/IRC every time you shop through Amazon, at no cost to you. Go to insightretreatcenter.org/smile.

You can also enter Amazon through IMC's **RECOMMENDED BOOKS** page to get this benefit when you make a purchase.

DONATE YOUR CAR: Make a tax-deductible donation of any vehicle, working or not. *Center for Car Donations* handles pick-up and all paperwork; IMC/IRC receives 75% of sale price. Tell them you want to donate to Insight Retreat Center. Call 877/411-3662 to be guided through the process.

E-SCRIP: Register your grocery club card and credit/debit cards with E-scrip and the participating merchants will donate a small percentage of your purchases to IMC/IRC. You keep all your credit card rewards. Register at www.escrip.com; Group ID is 238528.

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.

PLANNED GIVING

A charitable bequest is a simple and flexible way that you can leave a gift to support the future of IMC and IRC for generations to come. It's easy to make a bequest by including *Insight Meditation Center of the Midpeninsula* as a beneficiary:

- in your will or living trust
- in your retirement plan or bank account
- in your life insurance policy

The Legacy Circle was created to recognize those who include IMC/IRC in their estate and financial plans by making a bequest. Members of the Legacy Circle are invited to an annual luncheon with the IMC/IRC Teachers.

For more information, visit the **DONATE** page on either the IMC or IRC website. For questions, or to arrange a consultation with a volunteer attorney, email legacy@insightmeditationcenter.org.

• GENERAL INFORMATION:

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

• NEWSLETTER QUESTIONS:

Contact the editor at imc.newsletter@gmail.com.

• CONNECT:

To sign up for our UPCOMING EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS emails, go to the IMC website and click on the CONNECT link.



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

January ~ March 2016

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 14 - February 11, 7:30 to 9pm with Gil Fronsdal
- 5 Tuesday afternoons, January 19 – February 16, 1 to 2:30pm, with Bruni Davila and Liz Powell

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 pre-registration necessary.

BEGINNERS PRACTICE GROUP

- 4 Wednesday evenings, February 17, 24, March 2, 9, 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. With a 20-minute meditation, review of basic instruction and introduction to further teachings.

ONE DAY RETREATS

On Saturdays, unless otherwise noted:

- January 9, 8:30am to 5pm, **Daylong Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal
- January 30, 9am to 4:30pm, **Mindfulness Daylong Retreat for the Deaf Community** with Nikki Mirghafori
- February 6, 9am to 4:30pm, **Retiro en español** (Spanish Speaking Daylong Meditation Retreat) with Andrea Castillo
- February 20, 9am to 4:30pm, **Daylong Mindfulness Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal
- February 27, 9:30am to 4:30pm, **LGBTQueer Daylong Retreat** with John Martin
- March 19, 8:30am to 5pm, **Daylong Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal
- April 9, 9:30am to 4:30pm, **Mindfulness of Mind Daylong** with Andrea Fella
- April 16 9:30am to 4:30pm, **Working with the Five Hindrances** with Diana Clark and Andrea Castillo

RESIDENTIAL RETREATS

AT THE INSIGHT RETREAT CENTER (NEAR SANTA CRUZ)

For more information go to www.insightretreatcenter.org/retreats.

- March 6–13, Insight Retreat with Gil Fronsdal and Max Erdstein.
- March 20–27, Insight Retreat with Gil Fronsdal and Adrienne Ross.
- April 3–10, Insight Retreat with Nikki Mirghafori and Matthew Brensilver.
- April 23–30, Insight Retreat with Andrea Fella and Greg Scharf
- May 17–21, Insight Retreat with Gil Fronsdal and John Travis
- May 27–30, Insight Retreat with Ines Freedman and Shelley Gault
- June 5–12, Insight Retreat with Gil Fronsdal and Paul Haller

SERIES PROGRAMS

SEVEN FACTORS OF AWAKENING PROGRAM

FRIDAYS: JAN 29, FEB 26, MARCH 25, APRIL 22, MAY 20, JUNE 24—9:30AM TO 3:30PM

SATURDAY: JULY 9— 9:30AM TO 3:30PM

The Seven Factors of Awakening are qualities cultivated on the path to liberation. These seven—mindfulness, investigation, energy, joy, tranquility, concentration, and equanimity—refer to both psychological qualities we can develop as well as practices to be undertaken.

This seven-month program is an opportunity to explore these aspects of Awakening as a support for meditation and daily life through a combination of teachings, practices, and discussions. Pre-requisite: IMC's Eightfold Path program or equivalent. Bring lunch.

Register on the Special Events page of IMC's website.

EIGHTFOLD PATH PROGRAM

The Buddha's most explicit path of practice is the Eightfold Path. This is a set of eight practical approaches to bring Buddhist practice into the width and depth of our lives. This ongoing program is an introduction to each of the Eightfold factors so that participants can discover how to apply each set of practices in ways that are personally meaningful.

On the following Sundays, 1 to 3:30pm:

January 10 Right Action

February 14 Right Livelihood

March 13 Right Effort

April 10 Right Mindfulness

May 22 Right Concentration

Daylong Retreat at IRC: June 18

**DHARMA PRACTICE DAY – MINDFULNESS OF BREATHING
FRIDAYS, 9:30AM TO 3:30 PM—1/22; 2/19; 3/18; 4/15; 5/13**

This on-going program focuses on the development of *Anapanasati*, Mindfulness of Breathing. Meditation on breathing is one of the most common forms of meditation in Buddhism. The program is based on the *Anapanasati Sutta* which details the Buddha's instructions for using the breath as a means to develop the entire path of meditation practice. It is a practice that develops insight, the 4 Foundations of Mindfulness, the 7 Factors of Awakening and ultimately Liberation. A combination of meditation, teachings, and discussions. You may attend any part of the series.

SPECIAL EVENTS

DAYLONG RETREAT WITH GIL FRONSDAL

SATURDAY, JANUARY 9, 8:30AM-5PM

This retreat is meant for people 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. Previous experience recommended. Bring lunch.

DHARMA AND THE CREATIVE PROCESS WITH DAWN NEAL

SATURDAYS: JANUARY 9, FEBRUARY 20, MARCH 19, 6:30 TO 8PM

How might the creative process inform our capacity to awaken? What does meditation practice offer to our creative expression? Meditation practitioners engaged in creative practices of all kinds (painting, music, dance, poetry, and more) are welcome to attend. Each evening will include meditation, a short framing talk, and lots of group conversation.

BOOK READING: "HOW TO LIVE WELL WITH CHRONIC PAIN AND ILLNESS" WITH TONI BERNHARD

SUNDAY, JANUARY 24, 11AM TO 12PM

Toni Bernhard, author of *How to be Sick and How to Wake Up*, will share teachings from her new guidebook on keeping sickness, pain, and the whole array of life's daily troubles from turning into mental suffering.

MINDFULNESS DAYLONG RETREAT FOR THE DEAF

COMMUNITY WITH NIKKI MIRGAFORI

SATURDAY, JANUARY 30, 9AM TO 4:30PM. *This retreat for the Deaf Community will be interpreted by RID certified, qualified interpreters.* Metta is the Buddhist practice of cultivating kindness, friendliness, goodwill towards ourselves and all beings. This day will focus on metta through instruction, teachings, guided meditation, sitting and walking meditation, and Q/A periods.

RETIRO EN ESPAÑOL WITH ANDREA CASTILLO

(SPANISH SPEAKING DAYLONG MEDITATION RETREAT)

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 9AM TO 4:30PM. Un día dedicado a investigar y aclarar como practicar la meditación, la atención plena, y las enseñanzas budistas sin conflicto con nuestras raíces latinas y cristianas. Para inscribirte favor de contactar a Lilliam: lill_i_am@yahoo.com.

SUTTA STUDY: BALANCED PRACTICE WITH KIM ALLEN

3 TUESDAYS, FEBRUARY 9 – 23, 7:30 TO 9PM, AT IMC ANNEX

The art of Dharma practice includes engaging skillfully with complementary aspects of practice. Sometimes, we are called to actively cultivate qualities, while at other times, letting go is more appropriate. Practice also asks that we use both our head and our heart, and that we engage both inwardly and in the world. We will examine *suttas* that support the development of finding balance in our practice.

MINDFULNESS DAYLONG RETREAT WITH GIL FRONSDAL

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, MARCH 19, 9AM TO 4:30PM. Practicing mindfulness meditation on retreat is one of the foundations for maturing insight meditation. With alternating periods of sitting and walking meditation, instruction in mindfulness practice, and a Dharma talk. Recommended for both beginners and experienced practitioners. Bring lunch.

LGBTQUEER DAYLONG RETREAT WITH JOHN MARTIN

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 9:30AM TO 4:30PM. This Vipassana daylong is a wonderful opportunity for LGBTQueer practitioners to come together and engage in the dharma as a loving community. The day will include mindfulness, alternating periods of sitting and walking meditation, and Dharma talks. Whether you are new to meditation or a long-time practitioner, all levels of experience are welcome to attend. Bring lunch.

DAYLONG RETREAT WITH GIL FRONSDAL

SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 8:30AM TO 5PM. This retreat is meant for people 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. Previous experience recommended. Bring lunch.

MINDFULNESS OF MIND DAYLONG RETREAT

WITH ANDREA FELLA APRIL 9, 9:30AM TO 4:30PM

Taught in the style of U Tejaniya. We will explore a relaxed open awareness with an emphasis on exploring qualities of mind, and the attitude towards one's experience.

WORKING WITH THE FIVE HINDRANCES

WITH DIANA CLARK AND ANDREA CASTILLO

SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 9:30AM TO 4PM. Instruction and practice in how to transform ostensible meditation obstacles into meditation objects that support the growth of mindfulness, wisdom and joy.

YOUTH & FAMILY PROGRAMS

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

DHARMA ROCKS (3RD-5TH GRADE) Led by Liz Powell. Fun, interactive mindfulness games, crafts, and meditations. RSVP to Liz at eapowell@aol.com if you plan to attend.

- Jan 3, Mar 6: 9:20 to 10:50am; IMC Annex, 1040 Brewster, Ste D
- Feb. 14: 5 to 6:30pm; IMC Meditation Hall.

DHARMA BODHIS (MIDDLE SCHOOL 6TH-8TH GRADE) (6th graders can attend Dharma Rocks and/or Dharma Bodhis). Led by Hilary Borison. **Fourth Sunday of each month, 5:15 to 7:15pm.** A time to explore how the Dharma can support challenges and opportunities pertinent to middle schoolers through group discussions, mindfulness practice, creative activities, interactive games, pizza dinner, and more. RSVP for dinner plans. Contact Hilary, hborison@sbcglobal.net, or 650/575-2052.

MINDFUL TEENS (AGES 13 TO 19) Led by Nirali Shah and Bruni Davila. **First and third Sunday of each month, 5pm to 7pm.** We aspire to create a safe and joyful space where teens learn mindfulness to nurture inner-discovery, clarity and a deeper connection with others. After a guided meditation, we discuss issues around relationships with friends/family, stress, intentions, identity, etc, and in general have some fun with life! For info go to www.mindfulteens.net. Please RSVP Nirali or Bruni at Imc.MindfulTeens@gmail.com.

MINDFUL PARENTS SERIES

SECOND FRIDAY OF THE MONTH, 7 TO 8:30PM. An opportunity for parents to practice in community and to hear from local dharma teachers. Facilitated by Patty McLucas and Liz Powell. No pre-registration required. Jan 8-Wise Action; Feb 12-Wise Livelihood; Mar 11-Misha Merrill

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND FAMILY RETREAT

Saturday, May 28-Monday, May 30, Jikoji Retreat Center, Los Gatos. Registration opens January 31; info available online. Practice together as a family with other parents, young teens, and children. Applications will be due by late March.

AFFINITY GROUPS

LGBTQUEER SANGHA

2ND THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH, 7:30PM TO 9PM, IMC ANNEX. A peer-led sitting group open to all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse, intersex and queer individuals. Co-facilitated by Sue Bachman and Joe Hayes, imcqueersangha@gmail.com.

PEOPLE OF COLOR SITTING GROUP

TUESDAYS, JANUARY 27, FEBRUARY 9 & MARCH 8, 7:15AM TO 9:15PM, IMC ANNEX. Connect with other POC dharma practitioners in a nourishing, fun, and safe environment. Build sangha with periods of reflection and silence, group discussion, and talks on relevant themes. In practicing together, we create community, inclusivity and unity within our differences, claiming all of who we are and our cultural legacies. Facilitated by Bruni Dávila and other teachers. Contact Vickie Chang vickieychang@gmail.com.

YOUNG ADULT PROGRAM

AT HOME IN THE WORLD: DHARMA EVENINGS FOR PEOPLE IN THEIR 20'S AND 30'S. WITH MAX ERDSTEIN. FIRST & THIRD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH, 7:30 TO 9PM. An open, monthly group addressing Dharma themes relevant for twenty- and thirty-somethings. Through meditation, Dharma talks, and discussion we will explore how Dharma practice can be a refuge and inspiration as we make our way through the many worlds we inhabit.

SATI CENTER

These events are presented by Sati Center and held at IMC, unless otherwise noted. Info: sati.org or 650/223-0311.

SUTTA STUDY: THE MIDDLE LENGTH DISCOURSES

A Sati Center Sutta Study Online Course. **JANUARY 18 – MAY 1.** More information in Sangha Programs & News.

THE RADIANCE OF EMPTINESS

WITH GIL FRONSDAL AND DIANA CLARK. **TUESDAYS, FEBRUARY 2 – MAY 17, 9:40AM TO 12:30 PM.** Graduate level course on teachings of Emptiness in the teachings of the Buddha. Taught in Berkeley in conjunction with the Institute of Buddhist Studies. For more info: shin-ibs.edu.

SAMADHI: EXPLORING THE RANGE OF TEACHINGS AND CONTROVERSIES ON CONCENTRATION & JHANA

WITH RICHARD SHANKMAN. **SATURDAY, APRIL 30, 9AM TO 4:30 PM.** This day of practice and teaching will explain the various ways *samadhi* is taught and clarify its place in insight meditation.

BUDDHIST POETRY DAYLONG WITH DIANA CLARK

SATURDAY MAY 21, 9:30AM TO 3:30PM. Poetry, as a means to capture, explore, express and celebrate the Buddhist tradition, is an integral part of the earliest teachings. Please join us as we read and discuss different poems from the earliest Buddhist texts.

SUPPORT GROUPS

FOR THOSE EXPERIENCING LIFE-THREATENING ILLNESSES THURSDAYS 1:30 TO 3PM.

FOR THOSE EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HEALTH CHALLENGES

THURSDAYS 3:30 TO 5:30PM. At least 4 days before attending either group for the first time, please contact Mick Bennett, hmichael.bennett1@gmail.com 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 the teachings of the Buddha. Includes a 30-minute meditation, short talk and open discussion on the Buddha's teachings selected for the evening. Everyone welcome. Facilitated by Jennifer Lemas, jennlemas@comcast.net.

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.

YOGA AND MEDITATION HALF-DAY RETREAT

- Saturday, January 2, 9am to 12:30pm. After the busyness that accompanies the holidays, this mini-retreat offers a place where we can slow down, connect with our bodies, and help clarify what is important for the coming year.

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.

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.

- **Tai Chi for Health, Introductory Class**—Sat, Jan 23, 10 to 11:30am. Instructor will relate Tai Chi to four ideas: health, storing energy to prevent sickness, martial arts, and enlightenment; concentrating only on health aspects of moving energy, the relationship between Ying, Yang and Chi. Info/RSVP: Wil Chang (instructor) at jaysonwil@yahoo.com.
- **Mindfulness Hike at Pulgas Ridge** in RWC—Sat, Jan 9, 9am. Moderate 5-6 mile hike, in sun and shade; includes walking meditation period. Dress in layers, wear sunscreen. Heavy rain cancels. Carpool from IMC. Brenda Maste, brendamaste@att.net or 650/571-8641
- **Dharma-Inspired Book Group**—Fridays, Jan 15, Feb 19, Mar 18, 7 to 8:30pm. IMC Meditation Hall. We are reading *Unhindered: A Mindful Path through the Five Hindrances* by Gil Fronsdal. Contact: Anne Foster afoster@rawbw.com, 650/591-1285.

- **Earth Care Course**—Wed, Feb 3, 7 to 9pm, IMC Annex. Attend an introductory meeting for Earth Care course, “Low Carbon Living for Health and Happiness.” Contact Anne Schmitt, schmitta@pacbell.net.
- **Dharma Friends Event Planning Meeting**—Sun, Feb 7, 11am to 12pm. Plan events for April, May, June. IMC conference room, directly following the Sunday morning meditation and Dharma talk.
- **Mindfulness Hike at Arastradero Preserve**, Palo Alto—Sat, Feb 13, 9am. Moderate 4 mile hike, in sun and shade; includes walking meditation period. Some sun exposure. Dress in layers, wear sunscreen. Heavy rain cancels. Carpool from IMC. Lisa Michael, lisa.michael@pc charter.org.
- **Interfaith Creek Cleanups**—Sat, Feb 20, 9am. Romancing the Creek: Help keep Redwood Creek clean. Meet at Docktown Marina, 1548 Maple St, Redwood City. Watch video, pick up trash, and enjoy BBQ lunch with other faith-based communities. For info: John Beviacqua: 650/872-3910 or InterFaithPeaceCoalition@gmail.com.
- **Sona's Dharma Strummers Practice Sessions**—Sundays, 1 to 2:30pm: Jan 3, Feb 7, Mar 6, Apr 3. Please join us as we strum our way to samadhi...with ukuleles! We are a group of sangha members who are getting together to sing and play ukulele. For info contact Paul, sonasstrummers@gmail.com.
- **Sona's Dharma Strummers Play at Hopkins Manor**—Sundays, 1:30 to 2:30pm: Jan 10, Feb 21, Mar 13, Apr 10. We are making music with the residents of Hopkins Manor once a month. Hopkins Manor is a residential care facility for the elderly next to IMC. No prior musical experience is necessary. Basic ukulele instruction provided. For info contact Paul, sonasstrummers@gmail.com.
- **Women's Circle of Mindfulness**—2nd Thurs of each month, 10:45am to 12:30pm. A gathering for women who wish to deepen practice by exploring together how to bring principles of mindfulness into our daily lives. You're welcome to bring lunch or have tea until 1pm. Facilitated by Alicia McLucas, mclucasalicia@gmail.com, and Hilary Borison, hborison@sbcglobal.net.
- **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, or Shelly Gordon, sgordon@g2comm.com.

TEMPLE CLEANING

IMC does not have a janitorial service or any other paid staff. All cleaning and groundskeeping is done by our dedicated volunteers. As part of integrating practice in daily life, we encourage you to participate in “temple cleaning.” Spend 15 minutes mindfully keeping our center clean inside and out—after the Sunday dharma talk on the first and third Sundays of the month, 11 to 11:15am, and after the Wednesday Morning Half-Day Retreat at noon.

For **OTHER LOCAL SITTING GROUPS**, go to our website and click on “Links” on the left navigation bar, and scroll down the page.