

Hindrances to Mindfulness and Clarity

Gil Fronsdal

Five mental forces are singled out as challenges to mindfulness practice. Called the “Five Hindrances,” they are workings of the mind that hinder our ability to see clearly and our capacity to develop a stable, concentrated mind. These are sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubt. When weak or powerful, these forces hamper our mindfulness, concentration, and insight. Even with the best intention to stay focused, they can propel us into pre-occupation and distracted thought.

When strong, the hindrances hinder our ability to understand which thoughts, words and actions are harmful and which are beneficial. With its false promise of gratification, strong sensual desire can blind us to the consequences of inappropriate pursuit of pleasure. The pressure of ill will may cause us to act before reflecting carefully on the consequences. This is why Buddhist teachings strongly encourage people not to make decisions while under the influence of a hindrance. It is better, if possible, to wait to make a decision until the mind is more settled or clear.

The first two hindrances, desire and ill will, are forms of wanting, albeit in opposing ways. Desire wants to have, whereas ill will wants to push away. The third and fourth hindrances involve opposing 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 a combination of the other hindrances and can affect both body and mind.

Analogies for the Hindrances

The hindrances are “black holes” in the mind. A black hole is a collapsed star whose gravitational force is so powerful that light is sucked in and trapped. When a hindrance is strong, the light of awareness is pulled into its gravitational field and lost.

The hindrances can occur frequently in daily life, at times casting a powerful influence on our behavior. They can limit how well we function in life. Strong bouts of sense pleasure or ill will can result in actions one may regret for decades, maybe for the remainder of one’s life.

The Buddha used gold as an analogy for the mind, with and without the five hindrances. In order to shape gold into a beautiful object, gold needs to be soft and malleable. The more pure

the gold is, the more malleable it is. The same is true of the mind. If we purify the mind of the hindrances then the mind is no longer stiff and rigid; it becomes wieldy and can be shaped into something beautiful.

Hindrances as Strategies

The five hindrances can be strategies to avoid challenges or discomfort. During difficulties, having sensual desires and fantasies is a way of escaping what is uncomfortable. Some people resort to ill will and blame as a way of repelling difficulties. Sloth and torpor can be strategies of resistance; they are ways to pull away and disengage. In contrast, some people become restless, agitated and distracted in order not to face difficult situations. The last hindrance, doubt, is sometimes used to avoid making decisions.

The hindrances operate in everyone; their presence is not a personal failing. It is best not to look for quick fixes to overcoming them. Instead it is useful to include them as part of our mindfulness practice. They are important to examine and understand. The stronger the hindrances, the more important it is to understand them. They can be a basis for cultivating greater awareness and wisdom. They can become part of the path of practice, not a detour.

B.E.L.L.A. Practicing with the Hindrances

Mindfulness of the hindrances has five different aspects organized under the acronym BELLA, the Italian word for “beautiful.” When the hindrances are overcome and mindfulness is strong, the mind becomes beautiful.

Be

When a hindrance appears, it is useful to first let it be. This is not giving in to it or intentionally participating with the thinking it may involve. It means not acting on it or reacting to it. It involves

Continued inside

AUGUST WINDOW RENOVATION

August 1–18

We will be doing a seismic upgrade on the old stained glass windows in the IMC meditation hall. The new double-pane glass will substantially improve the safety of the glass wall during a major earthquake. The new glass will also provide much improved sound and heat insulation. IMC will be closed during some of the work so please check our online calendar.



SANGHA PROGRAMS & NEWS

SERIES PROGRAMS AT IMC

IMC offers a wide variety of programs that could be undertaken as a progressive curriculum in practicing and studying meditation and Buddhist practice—ranging from introduction to meditation to training in mentoring others. Those who want to progressively deepen their involvement with the practice might consider these programs as a way to participate over a number of years. Upcoming dates for these programs are in the schedule section of the newsletter and on the IMC online calendar.

BASIC PROGRAMS

Five-week Introduction to Meditation—Introduction to the basic mindfulness practice.

Four-week Beginners Practice Group—Continued instruction and support for people who have taken the Introduction to Meditation course or its equivalent.

Unhindered: Practicing with Challenges—a five-week series on learning to practice with the five most common distractions and psychological obstacles to meditation and mindfulness. For those who have taken the five-week Introduction to Meditation course.

PROGRAMS FOR DEVELOPING PRACTICE

Dharma Practice Days—This program meets once a month on Fridays, for a number of months, for learning, discussing, and practicing some of the core teachings and practices of Buddhism. This is a good program for meeting other practitioners.

Eightfold Path Program—An eight-month study, reflection, and practice program for learning foundational Buddhist practices. This program meets once a month for two hours, plus a once-a-month, one-on-one meeting with a mentor to discuss the month's topic. For those who have already taken the Introduction to Meditation course.

Intermediate Meditation Course—A four-week course for those who have learned the basic instruction in mindfulness meditation and have practiced it for at least six months.

Daily Life Practice Retreats—Week long non-residential retreats at IMC that emphasize bringing mindfulness practice into the fullness of our daily lives. Valuable for both beginning and experienced practitioners.

ADVANCED PROGRAMS

Entering the Stream—A ten-month study, reflection and practice program delving into the core teachings of the Buddha. For those with five years of insight meditation practice.

Dharma Mentoring Training—A two-year training in being a mentor for others engaged in mindfulness practice and Buddhist practice. For those with meditation retreat practice and six years of regular insight meditation practice.

BUDDHIST ENVIRONMENTAL CHAPLAINCY

On Saturday, October 14, from 9am to 4:30pm, the Sati Center is presenting an Introduction to Buddhist Environmental Chaplaincy with Gil Fronsdal, Kirsten Rudestam, and others.

Chaplains provide religious, spiritual, or profoundly humanistic support in significant and often difficult times. Buddhist chaplains do this with a focus on the mutually beneficial relationship between one's capacity for attention, integrity, compassion, and inner freedom, and their capacity for healing, reconciliation, and living with meaning and purpose. Buddhist Environmental Chaplains add to this a focus on our intimate relationship to the natural world. As our world goes through massive and global environmental changes, Environmental Chaplaincy has a growing role in helping us respond to these changes.

This day will provide an introduction to the many activities of Environmental Chaplains and Buddhist Environmental Chaplains. This includes deepening, healing and celebrating our relationship to the natural world, addressing the emotional, existential and societal issues related to environmental changes, and finding ways to care for our biosphere that strengthen our compassion, wisdom, and inner freedom. A range of speakers will talk about their work and reflections on this new and important field. The day will include presentations from a range of speakers with diverse experience in the field as well as exercises that demonstrate experiential approaches to Buddhist Environmental Chaplaincy. Bring lunch. For questions and to register email buddhistecochaplaincy@gmail.com.

ENTERING THE STREAM PROGRAM

Beginning October 2, this eight-month program, taught by Gil Fronsdal, provides experienced practitioners an opportunity to delve into some of the deeper teachings of our Buddhist tradition in a community of other committed practitioners. We will discuss core principles and insights important in the Buddha's teachings, including aspects of liberation and awakening. The program includes required monthly readings and short reflective essays.

See the Schedule for dates and times.

Pre-requisites: at least five years of insight meditation practice, five seven-day (or longer) silent vipassana retreats, and completion of IMC's Eightfold Path Program or its equivalent.

Participation by selection. To apply go to IMC website's Special Events page. Applications are due by September 1. Notification of acceptance in mid-September. For more information: imc.enteringthestream@gmail.com.

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

Hindrances, cont'd. from front page

training to stay present for our experience, without being in conflict with it. There is no need to be discouraged, angry or self-critical when faced with a hindrance. Letting a hindrance be is a practice of finding inner stability and equanimity in the face of destabilizing forces.

The practice of letting a hindrance be becomes most effective when combined with a clear recognition and acknowledgment of the hindrance. The clearer the recognition, the more we pull ourselves out of the gravitational force of the hindrance and the greater is our freedom from it. Recognition also ensures our practice is honest and realistic.

Examine

The most important aspect of practicing with the hindrances is to examine. Just as spiritual freedom requires wisdom, so overcoming the hindrances requires understanding them well. If we know all their guises and tricks, we are less likely to be tricked by them.

We can examine the components of a hindrance, i.e. its physical, energetic, emotional, cognitive and motivational aspects. For example, strong desire may be experienced physically as a leaning forward, a tightening of the solar plexus, or a sense of lightness. Energetically it may involve pressure, a rush of restlessness or an upwelling of vitality. Emotionally, sense desire may involve pleasant emotions like delight, excitement, or eagerness. Cognitively, sense desire may involve beliefs and stories we tell ourselves. And, motivationally, sense desire may include a strong impulse to act, to cling, or to fix.

Investigating a hindrance's absence is also important. Noticing its absence can also help us better appreciate the value of being free of a hindrance. Examining the absence of a hindrance can be a source of delight supporting the mindful life.

Learning how hindrances arise, how they are removed and how they can be prevented from arising requires attention and discernment. This is one way to overcome the hindering effect of the hindrances. With enough wisdom about them we learn not to give in to a hindrance no matter how strong.

The Buddhist word translated as "hindrance" literally means "covering." This suggests we can examine what hindrances are masking. For example, desire can cover loneliness, ill will may conceal frustrated desire, sloth and torpor can hide fear, restlessness and worry may cover wanting approval, and doubt can mask a reluctance to commit. Uncovering what's underneath the hindrances is effective for overcoming them.

Lessen

In addition to identifying and examining a hindrance we can lessen its strength. Relaxing both the body and mind are ways to lessen their intensity. We can soften any tension associated with a hindrance. If a hindrance is overwhelming, lessening its power may require removing ourselves from situations that reinforce it. It may be useful to direct one's attention to something that has a calming effect.

Focusing on an antidote to the hindrance can be helpful. For example, cultivating loving kindness can help lessen ill will; con-

templating the inner anatomy of the body may lessen sexual compulsion.

Let Go

Once a hindrance is understood well enough it can be appropriate to let it go. Sometimes this can be accomplished by letting up on the pressure fueling the hindrance, e.g., letting go of the thinking that perpetuates it. One might also let go of attachments to any self-identity connected to the hindrance.

The ability to let go of the hindrances grows with practice. As mindfulness strengthens, a time comes when mindfulness becomes stronger than the hindrances. The same is true with our ability to let go. As the "muscle" of letting go strengthens, it is easier to leave a hindrance behind.

Appreciate

The path of freedom is nurtured by appreciating the times we are free. When we have been caught up in an attachment, it is useful to value how we are when not caught. When a hindrance is no longer present it is useful to take time to enjoy this absence.

To be mindful and present without being hijacked by the hindrances is a joy. The relief that arises when the mind is free of the hindrances is a delight. If you can feel this sense of well-being, you will know a type of pleasure that is better than sense pleasures, better than the energy of ill will. The mind will naturally want more freedom, rather than losing freedom to the hindrances.

Unhindered attention is a treasure. It is what allows mindfulness to do its most penetrating work of liberation. When the mind is settled and freed of the hindrances we can look more deeply into the functioning of the mind and discover the fullest possibility of liberation.

—Excerpted from "Unhindered"

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.



Insight Meditation Center

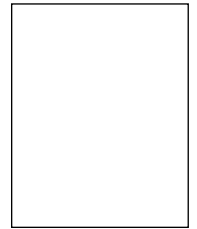
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WAYS TO DONATE

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 automatic way to support IMC/IRC when you shop through Amazon, at no cost to you. Go to insightretreatcenter.org/smile or enter through IMC's

RECOMMENDED BOOKS page.

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.

EBAY GIVING WORKS: Recycle your unwanted possessions and support IRC at the same time - it's tax-deductible. Go to: insightretreatcenter.org/e-giving

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.

HELP IRC WHILE BUYING OR SELLING A HOME

IMC sangha member Carol Collins is a retired longtime local real estate broker with Realtor connections throughout the state. If you are thinking of buying or selling a home she can refer you to a conscientious, highly qualified Realtor who will, in turn, make a donation in your name to IRC. Carol can serve as your consultant at no charge throughout the buying or selling process. She has performed this service for sangha members in the Bay Area and Santa Cruz. Contact Carol at carolcollins888@gmail.com, or 408/348-1385.



- **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

July ~ September 2017

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

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON HAPPY HOUR: LOVING KINDNESS PRACTICE

With Diana Clark and Nikki Mirghafori, 6 to 7pm. Guided meditation, teaching and discussion on loving kindness.

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, October 11 – November 8, 7:30 to 9pm with Gil Fronsdal

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

• Wednesday evenings, July 12 – August 2, 7:30 to 9pm
Led by Bruni Davila and Liz Powell. 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 4-week series on developing mindfulness practice includes a 20-minute meditation, review of basic instruction and introduction to further teachings that support mindfulness practice.

UNHINDERED: PRACTICING WITH CHALLENGES IN MEDITATION WITH DIANA CLARK AND TANYA WISER

• Wednesday evenings, September 6 – October 4, 7:30 to 9pm
Teachings, instructions, and discussion focused on using mindfulness to practice with the five hindrances, common mental challenges to meditation.

ONE DAY RETREATS

On Saturdays, unless otherwise noted:

- July 8, 9am to 4pm, **Dhamma for Scientists** with Kim Allen
- July 22, 9:30am to 4:30pm, **Embodying Joy** with Meg Gawler
- July 29, 9:30am to 4:30pm, **Maranasati: Awakening to Life Through Contemplating Death** with Nikki Mirghafori
- August 26, 9:30am to 4:30pm, **Mindfulness at Work** with Nikki Mirghafori
- September 2, 9:30am to 4:30pm, **Mindfulness of Mind** with Andrea Fella
- September 9, 9am to 4:30pm, Daylong with Gil Fronsdal
- October 7, 8:30am to 5pm, Daylong with Gil Fronsdal

RESIDENTIAL RETREATS

AT THE INSIGHT RETREAT CENTER (NEAR SANTA CRUZ)

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

- August 10–13, **LGBTQI Insight Retreat** with John Martin and Noliwe Alexander
- August 17–20, **Insight Retreat for People in their 20's & 30's** with Max Erdstein and Matthew Brensilver
- September 3–10, **Just Sitting, Clear Seeing: the Meeting of Zen and Insight** with Max Erdstein and Brian Lesage
- October 6–9, **Insight Retreat** with Ines Freedman and Shelly Gault (registration opens July 6)
- November 5–8, **Insight Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal and Ruth King (registration opens August 5)
- November 12–19, **Insight Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal, Max Erdstein, and Mel Weitsman (registration opens July 12)
- December 10–17, **Insight Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal and Andrea Fella (registration opens August 10)

SERIES PROGRAMS

DHARMA PRACTICE DAY SERIES ~ BRAHMAVIHARAS: PRACTICING WITH LOVE WITH NIKKI MIRGHAFORI

Fridays, 9:30am to 3:30pm, Sep 8, Oct 20, Nov 17, Dec 15

The *Brahmaviharas*—Lovingkindness, compassion, appreciative joy, and equanimity—are four aspects of love at the heart of Buddhist practice. Each day will be devoted to teachings, guided meditation, and discussions on one of the *Brahmaviharas*. You may attend any part of the series.

ENTERING THE STREAM PROGRAM WITH GIL FRONSDAL.

**Monday Oct 2, Friday Nov 3, Monday Dec 4, Friday Jan 19,
Monday Feb 5, Friday Mar 16, Friday Apr 20, Monday May 21,
9am to 3:30pm**

For more information, see Sangha Programs & News.

EIGHTFOLD PATH PROGRAM

TAUGHT BY CHRIS CLIFFORD AND OTHERS

- Sunday, Sep 25, 1 to 3:30pm: Introduction to the Path
- Sundays, 1 to 3:30pm: Oct 8, Nov 5, Dec 3, Jan 7, Feb 4, Mar 4, Apr 1, May 6
- Saturday, Jun 23, 9:30am to 4:30pm: Concluding Daylong Retreat at IRC

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. The Eightfold Path 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.

Pre-requisite: completion of IMC's 5-week Introduction to Meditation course or the equivalent. Application required by September 15. For more info go to IMC website's Special Events page, or email eightfoldpath@insightmeditationcenter.org.

DHARMA MENTORING PROGRAM

WITH ANDREA FELLA AND GIL FRONSDAL

Mondays, 9:30am to 4pm (except 10/6)

**First year: (2017-2018): Aug 28, Sept 11, Friday Oct 6, Nov 20,
Dec 18, Jan 8, Feb 12, March 12, April 2, May 7**

A two-year training in being a Dharma Mentor i.e., someone who meets individually with others to support their personal Dharma practice, study, and reflection. In offering spiritual direction, Dharma Mentors are spiritual friends facilitating another person's engagement with the Dharma. The program consists of monthly daylong classes, readings, writing and practicums. During the first year, the practicums will include participating as a student in IMC's mentoring programs. The second year involves being a mentor in these programs. Application and more info on IMC's website. Prerequisites for the program are six years of regular insight meditation practice, a cumulative 60 days of silent meditation retreat practice, and a recommendation from a Dharma teacher.

SPECIAL EVENTS

DHAMMA FOR SCIENTIST WITH KIM ALLEN

Saturday, July 8, 9am to 4pm. Science offers a particular way of seeing the world that has become broadly accepted in Western culture; even nonscientists are affected by a society permeated with a scientific worldview. Offered by a scientist and experienced Dharma practitioner, we will explore both the resonances between science and Buddhism and the ways in which they are quite distinct.

The day will include meditation and Buddhist teachings on topics such as investigation, the role of an objective observer, and the limits of cognitive knowledge in the development of the heart.

MINDFUL SELF-COMPASSION PROGRAM

WITH HILARY BORISON AND JUDY LONG. **Introduction and registration Monday, July 10, 1 to 3:30pm; Weekdays, Monday July 10—Thursday, July 20, 1 to 3:30pm and Saturday, July 15 9am to 1pm.** Cultivating self-compassion is a path to the alleviation of suffering, especially the suffering of painful self-criticism, shame, and feelings of unworthiness. This eight-week course will offer practices, reflections, and teachings for developing greater self-compassion and self-acceptance. The program offers a helpful foundation for practicing insight meditation. For info contact Hilary, hborison@sbcglobal.net.

EMBODYING JOY WITH MEG GAWLER

Saturday, July 22, 9:30am to 4:30 pm. During this day we will explore flavors of joy in our meditation practice—gratitude, gladness, delight, and joy in the fortune of others. We will cultivate joy through the complementary practices of insight meditation, qigong (movement meditation), and opening the heart (*Brahma Vihara* meditation). This mostly silent retreat, for both beginners and experienced practitioners, will include sitting and walking meditation, a dharma talk, qigong instruction, and guided meditations. Bring lunch.

MARANASATI: AWAKENING TO LIFE THROUGH CONTEMPLATING DEATH WITH NIKKI MIRGHAFORI

Saturday July 29, 9:30am to 4:30pm. "What is subject to death, dies. I am not exempt." is one of the Five Daily Remembrances the Buddha recommended for frequent reflections. Rather than ignoring or fearing this natural truth of our human lives, we can harness the power of this "supreme remembrance", as the Buddha called it, to live more fully, with presence, and according to our deepest values. Join us for a day of practice and exploration through dharma talks, guided meditation, and small and large group dialogue.

MINDFULNESS AT WORK WITH NIKKI MIRGHAFORI

Saturday, August 26, 9:30am to 4:30pm. Our mindfulness practice does not end at the border of our meditation cushion. Far from it, our practice can encompass every aspect of our home and work life. Though this transformation may naturally happen

SCHEDULE PG. 3

for many, there are skillful means and perspectives to help us embody our practice in the workplace, where we may spend a significant amount of our time and energy. Join us for a day of practice, community exploration and dialogue.

MINDFULNESS OF MIND WITH ANDREA FELLA

Saturday, September 2, 9:30am to 4:30pm. Taught in the style of U Tejaniya. 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. We will explore a relaxed open awareness with an emphasis on the attitude towards one's experience. The schedule for the retreat 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. Please bring a bag lunch.

DAYLONG WITH GIL FRONSDAL

Saturday, September 9, 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.

FOOLS & SAGES: HOW BUDDHISM IS PRACTICED IN

PRISON WITH DIANE WILDE, WALT OPIE, & BRETT WHEELER

Saturday, September 23, 9am to 4:30pm.

For over a decade the Buddhist Pathways Prison Project has been teaching mindfulness and Buddhism in California's state prisons, turning fools into sages. During this day of teachings, stories and practice, we will share what we have learned about forgiveness, overcoming denial, and healing while teaching mindfulness and compassion inside these institutions. Everyone is welcome, including those interested in volunteering in prisons and those interested in learning lessons in reconciliation, peace, and overcoming anger and violence. Taught by teachers from Buddhist Pathways Prison Project (BP3), with participation from several former inmates who will talk about their experience of Buddhist practice in the prison setting. The event is a fundraiser for BP3. For more info, contact info@buddhistpathways.org.

DAILY LIFE PRACTICE RETREAT WITH ANDREA FELLA

Sunday 10/2, 1 to 4:30pm • Monday thru Friday 10/3 – 10/7,

Mornings: 7:30 to 9am & Evenings: 7:30 to 9pm • Saturday 10/8: 9:30am to 4:30pm. We will integrate formal practice and Dharma discussion with our daily life by surrounding our usual workweek and workdays with practice and discussion. Begins with a half-day retreat with instructions and discussion, and ends with a daylong retreat. During the week we meet each morning and evening to inspire and support our daily life practice. To attend the retreat during the week, please attend the Sunday session. Sunday and Saturday sessions are open to all.

SATI CENTER

These events are presented by Sati Center and held at IMC. Visit sati.org or contact 650/223-0311, for more information.

I WILL NOT PASS AWAY...REINSTATING THE BUDDHA'S VISION OF THE FOUR-FOLD SANGHA

WITH AYYA ANANABODHI AND MINDY ZLOTNICK

Saturday, August 19, 1pm to 5pm. The Buddha said he would not pass away until there was a well-established community (sangha) of male and female monastics and male and female lay followers. This afternoon will offer an overview of the history of the Buddha's vision of the four-fold sangha, and especially how women were an integral part of this vision. The day will include an overview of the modern revival of the order of Buddhist nuns and the pioneering women reviving this lineage.

THE TEN PERFECTIONS WITH AJAAN THANISSARO (GEOFF)

Saturday, September 16, 9am to 4:30pm. The Ten Perfections (*parami*) provide a useful framework for leading a meaningful life, especially for lay Dharma practice. This course— through readings in the Pali Canon and the teachings of the Thai Forest Tradition, along with talks, discussions, and meditations—will explore ways in which these perfections can be pursued effectively in an imperfect world. For Saturday, September 16, bring lunch. There will be opportunity to offer food to the monastics.

BUDDHIST ENVIRONMENTAL CHAPLAINCY

Saturday, October 14, 9am to 4:30pm

More information see Sangha Programs & News.

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.

LGBTQUEER SANGHA

2nd Sunday of each month, 7:30pm to 9pm. 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, with Guiding Teacher John Martin. imcqueersangha@gmail.com.

CHARITABLE EVENTS

AIDS WALK SAN FRANCISCO

On July 16, a team of members from IMC/IRC will join in the SF AIDS walk. Our intention is to help relieve suffering in our community by raising funds through donations. The funds will benefit dozens of organizations working to stop new HIV infections and support people living with HIV/AIDS. Everyone is invited to join us. For more info contact Joe: imcqueersangha@gmail.com

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 Carla Brooke. **Third Sunday of each month at IMC, 11:15am to 12:45pm.** Interactive mindfulness meditations, games, art/ crafts, and movement. RSVP to Liz at eapowell@aol.com if you plan to attend, including the first name and age of each participant.

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 Vy Le & Gregor Levy. **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: www.mindfulteens.net. Please RSVP Vy or Gregor at Imc.MindfulTeens@gmail.com.

MINDFUL PARENTS with Tanya Wiser, July 14, 7:30 to 9pm. An opportunity for parents to practice in community and to hear from parents who are senior students/dharma teachers. Facilitated by Liz Powell. No pre-registration required.

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.

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.

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.

OTHER GROUPS

DHARMA-INSPIRED BOOK GROUP

Fridays, July 21, August 18, and September 15, 7 to 8:30pm. IMC Meditation Hall. We are reading *Silence: The Power of Quiet in a World Full of Noise*, by Thich Nhat Hanh. Contact Anne Foster, afoster@rawbw.com, 650/591-1285.

WOMEN'S CIRCLE OF MINDFULNESS

2nd Thursday 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 Hilary Borison (hborison@sbcglobal.net).

EARTH CARE BOOK STUDY

7:30 to 9pm on four Fridays: October 6, November 3, December 1 and January 5. We will be studying selections from *Coming Back to Life* by Joanna Macy and Molly Brown, with guided meditations and discussion prompts in small groups. Prerequisite: reading each selection in advance of our session on it (as published on the IMC online calendar and fliers at IMC).

The first week of October is Earth Care Week at IMC. Join us to celebrate and reflect on skillful Earth Care practices through the dharma talks and special events offered that week at IMC.

LOCAL SITTING GROUPS—go to our website and click on "Links" on the left navigation bar, and scroll down the page.