



Personal and Collective Suffering

Andrea Fella

In our meditation practice we often emphasize exploring our inner, personal experience. Through our practice we begin to open to the personal suffering that each of us experiences based on the conditioned patterns of our lives. Yet as our exploration of our personal suffering deepens, a question can naturally arise: “How can this practice help me deal with the broader suffering of the world?”

Can we use this same practice to meet and explore suffering that is happening on a larger scale? With racism, war, famine, global warming, religious persecution? There is, of course, a lot of personal suffering in conjunction with these events, but there is also what we could call a collective suffering, which is broader than the suffering of a single individual. Can our practice help us to transform such collective suffering?

I would like to offer some reflections about how our practice might support transformation around one issue that has been prominent in the news recently, that of racism. For many people of color in our country, the suffering of racism is a daily experience. For many white people in our country, the suffering of racism may seem abstract, not relevant to their personal experience, invisible or easy to ignore. And becoming aware of what we typically don't see is one of the functions of mindfulness.

In meditation practice, as we explore personal suffering our eyes start to open to the depths of ignorance and delusion that perpetuate that suffering. For example, before I started mindfulness practice, I considered myself so capable and healthy, I never expected to find a thread of self-hatred in my mind. After I began meditating I started to see this pattern of self-hatred, and it surprised me how much ignorance and delusion had obscured it in the past.

As we open to and begin to be aware of parts of ourselves that we have ignored or repressed, we might think that mindfulness practice is making things worse! But opening to experience that has been repressed paves the way toward integration. Our first response might be confusion, anger or fear: we don't like it, and we don't want to experience it. We might even think that mindfulness is causing the problem. Yet if we stick with the exploration, we see instead that we are opening to something that has been operating subconsciously. Now

that we are aware of it, delusion can no longer run the show, and the wisdom that grows through awareness helps to heal and integrate what has been repressed.

Analogously, in our collective community we can also explore separation, ignorance, and repression. One aspect of the collective suffering around racism is a separation into us and them. For some, this separation creates a distance that allows them to feel what is happening to “those other people” is not important for themselves, a sense that “it is their problem, not mine.” For example, those not living in Ferguson might feel the events there don't have a direct impact on their lives. Such separation and distance allow people to ignore the issues of others, keeping those issues at a comfortable remove.

In exploring collective suffering, I think the first thing we need to recognize is that some people in our communities feel or express the suffering more clearly than others. When there are divisions into us and them, one group is usually more dominant: having more power and privilege than the other group. For those in a dominant group, the advantages of their position are often invisible. For example, many white people would not be afraid if approached by a police officer while filling up their car at a gas station. In fact, they probably wouldn't even notice the lack of fear. On the other hand, an African-American may feel unsafe in the same situation, given the recent shootings of African-Americans at gas stations. The lack of fear that white people may have in such a situation can be considered an invisible advantage. Many such invisible advantages and disadvantages delineate the racial divide, creating stark differences in the experience between people. Those in an advantaged group often don't actively feel the collective suffering, while those without power or privilege feel the full brunt of the suffering of oppression.

Much as the ignorance of unawareness fuels repression of parts of our own psyche, the dynamic of racial separation and oppression is also fueled by ignorance. Those who are not experiencing the collective suffering are in what we might call a state of collective ignorance. This ignorance is a form of delusion, which is all the more powerful because it is shared ignorance: people tend to spend time with others who share



SANGHA PROGRAMS & NEWS

RIVAL PRISON GANGS AT A MEDITATION RETREAT

A prison daylong meditation retreat is not where I expected the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to bring together the members of the Northerner (Noreno) and Southerner (Soreno) prison gangs. Gang policy obligates them to fight if they meet, sometimes to the point death. Prison policy was to keep these two groups segregated.

In the 12 years I have been teaching meditation in the New Folsom maximum-security prison in Sacramento, I have never known a time Northerners and Southerners came together. But when Northerners wanted to join our January 2015 meditation retreat, prison officials, surprisingly, told us to include the Northerners or the retreat would be canceled.

Adding to the challenge, the retreat would be in the gym, not the chapel. Armed security would be present at all times. In the past, prison guards made no effort to support the retreat environment: they were known to hold boisterous conversations, call out derogatory statements to the inmates, and repeatedly slam the large iron doors.

Before the planned retreat, I discussed this with our established inmate sangha, a diverse group of African Americans, Whites, Asians, "Others" and Southerners. I explained we had two options: 1) we could cancel the retreat, or; 2) we could go ahead and hope for the best. The men all said that they did not want the daylong cancelled—they had been anticipating it for months. They preferred to welcome the Northerners, and hope for the best. We were going ahead with a great deal of apprehension.

I arranged for the Northerners to meet the entire sangha, including Southerners, the week before the retreat. I wanted the men to introduce themselves to each other, and I wanted to teach some basic Buddhist concepts to the Northerners as well as conduct a practice meditation session together. I requested that security guards limit loud conversations, and respect the atmosphere we hoped to create.

We had the meeting in the chapel, unexpectedly without prison security present. Just me and one other woman and 30 men, many we assumed were sworn enemies. We were nervous. At first the room was tense as the inmates sized each other up.

I called for quiet and everyone settled down. I explained the meaning behind the Three Refuges and stressed the importance of sangha as a sacred community. They committed to confidentiality and to the safety and sanctity of sangha. We recited the Three Refuges together and sat in meditation for 30 minutes. It was surprisingly peaceful. Afterwards everyone introduced themselves and described

their current mental state. Comments ranged from, "I was nervous about us all being together, but now I feel okay." "This is the first time I have felt safe in this prison" to "Silence gives me a chance to breathe." We were looking forward to our daylong retreat together!

On January 27 volunteers met in the gym, a huge, frigid, dirty, disheartening room. Just imagine a giant gray box with peeling grayish-greenish paint, a dusty cement floor etched with scratch marks from years as serving as the over-flow barracks for hundreds of inmates. Armed security were milling around...just watching, but also maintaining silence. One of our inmate sangha members came in early and wet mopped the entire gym floor. Incense, flowers, three donated Buddhas, a candle and our homemade altar cloth transformed that corner of the gym into a beautiful focal point for meditation. Vipassana meditation teacher Tony Bernhard taught for the day, and prison volunteer and senior Vajrayana practitioner Brandyn Davis offered yoga.

Thirty inmates and ten volunteers from Buddhist Pathways took part. At the 8:30 a.m. start I explained Noble Silence and offered anyone who wished, the opportunity to leave if they felt being silent for the day would be too difficult. No one did. We then took the Refuges. Brandyn began the day with gentle yoga. Tony gave a practical Dharma talk on the Four Noble Truths and the basics of practice. We practiced sitting and walking meditation until 11:30 when volunteers laid out lunch. After instructions on mindful eating, everyone was encouraged to take at least 30 minutes to eat their meal. (In prison eating is normally done very quickly.) We began the afternoon with a short session of qigong and then back to sitting and walking meditation.

At the end of the day, we formed a circle and everyone held hands. One participant commented, "I like being quiet. In prison you don't ever get to be quiet. This felt normal and good and peaceful." I had been worried about the safety given the Northerners and Southerners being together. But the inmates said the most difficult part of the day was leaving the retreat. They commented that for seven hours they were safe, authentic, and at peace. Gang affiliation, race... none of it mattered. They saw possibilities for themselves. Even in that grimy gray gym, with armed guards...they were free.

—Diane Wilde

Founder, Buddhist Pathways Prison Project
(buddhistpathways.org) and Sat Center Board Member

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

2014 IMC FINANCIAL SUMMARY

All of IMC's programs are freely offered. The programs and the operation of our center are funded by donations and supported by volunteers.

2014 INCOME

Regular Donations to IMC	\$139,732
Year End Fund Drive	\$39,422
Total Income	\$179,154

2014 EXPENSES

General Operations	\$104,854
Building Operations	\$14,669
Total Expenses	\$119,523

With the year-end fund drive, we were fortunate to end 2014 with a \$59,631 reserve. This will be used toward a number of projects: a major seismic upgrade of the large glass wall in the meditation hall, improving our sound and recording equipment, and rent for the IMC annex on Brewster Street which allows us to offer more programs. Expenses for this year include maintaining Audio Dharma and the IMC website, our online courses, this newsletter, website redesign, and donations toward health insurance for our teachers, Gil and Andrea. Insight Retreat Center donations and expenses are not included in this summary.

Thank you for your continuing generosity. All donations to IMC or IRC may be fully tax deductible. (Our tax ID number is 77-0450217).

—Ed Drury, IMC Treasurer

SPECIAL VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

IMC SPRING CLEANING – Saturday, May 16, 9am to Noon.

Our IMC building can use some tender loving care. Please join us for a mindful and deep cleaning practice to sweep away dust and dirt so that we can renew our practice center. Feel free to come all or part of the time. Look for a sign-up sheet in the community hall.

IMC GARDENING – Sunday April 12, 11am to Noon. If you have skills or interest in caring for the IMC grounds, please gather outside (after tea) with Jack Buktenika. Knowledge of pruning and basic gardening are welcome, however, love of the landscape is enough. Training will be provided. Only a small time commitment is needed.

For volunteer questions, please contact Hilary at imc.volunteerdirector@gmail.com.

CELEBRATING GIL'S 25 YEARS OF DHARMA TEACHING

SATURDAY, AUGUST 29, 6PM TO 9PM AT IMC. Gil first began teaching the group that eventually became IMC in August 1990. To celebrate his 25 years of teaching and dedication to the sangha we will have a special celebration at IMC.

Details and registration information will be posted on the IMC website in May. For questions or to volunteer to help, contact Hilary Borison at imc.volunteerdirector@gmail.com.

Personal & Collective Suffering, cont'd. from front page

their world view, creating the illusion that this world view is reality, rather than cultural construction.

As we turn towards the racial divides that exist in our communities, those associated with the dominant group may think that noticing the divisions somehow creates them. Similar to the process of recognizing the repression and division in our own psyches, at first we may wonder why it is helpful to be aware of the collective divides. One result of becoming aware of the divisions is that those with power and privilege start to feel the suffering of the separation. Awareness of the separation does not create this suffering. Rather it reveals suffering that is already present in the community as a whole.

Recognizing the suffering of the racial divide can give rise to many reactions. We may experience confusion, anger, shame, or denial. Instead of retreating back into the ignorance of separation, right here we can use our practice to explore those reactions. There is something for each of us to work with, personally. So the collective and the personal integrate and inform each other.

As more people open to the suffering of the racial divide, there seems to be an interesting dynamic at work. When more people in our communities hold this collective suffering, the suffering tends to decrease for those who had felt it most strongly. Staying open to that suffering is a challenge for those of us who have had the privilege of ignorance. Yet staying open to suffering is exactly what mindfulness practice asks of us. Our work begins right there; to allow the wisdom that comes with opening to suffering to help inform a wise response, rather than reacting out of our habitual and delusional modes.

Arthur C. Clarke, in the novel *Childhood's End*, offers a relevant parable. He tells the story of an intelligent extraterrestrial race that have come to planet Earth to evaluate the evolution of human consciousness. They find humanity has a capacity for an evolved consciousness, but that it needs a little help. So they create the conditions for any pain that is inflicted on another to be felt equally by all who witness it. This has an immediate impact: stopping violent, oppressive actions, simply because the suffering is felt by everyone.

To transform the mentality of us and them, we have to open to the suffering of others. When we truly feel their suffering with open-heartedness, and not pity, shame, confusion or anger, change must and will follow.



Insight Meditation Center

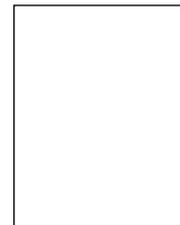
108 Birch Street

Redwood City, CA 94062

www.insightmeditationcenter.org

Email: insightmeditationcenter@gmail.com

650/599-3456



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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.

NEW! 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: You can make a tax-deductible donation of a vehicle you no longer want, working or not. The *Center for Car Donations* will handle pick-up and all paperwork needed; IMC/IRC will receive 75% of the sale price. Tell them you want to donate to Insight Retreat Center. Call 877/411-3662 and a helpful representative will guide you 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.

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.

• GENERAL INFORMATION:

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

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

• **CONNECT:** To be added or removed from the IMC mailing list or to update your address, phone, or email -**OR-** to sign up for our UPCOMING EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS emails, go to the IMC website and click on the CONNECT link.



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

April ~ June 2015

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 Tuesday afternoons, April 28 – May 26, 1 to 2:30pm, with Diana Clark
- 5 Wednesday evenings, April 29 – May 27, 7:30 to 9pm, with Tanya Wisner & Tom Fenner

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.

INTRODUCTION TO LOVINGKINDNESS MEDITATION

• **4 Wednesday evenings, June 3 – 24, 7:30 to 9pm**, with Dawn Neal. This course teaches the basic meditation practice of lovingkindness. As one of the central practices of Buddhism, lovingkindness heals anger and self-criticism while cultivating a generous heart. Lovingkindness will be taught as a practice and perspective that is integrated with mindfulness practice.

DAYLONG RETREATS

On Saturdays, unless otherwise noted:

- April 11, 9am to 4:30pm, **Mindfulness Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal
- April 18, 9:30am to 4:30pm, **Mindfulness of Mind** with Andrea Fella
- Friday, May 1, 9:30am to 4:30pm, **Dharma Practice Day—Brahmaviharas: Practicing with Love** with Gil Fronsdal.
- May 9, 8:30am to 5pm, **Daylong Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal
- May 23, 9am to 4:30pm, **Daylong Retreat – Embodying Equanimity** with Meg Gawler
- June 13, 6am to 9pm, **Intensive Daylong** with Gil Fronsdal
- June 20, 9am to 3pm, **Mindfulness of the Body: Yoga and Posture** for sitting with Max Erdstein and Lolly Font
- June 27 9:30am to 4:30pm **Mindfulness, Improv and Liberation** with Nikki Mirghafori
- July 18, 9:30 to 4:30, **Right View** (Sati Center event) with Tony Bernhard
- July 25, 9:30am to 4:30pm, **Mindfulness & Wisdom** with Andrea Fella

RESIDENTIAL RETREATS

AT THE INSIGHT RETREAT CENTER (NEAR SANTA CRUZ)

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

- June 23–28, **Insight Retreat in Spanish** (Español) with Rebecca Bradshaw, assisted by Andrea Castillo.
- July 29–August 2, **Insight Retreat** with Nikki Mirghafori and Richard Shankman.
- September 13–27, **14-day Insight Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal. Registration opens 4/13.
- October 17–24, **Insight Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal and Ruth King. Registration opens 6/17.

SPECIAL EVENTS

MINDFULNESS DAYLONG RETREAT WITH GIL FRONSDAL

SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 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.

TEMPLE GARDENING

SUNDAY, APRIL 12, 11AM TO NOON. If you have skills or interest in caring for the temple grounds, please gather outside (after tea) with Jack Buktenika. Knowledge of pruning and basic gardening are welcome, however, love of the landscape is enough. Training will be provided. Only a small time commitment is needed.

DAILY LIFE PRACTICE WITH ANDREA FELLA

APRIL 13 – 17, 7:30 TO 9AM. Integrating practice into our daily lives can be difficult. Many of us need support for this challenging but rewarding aspect of practice. We will integrate formal practice and Dharma discussion with our daily life by surrounding our usual workweek and workdays with practice and discussion. We begin with a half-day retreat with instructions and discussion on Sunday, and end with a daylong retreat on the following Saturday.

MINDFULNESS OF MIND DAYLONG WITH ANDREA FELLA

SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 9:30AM TO 4:30PM. Taught in the style of U Tejaniya. Retreats also are a wonderful environment for developing a continuity of awareness for an extended period.

We will explore a relaxed open awareness with an emphasis on exploring qualities of mind, and the attitude towards one's experience. Such an open awareness practice supports both the formal meditation of sitting and walking, as well as awareness of our normal daily activities. 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.

THE DHARMA OF EARTH CARE

FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 7 TO 8:30 PM. Last meeting of book discussion group reading selections from *A Buddhist Response to The Climate Emergency*, with essays by Thich Nhat Hahn, Bhikkhu Bohdi, The Dalai Lama, and many others. For info, Liz Powell, eapowell@aol.com.

DHARMA PRACTICE DAY ~ BRAHMAVIHARAS: PRACTICING WITH LOVE WITH GIL FRONSDAL

MAY 1, 9:30AM TO 3:30PM. This day will focus on the *Brahmavihara* of equanimity, a form of love at the heart of Buddhist practice through teachings, guided meditation, and discussions on this aspect of equanimity.

DAYLONG RETREAT WITH GIL FRONSDAL

SATURDAY MAY 9, 8:30AM TO 5PM. This retreat is meant for people who already understand the basic practice of mindfulness; no instruction will be given. The schedule consists of alternating periods of sitting and walking meditation. At the end of the day Gil gives a Dharma talk. Brief interviews to talk about the practice will be available with Gil. Bring lunch.

VESAK ~ BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

WITH GIL FRONSDAL SUNDAY, MAY 3, 10 TO 10:45AM. The Dharma talk this morning will commemorate the birth, enlightenment, and death of the Buddha. During the last 15 minutes of the talk, children from IMC's youth programs will join us to celebrate the day. Children will meet in the IMC parking lot at 10am to decorate the pagoda with flowers. At 10:30am children will carry the pagoda and baby Buddha into the meditation hall for our joint celebration. Families with children are encouraged to attend. Bring flowers for decorating the pagoda.

RENUNCIATION IN LAY LIFE WITH KIM ALLEN

4 THURSDAYS, MAY 7 – 28, 7:30 TO 9PM, AT IMC ANNEX. In the Buddhist teachings, renunciation, or letting go, is associated with contentment, ease, social harmony and liberation. The class will explore how renunciation can enrich the practice of lay life.

TEMPLE SPRING CLEANING

SATURDAY, MAY 16 FROM 9AM TO NOON, It's that time of year when the temple we all share receives our tender loving care. Please join in a concentrated cleaning practice to sweep away dust and dirt so that we can renew our practice center. Feel free to come all or part of the time. Look for a sign-up sheet in the community hall.

DAYLONG RETREAT – EMBODYING EQUANIMITY WITH MEG GAWLER. SATURDAY, MAY 23, 9AM TO 4:30PM.

Equanimity is one of the most sublime mind states in Buddhist practice, a state of wisdom grounded in being at peace with things just the way they are. We will explore three complementary approaches to the cultivation of equanimity, through the practices of: insight (mindfulness meditation), Qigong (embodiment and movement), and opening the heart (*Brahmavihara* meditation). This mostly silent retreat, for both beginners and experienced practitioners, will include sitting and walking meditation, a dharma talk, Qigong instruction (optional), and guided meditations. Bring lunch.

INTENSIVE DAYLONG WITH GIL FRONSDAL

SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 6AM TO 9PM. A full day of immersion in silent Dharma Practice. 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. Fifteen minute Interviews with Gil will be available on a sign up basis. You are welcome to come for the entire day or drop in for any part of the retreat. If you come for only part of the retreat, please enter the meditation hall at the beginning of a scheduled sitting. If you come while a sit is in progress, sit in one of the chairs in the outer hall. Bring breakfast and lunch. Light supper provided.

SUMMER PICNIC AT RED MORTEN PARK

SUNDAY, JUNE 14, 11AM TO 1PM. Join your fellow sangha members—adults, teens, children, and babies—in sharing friendship and favorite summer foods at IMC's summer vegetarian potluck picnic. This is a great chance to meet others who practice mindfulness. Everyone is welcome. If you can, bring a dish for 4 to 6 people to share. If you can't bring a dish, please bring yourself. Picnic Areas 2 and 3 in Red Morten Park, Redwood City.

MINDFULNESS OF THE BODY: POSTURE AND YOGA FOR MEDITATORS WITH MAX ERDSTEIN AND LOLLY FONT.

SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 9AM TO 3PM. Honoring the body as our vehicle for practice and awakening, this daylong workshop will focus on helping meditators discover physical balance, alignment and ease. Guided meditation, yoga, posture exercises and adjustments will be offered.

SCHEDULE PG. 3

DHARMA AND ART

FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 7 TO 9PM. How does meditation practice influence creative expression and how we experience the identity of "artist"? What role does art play in our lives as Dharma practitioners? Join Dawn Neal and Mirka Knaster for a short meditation followed by group discussion. We will explore how our meditation and artistic practices can mutually support and inform each other. For info, contact Mirka, 707/785-1130.

MINDFULNESS, IMPROVE, AND LIBERATION

WITH NIKKI MIRGHAFORI. SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 9:30AM TO 4:30PM Mindfulness and improv are both practices of being fully present, cultivating openness, curiosity, acceptance, and kindness. Both lead to more freedom in our daily lives. This daylong will be a combination of instruction, guided meditation, improvisational exercises, and small and large group discussion, which will build upon one another through the day. Leave your "self"-judgement and serious "self" at home, and instead, bring a bag lunch.

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.

IMC 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.

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. Contact sati.org or 650/223-0311, for more information.

EXPLORING THE SATIPATTHANA SUTTA

WITH DIANA CLARK, at IMC Annex

Course 1: Aspects of Satipatthana—Tuesdays, Mar 31, Apr 7, Apr 14, Apr 21, 7:30 to 9pm

Course 2: Foundations in the Satipatthana—Tuesdays, May 11, 18, 25, June 1, 7:30 to 9pm

Join us for a detailed exploration of the *Satipatthana Sutta*, a foundational text for meditation practice in our tradition.

Registration required at Sati.org.

INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY

SATURDAY MAY 2, 10AM TO 4PM. Held at the Institute of Buddhist Studies in Berkeley with Reverends Daijaku Judith Kinst, Jennifer Block & Jennifer Lemas. A daylong overview of a chaplain's work of providing spiritual care and support to people in hospitals, hospices, prisons and a wide variety of other settings. The work is wonderfully challenging and satisfying. In recent years, Buddhist practitioners have been experiencing chaplaincy as a powerful opportunity to practice engaged Buddhism, and for some, as a vocation and profession.

Information about the Sati Center's Buddhist Chaplaincy Training and the Institute for Buddhist Studies Chaplaincy Degree Program will also be provided.

RIGHT VIEW WITH TONY BERNHARD

SATURDAY JULY 18, 9:30 TO 4:30. Right View is the first element of the Buddha's Eightfold Noble Path. Understanding Right View supports our practice of the Buddha's path, benefits our day-to-day behavior and ethical conduct, and leads to diminishing dissatisfaction and suffering in our lives.

BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY TRAINING PROGRAM

Taught by Jennifer Block, Paul Haller, and Gil Fronsdal. September 18 ~ July 2016. An 11-month training program introducing a Buddhist perspective on spiritual care skills needed for being a chaplain or Buddhist teacher, or providing spiritual support for people in times of major life transitions and challenges.

Registration required. More info at Sati.org.

THE FOREST MASTERS OF THAI BUDDHISM

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 9AM TO 4:30PM. Taught by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

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.

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 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.

- Apr 5, May 3, 9:20 to 10:50am, IMC Annex, 1040 Brewster, Ste D
- June 14, 5 to 6:30pm, IMC Meditation Hall.

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, 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.

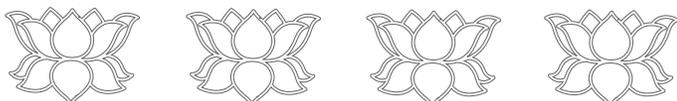
MINDFUL TEENS (HIGH SCHOOL) Led by Aaron Chavira, Nirali Shah and Trent Walker. First Sunday of each month, 5 to 6:30pm. A safe, fun space where teens apply mindfulness to self-discovery, empowerment, and fulfillment. A trusting environment where teens can discuss important issues in their lives, among themselves and adult facilitators. RSVP for purposes of food headcount to Aaron at Imc.MindfulTeens@gmail.com.

MINDFUL PARENTS SERIES

SECOND FRIDAY OF THE MONTH, 7 TO 8:30PM. April 10: Jennifer Kammeyer on Mindful Parenting of Children with Special Needs. May 8: "Raising Compassionate Boys and Girls" discussion groups.

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND FAMILY RETREAT: K-8TH GRADERS & PARENTS

MAY 23 - 25. 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 by lottery on the IMC website. Please submit applications as soon as possible



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.

- **Sona's Dharma Strummers Practice Sessions** – Sundays, April 19, May 3, and June 7, 1 to 2:30pm in Palo Alto. Please join us as we strum our way to samadhi...with ukuleles! No prior musical experience necessary. Basic ukulele instruction provided. For info visit the Dharma Friends web page on the IMC website.
- **Sona's Dharma Strummers Gig at Hopkins Manor**, Sundays, April 28, May 17, June 28, 1:30pm to 2:30pm. Come sing and play the ukulele for the residents of Hopkins Manor. No vocal or musical experience necessary. Just bring your Aloha spirit! For info visit the Dharma Friends web page on the IMC website.
- **Dharma-Inspired Book Group**, Fridays, April 17, May 15, June 19, 7pm to 8:30pm. IMC Meditation Hall. We are reading *Dancing with Life: Buddhist Insights for Finding Meaning and Joy in the Face of Suffering* by Phillip Moffitt. Anne Foster afoster@rawbw.com.
- **Dharma Friends Event Planning Meeting**, Sunday, May 3, 11am to 12pm. Plan events for July, August and September. IMC conference room.
- **Hike San Francisco, Golden Gate Park**, Saturday, April 12, 9am. Carpool from IMC. Moderate 5-6 mile hike, in sun and shade, possibly fog; includes walking meditation, adequate rest periods, plus a stop for lunch. We'll pick a restaurant. Dress in layers, wear sunscreen. Heavy rain cancels. Shelly Gordon, sgordon@g2comm.com.
- **Dharma Friends Brunch**, Sunday, May 17, 11am. Gather by the kitchen following the morning sitting. We will choose a local restaurant for brunch. Wendy Alger wendyalger@gmail.com.
- **Collage as a Process of Inquiry**, Saturday, June 6, 1 to 4pm, insightful collage making; no art experience necessary. IMC Meditation Hall. RSVP to Ryl Brock Wilson, ryl@artasaccess.com.
- **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 Alicia McLucas mclucasalicia@gmail.com, and Hilary Borison, hborison@sbcglobal.net.
- **Cinema Sanity**, At least one 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, or Shelly Gordon at sgordon@g2comm.com.

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