

The Benefits of Meditative Seclusion

Gil Fronsdal

Seclusion is an invaluable support for meditation. The types of seclusion emphasized in Buddhism are those associated with inner freedom, wholeness, and peace. While the word can have negative connotations in other usages, in Buddhist practice “seclusion” has positive meanings; it refers to being apart from things that are stressful enough to interfere with deepening meditation practice and with realizing greater inner freedom. Meditative seclusion occurs together with feelings of satisfaction, safety, and contentment. To dip into the fullness of seclusion in meditation is to tap into feelings of mental health and harmony.

The Buddhist word for seclusion is *viveka*, which etymologically means to “separate apart.” In addition to “seclusion”, *viveka* refers to the mindful separating apart or distinguishing of different aspects of our experience. By seeing the difference between healthy and unhealthy impulses, meditators have a better chance of avoiding getting involved with the unhealthy ones, i.e., they can remain secluded from them. By distinguishing mental freedom from mental attachments, one can discover how choosing freedom provides beneficial seclusion from attachments.

The most basic seclusion useful for meditation is physical seclusion, meditating in a place and time away from the distracting activities of daily life. Some meditators will go to a quiet room, a relatively empty or uncluttered place, or somewhere outdoors removed from ordinary hustle and bustle. Some find a wonderful seclusion by meditating early in the morning when there is still quiet and stillness. Such physical solitude allows for a greater focus on one's meditation practice. Connecting to the immediacy of one's experience is easier when one is surrounded by quiet and stillness rather than people talking or busy with activity. Meditation can also be easier when we are removed from—i.e., secluded from—beckoning smartphones, tempting TV shows, and pinging emails.

One form of physical seclusion is meditation retreats. Retreating from everyday life is not meant to be an escape or rejection of this life. Rather, it is a way to heal the fragmentation and self-alienation many people experience in the midst of a busy everyday life. Meditation retreats are a time to get back in touch with oneself, to become whole again. One dictionary definition for *viveka* is “singleness of heart.” I understand this to be a description of our deepest inner life becoming unified, whole, and available for wisdom and love. In this sense, meditation

retreats are a retreating back to a more authentic way of being. It is a seclusion which allows for a reconnecting to aspects of ourselves lost in a life of distraction and preoccupation.

The inner unification and “singleness of heart” possible in meditation is supported by a reduced mental involvement with sense experience. While this is sometimes described as seclusion from sense experience, it is more accurately a seclusion from any preoccupation with what can be seen, heard, smelled, tasted, and, in deep meditation, felt in the body. As the mind settles into a sense of peace, contentment and safety, it does not look toward sense experience for pleasure, fulfillment, or improvement. When there is less mental involvement with reacting, adjusting, and thinking about physical sensations, it is easier to let go of common preoccupations of the mind. The process of sensory seclusion is not a rejection or avoiding of sense experience. Rather it is a natural consequence of the mind becoming increasingly settled in itself without awareness actively directed outward through the five senses.

As meditation deepens, the mind tends to lose interest in discursive thinking, i.e., ongoing thinking that involves talking to oneself, carrying on conversations with others, or providing commentary about something. Such thinking starts to be seen as a kind of outward-directed attention by which one loses a deeper sense of wholeness or connection to oneself. As thinking quiets during meditation, a meditator can experience mental seclusion from discursive thinking. When this includes no longer thinking about the past or the future, being settled in the present allows for increasing degrees of clarity and peace. In such mental seclusion, there may be quieter and more subtle thinking about the meditation experience itself that does not disconnect us from the settling process of meditation.

An important form of seclusion is seclusion from the hindrances. Often occurring with discursive thinking, the hindrances are powerful preoccupations with desire, aversion, sloth, impatience, regrets, and doubts. These are usually outward directed fixations of the mind. A big part of meditation practice is to first learn to recognize the hindrances and then to learn how little value there is in being preoccupied with them. Much more valuable is separating oneself from involvement with them so that one can have a deeper intimacy with one's immediate, direct experience.



SANGHA PROGRAMS & NEWS

CHAPLAINCY & CPE AS SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

I'm grateful that I heard of chaplaincy at IMC. My interest was first piqued in a Dharma talk and then in practice discussion, and in 2011 I was accepted into the Sati Center Chaplaincy Training offered at IMC. Its teachings, mentoring, and community were a complementary container for my volunteer placement with Sojourn at San Francisco General Hospital. Offering chaplaincy to marginalized residents of San Francisco opened my eyes and heart to the power and benefits of this service-oriented, relational form of Buddhist practice.

Some years and a (related) graduate degree later, I spent 15 months enrolled in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) programs at Stanford Healthcare and Sequoia Hospital in Redwood City. CPE is required training for professional chaplains, usually held in a hospital. It's crafted to be a crucible, an intensive process of discovering if and how to offer spiritual care to people (often in transition or crisis) safely, effectively, and sustainably. Along with regularly meditating, chaplaincy and CPE have been my primary forms of Buddhist, and interfaith, practice for the last two years.

I heard somewhere that the role of a spiritual friend, or teacher, is "to hold up a mirror to the back of your head." In CPE, many hands held mirrors up to my blind spots. What a humbling process! It was a chance to receive honest feedback from—and step into compassionate confrontation with—a diversity of spiritually committed students and a supervisor/ educator. Each experienced the world differently than I do. We risked honestly sharing how our different perspectives, personalities, personal foibles, projections, and unconscious habits impacted each other, contributing to the joys and challenges we experienced offering chaplaincy. From this, I am starting to see and name my own projections and other "stuff" with growing transparency, compassion, and ease—not an easy process. And, it taught me to trust my strengths. While at times difficult, CPE was a priceless gift. It was, for me, an invaluable complement to retreat practice.

The heart of CPE is the practice of spiritual care conversations with patients, families, and hospital staff. In many ways, I find chaplaincy a natural extension of Buddhist meditation. The core practice is the same—turning towards what is and relating to it wisely. The pith of chaplaincy is turning towards suffering with compassionate, honest presence. The spiritual care conversations that follow can also open into sharing or discovering strength, solace, friendliness, equanimity, even joy. At times, hospital chaplaincy is really sad and hard, as might be expected from being a spiritual care first responder. And, like practice at its best, spiritual care encounters can evoke presence, authenticity, and a sense of potentiality that allows transformation (the patient's and mine). I didn't always manage to show up this way. Yet I received a powerful training that expanded my capacity and skill in allowing open, discerning, presence to emerge. These 15 months of CPE and chaplaincy service yielded significant fruit: gratitude, grounded purpose, and deep fulfillment.

—Dawn Neal

DEEPENING MEDITATION PROGRAM

WITH GIL FRONSDAL, DIANA CLARK & MAX ERDSTEIN

Mondays, **2019:** 8/26, 10/7, 11/11, 12/2; **2020:** 1/6, 2/3, 3/2, 4/20, 5/18. Optional retreat: March 15–22

The Deepening Meditation Program (DMP) is an eight-month series giving experienced practitioners the opportunity to delve into meditation practice and the Buddhist teachings. The program will focus on understanding the different attentional factors involved in mindfulness, insight, and concentration meditation. We will also consider the supports and challenges to meditation, and the experiences and insights emphasized in traditional Vipassana practice. Components of the program include monthly group meetings, readings, short reflective writing assignments, and small group practice-discussion meetings with Diana Clark, Max Erdstein and other teachers. Additional optional components are a seven-day retreat in March 2020 at IRC (space limited) and a series of daylong retreats at IMC focusing on related themes.

As this is an immersion program, having a regular meditation practice is required. Additional prerequisites are five years of committed insight meditation practice, four 7-day (or longer) silent insight meditation retreats and completion of the IMC Eightfold Path Program or its equivalent.

To apply, go to the Special Events page on the IMC website. Applications due by August 1. Notification of acceptance by August 14.

AN EVENING FOR PEOPLE OF ASIAN BACKGROUND WITH GIL, LILU, AND YING

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 7:30 TO 9PM

People of all Asian and South Asian backgrounds are invited to an informal discussion about IMC and participation in IMC. This is a chance to ask questions, raise concerns, and to describe challenges, joys, and possibilities that might exist at IMC for people born in Asia or descendants of Asian immigrants. People coming to IMC from an Asian cultural background will sometimes notice how different IMC is from the form of Buddhism or other religions they may be familiar with. The differences in styles and approaches can raise questions in people's mind about how to engage and practice in a community like IMC. Discussions about this and other topics will be hosted by Gil Fronsdal (founding teacher at IMC, immigrant from Norway), Lilu Chen (Chinese born, raised in the US with doctorate studying Islam in China), and Ying Chen (Chinese born software engineer, spouse and mother in a mixed Chinese-Indian family, IMC Dharma Leader).

We welcome any Asian or South Asian people who are new to IMC or have been coming for some time.

The Benefits of Meditative Seclusion, cont'd. from front page

These various forms of seclusion contribute to a greater clarity of awareness. When attention is not crowded with hindrances, thinking, and fixation with sense experience, awareness can become steady and clear enough for insight. One primary insight is seeing how the mind clings and what it clings to. In the Buddhist analysis of the mind, clinging is understood to be all the ways the mind gets attached, strains, resists, pushes away, shuts down, or pretends what is not true to be true.

When this is seen clearly enough, the meditative mind begins a process of relaxing and letting go of clinging. This leads to two forms of seclusion from clinging. The first is temporary, the second is permanent. In meditation, the temporary seclusion of mind is when a meditator is settled deeply enough into the meditation that there is no involvement with or tendency to cling. To have a significant experience of temporary seclusion from clinging can be transformative. A person can then know that clinging is optional and that the mind does have the capacity to be free of clinging. In addition, one's hope, expectation, and heavy investment in clinging can be questioned: does clinging ever live up to the promise that seems to accompany it?

The permanent seclusion from clinging is what Buddhism refers to as awakening. Often described as an "uprooting", this is an ending of one's tendency to cling. Small awakenings can do away with minor clinging; fuller awakenings uproot major attachments. The seclusion that follows from this uprooting is not a retreating or avoiding of the world; it allows a person to be in the middle of the world without clinging to any of it (and therefore, not entangled in it).

Understanding the usefulness of the various forms of seclusion—physical seclusion, sensory seclusion, and seclusion from discursive thinking, hindrances and attachments—can lead a meditator to value experiences of seclusion as they occur. As they are recognized and appreciated, it can be easier to avoid getting involved with concerns that cause one to lose the seclusion. Through recognition, the mind is more likely to settle into a wholesome and beneficial seclusion. With recognition, we can also guide the mind toward further freedom from attachments. Wise seclusion is a stepping stone to freedom and a form of freedom in itself. With the help of seclusion, meditation is a path to fuller and fuller experiences of freedom.

PARKING AT IMC

To be good neighbors, we ask that those attending IMC events do not park on the 100 block of Birch Street where IMC is located, unless you are not able to walk more than a short distance. Also, do not park in The Abigail parking lot across the street from IMC; your car may be towed.

Abundant street parking is found close to IMC: on El Camino, Brewster, Broadway, and Hopkins & Fulton. Parking further from IMC will not only help our neighbors, it will provide more parking for people for whom walking is a challenge. ~Thank you!

10 SUPREME SUPPORTS FOR MEDITATION

TAUGHT BY CHRIS CLIFFORD, DAVID COHN AND JENNIFER

LEMAS Fridays, 9am to noon: Sep 13, Oct 11, Nov 8, Dec 13, Jan 17, Feb 14, Mar 13, Apr 17, May 15, Jun 19

The ten perfections (*paramis*) are ten supreme qualities of character which, when developed, support both Buddhist practice and compassionate involvement in the world. This 10-month series is suitable for in-person participation or online study and practice with emailed readings and reflections and recorded in-class teachings and discussion. Sign-up forms to receive course materials will be available on the IMC website in late July. Participants are welcome to bring a brown bag lunch.

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.

STEPS TO LIBERATION: The Buddha's Eightfold Path

A NEW BOOK BY GIL FRONSDAL

The Eightfold Path is the Buddha's most well-known teaching on the path of practice. These eight areas of practice are equally a holistic approach to personal transformation as they are for wise ways of living in community. This book contains the material for IMC's Eightfold Path course, including reflections and practices for each of the Eightfold Steps. It is a great book for self-study and group discussion. Available print-on-demand from Amazon.

LIVE VIDEO STREAMING OF IMC TALKS

Video recordings of some of the Dharma Talks given at IMC are available on YouTube. When one becomes available there is a Video button associated with the talk in the Audio Dharma list of talks. All the video recordings can be reached from the Video link on the left menu on AudioDharma's homepage. Sunday morning talks by Gil (and occasionally other teachers) will also be live streamed. You can access the Audio Dharma Youtube channel directly at www.youtube.com/user/insightmed/videos

COMMUNITY WORK DAYS AT IRC

Saturdays, 9am to 4pm: July 20, Aug 10, Sept 14, Oct 19

Work days at IMC's Insight Retreat Center are a time to visit and learn about the center. It is also when those who have been on retreats can return to contribute and be part of the IRC support community. Work days consists of meditating, cleaning, doing repairs, and working in the garden and grounds. There is a morning and an afternoon work period. You can come to both or either. Lunch is provided. More info at insightretreatcenter.org.

Insight Meditation Center

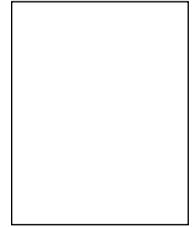
108 Birch Street

Redwood City, CA 94062

www.insightmeditationcenter.org

Email: insightmeditationcenter@gmail.com

650/599-3456



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



LEGACY COMMUNITY

By making a simple bequest or other arrangement to include IMC and/or IRC as a beneficiary of your will or living trust, your retirement plan, or your life insurance policy, you help assure that IMC and IRC will continue to make the Dharma accessible to a broad community on a dana basis for generations to come. The Legacy Community is made up of IMC or IRC practitioners who have included IMC and/or IRC in their long-term estate or financial plans. The Legacy Community, along with others interested in making a legacy commitment, are invited to an annual event with the IMC/IRC guiding teachers that celebrates the generosity and gratitude that make IMC possible.

For more information click on the Donate Now button on either the IMC or IRC website; under Ways to Donate, you'll find a Planned Giving link. For questions, or to arrange a consultation with IMC's volunteer estate-planning attorney, please email: legacy@insightmeditationcenter.org. The Insight Meditation Center of the Midpeninsula is the parent organization of IMC and IRC, a 501(c)(3) organization with tax ID number 77-0450217 and mailing address of 108 Birch St, Redwood City, CA 94062.

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.

For ways to donate go to: www.insightmeditationcenter.org/donate/

HELP IRC WHILE BUYING OR SELLING A HOME

IMC sangha member Carol Collins is a retired longtime local real estate broker with connections to realtors throughout California. If you are buying or selling a home, Carol can refer you to a conscientious, highly qualified realtor; Carol can also serve as your consultant, at no charge, throughout the buying or selling process to assist in all aspects of the transaction. After a sale, a donation will be made in your name to IMC or IRC. Carol has performed this service for sangha members throughout 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 2019

FOR IMC EVENTS PLEASE DO NOT PARK ON BIRCH STREET BETWEEN BREWSTER AND HOPKINS (IMC'S BLOCK)
UNLESS THERE IS A PHYSICAL NEED TO PARK CLOSE BY.

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.

MARTES EN LA TARDE 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 EVENING 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 afternoons, July 10 – August 14, 1:30 to 3pm, with David Cohn
- 5 Wednesday evenings, August 7 – September 4, 7:30 to 9pm, with Diana Clark & Jennifer Lemas
- 5 Tuesday afternoons, September 10 – October 8, 1 to 2:30pm with Ying Chen

- 5 Wednesday evenings, September 25 – October 23, 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.

ONE DAY RETREATS

On Saturdays, unless otherwise noted:

- July 6, 9:30am to 4:30pm, **Compassion Cultivation Daylong** with Nikki Mirghafori
- August 17, 9am to 4:30pm, **Metta Daylong** with John Martin
- August 24, 9:30am to 4:30pm, **Mindfulness and Wisdom Daylong Retreat** with Andrea Fella
- September 7, 9:30am to 4:30pm, **Exploring Wise Speech through the practice of Insight Dialogue** with Jill Shepherd
- September 14, 9am to 4:30pm, **Mindfulness of Breathing Daylong** with Gil Fronsdal
- September 21, 6am to 9pm, **Intensive Daylong** with Max Erdstein
- October 5, 8:30am to 5pm, **Daylong** with Gil Fronsdal
- October 12, 9:30am to 3:30pm, **Being Your Own Teacher Daylong** with Diana Clark.

HALF-DAY RETREATS

SATURDAY, JULY 13, 9:30 AM TO 12:15PM, WITH TANYA WISER

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10, 9:30 AM TO 12:15PM, WITH DIANA CLARK

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)

RESIDENTIAL RETREATS

AT THE INSIGHT RETREAT CENTER (NEAR SANTA CRUZ)

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

- July 30 to August 4, 6-Day **Insight Retreat in Spanish (Español)** with Andrea Castillo and bruni dávila
- August 14 to 18, 5-Day **Insight Retreat** with Andrea Fella and Pamela Weiss
- August 29 to September 2, 4-Day **Race, Money, Dharma Insight Retreat for People in their 20s and 30s**. With Max Erdstein and JaAnna (Harper) Hardy.
- October 2 to 6, 4-Day **Insight Retreat** with Max Erdstein and Matthew Brensilver

SERIES PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION TO THE BRAMAVIHARAS

INTRODUCTION TO COMPASSION CULTIVATION WITH NIKKI MIRGHAFORI WEDNESDAY EVENINGS, JULY 10 –31, 7:30 TO 9PM.

Cultivating a heart imbued with compassion brings peace, happiness, resilience and responsiveness in times of challenge. This four-week course will include talks, guided meditations, small group exercises, and Q/A. Appropriate for both beginners and experienced practitioners.

DEEPENING MEDITATION PROGRAM

WITH GIL FRONSDAL, DIANA CLARK & MAX ERDSTEIN

Mondays, 9:30 am to 4:00 pm: 8/26, 9am to 4pm: 10/7, 11/11, 12/2, 1/6, 2/3, 3/2, 4/20 5/18. Optional retreat: March 15–22

The DMP is an eight-month program giving experienced practitioners the opportunity to delve into meditation practice and the Buddhist teachings and instructions for meditation. More info in Sangha Programs & News and on the IMC website.

THE EIGHTFOLD PATH PROGRAM

WITH CHRIS CLIFFORD, BRUNI DÁVILA, LIZ POWELL & TANYA

WISER. The Buddha's most explicit path of practice is the Eightfold Path— 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 participants will discover how to apply each set of practices in ways that are personally meaningful.

Prerequisite: Completion of IMC's Introduction to Meditation course or equivalent.

All are welcome to attend the Sunday sessions below. Please register to receive course materials by email. A longer application is required to be assigned a mentor in addition to the group meetings. The form for both purposes is found under the Eightfold Path Program notice on the Special Events page of IMC's website. Applications for mentoring due by September 1.

2019

Introduction to the Path & Program—Sep 8 (1 to 2:30pm); Right View—Oct 6; Right Intention—Nov 3; Right Speech—Dec 1

2020

Right Action—Jan 12; Right Livelihood—Feb 16; Right Effort—Mar 15; Right Mindfulness—Apr 19; Right Concentration—May 17; Concluding Daylong Retreat at Insight Retreat Center, Santa Cruz—Sat, June 13 (9:30am to 4pm)

10 SUPREME SUPPORTS FOR MEDITATION

WITH CHRIS CLIFFORD, DAVID COHN AND JENNIFER LEMAS FRIDAYS, 9AM TO NOON: SEP 13, OCT 11, NOV 8, DEC 13, JAN 17, FEB 14, MAR 13, APR 17, MAY 15, JUN 19

The ten perfections (paramis) are ten supreme qualities of character which, when developed, support both Buddhist practice and compassionate involvement in the world. This 10-month series is suitable for in-person participation or online study and

practice with emailed readings and reflections and recorded in-class teachings and discussion. Sign-up forms to receive course materials will be available on the IMC website in late July. Participants are welcome to bring a brown bag lunch.

SPECIAL EVENTS

COMPASSION CULTIVATION DAYLONG

WITH NIKKI MIRGHAFORI SATURDAY, JULY 6, 9:30 AM TO 4:30 PM

A heart imbued with compassion is more peaceful, happy, and resilient in times of challenge. Compassion, through practice, can be better accessed and more skillfully expressed. This daylong draws on core Buddhist teachings on compassion and the Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT) course developed at Stanford University, which Nikki is certified to teach. Through mini dharma talks, guided meditations, small group exercises, and Q/A we will explore the path to cultivation of this essential human quality. Appropriate for both beginners and experienced practitioners.

METTA DAYLONG WITH JOHN MARTIN

SATURDAY, AUGUST 17, 9AM TO 4:30PM. This day will be devoted to cultivating loving-kindness (*metta*). The practice of loving kindness was taught by the Buddha to cultivate the natural beautiful qualities of an open and loving heart. The practice begins with ourselves and expands outward for all beings. There will be instructions and teachings to develop this practice and to work with the challenges that may block the full expression of the heart.

MINDFULNESS & WISDOM NON-RESIDENTIAL RETREAT

WITH ANDREA FELLA. SATURDAY AUGUST 24, 9:30AM TO 4:30PM, SUNDAY AUGUST 25, 1 TO 4:30PM, MONDAY THRU FRIDAY, AUGUST 26 – 30, MORNINGS 7 TO 9AM. During this week-long non-residential retreat we will explore a relaxed open awareness with an emphasis on exploring qualities of mind, and the attitude towards one's experience. Such awareness practice supports both the formal meditation of sitting and walking, as well as awareness of daily activities. We begin with a non-residential weekend retreat, Saturday 8/24 and Sunday 8/25. For those who have attended the entire weekend, the retreat can continue during the week with a meeting each morning from 7 to 9am. These meetings will include instructions and Dharma discussion. To support the community continuing to practice together during the week, Andrea asks that you commit to attending every morning during the week.

MINDFULNESS & WISDOM DAYLONG RETREAT

WITH ANDREA FELLA. SATURDAY, AUGUST 24, 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. 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 walk-

ing 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. See previous listing for expanded option. Bring lunch.

EXPLORING WISE SPEECH THROUGH THE PRACTICE OF INSIGHT DIALOGUE WITH JILL SHEPHERD

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 9:30AM TO 4:30PM. Insight Dialogue is an interpersonal meditation practice that brings the mindfulness and tranquility of traditional silent meditation into our experience with others. Working together in pairs, we will explore the six guidelines of Insight Dialogue in conjunction with the classical Buddhist teachings on Wise Speech: speech that is "...spoken at the right time, truthfully, affectionately, beneficially, and with goodwill." For more information about the practice of Insight Dialogue, please see metta.org/insight-dialogue-3/. This workshop is best suited for people with an established meditation practice, but previous Insight Dialogue experience is not required.

NOTE: Because the Insight Dialogue guidelines will be taught in sequence and much of the meditation is done in pairs, please plan to arrive on time and stay for the entire day. Bring lunch.

MINDFULNESS OF BREATHING DAYLONG

WITH GIL FRONSDAL SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 9AM TO 4:30PM Mindfulness of breathing lies at the foundation of Buddhist meditation practice. To support building a strong foundation, the day will include a variety of teachings and guidance on practices related to breathing, including detailed instruction on how to practice mindfulness of breathing, supporting the breath with the posture, and how emotions relate to the breath. No interviews. Bring lunch.

INTENSIVE DAYLONG WITH MAX ERDSTEIN

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 6AM TO 9PM. This is a great opportunity for a full day of immersion in silent Dharma Practice. Fifteen minute interviews with Max 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 day, please enter the meditation hall only at the beginning of a scheduled sitting. If you come while a sitting is in progress, please sit in the outer hall. Bring lunch. Breakfast and light supper provided.

YOUNG ADULT PROGRAM

AT HOME IN THE WORLD: DHARMA EVENINGS FOR PEOPLE IN THEIR 20'S AND 30'S WITH MAX ERDSTEIN **Sundays, 7:30 to 9pm (except the 2nd Sunday of the month).**

This weekly group addresses themes relevant to people in their 20s and 30s and includes guided meditations, short dharma talks, and group discussions. We have a friendly and vibrant ongoing community, and all are welcome to drop in at any time.

LGBTQUEER SANGHA

4th Sunday of each month, 5pm to 6:30pm. We are led by Guiding Teachers John Martin and bruni dávila, and open to all who identify under the LGBTQ+ umbrella. Contact co-facilitators sue bachman and Joe Hayes at imcqueersangha@gmail.com with questions or to be added to our mailing list.

SATI CENTER

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

NEUROSCIENCE AND EARLY BUDDHISM — CONVERGING VIEWS OF THE MIND WITH RICK MADDOCK

SATURDAY, AUGUST 31, 9:30AM TO 3:30PM. There is remarkable agreement between the early Buddhist view of the mind and the understandings emerging from modern neuroscience. The Buddhist concept of the aggregates (*khandhas*) could serve as a Table of Contents for a textbook on the human brain. The day's presentation will review the design and functions of the human brain by exploring modern understandings of its operation within the framework of Buddhist teachings on the aggregates, emptiness, and the mysteries of "not self."

THE SKILL IN QUESTIONS WITH AJAAN THANISSARO (GEOFF)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 9AM TO 4:30PM. For the purpose of putting an end to suffering, the Buddha divided questions into four types: those that deserve a categorical answer, those that deserve an analytical answer, those that deserve that the person asking the question be cross-questioned, and those that deserve to be put aside. This course will look at how the Buddha himself applied this scheme to the questions that other people asked him and to the questions he asked himself during his search for awakening. Bring lunch. There will be an opportunity to donate food for the meal offering to the monastics. No registration required. Just show up.

BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY TRAINING WITH JENNIFER BLOCK, GIL FRONSDAL, AND PAUL HALLER 11-month training: September 2018–July 2019. 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.

YOGA

WITH TERRY LESSER. Suitable for all. Bring a large towel and sticky mat, if you have one. Mats are also available.

MONDAY EVENING YOGA

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

THURSDAY MORNING YOGA AND SITTING MEDITATION

- **8:30 to 10:30am**

YOUTH & FAMILY PROGRAMS

DHARMA SPROUTS (K–2ND GRADE) Led by Hilary Borison 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. For more information or to RSVP, contact Hilary at IMC.familyprogram@gmail.com or 650/575-2052. Please provide first names of each adult and child who will attend.

DHARMA ROCKS (3RD–5TH GRADE) Led by Hilary Borison and Elisabeth Waymire. **Third Sunday of each month, 11:15am to 12:30pm.** Interactive mindfulness meditations, games, art/crafts, and movement. RSVP to IMC.familyprogram@gmail.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 and Darrin Force. **Second Sunday of each month, 5 to 7pm.** 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, IMC.familyprogram@gmail.com, 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.

SUPPORT GROUPS

SUPPORT GROUP FOR PERSONS WITH ILLNESS AND HEALTH CHALLENGES

First and Third Thursdays of the month, 12:30 to 2:30 pm. Meetings of this group include brief sittings and consideration of pertinent Dharma topics, but the primary purpose of the group is to provide each participant an opportunity to share personal challenges, triumphs, hopes, and fears with individuals facing a similar situation. At least four days before attending the group for the first time, please contact the group facilitator, Ying Chen at 408/802-6430 or yingchenb@yahoo.com.

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

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).

DHARMA-INSPIRED BOOK GROUP

THIRD FRIDAYS, JULY 19, AUG 16, SEPT 20, 7 TO 8:30PM

IMC Meditation Hall. In July we start *What's Beyond Mindfulness* by Stephen Fulder. Contact Anne Foster, afoster@rawbw.com, 650/591-1285 for information about our current book.

SONA'S DHARMA STRUMMERS PRACTICE SESSIONS

SATURDAYS, JULY 13, AUG 17, SEPT 14, 1PM TO 2:30PM. 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. Basic ukulele instruction provided. For location and more info contact Martha Chickering at marthachickerting@gmail.com.

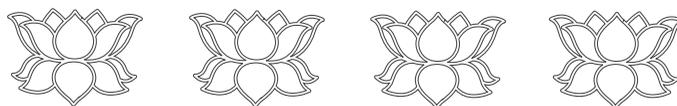
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SONA'S DHARMA STRUMMERS PLAY AT HOPKINS MANOR

SATURDAYS, JULY 20, AUG 31, SEPT 28, 1:30 TO 2:30PM. 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. If you don't play the ukulele, you can come and sing along. For more information contact Martha Chickering at marthachickerting@gmail.com.

CHARITABLE EVENTS

AIDS WALK SAN FRANCISCO JULY 14TH – a team of members from IMC/IRC will walk the 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. imcqueersangha@gmail.com



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