

Dharma Confidence

Gil Fronsdal

Confidence in our practice is central to the Dharma path. No matter what the circumstances, no matter what the challenges, as practitioners we trust the practice. No matter the distance we've traveled on the path—however little or far—our confidence to keep practicing is the most important thing. It is said, "Before Awakening, one practices; after Awakening, one practices." In other words, no matter what, *keep practicing*.

Awakening is not the end of practice; Awakening is the confirmation that the practice works. Awakening solidifies our confidence in Dharma practice. We understand that when done sincerely, a beginner's practice is as valuable and meaningful as that of an experienced practitioner. The greater our maturity with practice, the more often and more confidently we can begin afresh, always ready to *keep practicing*.

The key to Dharma confidence (*saddha*) is trusting the wholesomeness of the mind. Wholesomeness arises from the mental states—traditionally referred to as "beautiful"—nourishing and cleansing the mind and heart. These are states rooted in generosity, goodwill, and wisdom. With confidence in the mind's wholesome activities, we will do what it takes to refrain from acting on the unwholesomeness that muddies the mind. When there is a clear choice between what is unwholesome or what is wholesome, Dharma practice chooses the wholesome. This is a choice to *keep practicing*.

When we have insight into the pain of unwholesome mind states on the one hand, and the happiness and peace of wholesome states on the other, our confidence in the wholesome grows. Discovering how wholesome states of mind lead to greater happiness builds this confidence further. When our Dharma practice is rooted in wholesomeness, it is natural to want to *keep practicing*.

A traditional simile for Dharma confidence likens it to a magic gem that, dropped into muddy water, turns the water clear. Similarly, our doubts, anxieties, and agitation settle when our confidence is strong and the mind becomes clear. This transformation happens because confidence in Dharma practice introduces safety, peace, and a clear purpose into the mind. It is a reassuring confidence. We know we have a trustworthy path to *keep practicing*.

Dharma confidence is a force that motivates our practice. When we have strayed, it brings us back. When we are back, it keeps us going. When we keep practicing, we discover its per-

sonal benefits. This, in turn, transforms confidence into peaceful clarity (*pasada*) and verified faith (*avecca pasada*). Our motivation also becomes peaceful, less interested in dramatic results than in the steady, ongoing continuity of Dharma practice. We have an embodied momentum to *keep practicing*.

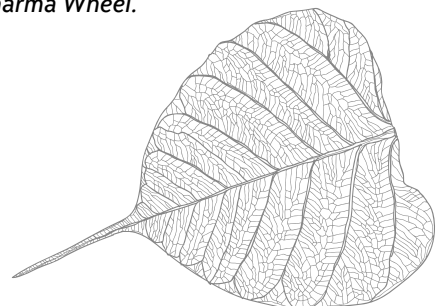
Dharma confidence is like a ship's ballast that keeps the boat afloat. Waves and wind may list the boat sideways, but the ballast always returns the vessel to its straight and upright position in the water. Similarly, while the waves and winds of life may toss us about, we won't capsize when we're rooted in Dharma confidence. When tilting too far for or against, we will return to being steady and upright. To find this balance, *keep practicing*.

Dharma confidence doesn't necessarily eliminate fear. It does, instead, prevent our fears from unduly influencing us. Despite our anxieties, insecurities, and trepidations, it encourages us to "keep practicing" in the midst of our fears. Fears stop being obstacles: rooted in fearless practice, we *keep practicing*.

One of the great gifts of Dharma practice is the dedication to continue doing it. This dedication is especially the case when the practice becomes the center of our life. Other things don't then have to become less important than they are. Dharma practice becomes more central because it benefits all other valuable parts of our life. We relate to everything from our deepest wellsprings of freedom and profound care.

We pay back the gift of the Dharma by allowing our confidence to keep us practicing. In time, it is a confidence by which we become free in ourselves and compassionate to others. In the language of the Buddha, we are no longer "dependent on others" (*aparapaccaya*) but capable of "service to others" (*parakamma*). In conclusion:

*When we keep practicing, we become fearless in the Dharma.
When we become fearless in the Dharma, we keep practicing.
When we are confident in this mutually reinforcing cycle
We turn the Dharma Wheel.*





SANGHA NEWS & PROGRAMS

IMC GRADUAL REOPENING, PART 2

A year ago, in the last IMC newsletter, I wrote we would begin our gradual reopening on August 1st, 2021. With the changing course of the pandemic, this was delayed until the end of October. Since then, we have started in-person meetings on Sunday morning, Monday evening, and Wednesday morning for people who are fully vaccinated and masked with N95 masks. Out of caution we limited the number of people who could come through a sign-up system.

Starting July 4, we plan on loosening up our COVID protocol to make it easier to come to IMC. We still require full vaccination and N95 masks for attending in-person events. However, we will not require registration of your vaccination card. For Monday evening and Wednesday morning there is no sign-up system. You are welcome to come to these programs when you wish.

For Sunday morning we will limit our attendance to 45 people. For this purpose, we will continue to have a sign-up system. This can be linked from What's New and in the IMC calendar posting for the event (both on IMC's homepage).

COVID-permitting, in August we will begin a new in-person Thursday evening program and have a daylong retreat August 27 with Bruni Davila.

—Gil Fronsdaal

SERIES PROGRAMS

DEEPENING MEDITATION PROGRAM WITH GIL FRONSDAL

ON ZOOM – MONDAYS, 9AM TO 4PM: 10/3, 10/31, 12/5, 1/6 (FRIDAY), 1/30, 3/6, 4/3, 5/1. OPTIONAL ONLINE RETREAT: MARCH 13–16; 9AM TO 4PM EACH DAY.

The eight-month Deepening Meditation Program gives experienced practitioners the opportunity to delve into the Buddhist teachings and instructions for meditation. We will utilize *Anapanasati* (mindfulness of breathing) as the reference for delving into practices and states of meditation related to the deepening of mindfulness, concentration, and insight. 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, and short reflective writing assignments. An additional optional component is a three-day online retreat.

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.

Applications found in What's New on IMC's website are due by September 1. Notification of acceptance by September 14.

THE 2022-23 EIGHTFOLD PATH PROGRAM

OFFERED BOTH IN-PERSON AND ONLINE.

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 eight factors so participants will discover how to apply each set of practices in ways that are personally meaningful.

Pre-requisite: completion of IMC's Introduction to Meditation course or the equivalent.

Please register. The in-person and online versions of the program will occur parallel at the same time. Participants can attend either version at any time though we encourage you to pick one for the sake of forming a community. After registering, you will receive Zoom links and course materials by email. A longer application is required to be assigned a mentor in addition to the group meetings. Mentoring slots may fill. Registration and Mentor Application is found on IMC's website under What's New and also under the Program menu > Special and Yearlong Programs.

TEAM TEACHING THE TWO VERSIONS OF THE PROGRAM ARE:

CHRIS CLIFFORD, LIZ POWELL, DAVID LOREY, MARJOLEIN JANSSEN, YING CHEN, SANDRA SANABRIA, WENDY LO, LILU CHEN, ARI CRELIN-QUICK, AND TANYA WISER

SUNDAYS 1PM TO 3:30PM PACIFIC TIME

2022: Sep 4, Oct 2, Nov 6, Dec 4

2023: Jan 8 (online for everyone), Feb 5, March 5, April 2, May 7. Concluding Daylong, Sat, June 24 at IRC and online.

Questions: eightfoldpath@insightmeditationcenter.org

SEVEN SHINING JEWELS PROGRAM WITH DIANA CLARK

ON ZOOM; SUNDAYS, 1 TO 3:30PM (PACIFIC), OCT 16, NOV 13, DEC 18, JAN 15, MAR 5, APR 2, MAY 7. A 7-month program focused on the Seven Factors of Awakening: Mindfulness, Investigation, Energy, Joy, Tranquility, Concentration and Equanimity. Pre-requisite: IMC's Eightfold Path Program or two years of regular Insight Meditation practice. See IMC web calendar for details.

ESTABLISHING A PRACTICE WITH TANYA WISER & KIRSTEN RUDESTAM

FOUR THURSDAY EVENINGS, SEPT 8–29, 6:30 TO 8PM. IN-PERSON AT IMC. An introduction to foundational teachings, guidance, and skillful tips to support establishing or deepening your meditation practice. Ample time provided to ask questions of teachers and to discuss course topics with participants. For beginners or experienced meditators who want to support or inspire their practice. Vaccination and masks required.

IN PERSON PROGRAMS: Please check for changing COVID protocol—
at least during July, being fully COVID vaccinated and wearing a N-95 mask required for in-person attendance.

WEEKLY MEDITATION AND TALKS

MONDAY EVENING SITTING AND TALK

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

WEDNESDAY MORNING HALF-DAY RETREAT

Sitting and walking meditation with Gil Fronsdal or guest teachers, 9:30am to 12:15pm. 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

At 12:15 we have an informal lunch and discussion outdoors in the parking lot. Everyone welcome (bring bag lunch)

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

MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

- 5 Thursday Evenings, 7 to 8pm, Aug 4 – Sep 1, with Tanya Wiser and Kodo Conlin

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, IN-PERSON AT IMC:

- August 27, 9am to 4:30pm, Mindfulness Daylong with Bruni Davila

ON SATURDAYS ONLINE WITH IRC (INSIGHT RETREAT CENTER)

- July 9, 9am to 4:30pm with Gil Fronsdal
- August 20, 9am to 4:30pm with Diana Clark
- September 3, 9am to 4:30pm with Matthew Brensilver

ONLINE PROGRAMS

SEE WEBSITE CALENDAR FOR LINKS TO FOLLOWING PROGRAMS:

- Monday thru Friday Morning Sitting and Talk with Gil Fronsdal or guest teachers, 7 to 7:45am. On YouTube
- Monday thru Friday Evening Happy Hour: Loving Kindness Practice with Nikki Mirghafori and others, 6 to 7pm. Guided Meditation teaching, and discussion on loving-kindness. On YouTube and/or Zoom
- Tuesday Morning Sitting, Reflection, & Discussion with Andrea Fella, Ari Crellin-Quick, and others, 9:30 to 10:45am. 30-minute sitting, followed by a reflection and discussion. On Zoom

- Thursday Evening Sitting and Q&A, with Andrea Fella, Ari Crellin-Quick, and others, 7:30 to 8:30pm. A sitting followed by a short reflection and discussion. On Zoom

MULTI-DAY RETREATS

IMC OFFERS MULTI-DAY RETREATS AT THE INSIGHT RETREAT CENTER (NEAR SANTA CRUZ)

- For Residential Retreat: insightretreatcenter.org/retreats
- For Online Retreats: insightretreatcenter.org/online-retreats/

SATI CENTER

For more information, go to sati.org

ONLINE PROGRAMS:

TUESDAYS, JULY 12, AUGUST 9, SEPTEMBER 13, 7:30 TO 9PM

AVOID ALL EVIL, DO GOOD, PURIFY THE MIND WITH SANTUSSIKA BHIKKHUNI

WEDNESDAYS, JULY 13, 20, 27, AND AUGUST 3 AT 7:30 TO 8:30PM

THE WAY TO THE BEYOND: A STUDY OF THE PARAYANAVAGGA WITH SUJATO BHIKKHU

SATURDAY, JULY 23, 9AM TO 12PM

THE CULTIVATION OF KNOWLEDGE: A HALF-DAY ON UNDERSTANDING AND RELEASING DIKKHA WITH KIM ALLEN

AUGUST 8, 10, & 12 (MON, WED, FRI), 8:30 TO 10AM

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE: A ZOOM-BASED THEATRICAL EXPLORATION (Z'OPERA) OF THE AMBATTHA SUTTA (DN 3) WITH DAVID LOREY, YING CHEN, DIANA CLARK, AND KIM ALLEN. Set in theatrical play form, the class will seek to recreate the high drama of the exchanges between the Buddha and others.

WEDNESDAYS, SEPTEMBER 14 — NOVEMBER 2, 6:30 TO 8:30PM

THE ORIGINAL BODY SCAN: 32 PARTS OF THE BODY MEDITATION — DISCOVERING FREEDOM WITHIN THE BODY WITH BOB STAHL

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 10:30AM TO 12PM & 2 TO 3:30PM

SELVES & NOT SELF WITH THANISSARO BHIKKHU

PERIODIC THURSDAYS, 3:30 TO 4:30PM

STUDYING THE WORDS OF THE BUDDHA: ONGOING CLASSES ON THE MIDDLE LENGTH DISCOURSES WITH GIL FRONSDAL AND DIANA CLARK. This ongoing course will provide a progressive and systematic study of the Middle Length Discourses (*Majjhima Nikaya*). Next module: July 14, 21, 28, and Aug 4 (Effort and Community)

IN-PERSON PROGRAM:

September 2022 – July 2023. BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY TRAINING WITH JENNIFER BLOCK, GIL FRONSDAL, AND PAUL HALLER. An 11-month training program introducing, from a Buddhist perspective, spiritual care skills needed for being a chaplain, Buddhist teacher, or offering spiritual support to people in times of major life transitions and challenges.

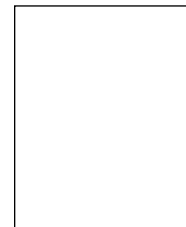
Insight Meditation Center

108 Birch Street

Redwood City, CA 94062

www.insightmeditationcenter.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



YOUTH AND FAMILY PROGRAMS

IMC has a variety of programs for youths and family from preschool through middle school. For more information contact Hilary at IMC.familyprogram@gmail.com.

MINDFUL TEENS

ON ZOOM, FIRST AND THIRD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH, 5 TO 6PM (sometimes in person at IMC). Open to all teens interested in mindfulness and discussions of applying mindfulness to all aspects of our lives. Contact: imcmindfulteens@gmail.com

SUPPORT GROUPS

SUPPORT GROUP FOR PEOPLE WITH HEALTH CHALLENGES

ON ZOOM: 1ST AND 3RD THURSDAYS OF THE MONTH, 12:30 TO 2:30PM
A time to share personal health challenges, triumphs, hopes, and fears with those with similar situations. For more info, contact Ying Chen at yingchenb@yahoo.com

BUDDHISM AND 12-STEP SUPPORT GROUP

ON ZOOM AND IN-PERSON, 2ND SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH 7:30 TO 9 PM
Group Discussion and study exploring the 12-Step Program and the Buddha's teachings. Contact Jenn Lemas, jennlemas@comcast.net

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/

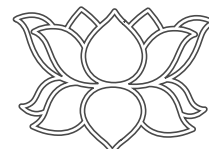
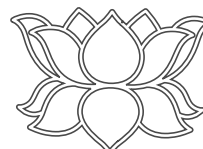
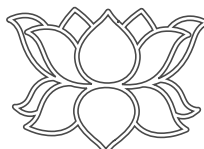
OTHER GROUPS

DHARMA CIRCLE FOR PEOPLE OF ASIAN BACKGROUND

WITH LILU CHEN AND YING CHEN. ON ZOOM: 2ND AND 4TH SUNDAYS OF EACH MONTH, 1 TO 2:30PM. Includes meditation, short Dharma talk, and discussion. Contact: asianimc2020@gmail.com

WOMEN'S CIRCLE OF MINDFULNESS

2ND THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH 11AM TO 12:30PM. SOMETIMES ON ZOOM, SOMETIMES IN PERSON. A gathering for women to explore in community the interweaving of mindfulness and daily life. Contact: Hilary Borison at hborison@sbcglobal.net



• GENERAL INFORMATION:

contact@insightmeditationcenter.org or 650/599-3456.

• **CONNECT:** To sign up for our **UPCOMING EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS** emails, go to the IMC website and click on the **EMAIL SIGN-UP** link. To receive this newsletter by mail: sign up by clicking on **NEWSLETTER**.