

## The Buddha as a Parent

### Gil Fronsdal

*Note from Gil: With the end of the pandemic, I am appreciating the renewed growth of our community. This includes our family and children's programs. I taught IMC's first children's program 25 years ago. This year, I officiated the wedding of one of the young girls there at the first meeting. With IMC's youth programs in mind, I am reprinting this article written when my sons were young. May all of the IMC community value and benefit from the presence of our youngest members.*

A less well-known part of Buddha's family life is that after his awakening, the Buddha became his son Rahula's primary parent for most of the boy's childhood. From the time Rahula was seven, he was under the care of his father, who proved to be a remarkably effective parent: Rahula had reached full awakening by the time he reached adulthood. So we can ask, what kind of parent was the Buddha? What kind of parenting techniques did he use? How did an enlightened teacher convey his spiritual message to his own child?

The scriptures do not offer much detail about the relationship between the Buddha and Rahula. An early story describes how Rahula came to practice under his father. Six years after the Buddha set out on his quest for liberation, and one year after his awakening, the Buddha returned to his hometown. Seven-year-old Rahula, on the urging of his mother, went to meet his father to ask for his inheritance. If Siddhartha had remained at home, Rahula would have been in line to inherit the throne. But as a renunciate living a life of poverty, what could the Buddha pass on? In response to Rahula's request, the Buddha said to Sariputta, his right-hand monk, "Ordain him." Rather than receiving the throne, Rahula inherited his father's way of life, a life dedicated to liberation.

As a parent myself, I wanted my two children to learn enough about the practices and teachings of Buddhism so that as adults they could turn to these resources if they desired or needed to. I also thought it would be wonderful if they could feel at home in Buddhism so that no matter where they went in life, this home would always be available as a refuge. And finally, because the greatest wealth I know is the well-being, peace, and compassion I have found through my Buddhist practice, I often wondered how I could pass along these riches more broadly to the next generation as a kind of spiritual inheritance.

I exposed my children to the basic Buddhist principles that have so deeply informed my own life. When I came across the three discourses where the Buddha teaches Rahula, I was surprised that the teachings seemed not only still fresh but also relevant to raising a child in modern America. In fact, these discourses became a guide for me as a parent.

An interesting picture of how the teacher guided his son's maturation is contained in three discourses, which, when read together, follow the

pattern of the three successive trainings forming the path to awakening: when Rahula was seven, the Buddha taught him about virtue; when he was a teen, the Buddha instructed him in meditation; and when he was twenty, the Buddha taught him liberating wisdom. Rahula's gradual maturation to adulthood thus paralleled his progress along his father's path to awakening.

#### **Virtue**

The first story illustrates how Rahula was taught to live a life of integrity. When he was eight, Rahula told a deliberate lie. The sutta called *The Discourse of Advice Given to Rahula at Mango Stone* (Middle Length Discourse 61) tells how the Buddha dealt with this. Having first meditated, the Buddha went to his son. Rahula prepared a seat for him and, as was the custom, put out a bowl of water so the Buddha could rinse his feet.

After his father cleaned his feet, a little water was left in the bowl. The Buddha asked, "Rahula, do you see the small quantity of water left in the bowl?"

"Yes," replied Rahula.

"As little as this," the Buddha said, "is the spiritual life of someone who is not ashamed at telling a deliberate lie."

The Buddha then threw out the remaining water and said, "Thrown away like this is the spiritual life of someone who is not ashamed at telling a deliberate lie."

The Buddha then turned the bowl upside down and said, "Turned upside down like this is the spiritual life of someone who is not ashamed at telling a deliberate lie."

And to drive the point home, the Buddha then turned the bowl back upright and said, "As empty as this bowl is the spiritual life of someone who is not ashamed at telling a deliberate lie."

He then taught his son, "When someone is not ashamed to tell a deliberate lie, there is no evil that he or she would not do. Therefore, Rahula, train yourself to not utter a falsehood even as a joke."

This part of the story reminds me that there is force but no inner strength behind angry castigation of children. Calmly, when he thought the time was right, the Buddha made his point without punishment or anger.

After this brief but sharp admonishment for lying, he then instructed his son to become more reflective about all his behavior. The Buddha asked, "What is a mirror for?"

"For reflection," replied young Rahula.

The following paraphrase conveys what the Buddha said next:



# SANGHA PROGRAMS & NEWS

## THE BUDDHA AS A PARENT (continued from front page)

*Whenever engaging in a physical, verbal, or mental activity, you should reflect, will this activity bring harm to myself or to others? If, on reflecting, you realize it will bring harm, then such activity is unfit for you to do. If you realize that it will bring benefit to you or to others, then it is something fit for you to do.*

It strikes me as key that instead of teaching his son to recognize absolute notions of right and wrong, the Buddha was teaching him to reflect on harm and benefit; this requires both self-awareness and empathy. Grounding moral decisions in what is harmful or beneficial helps protect our ethical life from being guided by abstract and external ideals unrelated to the effects of our behavior. Harm and benefit are also related to a person's sense of purpose. Things we do can either detract from or support the direction in which we want to go.

This teaching reinforced my belief in the importance of cultivating a child's capacity for empathy and an understanding of how his or her actions impact others. The powers of reflection and compassion do not come only from being told to be reflective or compassionate. They come from seeing these qualities modeled in others, particularly one's parents.

The Buddha also told Rahula to notice after doing something whether or not it caused harm. If harm resulted from something Rahula did, he was to find a wise person to confess this to as part of a strategy to do better in the future. From this I learned the importance of helping a child develop the integrity to admit mistakes. And such integrity depends a lot on how a child's mistakes are received by his or her parents. Again, the parents' ways of being and acting in the world are crucial to how a child's virtue grows: if the parent is someone who can be trusted and who is more interested in helping the child grow than in punishing the child, then the young person is more likely to be honest.

### Meditation

The second story shows how the Buddha began teaching meditation to Rahula as a way to develop a foundation of inner well-being (Middle Length Discourse 62). This story takes place when Rahula is a young teen. It starts as he sets out with his father on their morning alms rounds. Rahula was having conceited thoughts about his good looks, which he shared with his father.

Noticing his son's preoccupation, the Buddha said, "When seen with wisdom, the physical body should not be viewed as me, myself or mine." In fact, the Buddha continued, one shouldn't see any feeling, perception, mental activity, or consciousness through concepts of me, myself, or mine. Hearing this, Rahula felt admonished and returned to the monastery without collecting food for the day.

This is a radical teaching for a young teenager. I can't imagine that as a teen I could have understood what the Buddha was talking about. However, I remember all too well how, at that age, I was preoccupied with my personal appearance. I have often heard this justified in teens as part of the important developmental process of individuating, of finding themselves. Is it appropriate to admonish a fourteen-year-old for feelings of vanity? Was the Buddha interfering with normal developmental issues that teens should negotiate alone? Without developing a strong sense of self, how can a young person grow into a psychologically healthy adult? What kind of self-concern does a teen need in order to mature?

The Buddha's answer to these questions is seen in what he did next for his son.

The evening after he was admonished, Rahula went to his father and asked for instruction in breath meditation. The Buddha first used analogies to illustrate how to have equanimity during meditation. He said,

*Develop meditation that is like the earth: as the earth is not troubled by agreeable or disagreeable things it comes into contact with, so if you meditate like the earth, agreeable and disagreeable experiences will not trouble you. Develop meditation like water, like fire, like air and like space: as all of these are not troubled by agreeable or disagreeable things they come into contact with, so if you meditate like water, fire, air or space, agreeable and disagreeable experiences will not trouble you.*

Then, before actually teaching him breath meditation, the Buddha told his son to meditate on lovingkindness as an antidote to ill-will, on compassion to overcome cruelty, on sympathetic joy to master discontent, and on equanimity to subdue aversion.

Only then did the Buddha teach breath meditation in its classic formulation of sixteen stages. These stages go through phases of calming the body and mind, cultivating strong states of well-being and insight, and letting go. And then, as a powerful punctuation to his teaching to Rahula, the Buddha concluded by stating that if mindfulness of breathing is developed, a person will have the ability to be calmly mindful of his last breath.

As I read about the Buddha's teaching his son breath meditation to cultivate strong states of inner well-being, I saw how this is an alternative to building a rigid conception of "self." I wonder how much of modern teenage attempts at self-building and differentiation are fueled by their being ill at ease with themselves and with others. I assume that the process would be very different if based on a sense of being both at ease within oneself and imperturbable in the presence of others.

When teaching meditation to kids I have noticed that at about thirteen or fourteen, a jump occurs in their ability to meditate. I have been quite impressed by the ease with which some young teens can drop into deep, if transitory, states of meditation. I have known young people for whom meditation became an important tool for finding stability and peace in the midst of their adolescent challenges.

But it is not just for the usual teenage trials that breath meditation is useful. Breath meditation can be drawn upon at every step in one's journey in life. In this story, the Buddha concluded his instruction of his son by pointing to the value of breath meditation practice in preparation for the moment of one's death.

### Wisdom

In the third and final sutta the Buddha guides Rahula through a series of questions that lead him to liberating wisdom (Middle Length Discourse 147). By this time Rahula had devoted the greater part of his teen years to the path of awakening. In one passage he is described as exemplary in his love for training. By the time Rahula was twenty, his father understood that he was close to liberation. The Buddha then did something that I find quite touching: he went for a walk with his son deep into the woods in a grove of majestic sal trees. Sitting at the

base of one of these large trees, he led Rahula through a thorough questioning of every basis used for clinging to the idea of a self. The process the Buddha used was one of progressively loosening the enchantment with finding a self in anything. For someone as well trained as Rahula, the deeply rooted tendency to cling to some idea of an essential self can be the last barrier to liberation. As he listened to his father's teachings, this clear seeing of the impersonal nature of phenomena was the final step Rahula needed for his full liberation.

The Buddha's teaching on not-self can be perplexing. It is easy to see it as abstract philosophy and so miss that this teaching is a form of practical instruction on how to find happiness through letting go. To me it seems important that the Buddha taught Rahula about not-self while they sat deep in the woods. I have often found that I have a very different perspective when in nature than when in the middle of urban life. I find that the sense of peace and well-being that nature can provide facilitates letting go of self-concern. To contemplate letting go while reading a book on Buddhist philosophy in one's own home is a lot different from doing so surrounded by a quiet grove of trees. In reading this third discourse, I reflected on how useful it is to know oneself in the context of the natural world.

When the seven-year-old Rahula asked for his inheritance, he couldn't have imagined that thirteen years later he would have received the greatest gifts that any parent could pass on to a child. In Buddhism, awakening is known as the greatest happiness. We can wish for our children the peace, happiness, and safety that the path of awakening provides. Perhaps in the different phases of their growth they too can be established in the three trainings of virtue, meditation, and wisdom.

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## **AROUND IMC: IMC'S YOUTH AND FAMILY PROGRAMS AFTER THE PANDEMIC**

Twenty five years ago, Gil was the first teacher of children's programs at IMC, an indication of the importance of the spiritual development of the youngest in our sangha, and the importance of thriving children's programs to a sangha's vitality. As the children's programs have attempted to restart, it has become clear that pandemic isolation had a notable and continuing impact on children. Similarly, parents, and patterns of family life, have changed. As causes and conditions have changed, it has also become clear that there may be no easy or certain "going back" to family programs as they existed at IMC pre-pandemic. More likely it will take a concerted effort, by parents and the sangha at large, to adapt family programs to thrive in a post-pandemic reality.

Parents, you are encouraged to bring your children to the programs, to attend Mindful Parents, and to share your thoughts and concerns with program leaders. What would make the programs more accessible and valuable to you and your children today? Please see the Youth and Family Programs page on the IMC website, and the calendar, for more information.

Please send your comments or questions about parents' and children's programs to Hilary Borison, the Youth and Family Programs Director, [IMC.familyprogram@gmail.com](mailto:IMC.familyprogram@gmail.com). To stay informed, please share your email address, and the ages of your children, with Melody Baumgarten, [melodybaumgartner@gmail.com](mailto:melodybaumgartner@gmail.com). Melody is updating the Youth and Family Programs email list.

## **MEDITATION & WISDOM CIRCLE FOR BLACK**

### **PRACTITIONERS WITH ANNE ROISE**

**FIVE SATURDAYS: OCT 7 – NOV 4, 9 TO 10:30AM. ON ZOOM**

This series provides a supportive space for Black practitioners to begin, refresh and strengthen their meditation and daily mindfulness practice. We will focus on the intersection of Buddhism and Black collective wisdom as the teachings of the Buddha are explored in the context of our unique experiences and expressions. The framework for the series is the Divine Abodes (lovingkindness, compassion, empathetic joy, equanimity) which cultivate positive mind states. Our time together will include guided meditation, facilitated discussions and opportunities to share and connect with each other.

Black-identified practitioners can register with the link on the IMC calendar and website notice.

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## **AROUND IMC: DHARMA PRACTICE THURSDAYS ~ BRINGING THE DHARMA TO LIFE IN COMMUNITY**

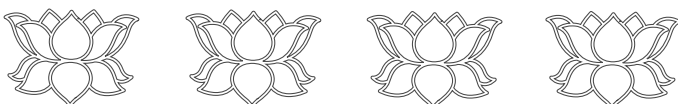
Thursdays at IMC are about developing and growing engagement with the dharma and the sangha, which along with the Buddha form the three jewels of Buddhism. Thursday night sessions are designed to be accessible and valuable to practitioners at all levels. For beginners, they explore basic concepts that support a life of mindfulness, compassion, and wisdom. For longer-term practitioners they are an opportunity to reinforce foundational Buddhist principles and to engage with newer IMC sangha members.

Tanya Wiser, who leads Dharma Practice Thursdays, has as her inspiration for these evenings her experience in a program which Gil led many years ago, called "Dharma Practice Days." It was during daylongs for that program that Tanya developed some of her closest dharma friendships, which to this day continue to sustain, inspire, and support her practice. Reflecting on how she has been changed and supported by her dharma friends, "It was far more powerful to witness a dear friend refrain from wrong speech than it was to read about right speech. The modeling by my dharma friend bore deeply into my being and sits there now, like an anchor in a storm, reminding me of the power of wise speech. Exploring in community, within a sangha, what it really means to practice the dharma, sharing our struggles and our stories, are gifts that we give each other that help deepen our practice."

The typical format of a Dharma Practice Thursday sit is sharing reflections on our practice the previous week; a guided meditation; a short dharma talk; discussions in small groups; and finally, sharing with all participants. The group discussions focus on the evening's dharma topic, and provide ample opportunity to ask questions.

The most recent dharma topic was working with the Paramis, on and off the cushion. The Paramis include qualities like patience, generosity, renunciation, and wisdom, all of which form an essential foundation for a well-formed practice. Considering these qualities carefully enables seeing habits and beliefs that have led to suffering, and recognizing how even simple and momentary awareness of the Paramis, in a reactive situation, can lead to a stronger foundation for our daily practice.

In October and November, the topic for Dharma Practice Thursdays will be Mindfulness of Speech. After covering the foundations of Wise Speech, we will consider and practice cultivating wise and compassionate speech in a variety of contexts including inner speech, interpersonal speech, speech during conflict, as well as while feeling strong emotions. Join us in bringing the dharma to life in community, on Dharma Practice Thursdays! Please see the event calendar on the IMC website for additional information.



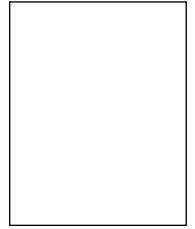
## Insight Meditation Center

108 Birch Street

Redwood City, CA 94062

[www.insightmeditationcenter.org](http://www.insightmeditationcenter.org)

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### DANA SUPPORTS IMC

IMC continues a 2,600-year-old Buddhist tradition of providing the teachings freely to all who are interested. IMC has no paid staff and is run entirely by volunteers. All financial support comes from the generosity of people who value what we do. Tax-deductible donations support all expenses, including programs, publications, website, the Insight Retreat Center, and AudioDharma. Teachers receive no salary and are supported by teacher dana, which isn't tax-deductible.

We at IMC are very grateful for all the support we receive, and are inspired by how beautifully Dharma practice develops when it does so in a field of generosity and gratitude!

To donate, please go to [www.insightmeditationcenter.org/donate/](http://www.insightmeditationcenter.org/donate/). If you have any questions or would like to donate in a different way, please email [fundraising@insightmeditationcenter.org](mailto:fundraising@insightmeditationcenter.org), or call (650) 260-8674.



#### • GENERAL INFORMATION:

[contact@insightmeditationcenter.org](mailto: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**.

### DAWN NEAL TO BE NEW GUIDING TEACHER FOR INSIGHT SANTA CRUZ

Dawn Neal, a long-term IMC practitioner, is becoming the Guiding Teacher for Insight Santa Cruz, IMC's sibling center. Dawn has a long and deep training in Buddhist practice and study, is professionally trained as a hospital chaplain, and is in the final phase of IMC's teacher training program taught by Gil and Andrea Fella. Dawn has been deeply connected to our Insight Retreat Center as both a practitioner and a frequent volunteer and service leader. Insight Santa Cruz will celebrate Dawn becoming their guiding teacher from 1 to 3pm on Sunday, October 15. Gil will attend to congratulate Dawn and encourage her in her new Dharma offering. For Gil, this is also a celebration of the decades-long friendship and collaboration between IMC and ISC. Registration is required for in-person attendance. Please see the ISC website for details, and for an online-broadcast link available to all.

#### 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, please 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!



# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

October ~ December 2023

## WEEKLY MEDITATION AND TALKS

### IN-PERSON AT IMC

#### MONDAY EVENING SITTING AND TALK

With Diana Clark 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. 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).

#### DHARMA PRACTICE THURSDAYS: BRINGING THE DHARMA TO LIFE WITH TANYA WISER OR GUEST TEACHERS, 6:30 TO 8PM

Join us for in-depth exploration of various Dharma topics. Includes sharing reflections on our practice the previous week; guided meditation, dharma talk, small group discussions, and sharing with all participants. Suitable for beginners and experienced beginners.

#### 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

## ONE DAY RETREATS

### ON SATURDAYS, IN-PERSON AT IMC:

- Oct 21, 9am to 4pm, **Mindfulness of the Body** Retreat with Kim Allen
- Oct 28, 9am to 4pm, **Retiro de un Dia en Español** con Andrea Castillo
- Nov 18, 9:30am to 4:30 pm, **Mindfulness Meditation** with Mei Elliott
- Dec 16, 9am to 4pm: **Radiance of Emptiness** with Francisco Gable

### ON SATURDAYS, ONLINE THRU IRC:

For information go to [insightretreatcenter.org](http://insightretreatcenter.org).

- Oct 7, 9am to 4:30pm with Liz Powell
- Nov 4, 9am to 4:30pm with Nikki Mirghafori, **Coming Home to the Body**
- Dec 2, 9am to 4:30pm with Matthew Brensilver, **Abiding in Care**

## SATURDAY HALF-DAY RETREATS

### IN-PERSON AT IMC:

- October 14, 10am to 1pm, **Sangha Retreat** with Jan Messer and Barry Rothman

- November 11, 9:30am to 12:15pm, **Mindfulness Meditation and Practice** with Tanya Wisner
- December 9, 9:30am to 12:15pm, **Mindfulness Meditation and Practice** with Tanya Wisner

## WEEKLY ONLINE PROGRAMS

See website calendar for links for the 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, Liz Powell and others, 6 to 7pm. Guided Meditation teaching, and discussion on loving-kindness. On YouTube and/or Zoom.
- **TUESDAY MORNING SITTING, REFLECTION, & DISCUSSION** with Dawn Neal and others, 9:30 to 10:45am. 30-minute sitting, followed by a reflection and discussion. On Zoom
- **MARTES DHARMA EN ESPAÑOL**, con Andrea Castillo o Sandra Sanabria, 6 a 7:30pm. Meditación y pláticas de Dharma en Español. On Zoom.
- **THURSDAY EVENING SITTING AND Q&A**, with Ari Crellin-Quick, Liz Powell, and others, 7:30 to 8:30pm. A sitting followed by a short reflection and discussion. On Zoom.

## RESIDENTIAL RETREATS

### AT THE INSIGHT RETREAT CENTER (NEAR SANTA CRUZ)

For information go to [insightretreatcenter.org](http://insightretreatcenter.org).

- Oct 5 – 8, 4-day **Insight Retreat** with Ines Freedman and Diana Clark
- Oct 15 – 22, 1-week **Insight Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal, Liz Powell, and Francisco Gable (Also available as Online/Hybrid)
- Oct 29 – Nov 5, 1-week **Insight Retreat** with Max Erdstein and Matthew Brensilver
- Nov 12 – 19, **Insight Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal, Shelley Gault, and Kirsten Rudestam (Also available Online/Hybrid)
- Nov 27 – Dec 3, **Insight Santa Cruz Retreat**, with Bob Stahl, Dawn Neal and Yasmina Porter (yoga)
- Dec 10 – 17, **Insight Retreat** with Gil Fronsdal and Andrea Fella (Also available Online/Hybrid)

## SERIES PROGRAMS

### ENTERING THE STREAM WITH GIL FRONSDAL

**SIX DAYLONG ZOOM CLASSES, OCT 2023 THRU MAY 2024, 9AM TO 4PM: MON OCT 2, FRIDAYS: OCT 27, DEC 8, JAN 19, MAR 29; SAT MAY 4, PLUS 3-DAY ZOOM RETREAT: WED-FRI, FEB 28-MAR 1.** This

eight-month program provides experienced practitioners an opportunity to delve into some of the deeper teachings of our Buddhist tradition in a community of other committed practitioners. We will discuss core principles and insights including

aspects of liberation and awakening. Includes required monthly readings and short reflective essays.

**Participation by selection. Application available on IMC website.** Pre-requisites: at least five years of Insight Meditation practice, five seven-day (or longer) silent Vipassana retreats, and completion of IMC's Eightfold Path Program or its equivalent.

### **2023 – 2024 EIGHTFOLD PATH PROGRAM**

**TAUGHT BY CHRIS CLIFFORD, TANYA WISER, LIZ POWELL AND OTHERS. OFFERED BOTH IN-PERSON AND ONLINE. SUNDAYS 1PM TO 3:30PM (PACIFIC), 2023: OCT 1, NOV 5, DEC 3; 2024: JAN 14, FEB 11, MAR 10, APR 14, MAY 12. CONCLUDING DAYLONG: JUNE 22**

The Buddha's most explicit path of practice is the Eightfold Path—a set of practical approaches to bring Buddhist practice into our lives. This course is an introduction to each of the Eight factors so participants can discover how to apply them in ways that are personally meaningful.

**Pre-requisite:** completion of IMC's Introduction to Meditation course or equivalent. **Please register.** Registration available under the Program menu > Special and Yearlong Programs. The in-person and online versions occur in parallel at the same time. Participants can attend either, please pick one as primary. You will receive Zoom links and course materials by email. Info: [eightfoldpath@insightmeditationcenter.org](mailto:eightfoldpath@insightmeditationcenter.org)

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

### **MEDITATION & WISDOM CIRCLE FOR BLACK PRACTITIONERS WITH ANNE ROISE**

**FIVE SATURDAYS: OCT 7 – NOV 4, 9 TO 10:30AM. ON ZOOM**

This series provides a supportive space for Black practitioners to begin, refresh and strengthen their meditation and daily mindfulness practice. Our time together will include guided meditation, facilitated discussions and opportunities to share and connect with each other.

Black-identified practitioners can register with the link on the IMC calendar and website notice.

**HALF DAY SANGHA RETREAT WITH JAN MESSER AND BARRY ROTHMAN. SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 10AM TO 1PM, IN-PERSON AT IMC.** Facilitated by sangha members. Hosted by the IMC Community Development group. An opportunity to fortify, grow, and deepen our community experience through meditation and wise speech discussions about dharma practice and community. Bring lunch and we'll eat together.

### **MINDFULNESS OF THE BODY – DAYLONG MEDITATION**

**RETREAT WITH KIM ALLEN. SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 9AM TO 4PM, IN-PERSON AT IMC.** Explores mindfulness of the body through classical instructions, including guided and silent meditations, alternating periods of sitting and walking, and Dharma talks. Brief one-on-one meetings with the teacher will be available. Recommended for people who have attended an introductory mindfulness meditation course (or similar), and experienced practitioners. Bring lunch.

**RETIRO DE UN DIA EN ESPAÑOL CON ANDREA CASTILLO: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE: BUILDING A BRIDGE FROM THE TEACHINGS TO OUR DAILY CHALLENGES.**

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 9AM TO 4PM, IN-PERSON AT IMC.**

Includes guided meditations, dharma talks, and alternating periods of sitting and walking. We will engage in contemplations on living the Dharma. Provides an opportunity to strengthen mindfulness, develop concentration, practice with the IMC community, and ask a teacher questions. Appropriate for beginners and those with more experience. Bring lunch.

### **HALF-DAY MINDFULNESS MEDITATION AND PRACTICE**

**WITH TANYA WISER. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 9:30AM TO 12:15PM, IN-PERSON AT IMC.** Includes guided meditations, a brief dharma talk, group discussion, and mindful activity. An opportunity to deepen your meditation and daily life practice, ask a teacher questions, and practice with other sangha members. Appropriate for beginners and those with more experience. Bring lunch.

### **AWARENESS AND WISDOM INTEGRATED HOME RETREAT WITH ANDREA FELLA. SUNDAY – SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12 TO 18**

**WITH TWO ONLINE SESSIONS DAILY 7:30AM TO 9:30AM; 3:30PM TO 4:30PM, ON ZOOM.**

Inspired by the teachings of Sayadaw U Tejaniya. We will explore a relaxed open awareness with an emphasis on exploring qualities of mind, and the attitude towards one's experience. The emphasis will be exploring integrating awareness into our whole day and all activities.

Registration is required: To register contact Yosh Haggerty: [yosh@insightretreatcenter.org](mailto:yosh@insightretreatcenter.org)

### **MINDFULNESS MEDITATION DAYLONG WITH MEI ELLIOTT.**

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 9:30AM TO 4:30 PM, IN-PERSON AT IMC.**

Includes guided meditations, a dharma talk, and alternating periods of sitting and walking. Instructions and guidance on mindfulness of breathing, body, emotions, thoughts, and open attention. An opportunity to strengthen mindfulness, develop concentration, practice with the IMC community, and ask a teacher questions. Appropriate for beginners and those with more experience. Bring lunch.

### **HALF-DAY MINDFULNESS MEDITATION AND PRACTICE**

**WITH TANYA WISER. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9, 9:30AM TO 12:15PM, IN-PERSON AT IMC.**

Includes guided meditations, a brief dharma talk, group discussion, and mindful activity. An opportunity to deepen your meditation and daily life practice, ask a teacher questions, and practice with other sangha members. Appropriate for beginners and those with more experience. Bring lunch.

### **THE RADIANCE OF EMPTINESS: MINDFULNESS MEDITATION DAYLONG WITH FRANCISCO GABLE. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 9AM TO 4PM, IN-PERSON AT IMC.**

The practices of emptiness in Early Buddhism are ways of mindfully emptying the heart and mind of obstructions to true joy, compassion and care. Includes guided

## SCHEDULE PG. 3

meditations, dharma talks, and small group activities. For beginners and those with more experience. Bring lunch.

### **NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION WITH TANYA WISER.** **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31, 6 TO 10:30PM, IN-PERSON AT IMC.**

Join us on New Year's Eve for an alternative in-person celebration of 2023 and to welcome 2024. We will practice sitting and walking meditation, offer inspirational reflections (bring a poem or song to share); guided *Brahma Vihara* meditation, chant together and ring the bell 108 times to bring the celebration to a close. Please come whenever you can and stay as long as you like. A schedule will be posted online closer to the date. Hope to see you there!

### **20s AND 30s PROGRAM**

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**AT HOME IN THE WORLD: DHARMA EVENINGS FOR PEOPLE IN THEIR 20'S AND 30'S WITH MAX ERDSTEIN AND GUEST TEACHERS. Sundays, 7:30 to 9pm (except the 2nd Sunday of the month).** Our meetings alternate between Zoom and in person at IMC; please check IMC's website Calendar for details. 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.

### **YOUTH & FAMILY PROGRAMS**

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IMC has a variety of programs for youths and family from preschool through high school. For more information contact Hilary at [IMC.familyprogram@gmail.com](mailto:IMC.familyprogram@gmail.com). In-person at IMC.

**MINDFUL PARENTS** Led by Lauren Silver and Melody Baumgartner. **THIRD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH, 11:15AM TO 12:45PM.** This year's theme is Mindful Parenting in the context of the Eightfold Path. Each month we will explore a different path factor. Parents are invited to practice together in a warm and caring community, supporting each other as we raise thriving children of all ages—infancy through adulthood. Includes meditation, mindful speech and listening, with time for sharing. No registration necessary. For information contact Melody Baumgartner at [melodybaumgartner@gmail.com](mailto:melodybaumgartner@gmail.com).

**DHARMA SPROUTS (K-2ND GRADERS & THEIR PARENTS)** Led by Hilary Borison and Carla Rayacich. **First Sunday of each month, 11:15am to 12:15pm.** Meditation and mindfulness practice through stories, songs, art, movement, and games. Parents/caregivers participate with their children. Contact Hilary Borison at [IMC.familyprogram@gmail.com](mailto:IMC.familyprogram@gmail.com) or 650-575-2052 for more information or to RSVP. Please provide first names of each adult and child who will attend.

**DHARMA ROCKS (3RD-5TH GRADERS)** Led by Camille Whitney and Tim Sandoe. **Third Sunday of each month, 5 to 6:15pm.** Meditation and mindfulness practice through games,

stories, and art. Vegetarian pizza will be provided. Parents/guardians can either drop off and pick up their kids or wait at IMC. We ask participants to sign up at least two days before the event. For more information, please email [CRWmindfulness@gmail.com](mailto:CRWmindfulness@gmail.com).

**DHARMA BODHIS (6TH-8TH GRADERS)** Led by Hilary Borison. **SECOND SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH, 5:15 TO 6:45PM.** A time to explore how the dharma can support challenges and opportunities pertinent to middle schoolers through group discussions, mindfulness practice, creative activities, and interactive games. Vegetarian pizza will be provided. RSVP if you plan to attend. For info or to RSVP, contact Hilary Borison: 650-575-2052 or [IMC.familyprogram@gmail.com](mailto:IMC.familyprogram@gmail.com).

**MINDFUL TEENS (HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS)** Led by Laura Hansen and Max Erdstein. **First Sunday of each month, 5:30pm to 6:30pm.** Open to all teens interested in mindfulness and discussions of applying mindfulness to all aspects of our lives. For info, or to be added to our email list: [imcmindfulteens@gmail.com](mailto:imcmindfulteens@gmail.com).

### **SUPPORT GROUPS**

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#### **SUPPORT GROUP FOR PEOPLE WITH HEALTH CHALLENGES**

**ON ZOOM: 1ST & 3RD THURSDAYS OF THE MONTH, 12:30 TO 2PM.** The primary purpose of this group is to provide each participant an opportunity to share personal challenges, triumphs, hopes, and fears with individuals facing a similar situation. Meetings include brief sittings and consideration of pertinent Dharma topics. At least four days before attending the group for the first time, please contact Ying Chen at [imcsg22@gmail.com](mailto:imcsg22@gmail.com).

#### **BUDDHISM AND 12-STEP SUPPORT GROUP**

**ON ZOOM, 2ND SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH 7 TO 8:15PM.** Group discussion and study exploring Recovery principles and the teachings of the Buddha. Includes a 15-minute period of sitting meditation, a reading on Dharma and Recovery and open discussion. Everyone is welcome. Facilitated by Jennifer Lemas. For more information contact: [jennlemas@comcast.net](mailto:jennlemas@comcast.net). See IMC website calendar for Zoom link.

### **OTHER GROUPS**

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**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 sitting meditation, a short dharma talk, discussion and community activities. We intend to provide a safe, friendly, and nourishing environment. Open to all self-identified people of Asian or South Asian, Southeast Asian, East Asian and Pacific Islander background. No registration required. For info contact [asianimc2020@gmail.com](mailto:asianimc2020@gmail.com).

**WOMEN'S CIRCLE OF MINDFULNESS WITH HILARY BORISON. THURSDAYS, 11AM TO 12PM. In-person on 2nd Thursdays of the month; on Zoom other weeks.** A gathering for self-identified women who wish to deepen practice in a loving

## SCHEDULE PG. 4

community, as we learn to weave mindfulness throughout our daily lives. For info and to receive the Zoom link, contact Hilary at [hborison@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hborison@sbcglobal.net).

### DHARMA-INSPIRED BOOK GROUP

**ON ZOOM: FRIDAYS, 5 TO 6:30PM.** We stroll through books on Buddhism and meditation at a pace that allows lots of discussion. You are free to drop in even if you don't have the book. The Dharma-Inspired book group is self-led. For our current book, Anne Foster is acting as facilitator, contact: [afoster@rawbw.com](mailto:afoster@rawbw.com). For info, Zoom link, and to sign up to receive email updates: [insightmeditationcenter.org/dharma-friends/](http://insightmeditationcenter.org/dharma-friends/)

### EARTH CARE GROUP

**ON ZOOM: LAST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH, 8:30 TO 10AM.** We focus on a set of diverse topics relating to the right actions we can take to mitigate climate change. Meetings will usually have an invited speaker and include a brief meditation, presentation, and group discussion. See IMC website calendar for Zoom link. For questions, contact the Earth Care group at [EarthCare.Dharma@gmail.com](mailto:EarthCare.Dharma@gmail.com).

### SENIOR SANGHA GROUP: ENJOYING OUR AGING WITH DAVID COHN, FIONA BARNER & ROBERT CUSICK

**ON ZOOM: USUALLY ON THE THIRD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH, CHECK THE IMC CALENDAR TO CONFIRM, 11AM TO 1 PM.** (See the calendar entry and fill out the short form to be added to the email list for class materials, announcements and Zoom link). Suzuki Roshi was asked, "Why do you practice?" He laughed and said, "To enjoy my old age." Join our dharma-based community of IMC seniors of all ages. We will cultivate enjoying our journey through the vicissitudes and blessings of aging with kindness and wisdom practices. Includes guided meditations, talks, and discussions on topics that support aging with ease and contentment.

### SONA'S DHARMA STRUMMERS

Join us as we make music for the elderly. No prior musical experience is necessary. Once a month, we visit an elderly residential care facility in Redwood City and sing old favorites accompanied by our ukulele playing. If you don't play the ukulele, you can come and sing along. We practice once a month in a nearby home. Basic ukulele instruction provided. Masks required indoors. For info contact Martha at [marthachickerting@gmail.com](mailto:marthachickerting@gmail.com).

### IMC LGBTQIA+ SANGHA

**ON ZOOM: 1ST AND 3RD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH, 5 TO 6PM**

Suitable for both beginners and experienced practitioners within our LGBTQIA+ community. Open to people who self-identify as trans, nonbinary, queer, genderqueer, questioning, bisexual, asexual, intersex or two-spirit, gay, lesbian.

Please contact [imcqueersangha@gmail.com](mailto:imcqueersangha@gmail.com) to join us online and be added to our e-mail list. The Zoom link will be sent separately. We are peer facilitated with guiding teacher Bruni Dávila.

## YOGA

### THURSDAY MORNING YOGA AND SITTING MEDITATION WITH TERRY LESSER 9 TO 10:45AM IN-PERSON AT IMC

Each session uses a variety of asanas (poses) to focus and calm the mind, enhance breath and overall awareness, and develop flexibility, balance, and strength. Beginners are always welcome. The class is a mixed level, and everyone is encouraged to work in accordance with their own needs and abilities. Bring a large towel and sticky mat if you have one.

## SATI CENTER

Register for these events at [Sati.org](http://Sati.org) for more info and Zoom links.

### ON ZOOM:

#### REALIZING OUR EMBEDDEDNESS IN NATURE

WITH CHRIS IVES. **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 10AM TO 12PM.** Chris Ives, scholar and author, will explore Buddhist resources for helping us overcome our sense of being separate from nature and realizing our embeddedness in nature as nature.

#### BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY SPEAKER SERIES: REV MAX SWANGER—LEARNING TO HELP: A BUDDHIST JOURNEY INTO CHAPLAINCY **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 9 AM TO 10 AM.**

Reverend Max Hokai Swanger, M.Div., BCC was raised Jewish and Presbyterian and later converted to Buddhism in College.

**SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIP AND RIGHT VIEW: AN EXPLORATION THROUGH DHARMA CONTEMPLATION WITH GREGORY KRAMER AND KIM ALLEN. **SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 9 AM TO 12:30 PM.**** Spiritual friendship (*kalyanamitta*) is named as the most important external factor for walking the Eightfold Path, and wise attention the most important internal factor.

**FEAR, DREAD, AND FREEDOM WITH KIM ALLEN, DIANA CLARK, YING CHEN, AND DAVID LOREY **TUESDAY, THURSDAY & SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5, 7, & 9, 8:30AM TO 10AM.**** We will read *suttas* in which people encounter difficulties along the path, as well as *suttas* that address challenging topics like death.

### IN-PERSON AT IMC AND ON ZOOM:

#### LIVING KINDNESS: BUDDHIST TEACHINGS FOR A TROUBLED WORLD WITH KEVIN GRIFFIN

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 10 AM TO 5 PM.** Lovingkindness, or metta, is sometimes depicted as a simple "open your heart and love everybody" practice, but a closer look at the Buddha's teachings reveals a more complex and nuanced picture.



*Please refrain from wearing scented products to our center, as there are those who have allergies, asthma, or chemical sensitivities.*