



Natural Dharma Growth Gil Fronsdal

*House-builder, you are seen!
You will not build a house again!
All the rafters are broken,
The ridgepole destroyed;
The mind deconstructed
Has reached the end of craving.*

—Dhammapada 153-154

An arrow in the heart is an analogy used by the Buddha for debilitating human suffering (*dukkha*). Pulling out the arrow is liberation. A hunter's deer trap and a fisherman's fishhook were his analogies for becoming caught in the web of human attachments. Sewing clothes together represents how craving sews beliefs, stories, and emotions into world views and identities. In the verse above, dismantling all that is constructed by craving is illustrated by dismantling a house. Elsewhere, the Buddha describes this as a wave flattening a sandcastle and the breaking of a clay pot.

All these analogies utilize human-made objects that would not exist in nature without human ingenuity and manufacture. They are artifacts of human creation, synthetic products not grown or created by natural, non-human processes.

The Buddha consistently used synthetic analogies for craving and clinging and the challenges they create. He analogized mental hindrances as extensive farmer-built irrigation channels. As the channels can drain a river of its water, hindrances can drain the mind of wisdom. Just as closing the irrigation channels restores the water and strong current so the river can flow far, abandoning the hindrances restores the power of the wisdom which “knows one's own welfare, the welfare of others, and the welfare of both” and ultimately leads to liberation.

Using human-made objects as analogies for the world of human suffering suggests that suffering is, often enough, a human construct. A purpose of Buddhist practice is to deconstruct and destroy these synthetic made-up worlds that bring us so much emotional pain.

In contrast to human-made objects used to represent the world of suffering, the Buddha described the practices leading to the end of suffering with natural analogies and processes. The Buddhist word often translated as “practice” is *bhavana*, meaning “growth” and “cultivation,” words associated with farmers tending their plants and trees. To practice the Dharma is to cultivate our poten-

tial to grow spiritually, as farmers do with plants. Just as seeds sprout and plants grow, increase, and come to fullness in dependence on the earth, so wholesome states grow, increase, and come to fullness in dependence on cultivating the Noble Eightfold Path. Protecting the growth of what is wholesome within us is likened to supporting the growth of a tree by protecting it from being overgrown by vines.

An evocative natural metaphor associated with Buddhist practice is the womb (*yonī* in Buddha's language). Just as human life grows naturally in a mother's womb, the Buddha's “contemplation from the womb” (*yoniso manasikara*) generated the understanding leading to his awakening. This analogy suggests that profound spiritual contemplation born from a deep source within supports our spiritual growth.

In the suttas, people approaching awakening are described as “ripe,” and experiencing realization is referred to as attaining the “fruit.”

All these natural analogies suggest that spiritual practice involves natural growth, which we support, nourish, and protect. It is not something we construct, engineer, or force. Instead of being concerned with what Buddhist practice we should do, it might be more helpful to consider what wholesome inner qualities we want to foster and how to create the conditions for them to develop. The Buddha said that living ethically gives rise to gladness, gladness gives birth to joy, joy calms the body, with a calm body one feels happy, and happiness concentrates the mind. In this description becoming concentrated is not something a practitioner does; rather, it arises from a natural growth nourished by a series of pre-existing wholesome states.

In one of his teachings, the Buddha describes spiritual growth as being so in conformity with what is natural (*dhammata*) that one does not need to actively think or have wishes about growing. If one is ethical, it is natural for non-regret to appear. With non-regret, gladness arises. In this teaching, the process does not end with concentration, but continues all the way to liberation. This does not imply that a practitioner does not have a role in their spiritual development. Rather, a practitioner provides the supporting conditions, the primary one being a clear, undistracted awareness which functions like sunlight providing an essential condition for plants to grow.

(Continued inside)

REFLECTIONS ON YEARS OF BUDDHIST PRACTICE

GIL FRONSDAL

Reflections on my spiritual path have been especially alive recently—brought into sharper focus by a five-day walking pilgrimage that culminated at the San Francisco Zen Center. As I climbed the brick steps leading to the wooden doors of the Zen Center—steps I first walked up almost exactly fifty years ago—I was brought full circle to the place where my Buddhist journey truly began.

Fifty years. It sounds like a long time, yet it feels like it passed in the blink of an eye. At the same time, I am flooded with memories—so many they feel like old files spilling out of a cabinet: retreats, teachings, people, places, and moments of deep insight and struggle.

When I returned to the Zen Center, I was coincidentally assigned the same meditation seat I occupied for my very first meditation there. In the first moments of sitting there, I couldn't help but ask myself: What has changed in 50 years?

My thoughts spun stories about the past, and I briefly wondered if nothing had changed—that my mind was as busy now as it was when I first sat there fifty years ago. But my body told a different story—it was now a refuge, a valued home for awareness and ease. Contrasting this bodily joy with the discomfort I felt meditating all those years ago, I remembered the subtle yet powerful shift that began in those early days of sitting. I didn't understand it at the time, couldn't name it, but I felt something right—something that pulled me to continue meditating. That initial, vague sense of “yes”—to practice, to presence, to this path—took root in me and never left.

At the time, I was twenty years old. Though I knew I needed to return home to Norway and sort out a few things regarding my country of birth, I also knew that Buddhist practice was something I wanted to dedicate my life to. That sense of direction didn't come from intellectual certainty but from something deeper—a warmth, a tenderness, a glow within that whispered: “This is the way.” I trusted that feeling. And for fifty years, it has never misled me.

Over time, I understood this path is not just about meditation techniques or isolated insights. It is a path of growth. In Pali, the word we often translate as “practice,” *bhavana*, means “cultivation” or “growth.” While in English, we often describe our practice in terms of techniques—“I practice mindfulness,” or “I practice metta,” for example—the word *bhavana* invites a more profound question: What am I growing?

This shift in language moves us from focusing on technique and following instructions to experiencing meditation as a fertile field in which Dharma life matures. The question, “What am I growing?” invites a deep listen to what wants to grow out of our depths.

For me, this inner unfolding was instinctive. Fortunately, I wasn't constrained by societal expectations. I didn't feel pressure to get a conventional job, earn a degree, or save for retirement. From a young age, I had what you might call a monastic disposition. Even my teenage room reflected a kind of austerity—bare, minimal, focused.

When the Buddha awakened, he returned to his five ascetic companions and told them he had discovered the middle way—not indulgence, not self-denial, but a path through the jungle of these extremes. At first, I imagined this was a midpoint on a straight line. But now I understand it differently. It is an open, unobstructed space, like an open path through a dense forest. What makes it a path is its emptiness: no resistance, no barriers, no obstructions of greed, hatred, or delusion. It is an inner spaciousness that gives breathing room to clarity, freedom, and compassion.

The Buddha's own discovery of this path came through remembering a childhood moment of deep, peaceful absorption under a rose-apple tree. This feeling—this *jhanic* well-being—became the compass that led him toward liberation. And it was not an escape from the world, but a deep engagement with it. The path he laid out—the Eightfold Path—was a way to live in this world with integrity and freedom. It was not about renouncing the world or indulging in it, but about walking a middle way through it.

Looking back, what strikes me most is how practice gradually transformed me, not through force or willpower but through sustained presence and openness. Growth occurred without planning. Something within kept unfolding, almost on its own, as if it wanted to grow. And I began to appreciate that Dharma practice is about making anything happen; it fosters a dynamic, developmental journey emerging from within.

This developmental nature of practice is something I emphasize more and more today. For example, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness are not just a set of meditation instructions—they are a map of inner evolution. At the heart of this model is a turning point: learning to distinguish between surface and deep feelings. Many people live on the surface, responding to immediate sensations or emotions. But deeper within, some feelings are more fundamental—openness, love, tenderness, and movement toward liberation. The path truly opens when a person learns to recognize and trust these deep feelings.

This is the core of what I've come to understand and live over the past five decades. Something inside each of us longs to be free. Practice, in its truest sense, is about learning to trust and follow the call to freedom from suffering. Sometimes called the “way-seeking mind,” this is how, step by step, we naturally develop growing clarity, compassion, and awakening.

Fifty years is not a very large dataset by scientific standards. But for me, it's been more than enough to show the transformative power of this path. This life of inner listening and trust has served me deeply and well. And if you are here now—reading this, practicing, seeking—it is partly because I trusted that path. That trust created conditions for this community, this teaching, this moment. And now, it is up to us to listen within and see what is leading onward in our hearts.

The open path isn't found outside ourselves. It's already here—quietly unfolding in the empty space where resistance falls away and deep feeling arises. And it's in that space that liberation begins.

(Editor: this article is adapted from a talk at the Insight Retreat Center)

NATURAL DHARMA GROWTH, CONT'D

One aspect of what we might call this natural human operating system (as opposed to the artificial or synthetic one) is that it involves the natural shedding of all that brings us debilitating suffering. As we grow, we shed these things, just as a snake sheds its old skin. As the wholesome natural system grows, delusions, attachments, and obsessions fall away. This natural shedding process, which might be likened to children leaving behind fairy tales as they mature, brings liberation and freedom in the course of the practitioner's journey.

The essence of Buddhist practice is twofold. First is to support the natural growth of our inherent potential to move toward awakening. Second is to allow for the shedding, letting go, and disappearance of everything that is not natural, and which is an unfortunate byproduct of the human capacity to construct stories, imagine things that are not real, and generate unlimited desires leading to suffering. Buddhist practice, at heart, is learning to live the natural processes that lead to the end of suffering.

SATI CENTER'S ANUKAMPA PROGRAM WITH GIL FRONSDAL AND VANESSA ABLE • AUGUST 2025 TO JULY 2026

Anukampa is the Buddhist word for spiritual care. This 11-month program applies aspects of spiritual care found in Buddhism and modern chaplaincy to one's own spiritual growth. Central to this training are the ten Buddhist perfections, or paramis, that give strength, resiliency, and wisdom to Buddhist practice. The program matches these ten with ten core human needs addressed by chaplains in their spiritual care.

Starting August 25, the course will be on Zoom on Thursdays from 9am to 12:30pm. Essays by Gil and Vanessa will be the class lectures, so Thursday sessions can focus on deeper exploration and discussion of course themes. More information is on the Sati Center website, sati.org.

IMC SUMMER POTLUCK PICNIC

SUNDAY, JULY 27, 11AM TO 2PM AT PICNIC AREA #3 IN RED MORTON PARK IN REDWOOD CITY. EVERYONE INVITED!



IMC COMMUNITY MEETING WITH GIL FRONSDAL SUNDAY, AUGUST 24, 11:15AM - 12:15 PM

IMC is growing with new participants, new teachers, and new programs. This community meeting will be a time for Gil to discuss the opportunities and challenges of this growth, in the context of IMC being an all-volunteer community based on a culture of generosity. The meeting will include time for the IMC community to ask questions and offer ideas. Gil, who has been teaching at IMC for 35 years, marvels at how IMC keeps growing and becomes a brighter light each year.

THREE-YEAR DHARMA STUDY SERIES AT IMC WITH GIL FRONSDAL

Periodically, Gil teaches three one-year study programs on core Buddhist areas of practice known as "the three trainings." These three trainings in ethics, meditation, and wisdom integrate Buddhist practice into our whole lives. Anyone wishing to bring Buddhist practice more fully into their lives or to cultivate its full potential is encouraged to take these trainings.

The three study programs have biweekly readings of Gil's essays, providing primary teaching. The heart of each program is the one-day-a-month class sessions, which include discussion, questions, meditation, and exercises related to the reading topics. Meeting monthly with a program buddy and a small discussion group is optional, though encouraged. Also included are short monthly writing exercises designed to help participants contemplate the teachings.

The three study programs are Equivalence of Ethics and Enlightenment, Deepening Meditation Practice, and Entering the Stream. They usually run from October to May. In 2025-26, the cycle begins with Equivalence of Ethics and Enlightenment, described in the article below.

THE EQUIVALENCE OF ETHICS AND ENLIGHTENMENT WITH GIL FRONSDAL

ONLINE FRIDAYS, 8:30 AM TO 3:30 PM • 2025: OCT 3, NOV 7, DEC 12;
2026: JAN 16, FEB 13, MAR 14, APR 10, AND MAY 8

This program is one of three one-year study programs described in the article above.

In Buddhism, ethics and awakening are inseparable. The Buddha's path to awakening is ethical, awakening itself is ethical, and the awakened life is ethical.

This eight-month program, starting in October 2025 and ending in May 2026, allows experienced practitioners to delve into important ethical teachings of our Buddhist tradition within a community of other committed practitioners. Includes required bi-weekly readings and writing of short reflective essays monthly. Prerequisites: at least four years of committed insight meditation practice, three seven-day (or longer) silent Vipassana retreats, and completion of IMC's Eightfold Path Program or equivalent. More information and applications can be found on IMC's website under Programs.

INSIGHT WORLD AID UPDATE

Founded at IMC, Insight World Aid continues to grow with programs to feed the unhoused, offer Grief Circles, and provide compassion caregiving workshops to people engaged in environmental and service work. We welcome volunteers. Info at insightworldaid.org.

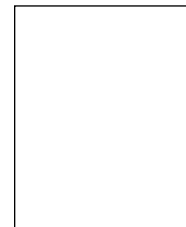
Insight Meditation Center

108 Birch Street

Redwood City, CA 94062

www.insightmeditationcenter.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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 community members who value what IMC offers. 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. (Dana given to individual named teachers is not tax-deductible; dana directed to all IMC teachers generally is tax-deductible.) We at IMC are very grateful for all the support we receive, and are inspired by how the Dharma thrives in a field of generosity and gratitude!

To learn how to donate, please go to insightmeditationcenter.org/donate/. If you have any questions, please email fundraising@insightmeditationcenter.org or call (650)260-8674. Insight Meditation Center of the Mid-Peninsula, parent organization of both IMC and IRC, is a 501(c)(3) organization, federal tax ID 77-0450217.



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

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!



GENERAL INFORMATION:

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

NEWSLETTER: If you have any suggestions for articles please email your thoughts to: newsletter@insightmeditationcenter.org.

ON THE IMC WEBSITE:

- To sign up to receive emails: click on the **EMAIL SIGN-UP** button (upper right).
- To receive this newsletter by postal mail: Resources>Newsletter, click on "PAPER newsletter: [sign up for our postal mail list](#)"



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

July – September 2025

WEEKLY MEDITATION & TALKS

IN-PERSON AT IMC:

MONDAY EVENING SITTING AND TALK

With Diana Clark or guest teachers, 7:15 to 8:30pm. A 30-min sitting, a 30-min Dharma talk, and 15 min Q&A.

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
- 12:15 – Informal lunch and discussion outdoors in the parking lot (weather permitting). 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 in exploring various Dharma topics. Includes guided meditation, dharma talk, and group discussions where we are encouraged to engage with the teachings in a way that brings us closer to the dharma and the sangha. 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

MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

IN-PERSON AT IMC:

5-WEEK INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

Basic instructions in mindfulness meditation taught sequentially, starting with mindfulness of breathing, followed by mindfulness of the body, emotions, thinking, and the application of mindfulness in daily life.

- 5 Sundays, Jul 27–Aug 24, 1:30 to 3pm with Mei Elliott

INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS MEDITATION DAYLONG

- Saturday, Jul 5, 9:30am to 4:30pm, with Mei Elliott
- Saturday, Jul 26, 9:30am to 4:30pm, with bruni dávila

BASIC MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

- Monday evenings 6:15 to 7pm
- Wednesday mornings 8:15 to 9am

DAYLONG RETREATS

ON SATURDAYS, IN-PERSON AT IMC:

- Jul 5, 9:30am to 4:30pm, **Introductory Mindfulness Meditation** with Mei Elliott
- Jul 26, 9:30am to 4:30pm, **Introduction to Mindfulness Meditation** with bruni dávila
- Aug 2, 8:30am to 5pm, **Daylong** with Gil Fronsdal
- Aug 9, 9:30am to 4pm, **Lovingkindness Meditation** with Kodo Conlin

ONLINE THRU IRC:

For information go to insightretreatcenter.org.

- Aug 16, 9am to 4:30pm, **Daylong** with Matthew Brensilver

SATURDAY HALF-DAY RETREATS

ON SATURDAYS, IN-PERSON AT IMC:

- Sep 20, 9:30am to 1pm, **LGBTQIA2S+ Mindfulness Half-Day** with Tanya Wiser

NON-RESIDENTIAL RETREATS

- Aug 3–9, **Week-long Awareness and Wisdom Integrated Home Retreat** with Andrea Fella
- Sep 5–7, 3-Day **Weekend Non-Residential Retreat** with Tanya Wiser

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, Anne Roise and others, 6 to 7pm. Guided meditation small-group practice, and discussion on loving-kindness. On YouTube and/or Zoom.
- **TUESDAY MORNING SITTING, REFLECTION, & DISCUSSION** with Dawn Neal, Marjolein Janssen and others, 9:30 to 10:45am. 35-minute sitting, followed by a reflection and discussion. On Zoom
- **TUESDAY EVENING SITTING AND TALK** with various Dharma leaders, 7 to 8:15pm. 30-minute sitting, 30-minute Dharma talk, and 15 minutes for Q&A and discussion. On Zoom.
- **MARTES DHARMA EN ESPAÑOL** con Andrea Castillo, Sandra Sanabria y otros, 6:30 a 8pm. Meditación y pláticas de Dharma en Español. En Zoom.
- **WEDNESDAY SITTING AND DHARMETTE** with Matthew Brensilver, 7:30 to 8:15pm. On YouTube.
- **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 IRC

For information go to insightretreatcenter.org.

- Aug 20 to 24, **5-DAY INSIGHT RETREAT IN SPANISH (ESPAÑOL)** with Andrea Castillo and David Lorey (Retreat full; wait list open)
- Oct 12 to 19, **1-WEEK INSIGHT RETREAT** with Diana Clark, Kim Allen, David Lorey, and Ying Chen
- Oct 26 to Nov 2, **1-WEEK INSIGHT RETREAT** with Gil Fronsdal and Andrea Castillo with Mei Elliott online practice support (Also Online)
- Nov 16 to 23, **1-WEEK INSIGHT RETREAT** with Gil Fronsdal and TBD with Kodo Conlin online practice support (Also Online)
- Nov 30 to Dec 7, **1-WEEK INSIGHT RETREAT** with Gil Fronsdal and Andrea with Liz Powell online practice support (Also Online)
- Dec 14 to 21, **1-WEEK INSIGHT SANTA CRUZ INSIGHT RETREAT** with Dawn Neal, Bob Stahl, and Mary Grace Orr

IRC ONLINE RETREATS

For information go to insightretreatcenter.org.

- Aug 31 to Sep 27, **28-DAY EXPERIENCED PRACTITIONERS RETREAT** with Gil Fronsdal, assisted by Ines Freedman
- Oct 26 to Nov 2, **1-WEEK INSIGHT RETREAT** with Gil Fronsdal and Andrea Castillo; with Mei Elliott online practice support
- Nov 16 to 23, **1-WEEK INSIGHT RETREAT** with Gil Fronsdal and TBD; with Kodo Conlin online practice support
- Nov 30 to Dec 7, **1-WEEK INSIGHT RETREAT** with Gil Fronsdal and Andrea Fella; with Liz Powell online practice support

IRC OFFSITE RETREATS

Except where noted—for info: insightretreatcenter.org/offsite-retreats/

- August 16–23, **1-WEEK DHARMA IN NATURE, NATURE IN THE DHARMA—INSIGHT RETREAT** with Gil Fronsdal at Big Springs Retreat Center outside of Sierra City, CA, (Retreat full; wait list open)
- Aug 19–23, **5-DAY DHARMA DHARMA: THE UNFOLDING OF NATURE** with LC Tran; at Big Bear Retreat Center, Big Bear, CA
- Sep 5–7, **3-DAY WEEKEND NON-RESIDENTIAL INSIGHT MEDITATION RETREAT** with Tanya Wiser at IMC, Redwood City, CA.
- Sep 27–Oct 2, **6-DAY BIPOC NATURE DHARMA AND INSIGHT RETREAT** with Victoria Cary and Ram Appalaraju at Big Springs Retreat Center outside of Sierra City, CA

SERIES PROGRAMS

2025 – 2026 EIGHTFOLD PATH PROGRAM

WITH TANYA WISER, CHRIS CLIFFORD, LIZ POWELL & OTHERS

IN-PERSON AND ONLINE. SUNDAYS 1PM TO 3:30PM (PACIFIC), 2025: SEP 28, OCT 5, NOV 9, DEC 14; 2026: JAN 11, FEB 8, MAR 8, APR 12, MAY 3.

CONCLUDING DAYLONG: JUNE 6

The Buddha's most explicit path of practice is the Eightfold Path. This 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.

PRE-REQUISITE: completion of IMC's Introduction to Meditation course or equivalent. The in-person and online versions will occur in parallel at the same time. Participants can attend either version, although you are encouraged to pick one as primary to build community. **PLEASE REGISTER**—you will receive Zoom links and course materials by email. An application is required to be assigned a mentor. Mentoring slots may fill. Register on the IMC website: Programs > Special and Yearlong Programs. Questions: eightfoldpath@insightmeditationcenter.org

2025-2026 THE EQUIVALENCE OF ETHICS AND ENLIGHTENMENT WITH GIL FRONSDAL

Online • Fridays, 8:30 AM TO 3:30 PM: Oct 3, Nov 7, Dec 12, Jan 16, Feb 13, Mar 14, Apr 10, and May 8

In Buddhism, ethics and awakening are inseparable; for the Buddha's path to awakening is ethical, awakening itself is ethical, and the awakened life is ethical. (See article in this newsletter for more information).

SPECIAL EVENTS

IN-PERSON AT IMC UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

INTRODUCTORY MINDFULNESS MEDITATION DAYLONG WITH MEI ELLIOTT

Saturday, Jul 5, 9:30am to 4:30pm.

Includes guided meditations, dharma talks, and alternating periods of sitting and walking. With instructions and guidance on mindfulness of breathing, body, emotions, thoughts, and open attention. An opportunity to strengthen mindfulness, develop concentration, practice in community, and ask a teacher questions. For beginners and those with more experience. Bring lunch.

INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

DAYLONG RETREAT WITH BRUNI DÁVILA

Saturday, Jul 26, 9:30am to 4:30pm. Includes guided meditations, dharma talks, and alternating periods of sitting and walking. Instructions and guidance on mindfulness of breathing, body, emotions, thoughts, and open attention will be provided. This daylong retreat is an opportunity to strengthen mindfulness, develop concentration, practice with the IMC community, and ask a teacher questions. For beginners and those with more experience. Bring lunch.

IMC SUMMER POTLUCK PICNIC

Sunday, July 27, 11am to 2pm at Picnic Area #3 in Red Morton Park in Redwood City. Everyone invited!

DAYLONG WITH GIL FRONSDAL

Saturday, Aug 2, 8:30am to 5pm. This retreat is meant for people who already understand the basic practice of mindfulness; no instruction will be given. Includes alternating periods of sitting and walking meditation with a Dharma talk at the end of the day. Brief interviews to talk about the practice will be available with Gil. Bring lunch.

AWARENESS AND WISDOM INTEGRATED HOME RETREAT WITH ANDREA FELLA

AUG 3–9 (SUNDAY – SATURDAY); TWO SESSIONS DAILY: 7:30AM TO 9:30AM & 3:30 TO 4:30PM. ON ZOOM. Inspired by the teachings of Sayadaw U Tejaniya. Explores 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 required—see the IMC calendar entry to register. For questions contact Yosh Haggerty at yosh@insightretreatcenter.org.

LOVINGKINDNESS MEDITATION DAYLONG WITH KODO CONLIN

SATURDAY, AUG 9, 9:30AM TO 4PM. Join us for a day of metta (lovingkindness) practice as we nourish the roots of kindness, compassion, and mental beauty. Includes guided and silent meditations, alternating periods of sitting and walking, and short Dharma talks. Recommended for people who have some meditation experience and have attended an introductory mindfulness meditation course (or similar), as well as for experienced practitioners. Bring lunch.

SCHEDULE pg. 3

3-DAY WEEKEND NON-RESIDENTIAL RETREAT WITH

TANYA WISER SEP 5–7 (FRIDAY – SUNDAY) Together, we will cultivate wise and compassionate mindfulness—in silence and stillness, in community, and in the flow of daily life. Registration required—see the IMC calendar to register.

LGBTQIA2S+ HALF-DAY RETREAT WITH TANYA WISER

SATURDAY, SEP 20, 9:30AM TO 12:15PM. Offers a welcoming space for those who identify as LGBTQIA2S+. A special opportunity for our community to come together in mindfulness, presence, and practice. Includes guided meditations, a silent sit, a short dharma talk, mindful activity, a group practice discussion, and time to enjoy lunch together. This is a chance to deepen your meditation practice, connect with fellow LGBTQIA2S+ sangha members, ask questions, and receive the support of spiritual community.

20's AND 30's PROGRAM

AT HOME IN THE WORLD 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 the IMC website Calendar for details. Our group addresses themes relevant to people in their 20's and 30's 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.

IMC LGBTQIA2S+ SANGHA

ON ZOOM: 3RD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH, 5 TO 6:30PM

Suitable for both beginners and experienced practitioners within our LGBTQIA2S+ community. Open to people who self-identify as LGBTQIA2S+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, asexual, and two-spirit) and genderqueer and inquiring. To join us online and be added to our e-mail list, please contact imc-queersangha@gmail.com. The Zoom link will be sent separately. Guiding teacher Tanya Wiser.

YOUTH & FAMILY PROGRAMS

IN-PERSON AT IMC UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. CHECK IMC WEBSITE CALENDAR—MOST PROGRAMS PAUSE DURING THE SUMMER.

MINDFUL PARENTS LED BY LAUREN SILVER AND MELODY

BAUMGARTNER. THIRD SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH IN-PERSON AT IMC, 11:30AM TO 1PM. MEETINGS RESUME IN OCTOBER Parents are invited to practice 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. Contact Melody: melodybaumgartner@gmail.com.

DHARMA SPROUTS (K–2ND GRADERS & THEIR PARENTS) Led by Hilary Borison and Carla Rayacich. **FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH (EXCEPT MEETING ON JULY 13) 11:30AM TO 12:30PM.** Meditation and mindfulness practice through stories, songs, art, movement, and games. Parents/caregivers participate with their children. Contact Hilary at IMC.familyprogram@gmail.com for more information or to RSVP. Please provide first names of each adult and child who will attend.

DHARMA ROCKS (3RD–5TH GRADERS) THIRD SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH, 5 TO 6:15PM. MEETINGS RESUME IN SEPTEMBER. 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 info, email Hilary at IMC.familyprogram@gmail.com.

DHARMA BODHIS (MIDDLE SCHOOL) & MINDFUL TEENS (HIGH SCHOOL) Led by Hilary Borison and Conrad Sherby. **SECOND SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH, 5:30 TO 7PM ON ZOOM. MEETINGS RESUME IN SEPTEMBER.** We'll explore how the dharma can support challenges and opportunities through group discussion, mindfulness and self-compassion practices. Contact Hilary at IMC.familyprogram@gmail.com for the Zoom link.

SUPPORT GROUPS

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 similar situations. 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.

BUDDHISM AND RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUP

ON ZOOM, WEEKLY ON SUNDAY 7 TO 8:15PM. Group discussion and study exploring Recovery principles and the teachings of the Buddha. Includes 15-20 minutes of sitting meditation, a reading on Dharma and Recovery and open discussion. Everyone is welcome. Peer-led group. For more info contact: stan.loll@gmail.com. See IMC website calendar for Zoom link.

OTHER GROUPS

CHECK THE IMC WEBSITE CALENDAR FOR ZOOM LINKS UNLESS NOTED.

ONLINE SUNDAY SANGHA WITH JAN MESSER AND BARRY

ROTHMAN, IMC SANGHA MEMBERS. ON ZOOM: SUNDAY FOLLOWING THE DHARMA TALK, AT APPROXIMATELY 10:45 TO 11:30AM. Connect with sangha (community), foster dharma friendships and support each other's Buddhist practices and discuss dharma teachings online with IMC members from all over the world.

DHARMA CIRCLE FOR PEOPLE OF ASIAN BACKGROUND

WITH 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.



SCHEDULE pg. 4

WOMEN'S CIRCLE OF MINDFULNESS WITH HILARY

BORISON. ON ZOOM: THURSDAYS, 11AM TO 12PM.

A gathering for self-identified women who wish to deepen practice in a loving 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.

DHARMA-INSPIRED BOOK GROUP

ON ZOOM: FRIDAYS, 5 TO 6:30PM. We read books on Buddhism and meditation at a pace that allows for discussion. You may drop in even if you don't have the book. Anne Foster is acting as facilitator for our current book. Contact: afoster@rawbw.com. For info and Zoom link: go to the IMC website Calendar > Dharma Friends Events Calendar.

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 usually have an invited speaker and include a brief meditation, presentation, and group discussion. For info email 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 WEBSITE CALENDAR TO CONFIRM, 11AM TO 1 PM. (See calendar entry and fill out the short form to be added to the email list for class materials, and Zoom link). Join our dharma-based community of IMC seniors of all ages. 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 necessary. Once a month, we visit two residential care facilities in Redwood City and sing old favorites accompanied by our ukulele playing. We practice once a month; basic ukulele instruction provided. Contact Martha at marthachickerting@gmail.com.

YOGA

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

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

SATI CENTER

ON ZOOM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. MORE INFO, REGISTRATION AND ZOOM LINKS AT SATI.ORG

ORIGINAL LOVE WORKSHOP WITH HENRY SHUKMAN

SAT, JUL 12, 9AM TO 12PM. We will work through progressively deeper levels of allowing, welcoming and loving immediate experience as it is, guided by Henry's broad map of practice which identifies four key zones of development— Mindfulness, Connection, Flow, and Awakening.

FLOWING WISDOM, RIPPLES OF INSIGHT WITH YING CHEN, DAVID LOREY, DIANA CLARK, KIM ALLEN

SAT, JUL 19, 9AM TO 4PM • IN PERSON AT IMC

Explores the rich metaphorical landscape of water as a powerful support for meditation and daily practice.

WISE LIVELIHOOD: LOOKING BEYOND THE FIVE JOBS TO

AVOID WITH KERRY DUNN 2 SATURDAYS, JUL 26 & AUG 2, 9AM TO 12PM. Wise livelihood is often taught as an ethical practice, with a focus on the five job types to avoid. In contrast, this course will look at teachings from across the Pali canon to build a more dynamic relationship to this key path factor.

CONVERSATION WITH STEPHEN BATCHELOR & GIL

FRONSDAL TUE, JUL 29, 9AM TO 10:30AM Stephen Batchelor and Gil Fronsdal will meet for a 90-minute online conversation to explore the themes of Stephen's upcoming book, *Buddha, Socrates, and Us: Ethical Living in Uncertain Times*.

RELAXING INTO BIG-HEARTED AWARENESS WITH DAWN

NEAL SAT, AUG 16, 9AM TO 12PM. An exploration of open and loving awareness: we will cultivate kindness (Metta) to stabilize attention, then connect with the spacious and loving qualities of heart and mind. This practice combines approaches of Metta meditation with the wisdom awareness approach of Sayadaw U Tejaniya.

DAYLONG WITH THANISSARO BHIKKHU

SAT, SEP 13, 9AM TO 4PM

In-person at the Insight Meditation Center and online via Zoom

TRAINING PROGRAMS

BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY TRAINING PROGRAMS

SEP 2025 – JUL 2026

- In Person with Jennifer Block, Gil Fronsdal, and Paul Haller
 - On Zoom with Vanessa Able, Dawn Neal, And Trent Thornly
- 11-month trainings 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.

ANUKAMPA PRACTICE PROGRAM WITH GIL FRONSDAL AND VANESSA ABLE. Aug 2025 To Jul 2026

An 11-month program introducing foundational practices and values of spiritual caregiving found in Buddhism, and in the modern discipline of chaplaincy. More info can be found at sati.org/anukampa-training-program/

STUDY PROGRAM

EXPLORING THE BUDDHA'S MIDDLE LENGTH

DISCOURSES: WITH GIL FRONSDAL AND DIANA CLARK

- Part A covers the themes Relating to the Teachings, Faith & The Path
 - Part B covers the themes The Buddha, Karma & Rebirth
- A systematic study of the *Majjhima Nikaya*. Self-paced online courses, that include audio, video and written components.