



Compassion: A Homecoming

Gil Fronsdal

Compassion is one of the most beautiful qualities of the human heart. Known in Pali as *karuna*, it is the deep wish that beings be free from suffering and the caring response that arises when we encounter suffering in ourselves and others. Buddhism sometimes refers to compassion as the “jewel in the lotus”—the lotus being the heart that, through practice, blossoms into freedom, and the jewel of compassion found at the center of that opening. To feel compassion without reservation or fear is, for many people, among the most meaningful experiences of a human life.

Yet compassion is not always easy to feel. We may want to be compassionate, and still find ourselves holding back, overwhelmed, or falling into something that feels more like distress. Understanding what compassion actually is—and what it is not—can help.

Compassion is not the same as feeling troubled by another's pain. When someone else's suffering touches our unresolved fears, grief, or sense of helplessness, distress can arise instead of compassion. Distress tends to make us contract, pull away, or become paralyzed. Compassion, by contrast, is spacious. It allows us to be fully present with suffering—ours or another's—without being overwhelmed by it. Compassion doesn't make us victims of what we witness. It asks us to see clearly, to care deeply, and to remain open.

A useful way to think about compassion is as a quality of attunement. It is a willingness to be present to what is here: the particular suffering that appears in this moment. Understood this way, compassion carries no agenda. It does not require that suffering be fixed immediately, or that things be different from how they are. It does not judge. It simply wants to be with what is, and in that presence, to offer care.

When needed, compassion often calls forth a response. But the response arises from a place of presence rather than reactivity—from seeing clearly what is needed rather than being driven by our own discomfort with suffering. In this sense, compassion is one of the most practical qualities we can develop. It helps us respond wisely rather than react mindlessly.

One of the important insights Buddhism offers is that compassion is not something we have to manufacture out of nothing. Rather, it is a natural capacity of the human heart that can be uncovered, strengthened, and allowed to flow freely. The question is less “how do I create compassion?” and more “what is preventing compassion from arising?”

Several things tend to obstruct compassion. Stress and self-preoc-

cupation are among the most common. When we are anxious or caught up in our own concerns, the attention and sensitivity needed for compassion to arise aren't available. When we relax and let go of some of our self-concern, the heart often opens on its own. People who cultivate deep states of calm through meditation frequently discover that compassion and love arise naturally as the mind settles.

Another obstacle is taking suffering too personally—either our own or others'. If we have not found a way to be with our own pain with some degree of equanimity, encountering others' pain can trigger reactivity rather than compassion. Mindfulness practice supports compassion so it does not become entangled with reactivity. By learning to be present with our own experience—including our difficult experiences—without either pushing it away or being overwhelmed by it, we develop the capacity to be present with others' experience in the same way. In this sense, compassion for others grows from understanding our own suffering. Mindfulness practice is a great help in this. As we learn to see our own pain more clearly, understand its roots, and find some freedom from it, we become more able to extend genuine care to others.

It is also worth noting that cultivating compassion does not mean placing ourselves under an obligation to feel it at all times, or to sacrifice our own well-being in the service of others. Obligation tends to produce stress, guilt, and a kind of forced compassion that can exhaust us rather than nourish us. In Buddhism, compassion is not required. It is a natural response from our generosity, empathy, and care. From these sources, compassion evokes a sense of well-being, even happiness. The practice of compassion, at its best, enriches the one who is compassionate as much as it benefits those who receive it.

Safety also plays an important role in cultivating compassion. When we feel threatened, compassion is difficult. Learning to feel safe while remaining open to the world—through meditation practice to soften anxieties and self-protective habits that close the heart—is part of how compassion develops. And developing greater confidence and skill in responding to difficulty also helps. When we trust that we have some capacity to meet what arises, we are less likely to turn away from suffering.

Buddhism recognizes that compassion and liberation are not separate pursuits. They support each other. As we become freer from our own reactivity and self-clinging, our capacity for compassion

(Continued inside)

COMPASSION: A HOMECOMING, CONT'D

naturally increases. And as compassion increases, so does the importance of freedom—because we begin to see more clearly how suffering arises and that it can end. In Buddhist practice, the development of compassion is inseparable from the development of wisdom and equanimity. Each quality supports the others, and together they form the ground of a life lived with care.

The path of compassion does not require grand acts. It starts in small moments of pausing to be present with what is difficult. It can be present in looking at suffering with kindness rather than judgment. Compassion can be noticing the suffering of someone nearby and allowing it to matter. These small moments of compassion, practiced again and again, gradually open the heart in ways that may surprise us.

The Buddha evoked a mother's love for her only child as a powerful image of the kindness and care we are all capable of. What makes this image so evocative is not just its strength but its naturalness—this is love and care that do not need to be argued for or justified; they arise as who we are. As our own natural compassion becomes available to us, compassion is not an achievement. It is a homecoming.

GRATITUDE TO ALL IMC VOLUNTEERS

From Gil Fronsda

A remarkable and inspiring part of IMC is how the center is entirely run by volunteers. From volunteers who clean the center during the 15 minutes “sangha service” time each Wednesday morning, to all the managers and recorders who keep our programs and offering going smoothly, to members of our Board, finance team, and technology group, and everyone in-between and beyond, thank you all! At IMC “the medium is the message” in that the generosity and goodwill of our volunteers is one of the important Dharma messages broadcast from our community. In this sense, volunteers are important teachers for us all. May we all rejoice in the generosity, goodwill, and gratitude of our community; may the goodness of our community spread out into the world.

NEW DHARMA ORGANIZATION – UNCONTRIVED

IMC has trained numerous students and quite a few Dharma teachers over the years. Some of these teachers are now helping to spread the Dharma into new communities. In 2025, a new Dharma organization called Uncontrived, led by Kim Allen, emerged from IMC.

Uncontrived ([Uncontrived.org](https://uncontrived.org)) is an online dana-based organization whose community has been growing since 2020 when Kim started a weekly sutta group during the pandemic. As additional teachings were added—quarterly half-days, classes, Dharma practice programs, and online retreats—it became clear that starting a nonprofit made sense. Uncontrived became an official organization in summer 2025.

Kim’s vision for the community is to serve dedicated practitioners who are interested in traditional teachings from the Pali Canon expressed in ways suitable for our current times –inspired by Gil’s work in this area. Uncontrived includes many participants from other regions who find value in the in-depth Dharma discussions of suttas and more modern teachings.

An aspiration for 2027 is to begin holding an annual in-person retreat that allows people who have only talked on Zoom to meet and practice together. Uncontrived represents a new form of Dharma organization that extends IMC’s style of teaching more broadly into the world. All are welcome to join our programs.

GENEROSITY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

More and more of our community members are choosing to support IMC and our teachers digitally using their phones or computers. Currently, the simplest way to do this is through the donation page on the IMC website.

To bridge our physical and digital spaces, we have placed a QR code right on the dana box by the front door. Scanning this code takes you directly to our online donation page, where you can choose to support IMC, specific teachers, or both.

We are continually looking for ways to make digital giving even easier—such as exploring options like Venmo—to seamlessly support your practice of generosity. We are deeply grateful for your presence and your generous support.

THE BODY & HEART AT THE CENTER: KNOWING, SENSING, CALMING WITH TANYA WISER AND SHELLEY GAULT — A 3-DAY NON-RESIDENTIAL RETREAT AT IMC

Fri, Jul 31, 5:30pm to 8pm; Sat, Aug 1, 8:30am to 8pm; Sun, Aug 2, 8:30am to 4pm. Registration required.

Offers teachings on cultivating *sati*—mindful awareness—through the lens of the physical body and with the support of a caring heart. Participants will be guided in developing their capacity to know and sense physical experience directly, and to

calm the body and mind. Includes guided meditation instructions, silent sitting and walking periods, dharma talks, and small group practice discussions with the teachers. Suitable for new and experienced practitioners.

For information and registration: See the entry on IMC’s website Calendar.

GRADUATION OF IMC DHARMA LEADERS

In mid-June, Ines Freedman and Gil Fronsdal celebrated the graduation of 35 participants from our two-year Dharma Leader Training program (DLT). This training prepares individuals to teach, mentor, and share the Dharma and mindfulness in non-retreat settings, including weekly sitting groups, classes, and day-long retreats. The invitation-only cohort was truly global, drawing participants from Europe, South America, Canada, the Bay Area, and across the United States. We are deeply grateful for this mature, capable group and are thrilled that they will be sharing their guidance. Currently, these graduates teach IMC's Tuesday Evening Sitting and Talk and Thursday Evening Meditating in Community.

The graduates are:

Aaron Chavira, Angela Salgado-Birnschein, Anne Roise, Anne Voigt, Antonio Martinez-Alcantara, Brian Johnson, Charlie Wheeler, Corina Urdaneta, Deanna Befus, Declan McCarron, Doug Wiebe, Fred Branaman, G Schulz, Giulio Lucarda Gomis, Heather Gardner, Janel Crooks, Jim Lakey, Kristina Isberg, Lauren Silver, Lily Huan, Lisa Goddard, Lish Dorosin, Lydia Ridgway, Merce Lopez, Matthew Hahn, Monica Sanchez, Nena Sandoval, Pablo Gonzalez, Paul Waters, Peter Fenczyk, Ram Appalaraju, Ross Bauer, Sandra Sanabria Bohórquez, Thina Ollier, and Yanli Wang.

EVENING DHARMA LEADER-LED SITTINGS

The new Dharma Leaders are now leading two different sitting groups for our IMC community:

Tuesday Evening Sitting and Talk with various Dharma Leaders, **7 to 8:15pm, on Zoom**. With meditation, teachings, and discussions on practicing mindfulness in meditation and daily life.

- Jun 23–Jul 14 — The Three Refuges
- Jul 21–Aug 11 — The Four Noble Truths
- Aug 18–Sep 22 — The Five Hindrances
- Sep 29–Nov 3 — The Five Daily Remembrances

Thursday Evening Meditating in Community—In-person at IMC, 6:30 to 8pm, starting July 23. Includes sharing reflections on our practice; guided meditation, dharma talk, and group discussions. Every Thursday, with periodic series on meditation topics e.g.:

- Jul 23–Aug 20 — Introduction to Meditation
- Aug 27–Sep 24 — The Hindrances

IMC HIDDEN VILLA RETREATS & CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

IMC is very pleased to be able to offer retreats at Hidden Villa, our local gem of a nature preserve and educational farm in the foothills of Los Altos. We will offer a residential retreat there October 25–29. As is IMC's practice, this is offered freely and supported by volunteers. Anyone who would like to volunteer as part of the wonderful support team for this retreat, please contact nancyhamilton@insightmeditationcenter.org

There are volunteer opportunities to cook, do light shopping, errands, and other logistical tasks, both in advance and during the retreat. We look forward to hearing from you!

2026–27 PROGRAMS WITH GIL FRONSDAL

Starting in the Fall of 2026, these programs offer unique opportunities to study key areas of Buddhist training with Gil Fronsdal and a wonderful group of Buddhist teachers.

IMC'S DEEPENING MEDITATION PROGRAM

- **Teacher:** Gil Fronsdal
- **Overview:** This is the second year in a three-year series, with each year dedicated to one of the “three trainings”: Ethics, Meditation, and Wisdom. The primary focus of this year's program is an in-depth study and practice of the Buddha's teachings on the mindfulness of breathing.
- **Schedule:** The program generally meets once a month from 9:30am to 3:30pm. However, the first meeting on **October 2** will be from 9:30am to 1:30pm.
- **Format & Registration:** Offered via Zoom, with the option to attend in person with Gil at IMC. Registration is found on IMC's website under the Program menu on the “Special and Yearlong Programs” page.

ANUKAMPA PROGRAM: THE SPIRITUALITY OF CARE AND FREEDOM

- **Teachers:** Vanessa Able and Gil Fronsdal
- **Dates:** August 2026 – June 2027
- **Overview:** This course offers a deep exploration and reflection on core Buddhist themes of care and compassion. These themes are examined through the lens of the ten perfections and ten core areas of contemplation and maturation which form part of the modern spiritual care movement known as “chaplaincy.”
- **Format & Registration:** Offered online via Zoom through the Sati Center. Learn more at sati.org.

INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY TRAINING

- **Overview:** An 11-month program designed for individuals interested in developing skills for chaplaincy and spiritual care. It includes a commitment of 10 hours per month of volunteer work in a spiritual care or chaplaincy setting.
- **Schedule:** The program meets one Friday a month.
- **Format Options:**
 - **In-Person (Starts in September):** Led by chaplain Jennifer Block, Zen priest and teacher Paul Haller, and Insight teacher Gil Fronsdal.
 - **Online (Starts in August):** Led by Vanessa Able, Trent Thornley, and Dawn Neal—each of whom is a professionally trained chaplain and Buddhist teacher.
- **More Info:** Details and registration are available at sati.org.



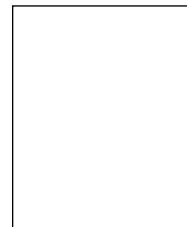
Insight Meditation Center

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Redwood City, CA 94062

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



DANA IS THE BUDDHIST WORD FOR GIVING

IMC and IRC continue a 2,600-year-old Buddhist tradition of providing the teachings freely to all who are interested. IMC and IRC have no paid staff and are 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. We at IMC and IRC 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!

Donations to IMC and IRC are tax-deductible. Donations to teachers are not tax-deductible. To learn how to donate, please go to insightmeditationcenter.org/donate. If you have any questions, please email gratitude@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 with 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.*

SIT AND TEA WITH GIL

THURSDAY, JULY 23, 4 TO 5:15PM. Everyone is welcome to a 30-minute meditation followed by a 45-minute informal tea and open discussion with Gil Fronsda.

IMC COMMUNITY MEETING WITH GIL

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23, 11AM TO 12PM. Everyone is welcome to an in-person discussion on the state of IMC and questions and concerns you may have. Follows the usual Sunday morning schedule.

PARKING AT IMC

For the sake of our neighbors, please do not park on the one-way block of Birch St where IMC is located. Those who need to park closer can do so in front of IMC. Others, please consider coming a few minutes early so you can park further away and leave parking for people who can't walk far. 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.
- 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 2026

WEEKLY MEDITATION & TALKS

IN-PERSON AT IMC UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED:

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).

THURSDAY EVENING MEDITATING IN COMMUNITY

With local IMC Dharma leaders, 6:30 to 8pm starting July 23. Includes sharing reflections on our practice; guided meditation, a dharma talk, and group discussions.

SUNDAY MORNING SITTING 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

MONDAY EVENING SITTING AND TALK IN BERKELEY

With Yanli Wang and Lily Huang or guest teachers, 7 to 8:30pm. A sitting, Dharma talk, and small and large group discussions. At Berkeley Finnish Hall Meeting Room (1970 Chestnut St, Berkeley, CA)

MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

IN-PERSON AT IMC UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED:

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.

- Thursdays, Jul 23 – Aug 20, 6:30 to 8pm with Lish Dorosin and Doug Wiebe

INTRODUCTION MINDFULNESS MEDITATION DAYLONG

- Saturday, Jul 25, 9:30am to 4:30pm, with Liên Shutt

BASIC MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

- Wednesday mornings 8:15 to 9am

DAYLONG RETREATS

ON SATURDAYS, IN-PERSON AT IMC:

- Jul 18, 9:30am to 4:30pm, **SILENT MINDFULNESS DAYLONG** with Dawn Neal
- Jul 25, 9:30am to 4:30pm, **INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS MEDITATION** with Liên Shutt
- Aug 22, 8:30am to 5pm, **SILENT MINDFULNESS DAYLONG** with Gil Fronsdal
- Sep 26, 9am to 4:30pm, **REFUGE IN TIMES LIKE THESE DAYLONG** with Thina Ollier and Lauren Silver

ON SATURDAY, IN-PERSON IN BERKELEY:

- Aug 22, 9:45am to 4pm, **A Day of Lovingkindness Practice** with Matthew Brensilver. Registration required. For registration and accessibility information: insightretreatcenter.org/offsite-retreats/

SATURDAY ONLINE THRU IRC:

For information go to insightretreatcenter.org.

- Jul 18, 9am to 4:30pm, **Receptive Awareness** with Andrea Fella
- Oct 3, 9am to 4:30pm, Daylong with Diana Clark—Reg opens 7/3
- Nov 7, 9am to 4:30 pm, Daylong with Ying Chen—Reg opens 8/7
- Dec 12, 9am to 4:30 pm, Daylong with bruni dávila—Reg opens 9/12

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. With meditation, teachings, and discussions on practicing mindfulness in meditation and daily life. On Zoom.
- **MARTES DHARMA EN ESPAÑOL** con Andrea Castillo, Sandra Sanabria y otros, 6 a 7:15pm. Meditación y pláticas de Dharma en Español. En Zoom.
- **WEDNESDAY SITTING AND DHARMETTE** with Matthew Brensilver, 7:30 to 8:15pm. On YouTube and Zoom.
- **THURSDAY EVENING MEDITATION AND TALK**, with Liz Powell, and others, 7:30 to 8:30pm. A sitting followed by a short reflection and discussion. On Zoom.
- **DOMINGOS: RAÍCES COMPARTIDAS EN EL DHAMMA** 7 a 8 am en zoom

RESIDENTIAL RETREATS AT IRC

For information go to insightretreatcenter.org.

- Jul 12–19, **1-WEEK INSIGHT RETREAT IN SPANISH** (Español) with Andrea Castillo and David Lorey
- Oct 8–11, **4-DAY INSIGHT RETREAT** with Max Erdstein and Ines Freedman
- Oct 18–25, **1-WEEK INSIGHT RETREAT** with Gil Fronsdal, Mei Elliot, and Kodo Conlin
- Oct 30–Nov 2, **4-DAY INSIGHT RETREAT FOR PEOPLE IN THEIR 20S AND 30S** with Max Erdstein and Matthew Brensilver—Reg opens 7/30
- Nov 15–22, **1-WEEK INSIGHT RETREAT** with Gil Fronsdal and Matthew Brensilver—Reg opens 7/15
- Nov 29–Dec 6, **1-WEEK INSIGHT RETREAT** with Gil Fronsdal and Andrea Fella—Reg opens 7/29
- Dec 13–20, **1-WEEK METTA RETREAT** with Nikki Mirghafori and Liz Powell—Reg opens 8/13

IRC ONLINE (HYBRID) RETREATS

For information go to insightretreatcenter.org.

- Aug 30–Sep 26, **28-DAY INSIGHT RETREAT** with Gil Fronsdal; Online Practice Discussions with Ines Freedman
- Oct 18–25, **1-WEEK INSIGHT RETREAT** with Gil Fronsdal, Mei Elliot, and Kodo Conlin Online Practice Discussions with Ying Chen—Reg opens 7/18
- Nov 15–22, **1-WEEK INSIGHT RETREAT** with Gil Fronsdal and Matthew Brensilver Online Practice Discussions with Kristen Rudestam—Reg opens 8/15
- Nov 29–Dec 6, **1-WEEK INSIGHT RETREAT** with Gil Fronsdal and Andrea Fella Online Practice Discussions with Shelley Gault & Tanya Wisner—Reg opens 8/29

IRC OFFSITE RETREATS

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

- Jul 12–19, **1-WEEK LISTEN, HEART, PEACE** with Kim Allen and Diana Clark, at Big Bear Retreat Center, Big Bear CA
- Oct 25–29, **5-DAY INSIGHT MEDITATION RETREAT** with Diana Clark, Kim Allen, David Lorey, & Ying Chen at Hidden Villa Retreat Center, Los Altos Hills, CA. For info: insightretreatcenter.org/hidden-villa—Reg opens 7/1/26

SERIES PROGRAMS

2026-2027 EIGHTFOLD PATH PROGRAM WITH LYDIA RIDGWAY AND YANLI WANG (IN-PERSON), AND THINA OLLIER AND JANEL CROOKS (ZOOM) & GUEST TEACHERS

In-person and Zoom: Sundays 1pm to 3:30pm, 2026: Oct 4, Oct 11, Nov 8, Dec 6; 2027: Jan 10, Feb 14, Mar 14, Apr 11, May 9, June 13

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. An introduction to each of the Eightfold factors so participants will discover how to apply each set of practices in ways that are personally meaningful.

PREREQUISITE: Completion of IMC's Introduction to Meditation course or equivalent. The in-person and online versions of the program will occur in parallel at the same time. Please register for only one on the IMC website: Programs > Special and Yearlong Programs. Mentoring slots may fill up. Apply before Aug 15 to be matched with a mentor.

Questions: eightfoldpath@insightmeditationcenter.org

2026-2027 DEEPENING MEDITATION PROGRAM WITH GIL FRONSDAL

On Zoom: Usually Fridays, 9am to 3:30pm, 2026: Oct 2 (9am to 1:30 pm), Nov 6, Dec 14 (Monday); 2027: Jan 14 & 15, Feb 12, Mar 12, Apr 8 (Thursday), May 21. Optional DMP online retreat: Mar 13-16; 9am to 4pm each day

An eight-month program giving experienced practitioners the opportunity to delve into meditation practice and 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 experi-

ences and insights emphasized in traditional Vipassana practice. Includes monthly group meetings, readings, short reflective writing assignments, and an optional three-day online retreat

PREREQUISITES: Three years of regular insight meditation practice, two seven-day (or longer) silent insight meditation retreats, and completion of the IMC Eightfold Path Program or equivalent. Apply on the IMC website: Programs > Special and Yearlong Programs. Applications due by Sep 1. Notification of acceptance and Zoom link by Sep 14.



SPECIAL EVENTS

IN-PERSON AT IMC UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

SILENT MINDFULNESS DAYLONG WITH DAWN NEAL

Sat, Jul 18, 9:30am to 4:30pm. Intended for those 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 practice interviews will be available with Dawn. Bring lunch.

SIT AND TEA WITH GIL

Thu, Jul 23, 4 to 5:15pm. Everyone is welcome to a 30-minute meditation followed by a 45-minute informal tea and open discussion with Gil Fronsdal.

INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS MEDITATION DAYLONG RETREAT WITH LIÊN SHUTT

Sat, Jul 25, 9:30am to 4:30pm. Includes guided meditation, alternating periods of sitting and walking meditation and Dharma talks. Instructions and guidance on mindfulness of breathing, body, emotions, thoughts, and open attention provided. 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.

IN CHINESE: A JOURNEY INTO THE HEART'S NATURAL QUALITIES SERIES WITH LYDIA RIDGWAY AND YANLI WANG

Sun, Jul 26, 1:30pm to 3pm (last in a 4-part series). The Brahmaviharas—often translated as the “Divine Abodes”—are four beautiful qualities of the heart taught by the Buddha: loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy, and equanimity. These qualities are capacities we can gently uncover and strengthen through mindful awareness and practice.

SILENT MINDFULNESS DAYLONG WITH GIL FRONSDAL

Sat, Aug 22, 8:30am to 5pm. Intended for those 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 practice interviews will be available with Gil. Bring lunch.

SCHEDULE PG. 3

THE BODY & HEART AT THE CENTER WITH TANYA WISER AND SHELLEY GAULT — A 3-DAY NON-RESIDENTIAL RETREAT

Fri, Jul 31, 5:30pm to 8pm; Sat, Aug 1, 8:30am to 8pm; Sun, Aug 2, 8:30am to 4pm. In-Person at IMC. Registration required.

Look for article in this newsletter. For information and registration: see the event on IMC's website Calendar.

A DAY OF LOVINGKINDNESS PRACTICE WITH MATTHEW

BRENSILVER Sat, Aug 22, 9:45am to 4pm at Fellowship Hall, Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists, 1924 Cedar St, Berkeley, CA. We will explore the boundless friendliness of *metta* and the ways that it is both the path and the fruit of meditation practice. Includes guided and silent sitting and walking meditation, a dharma talk, and an opportunity to ask questions. All are welcome. Registration required: For registration and accessibility info see insightretreatcenter.org/offsite-retreats/

IMC COMMUNITY MEETING WITH GIL

Sun, Aug 23, 11am to 12pm. Everyone is welcome to an in-person discussion on the state of IMC and questions and concerns you may have. Follows the usual Sunday morning schedule.

REFUGE IN TIMES LIKE THESE DAYLONG WITH THINA

OLLIER AND LAUREN SILVER Sat, Sep 26, 9am to 4:30pm Intended for those who already understand the basic practice of mindfulness. Provides teachings on "going for refuge," one of the foundations for all Buddhist practice. Includes guided, silent and walking meditation, dharma talks, and time for Q&A. Practice discussions with the teachers will be available. Bring lunch.

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 SEPTEMBER) 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

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) Led by Lily Pan and Hilary Borison.

THIRD SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH, 4:30 TO 6PM (MEETINGS RESUME IN AUGUST). 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. Please sign up at least two days before the event. Info: IMC.familyprogram@gmail.com.

DHARMA BODHIS (MIDDLE SCHOOL) & MINDFUL TEENS

(HIGH SCHOOL) Led by Hilary Borison and Conrad Sherby. **SECOND SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH, 5PM ON ZOOM. (MEETINGS RESUME IN OCTOBER)**

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.

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.

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 Buddha's teachings. Includes 15-20 minutes of sitting meditation, a short talk on Dharma and Recovery followed by open discussion. Everyone is welcome. Peer-led group. 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.

SCHEDULE PG. 4

BIPOC SITTING GROUP WITH LILY HUANG In-person at IMC: **1st Sundays of each month, 5 to 6:30pm.** Open to those who identify as Black, Indigenous, or Person of Color. Includes a guided meditation, a brief Dharma talk, community check-ins, and group discussion. A supportive and nourishing environment for BIPOC folks to practice and grow on the path together.

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. Provides 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.

WOMEN'S CIRCLE OF MINDFULNESS WITH HILARY BORISON. **THURSDAYS, 11AM TO 12PM. USUALLY ON ZOOM; IN-PERSON AT IMC ONCE A MONTH; PLEASE CHECK THE IMC WEBSITE CALENDAR FOR DETAILS.** 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 10:50AM 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

DISPELLING DELUSION: EXPLORING THE VIPALLASAS THROUGH EARLY BUDDHIST POETRY WITH AYYA SANTUSSIKA **SUN, AUG 9, 9AM TO 12PM**

There are four *vipallasas*, (distortions) that cause most of our misapprehensions of reality. Dispelling these distortions leads to awakening, seeing the way things actually are. We will explore early Buddhist poetry that describes this breakthrough to enable us to do that same work.

DANA AND RENUNCIATION AS POLITICAL PRACTICE WITH SEAN OAKES **SAT, SEP 12, 9AM TO 12PM**

THERAVADA BUDDHISM WITH DR. ALEX RUIZ-FALQUÉS **4 FRIDAYS, OCT 2 – 23, 8 TO 9:30AM.** Four-week introductory course on Theravada Buddhism, the only living Buddhist tradition that preserves and transmits the earliest strata of Buddhist thought in an unbroken lineage. Covers history, literature, philosophy and meditation.

THANISSARO BHIKKHU DAYLONG **SAT, OCT 10, 9AM TO 4PM IN-PERSON AT IMC AND ON ZOOM**

CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Sati Center now offers two certificate programs in Buddhist Studies. More info can be found at sati.org/certificate-programs/

- THERAVADA BUDDHIST STUDIES
- BUDDHIST SPIRITUAL CARE

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.

BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY & SPIRITUAL CARE

- **INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY** with Paul Haller, Jennifer Block, and Gil Fronsdal **SEP 2026–JUL 2027**
- **ONLINE INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY** with Vanessa Able, Trent Thornley, and Dawn Neal **AUG 2026–JUL 2027**
- **ANUKAMPA PROGRAM: THE SPIRITUALITY OF CARE AND FREEDOM** with Vanessa Able and Gil Fronsdal **AUG 2026–JUN 2027**