

# Mid America Dharma News

Offering Insight Meditation to the Heartland | Spring 2018



## Beating Up on Ourselves

by Gloria Taraniya Ambrosia

We seem to have an incredible propensity for defining what arises in our minds as wrong or bad and then beating up on ourselves for the way we are. I've found that one cannot understate the degree of objectivity that is required in those moments. And realizing that high level of objectivity can take many years.

**What trips us up here is the fact that stomping on difficult states or beating up on ourselves seems to make perfect sense. We want to get rid of these states, don't we?**

When difficult states come up, we suffer. And the unawakened mind turns to the only strategies it knows for dealing with that suffering—that is, the five hindrances. We want some other condition, resist or hate the condition at hand, bury our heads in the sand, worry, and/or question our capacity to find freedom. The unawakened mind wants to get away from dukkha because it doesn't see the truth that dukkha is inherent in our existence. So we turn to the five hindrances to address our discomfort—not seeing, of course, that we are compounding it.

The Buddha puts forth a new approach to freedom—the seemingly counter intuitive approach of turning towards conditions, embracing them, holding no view about them, and realizing their impermanent and impersonal nature. The key here is a kind of objectivity that allows conditions to be what they are. This non-resistance and yet non-participation makes it possible to uproot the grasping that is really at the heart of difficulty. We move away from the states—but propelled by wisdom, not resistance.

**Gloria Taraniya Ambrosia** studies and practices within the Thai Forest Tradition, specifically the disciples of Ajahn Chah. She serves as a Core Faculty member at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies. She has been a Dhamma teacher since 1990. She is the co-author of *Older and Wiser: Classical Buddhist Teachings on Aging, Sickness, and Death*. To learn about her June 14-17, 2018 retreat in St. Louis, please see page 8.

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## Register online for our retreats:

- Visit [midamericadharmadharma.org](http://midamericadharmadharma.org)
- Click Mid America Dharma Retreats
- Register for your preferred retreat by clicking On-line Registration



We post up-to-date info on our Facebook page. Comment or message us anytime – we love to hear from you!

## **Vipassana Defined** excerpts from an edited talk titled **What is Vipassana?**

by Shaila Catherine

*Vipassana* is a Pali term in common usage in contemporary meditation circles. Usually the term is used to refer to the engagement of certain mindfulness techniques. *Vipassana* is translated as Insight. It means clear seeing. In our busy lives, blinded by the habit of only being superficially aware, we often don't see clearly. What did you really see today? How do you behold the world?

The popular notion that *vipassana* is about watching the breath, observing sensations arise in the mind, or letting go of thoughts misses the profound implications of this radical awareness. The traditional practices associated with *vipassana* direct our attention to the realization of insight through contemplation, mindfulness and investigation of three specific characteristics; *anicca*: the impermanence or changing nature of all things, *dukkha*: the unsatisfactory or unreliable nature of all things and *anatta*: the emptiness of all conditioned things.

*Vipassana* practices include various systematic meditative practices that highlight these three primary insights. When we clearly perceive the way things are, we are liberated from the misperception that any conditioned things could be a stable permanent basis for our happiness. We are liberated from ignorance.

People commonly believe experience to be other than it is and react based on misperception. We forget to notice that conditioned phenomena are impermanent, unreliable and not-self.

Sometimes students imagine that insight will be dramatic. Insight may simply be this quiet knowing of things as they actually are, rather than as we believe they should be.

I have asked many students to consider if they have known any experience that has not changed. No one has been able to provide an example. Perceptions may increase or decrease, get better or worse, disappear or transform. We all know that things change. Our bodies age. We meet people and then part. Our thoughts rapidly flit through consciousness. Our emotions fluctuate throughout the day.

The experience of the changing nature of things is not a rare or special occurrence, but how do we extract the insight from our experience? How do we experience life in a way that is liberating?

Meditation cultivates the capacity to steadily perceive the truth of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta* underneath the surface of experience. Insight transforms. It is the spotlight that puts experience into clear view. It is not intellectual understanding, a good idea at the time, or an experience that conforms to teachings. Insight transforms the fundamental way we experience life. These three insights prevent clinging. When clinging ceases, suffering ceases.

As we practice we learn to rest in the first moment of experience at any sense door, before it becomes a chain of discursive thinking where misperception colors awareness. Often people get entangled in their ideas about events, not even aware how far the attention is removed from the actuality of what has occurred.

The Buddha taught that everything we need for liberating insight can be found by looking into our own experience of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking. Just look into this moment's experience of sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and thought. Let the experience of life touch you. It is simply our actual moment to moment experience that we have to work with and wake up to — not a fantasy of what insight should be like.

Insight is the immediate knowing of things as they are actually occurring. It is the clear relationship to living that will reveal our freedom and put an end to suffering and resistance. You don't need to understand it or think about it so much.

**Shaila Catherine** is the founder of Bodhi Courses, an on-line Dhamma classroom, and Insight Meditation South Bay, a Buddhist meditation center in Silicon Valley in California. To learn about her upcoming retreat with Phil Jones, please see page 8.

## The Dharma of the Senses

by Bridget Rolens

It's been a difficult day and you're feeling stressed out. As you drive home you see your favorite fast food restaurant and you can smell the aroma of fries. Your mind thinks about how the pleasure of eating fries and drinking a milk shake has relieved the tension of your stress in the past. Another part of your mind reminds you that fries act like a gateway drug to compulsive eating of foods heavy in fat, sugar and salt. Your craving for the "quick fix" of fries and shake increases and aversion to NOT getting your fix increases. You act upon the craving, consume the fries and shake and find that it leads to an old behavior of compulsive eating to relieve stress, boredom, anxiety, anger or any other unpleasant feeling. While you continue to get brief relief from uncomfortable feelings by eating certain foods, overall the effects of this indulgence create more suffering.

Using food in this way may not be one of your strategies. But can you identify some other action that you engage in to avoid unpleasant feelings or to increase pleasant feelings in such a way that you end up suffering more not less?

All day long our eyes see forms, our ears hear sounds, our tongues taste flavors, our noses smell odors, our bodies feel physical sensations, and our minds think thoughts. All these sensory experiences are perceived as pleasant, unpleasant or neutral and, if we aren't paying attention, trigger a reaction. We grasp at the pleasant, push away the unpleasant and ignore the neutral. To the extent we react with greed (clinging to having pleasure)

hatred (avoiding pain) or delusion (ignoring neutral) we create suffering. The stronger the reaction, the greater the suffering.

In his book *Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Awakening* Joseph Goldstein shares the wisdom of Ledi Sayadaw, one of the great Burmese meditation masters and scholars of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries:

[Ledi Sayadaw] likened the sense bases [eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind] to six train stations from which trains travel to various destinations. Either they take us to situations of suffering, they take us to realms of happiness, or to freedom and full awakening. Consider how all the wholesome and unwholesome actions we do, with their respective karmic consequences, originate at one of the sense doors.

This teaching of the Buddha is a practice of mindfulness that can weave throughout each moment of life. It encourages us to stay tuned in to the intentions underlying our habitual reactions to sensory experience and gradually respond in wholesome ways. We experience moments of liberation from suffering. We get a taste of freedom. We gain the wisdom that understands what brings true happiness, a happiness that can pervade even the most difficult experiences of life.

**Bridget Rolens** will be in Springfield, IL for a non-residential retreat Oct. 12-14. For more information, please see page 9.

## Switching from Mail-in by Phil Jones

You may have noticed that this issue doesn't include a registration form. After a year of experimenting with our new on-line registration system while continuing with the mail-in registrations, we have decided to ask all retreatants to use our on-line system.

The on-line system allows us to gather more information during the registration process so that we can better serve you. It also allows us to change our registration information if there are last minute

changes, which we're unable to do with a registration form in the newsletter.

We hope that those who have chosen to continue using the paper registration form will be able to use the on-line system. But if you have problems with it or simply don't have access to a computer, please feel free to contact the registrar for assistance. Of course if you prefer to pay by check you will still have that option at the end of the registration process.

# Meditation and Psychotherapy

by Robert Brumet

Many individuals who practice meditation are also seeing a psychotherapist, which often precipitates questions about the relationship between these disciplines.

*“Can one grow spiritually without having psychotherapy?”*

*“Does psychotherapy enhance meditation practice— or vice versa?”*

*“Can meditation be considered an alternative to psychotherapy?”*

Traditionally, in the East spiritual practice has been emphasized with little attention given to psychological development. In the post-modern West just the opposite is true; many people in our culture turn to psychology rather than spirituality as a primary vehicle for the pursuit of happiness.

It's necessary to understand the intention and the scope of each discipline. A clear understanding of both the potential and the limitation of each practice is very important for every spiritual seeker.

I think it's safe to say that a common denominator of both disciplines lies in the admonition to “Know Thyself.” Virtually every form of psychotherapy and spiritual practice has the intention of increasing self-awareness. From this perspective both of these disciplines are mutually supportive of the other.

Another common denominator might be labeled “impulse containment”. Both disciplines generally encourage the individual to recognize impulses and desires before acting (or not acting) on them. Both advise that our actions should be conscious and intentional.

The biggest difference between psychotherapy and spiritual practice may lie in the assumption each makes regarding the nature of the self. In psychotherapy, the term self usually refers to the personal self or the ego. Most forms of psychotherapy are designed to strengthen the ego.

The general intention of most spiritual practice is to dissolve one's identification with the ego. Spiritual practice tends to see the ego as unreal and to use the term Self to reference a transcendent Self – something far beyond the ego or the personal self.

From this perspective these two disciplines may seem to be working at cross-purposes. This apparent dilemma need not be problematic if we understand the right function of the ego and the right relationship between these two disciplines.

We need a healthy ego to function in the world, and yet ultimately, the ego is not what we are. Psychotherapy can help us to heal and strengthen the ego; and spiritual practice can help us realize that we are more than the ego.

Psychotherapy and spiritual practice can be mutually supportive if we have clear understanding of the intention and purpose of each – but sometimes we try to use one to do what the other is designed to do. For example, we may be using spiritual practice to avoid issues that should be addressed in psychotherapy. Spiritual practices can be used as an escape from honestly looking at oneself. (Aka Spiritual By-Passing)

Conversely, some individuals become frustrated with psychotherapy because it does not address their deeper spiritual needs.

Psychotherapeutic interventions are sometimes used to treat spiritual emergencies. These interventions are often unsuccessful-and if they do seem to work they often simply mask the symptoms while leaving the real issues unaddressed.

The wisest approach is to find a psychotherapist who has a clear understanding of the nature and the purpose of spiritual practice, and to find a spiritual teacher who is psychologically literate and is able to discern when psychotherapeutic intervention is called for.

We are blessed to live in an era where we have access to both of these very powerful disciplines; yet this opportunity emphasizes the need for the knowledge and wisdom to use each of them effectively.

**Robert Brumet** leads the Unity Sangha in the Kansas City area and offers meditation retreats throughout North America. For more information, please see page 9.

## Green Eyes Glued to the Screen

by Rachel Shubert

A few months ago, I deactivated my Facebook account. I told people it was a “mental health break”. Everyone understood. The anger, politics. It’s addictive, yet trivial. We spend too much time on our phones, cut off from what’s going on around us. I should give it up too.

What I didn’t bring up in these conversations was that I was struggling with the envy that Facebook stirred up. In deactivating my account, I was seeking relief from that as much as anything else, but I found it embarrassing to admit.

What is it about envy? It’s a universal human experience, yet we cringe to confess it or discuss it. Envy deserves understanding and compassion as much as any other form of suffering and I’d like to drop the shame I carry around it.

My education began a few years ago, when my meditation practice was brightened by an introduction to the *Brahma Viharas*. Of the four, sympathetic joy, *mudita*, leapt out at me. I was lacking this quality, having always been so prone to envy, but had never recognized it until then. I marveled at the absence of a concept like sympathetic joy in all the positive psychology literature I had read. *Mudita* seemed downright innovative to me: a brilliant happiness hack. I loved the simple logic put forth by the Dalai Lama: if the happiness and good fortune of others becomes our own, our chances of joy “are enhanced six billion to one. Those are very good odds.”

What a relief it was to have the pain of envy quickly and drastically reduced by regular *metta* and *mudita* meditations! When doing *metta*, I’d select someone I was envious of as my “difficult” person to direct well wishes to, and I’d stick with them sitting after sitting until there was a shift in how I felt about the individual.

Relief from envy transformed into joyful experiences. I could observe something beautiful happening to a complete stranger and bask in it wholeheartedly. My comparing, fearful mind relaxed enough for me to be genuinely happy for the people in my life when they had good news. Basking in lovingkindness and vicarious joy had me feeling uplifted. Generous. Blessed.

Why did my joy-producing practices slow, falter, and eventually grind to a halt? It’s possible I succumbed to the “far enemy” of *mudita*, giddiness, exhilaration or that I was slipping towards spiritual pride. I realized that envy was starting to hurt again. It was Facebook that often clued me into this.

I cannot be alone. I suspect the pain of envy is rampant among my generation (I’m 35) and those younger, inflamed by the constant stream of information about people we know on social media platforms – their new homes, their dream vacations, engagement photos, charming wedding clips, adorable children. On Instagram, you’ll see this overlaid with a gauzy filter so it’s even dreamier. On LinkedIn, you’ll encounter promotion announcements and general proof of everyone’s career brilliance. Back on Facebook you’ll read the witty anecdotes and the humblebrags.

We choose the images and narratives we place before others as carefully as any lifestyle magazine. Even when a person understands that they aren’t seeing the full truth of other people’s lives on social media—in fact, some may be overcompensating online—the selective information we receive still has an emotional impact. This is especially true when you’re down or struggling.

What to do? And if I’m not alone—which I’m sure I’m not—why don’t I hear more about envy and sympathetic joy in Buddhist circles? *Mudita* seems to take a backseat to mindfulness, lovingkindness, and just about everything else. I asked Jan Rosamond about this perception.

“*Mudita* has a PR problem,” she said. As *metta* practice is taken seriously by more practitioners, *mudita* is gaining alongside it. “Sympathetic joy is hard for Westerners,” as hyper-individualized and competitive as we are. “It’s easier for a Westerner to grasp lovingkindness or compassion, than it is to relax the concepts of self and other enough to allow sympathetic joy to come forth.” Once a student is immersed in lovingkindness, it’s easier to teach them that *mudita* is a natural extension of *metta*:

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Continued on page 11

## Mindfulness as a Way of Life

by Oren Jay Sofer

One afternoon at IMS, during the annual three-month retreat, Joseph Goldstein and I were talking about the importance of integrating the practice into one's daily life. I mentioned that one could easily create an online course focused on post-retreat integration. Joseph looked at me and smiled and said, "Great, why don't you do it?"

That was the birth of Next Step Dharma ([www.nextstepdharma.org](http://www.nextstepdharma.org)), a six-week online course specifically designed to support practitioners to bring meditation into their daily lives.

There can be a tendency to think of mindfulness practice as a special activity, separate from the rest of our lives. But if mindfulness is something we only do at certain times, its value becomes quite limited. To be transformed by the Dharma requires making mindfulness part of the fabric of our lives.

**There can be a tendency to think of mindfulness practice as a special activity, separate from the rest of our lives. ... To be transformed by the Dharma requires making mindfulness part of the fabric of our lives.**

The demands and pressures of modern society make this challenging. When we spend the majority of our time doing and accomplishing, that way of relating to experience gets imprinted on the mind. This carries over into our contemplative practice, where we can end up viewing mindfulness itself as another thing to "do." It becomes something with a beginning and an end, something we can get right or wrong, rather than an ongoing process of learning.

There are many ways to step out of this limiting relationship to mindfulness. It begins with developing more ease in our formal practice. We can shift our effort from an attitude of 'doing' to one of 'being,' and access the innately receptive quality of awareness.

Try it out. Play with the difference between "paying attention" to your breathing and "feeling" your breathing. The former often involves an inner contraction, a narrowing of the mental focus, or a subtle leaning towards the breath. To feel the breathing is an opening of attention; we settle back into receiving the experience.

As you get a feel for this quality of balanced presence, you can start to notice when there is unnecessary tension in your practice. The jaw tightens; the eyes contract or the brow furrows; maybe your hands clench slightly. As we become more sensitive to these signals, we learn how to investigate what's driving the tension and gently release it.

With intention, this process carries over into the rest of our life. We may notice how constricted our breathing has become in a meeting, or how tightly we're gripping the steering wheel in traffic. The strain becomes apparent, we soften and relax. Throughout the day, we learn more and more to return to an easy, natural alertness.

Practicing mindfulness in a relaxed and receptive way, we realize that we actually can be mindful all the time. Knowing what's happening within and without becomes as natural as seeing or hearing. The mind is aware all of the time, if we learn how to notice it.

When mindfulness is something we do, it happens during discrete periods of day. When it's about genuine learning, it becomes how we live.

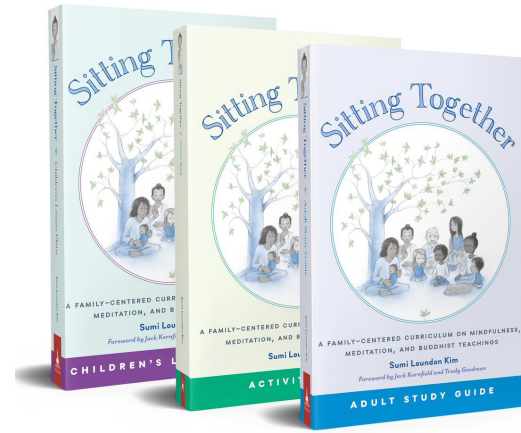
**OrenJaySofer** has practiced meditation in the Theravada Buddhist tradition since 1997 and is a long-time student of Joseph Goldstein, Michele McDonald, and Ven. Ajahn Sucitto. He holds a degree in Comparative Religion from Columbia University, is a Somatic Experiencing Practitioner for healing trauma, a Nonviolent Communication Trainer, and a member of the Spirit Rock Teachers' Council. Oren is the Founder of Next Step Dharma, and the author of the book, *Say What You Mean: A Mindful Approach to Nonviolent Communication*. [www.OrenJaySofer.com](http://www.OrenJaySofer.com)

# Sitting Together: A Family-Centered Curriculum on Mindfulness, Meditation, and Buddhist Teachings

A Book Review by Amy Zoe Schonhof

The Family is the first sangha. That is the central intimation of Sumi Loundon Kim's latest publication, *Sitting Together: A Family-Centered Curriculum on Mindfulness, Meditation, and Buddhist Teachings*.

*Sitting Together* provides curricula for parents and children that integrate mindfulness and meditation with fundamental Buddhist teachings on kindness, ethics, character and service. Volume one is a study guide containing thirty-six lesson plans for adults. Volume two is for children ages 3-12, and also contains thirty-six lesson plans, and a songbook. Volume three contains fifty-seven activities that complement the children's curriculum.



***Sitting Together* offers an accessible, well-considered and knowledgeable orientation to Buddhist teachings for individuals and communities interested in integrating these wisdom teachings into the hearts and minds of children and families.**

The *Sitting Together* curricula can be utilized by individual families, grandparents and grandchildren, multiple families who wish to form community, and established Dharma communities. The lesson plans can be used as stand-alone or taught in tandem. The lessons can be taught weekly or spread out over time. Individual lessons within each unit can be stand-alone or build upon one another.

Two things make this offering critical and relevant in the realm of mindfulness curricula. First, is the intentional inclusion of mindfulness within the larger body of traditional Buddhist nomenclature. Although mindfulness teachings are ubiquitous as a result of the proliferation of secular mindfulness-based interventions, these offerings are often absent of important components of Buddhist teachings—particularly ethics, morality and character development. These are

important teachings many of us wish to instill in our children. *Sitting Together* provides a roadmap for bringing these conversations into the family, without being heavy-handed with religion.

Second, Loundon Kim's offering provides the opportunity for families to learn and practice together. For example, while adults are learning about the Precepts in the unit on ethics, the children's curriculum is delivering an age-appropriate complement. This gives the family the chance to integrate these teachings as a collaborative undertaking.

What warms my heart most about *Sitting Together* is the emphasis on the family as the first sangha. It is within the family where our fundamental understanding of ourselves, the outer world and our place within it originates. *Sitting Together* offers an accessible, well-considered and knowledgeable orientation to Buddhist teachings for individuals and communities interested in integrating these wisdom teachings into the hearts and minds of children and families. It is a lovely reminder to make the home a place of refuge and encourages the family to make the effort to sit...together.

**Amy Zoe Schonhoff** is a mother, Mid America Dharma board member and teacher of mindfulness-based interventions for adults and children.

# Mid America Dharma Retreats

## Gloria Taraniya Ambrosia

Residential Retreat—A Practical Examination of the Fourth Foundation of Mindfulness

June 14-17, 2018, St. Louis, MO | Online registration open. Closes May 31, 2018



**Gloria Taraniya Ambrosia** studies and practices within the Thai Forest Tradition, specifically the disciples of Ajahn Chah. She serves as a Core Faculty member at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies. Taraniya served as resident teacher of the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts from 1996 through 1999. She has been a Dhamma teacher since 1990. She is the co-author of *Older and Wiser: Classical Buddhist Teachings on Aging, Sickness, and Death*.

### Fee Range:

Actual Cost, Single: .....	\$390
Minimum: .....	\$340
Reduced: .....	\$365
Supporter: .....	\$415
Sponsor: .....	\$440
Benefactor: .....	\$490

## Shaila Catherine and Philip Jones

Residential Retreat—Awakening with Insight

August 9-16, 2018, Leavenworth, KS | Online registration opens May 9 and closes July 30, 2018



**Shaila Catherine** is the founder of Bodhi Courses, an on-line Dhamma classroom and Insight Meditation South Bay, a Buddhist meditation center in Silicon Valley, California. Shaila has been practicing meditation since 1980 and has taught since 1996. She studied with masters in India, Nepal and Thailand, completed a one-year intensive meditation retreat, and authored *Focused and Fearless*. She has extensive experience with the practice of *metta*. Shaila has been practicing under the direction of Ven. Pa-Auk Sayadaw. She authored *Wisdom Wide and Deep*.

### Fee Range:

Actual Cost, Single: .....	\$875
Minimum: .....	\$800
Reduced: .....	\$825
Supporter: .....	\$900
Sponsor: .....	\$925
Benefactor: .....	\$975



**Philip Jones** has practiced meditation since 1987 and has been teaching Insight Meditation since 1996. He studied with teachers from Spirit Rock and the Insight Meditation Society and graduated from the first Community Dharma Leader training program in 2000. He studied for a number of years with Matthew Flickstein and more recently has been practicing with Shaila Catherine. He has served on the board of directors of Mid America Dharma, since the mid-1990s. Many of his talks and writings can be found at [silentmindopenheart.org](http://silentmindopenheart.org).

### LISTEN

Shaila's retreat recordings at <http://dharmaseed.org/teacher/163/>

Philip's retreat recordings at [www.midamericadharmadharma.org/audio.html](http://www.midamericadharmadharma.org/audio.html).



# Mid America Dharma Retreats

## **Bridget Rolens** Non-Residential Retreat—The Dharma of the Senses

October 12-14, 2018, Springfield, IL | Online registration opens August 12 and closes October 4, 2018



**Bridget Rolens** teaches mindfulness meditation as a spiritual practice and as a tool for stress reduction. Bridget has certification as a Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction teacher and is a Healthy Steps trainer. She completed the Core Coach Training Program of Wellcoaches School of Coaching. Recognized by the Spirit Rock Teachers Council as a Community Dharma Leader, she leads a weekly insight meditation group and offers classes and retreats. Forty-five years of experience in healthcare and spiritual practices rooted in Christian, Buddhist and Twelve-Step Recovery traditions give Bridget a strong understanding of the connection between body, mind and spirit.

### Fee Range:

Actual Cost, Single: .....	\$85
Minimum: .....	\$55
Reduced: .....	\$75
Supporter: .....	\$95
Benefactor: .....	\$115

## **Robert Brumet** Householder Retreat—Multi Day Non-Residential Retreat

October 28 - November 1, 2018, Kansas City, MO | Online registration opens Aug. 28 and closes Oct. 21.



**Robert Brumet** has practiced Insight Meditation since 1988. He has been leading a local sangha and conducting meditation retreats throughout North America since 1995. In the early 1990s he received *Vipassana* facilitator training from Shinzen Young. In January 2000 he graduated from the Community Dharma Leader training program sponsored by Spirit Rock Meditation Center. Robert is one of the founding members of Mid America Dharma. He teaches at Unity Institute and Seminary near Lee's Summit, MO

### Fee Range:

Actual Cost, Single: .....	\$85
Minimum: .....	\$55
Reduced: .....	\$75
Supporter: .....	\$95
Benefactor: .....	\$115

**LISTEN** to Robert's retreat recordings on our Audio page  
[<http://midamericadharma.org/index.php/audio/>]

## **Spring Washam** Two-Part Non-Residential Retreat, St. Louis, MO

November 1, 2018 — Evening talk for self-identified People of Color (POC) only

November 2-4, 2018 — Non-residential retreat for All Community

Online registration opens Sept.1 and closes Oct. 25, 2018



**Spring Washam** is a meditation and dharma teacher at the East Bay Meditation Center in Oakland, CA. She is founder of Lotus Vine Journeys, an organization that blends indigenous healing practices with Buddhist wisdom. She authored *A Fierce Heart*. She trained with Jack Kornfield and has studied meditation and Buddhist philosophy since 1997. She is a member of the Spirit Rock Teachers Council. She is a healer, facilitator, spiritual activist, and writer and brings mindfulness practices into diverse communities. She practiced and studied under masters in the Theravada and Tibetan traditions. To learn more about Spring, visit her website at [www.springwasham.com](http://www.springwasham.com).

### Fee Range:

#### All Community Weekend:

Actual Cost .....	\$65
Minimum.....	\$40
Reduced .....	\$60
Supporter.....	\$70
Benefactor.....	\$90

Saturday and Sunday only: \$60

POC Thursday Night..... \$5

(POC Thursday Night attendees will receive a \$5 discount toward the cost of the All Community Weekend)

Friday Only \$5

Weekend Only \$55

## Dana For Our Sangha

Mid America Dharma operates through the generosity of our volunteers and the financial gifts of our supporters, which help to cover our operating expenses, support our teachers and scholarship fund.

In the Pali language, generosity is called dana. Generosity is part of a 2500 year old tradition of supporting the Buddha's teachings, Dharma teachers, and sangha through gifts. The practice of dana is more than just providing financial support. It allows each of us to explore the experiences of giving and receiving.

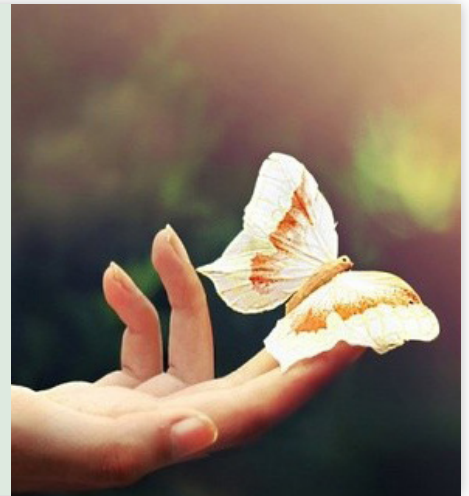
Mid America Dharma is very grateful for all the support we receive. If you are interested in giving dana to Mid America Dharma, you may donate on-line by going to the donate page of our website or fill out the form below.

### Yes, I want to support the work of Mid America Dharma!

- Donate **online** at [www.midamericadharmadharma.org/index.php/donate/](http://www.midamericadharmadharma.org/index.php/donate/) using your credit or debit card
- Enclosed is my **check** to Mid America Dharma for \$\_\_\_\_\_.  
Please mail to Mid America Dharma, c/o Amy Zoe Schonhof  
P.O. Box 8472, Kansas City, MO 64114

I would like to support the following: (Please indicate your choice(s)).

- MAD Operating Support
- MAD Scholarship Fund
- MAD Teachers



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## Retreat Basics: The Five Precepts

We ask everyone participating in our retreats to make a commitment to follow the Five Ethical Precepts, a foundation for our practice. The precepts create the community of harmony and safety necessary for our work of turning inward. The self restraint we show by following the Precepts is essential to settle the mind.

Through this we develop confidence in our work and ability to do the practice. Following the Precepts bestows a sense of happiness with our own goodness.

- ▶ I undertake the training of refraining from taking the life of any living being.
- ▶ I undertake the training of refraining from taking what has not been given.
- ▶ I undertake the training of refraining from any form of intentional sexual activity.\*
- ▶ I undertake the training of refraining from false and harmful speech.
- ▶ I undertake the training of refraining from intoxicating drink and drugs that lead to heedlessness.

\* A more general form of this precept is “I undertake the training to refrain from sexual misconduct,” but at retreat we commit to the version stated above.

# Retreat Registration

**Insight Meditation offers** an easily accessible way to free the mind from the distortions of self-centeredness, negativity and confusion. Through concentrated awareness, we see that our experience is a constantly changing process, in which all aspects of life are accepted with increasing balance and equanimity. This insight leads to the possibility of living each moment fully, with compassion and genuine freedom. Insight Meditation requires no belief commitments and is compatible with religious affiliations. Unless specified, no previous meditation experience is required.

**Retreat Format:** Periods of sitting meditation and/or Dharma teachings alternate with walking meditation. Retreats are held in silence, with talking only during specified teaching periods. Beginners should be present from the start of the retreat to receive initial instructions.

Please bring a meditation cushion or bench and a soft floor pad for meditation. Standard chairs are available and may also be used. Wear comfortable, loose fitting clothes. Please do not wear or bring strongly scented lotions, perfumes or incense.

**Residential retreats** begin with check-in at 4 PM on the first day and run through lunch on the last day. Participants are guided through group or private interviews and daily general lectures. Meals are simple. A tea table is provided.

**Registration:** Information about retreat site, starting times, etc., is available online or will be sent after you register.

**Fees:** Retreat costs are listed under each retreat heading.

**Sliding Scale:** Costs for each retreat are listed as a range.

Any amount paid above the actual cost will be regarded as a tax-deductible contribution used to support retreat expenses and scholarships.

**Residential:** a minimum deposit of \$75 must accompany registration; full payment is due before the start of the retreat. Non-residential retreats: please pay the full fee when you register.

**Registration Opening Dates and Deadlines:** are listed on the specific retreat pages. Registrations are not accepted prior to the beginning date for each retreat. If the registration fee for a residential retreat is not received by the deadline, there is a \$25 late fee.

**Refunds:** We will refund fees if requested before the deadline. Refunds requested later than this are made at the discretion of Mid-America Dharma's Board of Directors.

**Scholarships:** We do not want inability to pay to prevent you from attending. We offer a reduced rate on residential retreats. If further financial support is needed to attend residential and non-residential retreats, we offer scholarships. Learn more about these options when you register online or the registrar can send you written materials. Applications must be received by the registrar no later than three weeks prior to the retreat.

**Teacher Support:** Our retreats are led by teachers who freely give the teachings without payment. All retreat fees go for retreat expenses, such as facility rental and meals. It is central to this tradition that students support teachers through their dana (donations).

There is no expected amount, but please give to the extent you are able. Dana is completely voluntary.

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## Green Eyes Glued to the Screen

*Continued from page 5*

it is what occurs when the loving heart encounters the flourishing of others, just as compassion is what results when the loving heart encounters suffering in others. Jan reminded me that envy is to be worked with and that observing it closely is a good place to start.

I realize that I don't need to treat envy like an odious weed, to be plucked out of the garden of my heart the moment it is found. Sympathetic joy doesn't need to be planted in desperation in all of the empty spaces created

by weeding. Maybe I should work the soil, and seek to enrich the ground from which everything is growing.

So back to *metta* practice. Love for my sometimes envious, sometimes generous, very imperfect self. Love for others, even if their Facebook streams have made me antsy. Especially if their Facebook streams have done so. Love for all of us striving, comparing creatures. No forcing the matter or faking the happiness or rushing the growth... and for just awhile longer, no checking Facebook. I have more time to meditate this way.

## Mid America Dharma

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## Mid America Dharma Upcoming Retreats

- June 14-17, 2018..... Residential retreat, Gloria Taraniya Ambrosia, St. Louis, MO
- August 9-16, 2018..... Residential retreat, Shaila Catherine and Phil Jones, Leavenworth, KS
- October 12-14, 2018..... Non-Residential retreat, Bridget Rolens, Springfield, IL
- October 28-Nov. 1, 2018..... Householder Non-Residential retreat, Robert Brumet, Kansas City, MO
- Nov. 1-4, 2018 ..... Non-Residential retreat, Spring Washam, St. Louis, MO

For all of our 2018 retreats, see [WWW.MIDAMERICADHARMA.ORG/RETREATS](http://WWW.MIDAMERICADHARMA.ORG/RETREATS).