

## Tips for Establishing a Meditation Practice

Meditation is a powerful practice that has a cumulative effect the more you do it – and the more regularly you do it. Because we have so many distractions in our lives, so much sensory input, and because we have not yet established meditation as a 'habit', it can be difficult to continue with our initial enthusiasm...

If you would like to make meditation a part of your life, we've listed some things below that you can do to support that wish. If you would like more information about Center events, please ask, call, or check our website.

### ❖ **Meditate with other people**

Meditating with other people whenever we can – in the morning or evening (or both!) – is a good way to support a regular meditation practice. Here are some ideas:

- ♦ Befriend meditators!
- ♦ Thursday Drop-In introductory meditation class the first & third Thursday of the month, 7-8:30pm. Two techniques are taught that provide a balanced basis for the development of insight, clarity, and compassion.
- ♦ There are (unled) 40-minute sits every weekday morning at the Center starting at 7:30am (doors open at 7:25 and close at 7:30), and every Monday evening at 6pm.
- ♦ 'Sangha Night' Wednesdays, 6:45-9:15pm is our ongoing class and focuses on meditation. Please join us!

### ❖ **Set up a 'dedicated,' (quiet, if possible), area to meditate in**

In setting up a place to sit you can:

- ♦ Get a cushion (or a bench, or chair - whatever you use) that you are comfortable sitting on and leave it there.
- ♦ Leave something there that you find beautiful or inspiring.

### ❖ **Schedule the Time/Prepare**

- ♦ Set aside some time every day or at other intervals.
- ♦ Even a few minutes of meditation time can be helpful to start with. There are very good CDs on sale in the Center of led meditations if you need help getting started!
- ♦ Ways of preparing before meditation include: body awareness, yoga or tai chi, chanting, walking meditation, or just sitting quietly. We offer a yoga class Tuesdays at 5:45pm. Most people don't realize yoga was invented as preparation for meditation!

### ❖ **Deepen your experience**

**Retreats** are a traditional and excellent way to deepen your meditation practice in a beautiful, natural setting. Its benefits are unique. We go on weekend retreats several times a year, and longer retreats (5-10 days) in the summer and winter. We also offer occasional non-residential one-day retreats at the Center. All these retreats are appropriate for beginning as well as more experienced meditators.

❖ **Deepen your interest and understanding**

- ♦ Take a 6-week Introduction to Buddhist Meditation or Introduction to Buddhism course.
- ♦ Come to a day or weekend retreat, combining meditation practice and study.
- ♦ Drop-in to Wednesday Sangha Night or sign up for a course.
- ♦ Read a book written by a very experienced meditator and teacher, such as Parmananda's *A Practical Guide to Buddhist Meditation* or Jinananda's *Meditating*. There is a recommended reading list available by request.

❖ **Seek personal guidance if you need it**

- ♦ If you have a question about your personal meditation practice you can call the Center to set up a meditation interview with a meditation teacher. These are brief meetings (about 15 minutes or less) during which you can receive some simple guidance on how to work with what is arising during your meditation practice. Often our own intuition can guide us, but every once in a while some external guidance may be needed or helpful.

## **Review of Two Basic Meditation Techniques**

❖ **Mindfulness of Breathing**

1. Count after the out-breath
2. Count before the in-breath
3. Awareness of the whole of the breath (no counting)
4. Awareness of the point at which we feel the breath enter the body

❖ **Loving-kindness Meditation (Metta Bhavana)**

1. Self
2. Good friend
3. Neutral person
4. Difficult person
5. 1-4 together + all beings

## **Ongoing Classes and Upcoming Events**

- ❖ Every month there is a bulletin of upcoming SFBC events posted on our website and also printed on one page found in the Center. Let us know if you would like to have this bulletin emailed to you once a month. SFBC Schedule: **Drop-in intro to meditation**, first and third Thursday of the month; **6-week Introduction to Meditation or Buddhism course**, Tuesdays, 7pm (see bulletin for start dates); following on from our intro courses on meditation and Buddhism, we regularly offer short **Continuation Courses** on Mondays (see bulletin); **Morning Meditation**, M–F, 7:30 am; **Monday evening meditation**, 6pm; **Hatha Yoga** Tuesdays, 5:45pm; **Wednesday Sangha Night** focusing on meditation, 6:45 – 9:15pm; **Affinity groups: Men's Nights** on 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursdays, 7pm; **People of Color** sits once a month on Sunday afternoons, 1pm; **Queer women's group** usually meets on 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays, 7pm. **Also**, see our **retreat calendar** in the Center or on our website