

Introductory Meditation Course

This course will run over 9 weeks on Fridays from midday until 1pm commencing in February 2nd February and finishing 29th March. (N.B. The last 29th March session is a Thursday as 30th March is Good Friday). WIMR Human Resources have endorsed this course to promote staff wellbeing. Limited spots are also available to other Westmead precinct staff members.

This course is designed for people who have never meditated before, however people who already know how to meditate will also find it useful. We will provide a thorough grounding in two approaches to meditation; mindfulness and the cultivation of positive emotion through three meditation practices.

Walking Meditation: In this practice one learns how to apply mindfulness to common everyday activities such as walking. This can have a grounding experience and be effective in managing stress.

Mindfulness of Breathing: In this practice one learns to cultivate mindfulness towards the breath. It can have an effect of calming the mind and one also learns how to find contentment in the present moment. If practiced regularly it can also have a powerful integrating effect on the mind leading to less inner conflict.

Cultivating positive emotion: This is done through a meditation practice is called ‘The Mettā Bhāvanā’. In this practice one actively cultivates positive states of mind such as kindness, friendliness, compassion, joy in the happiness of others and equanimity. One learns to actively work on habitual negative thinking patterns, leading to a more positive self-image and learning to dwell in more positive states of mind. It also helps to dissolve the barrier between ‘self and other’ and one learns to relate to other people on the basis of their common humanity. This has a very beneficial effect both to oneself and to the world.

Course Outline

Week 1: What is meditation?

- What is meditation?
- Course overview
- Introducing mindfulness
- Walking meditation and body scan
- Questions and answers

Week 2: Introducing the Mindfulness of Breathing

- Overview of the mindfulness of breathing
- Using counting to help focus on the breath
- Walking meditation
- The Mindfulness of Breathing (stage 1 and 2)
- Questions and answers

Week 3: Balancing our efforts

- Balancing our effort
- Walking meditation
- The Mindfulness of Breathing (full practice)
- Questions and answers

Week 4: Curiosity

- Curiosity exercise
- The Mindfulness of Breathing (short practice)
- Discussion

Week 5: Introducing the Mettā Bhāvanā - kindness to ourselves

- Overview of the Mettā Bhāvanā
- Cultivating kindness towards ourselves
- The Mettā Bhāvanā (stage 1)
- Questions and answers

Week 6: The Mettā Bhāvanā - kindness to others

- Cultivating kindness towards a good friend
- The Mettā Bhāvanā (stages 1 - 3)
- Questions and answers

Week 7: The Mettā Bhāvanā - kindness to people we find difficult

- How to cultivating kindness towards people we find difficult
- The Mettā Bhāvanā (full practice)
- Questions and answers

Week 8: Imagination and beauty

- Using our imagination to embrace beauty and cultivate contentment
- The Mindfulness of Breathing (full practice)

Week 9: Practice week

- Questions and answers
- The Mettā Bhāvanā (full practice)

Please contact Andrew Harman (andrew.harman@sydney.edu.au) if you wish to attend any of these classes.

After the Course

Once you have attended this course you are welcome to join the following regular meditation classes which are all held in the WIMR Level 2 Video Conference Room (C2.31) situated near reception:

1. Meditation with limited guidance (Monday's midday -12.45pm)

This is for people who have learnt to meditate and little or no guidance is offered. We usually meditate for 30-40 minutes and often incorporate Zen poetry and inspirational readings.

2. Guided meditation around a theme (Wednesday's midday - 1pm)

This includes a 20 minutes presentation or discussion on a meditation theme followed by a guided meditation and then some time for questions. We often have an invited Buddhist meditation teachers to teach this class.

3. Meditation and Study/Discussion (Friday's 11am - midday)

This is for people are interested in exploring meditation themes in more depth. It is usually within a Buddhist context. We meditate for 30 minutes and then read and discuss a book. People are welcome to leave after the meditation. You do not need to be a Buddhist (or even want to be one) to attend this session.

Books read:

2016: Living with Kindness by *Sangharakshita*

2017: Living with Awareness by *Sangharakshita*

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