

Dear Retreatant,

We are looking forward to the Insight Meditation Society retreat *Our Relational Sensitivity on a Whole-Life Path: A Responsibility and a Blessing* with Gregory Kramer, assisted by Peace Twesigye.

To receive the most benefit, please consider releasing other engagements so as to commit to a weekend of sustained simplicity, investigation, and serenity. The retreat will offer an introduction to an experiential sense of Insight Dialogue, a deeper sense of sangha, and renewed enthusiasm for a whole-life Dhamma path where nothing –surely not our moments engaged with other people– is to be left out.

Intrinsic to this retreat is [Insight Dialogue](#) practice, a formal practice that brings together meditative awareness, Buddhist wisdom teachings, and natural human relatedness. Insight Dialogue guidelines will be introduced and mainly practiced in small group breakouts. Please plan on practicing in breakouts to get the most from this retreat. In this letter, we provide suggestions that, in our experience, have proved to be supportive for online practice. Please read it carefully. Where possible, we encourage you to do your best in meeting these conditions.

This retreat is based on Gregory's book [A Whole-Life Path](#). Although this is not required reading to participate, the book will contribute to a deeper understanding of the material and enhance your opportunities to apply the teachings to your life. [Click here for the first two chapters](#) to get you started.

If you have any questions about the retreat that is not registration related, please email jean@metta.org.

Yours in the Dhamma,

Gregory and Peace

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June 25-27, 2021

Ethical Guidelines

The course will be grounded in our shared commitment to ethical conduct and non-harming, just as it would be if we were practicing together in a physical meditation hall. To guide our practice and create a safe place for sangha to grow, we request that you review and commit to the following precepts.

1. **We undertake the precept of non-harming.** In undertaking this precept, we acknowledge the interconnection of all beings and our respect for all life. We agree to refine our understanding of non-harming in all our actions, specifically how our words and deeds can bring harm or kindness in interaction.
2. **We undertake the precept of refraining from taking what is not given.** We agree to not take that which does not belong to us and to respect the property of others. We also agree to take responsibility for anything shared during any session of this course.
3. **We undertake the precept of refraining from sexual misconduct.** We agree to avoid creating harm through sexuality and to avoid sexual exploitation. In our ID practice, we take particular care around speech or behavior that might create sexual discomfort. Sexual feelings can be known and not spoken. In addition, commenting about appearance, regardless of intent, is not appropriate and can be misconstrued as sexual in nature. Special care is required in the intimate container created during breakout sessions.
4. **We undertake the precept of refraining from false, harsh or frivolous speech.** We agree to cultivate conscious and clear communication, and to cultivate the quality of loving-kindness and honesty as the basis of our speech. We agree to take responsibility for what we share, aware of the impact it may have on others. We also respectfully agree not to share what others have shared with us without their permission, with the exception of situations when something shared has resulted in harm.
5. **We undertake the precept of refraining from intoxicants that cause heedlessness or loss of awareness.** We agree that we will not use intoxicants during the sessions, and be mindful of how what we consume, such as stimulants and other forms of toxins, can impact our practice and interactions. Because this is a retreat at home, we invite you to notice if you experience technology engagement as a possible form of intoxication.

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Before the Meeting

- Plan on attending the first session with Zoom already downloaded with the [updated version](#) onto your computer, tablet or phone, and with some familiarity with how it functions. For example, be prepared knowing how to turn on your video, mute / un-mute, speaker and gallery view (lets you see everyone at once, except if using a phone or tablet), volume control, etc. You can find some information [here](#) and there are also many online resources.
- Please try to find a quiet and distraction free space in which to take your seat for practice.
- Alert the people in your household to your commitment to be fully present and free of distractions during the online gatherings and ask they respect both the privacy of your meditation partners and the meditative nature of the session.
- Please join with only one person to a Zoom screen (for ease of setting up breakouts), and do not join on more than one device.
- If you need to use your computer or phone, consider designating a time or times to attend to them and otherwise refrain from engagement with technology outside of those periods if possible, given your household responsibilities. You are encouraged to silence your cellular phone (including the vibrate function), to only open the Zoom room on your computer screen during the practice sessions, and to close all other windows on your computer.
- You are encouraged to sit in front of a clean, simple background.
- Please plan on being in your seat, Zoom ready, and somewhat settled a few minutes before the start of each session. We will begin each session promptly, and it is supportive if everyone is settled when we begin.
- Please [name yourself](#) if you have not yet done so.

During the Meeting

- Your presence is highly valued. Please leave your video on, as this helps create a greater sense of community.
- If you need to move your device for some reason, please turn the video off while you're moving. It can be quite distracting and disorienting if one person starts moving around, just as it would be in the meditation hall.
- If, for the same reason, you are joining the call from your phone, please set your phone up somewhere where it can stay still.

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- In order to take care that what is shared stays within our meeting, please make sure that the call cannot be heard by others in your household. It could be helpful to use a headset or earphones. Please do not record the group meeting, either using Zoom or other devices.

During Practice in Small Group Breakouts

There will be invitation for small groups 'Breakout Rooms' for Insight Dialogue practice.

- Please respect the silence outside of the Insight Dialogue practice, and give special care to the ethical guidelines in the intimate container created in these breakout sessions. Breaches to the guidelines will be handled on an individual basis and participants may be asked to leave the session/course.
- Please attend these sessions with the intent to participate in the breakout sessions.
- If you do not intend to practice in small group breakouts, please leave the session when prompted as it will impact the formation of the breakout groups.
- You will be sent into breakout rooms automatically. This is to provide ease and inclusion for those who join by phone.
- For those joining by video, please "share video" with your practice partners when participating in breakouts.
- There will be an option to ask for assistance and also to leave a breakout room any time. If support is needed, click "ask for help" and a facilitator will be sent to your room.
- If you are logged in but appear not to be present for the breakout, you may be removed from the session.
- If you have a special request for assignment in breakout rooms, please let us know in advance of the session. Please only make requests if there is a special need, as opposed to a preference.

Support

Due to the nature of this practice, we may find ourselves being impacted by material we read or Dharma talks we listen to. If at any point during your engagement with this course you feel overwhelmed, we suggest you have a trusted person that you can connect with. In the unlikely event that you experience something of concern, please contact the Zoom host.

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