



# Insight Meditation Center of Pioneer Valley

## Summer/Fall 2020

all events are via Zoom

### ***Facing Death, Impermanence & Climate Change: A practical introduction to Buddhist Death Contemplation***

Course with Nick Boutros

**4 Mondays, August 17 - September 7; 7:00 - 8:30pm**

*Suggested contribution: \$32-80 registration + teacher donation*

Death Contemplation is an ancient practice in many spiritual traditions. In the Buddhist world, maranasati (literally mindfulness of death) is recommended to bring about clarity, bravery, equanimity and spiritual urgency. Put another way, we contemplate death not because we're obsessed with death, but because of the opposite: it's a means to keep us aware that we're alive now and remind us of the ways that we want to live, despite the messiness of life and its eventual ending.

In this course, we'll primarily explore death contemplation from the ancient meditation manual, the Visuddhimagga. Its eight death contemplations have been updated and related to our modern context. Emphasis will also be given to systemic awareness and change, helping us to look not only at our own death but at the unpredictable world in which we live, and, importantly, at climate change, which represents the potential end of life as we know it. After all, maranasati isn't just about death but about all experiences that overwhelm our everyday ability to grapple with what we're presented with.

As part of this work, we will confront our cultural and personal alienation from death. We'll review practices such as mindfulness of breathing and loving-kindness, which help create the right context with which to examine this emotionally intense subject matter. Finally, we'll also regularly question how we can bring more and more awareness of death into our daily lives.

Because of the emotionally intense nature of this course material, some previous experience with meditation is highly encouraged. At the very least, you need the ability to gauge your stimulation level and have tools to self-soothe if needed. If you're unsure whether you're a good fit for this course, please consult with a mental health professional or meditation teacher before signing up, or talk to the instructor.

### ***Upright in the Storm***

Full-day retreat with Devon and Craig Hase

**Saturday, August 29; 9:30am - 4:30pm**

*Suggested contribution: \$25-50 registration + teacher donation*

These are difficult times. Like, really difficult. So how do we stay sane even when the world has gone mad? How do we find calm, kindness, maybe even humor, right in the middle of the grief and fear we're all facing? In this online daylong meditation retreat, Devon and Craig will offer teachings and practices from their book *How Not to Be a Hot Mess*. Along the way they'll talk dharma, social & racial justice, relationships, and all the other nitty gritty everyday conundrums we find ourselves in.

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### ***Paramis - Part 1***

Course with Candace Cassin

**5 Tuesdays, September 1 - 29; 4:00 - 5:45pm**

*Suggested contribution: \$40-100 registration + teacher donation*

The ten paramis, or perfections of the heart, are spiritual qualities that are both supports for, and fruits of our practice, especially in everyday life. In this class we will explore the paramis of generosity, ethical integrity, renunciation, wisdom, and courageous energy. Part 2, exploring the remaining five paramis will be explored in the next cycle of offerings.

*Class size limited to 20.*

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### ***Going Deeper: Liberating, Loving, Empowering Not Self***

Experienced Student Group with Tara Mulay

**Thursday, September 3; 7:00-8:30pm**

*Suggested contribution: \$8-25 registration + teacher donation*

This class is open for those who have established a regular practice, and are comfortable with the basics, but would like to ask questions and learn more. We will do a combination of sharing about our practices, exploring various meditation techniques and delving into some of the teachings which can be used to deepen practice.

This class will be running on first Thursdays with various teachers. Registration for each month is requested. Topics will be announced as early as we can. *Organized by Tara Mulay.*

## **Rooting in The Dharma**

Class with Jean Esther

**Saturday, September 5, 10:00am - 12:00pm**

*Suggested contribution: \$5-25 registration + teacher donation*

Please join Jean in exploring these questions through guided meditation and a short selective Dharma talk followed by a period of reflective group inquiry. (Particular attention will be paid to the support and care of our nervous systems through meditative practices.) This series may be attended as a whole or as individual drop in sessions by themselves. For experienced practitioners and beginners.

*The specific topic will be announced later*

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## **Equanimity: Deepening Composure Amidst the Worldly Winds**

Course with Manny Mansbach

**4 Mondays, September 14 - October 5; 7:00 - 8:30pm**

*Suggested contribution: \$32-80 registration + teacher donation*

The Buddha's teachings on equanimity offer a training path to stop resisting the way things are, to discover greater spaciousness, and to understand more clearly that suffering and joy are as natural as night and day. While we cannot stop the waves or challenges of life, we can learn to ride them with increasing grace, dignity, compassion and wisdom. This class is an invitation to stop wishing for a different life, and to embrace the one we have with both arms and a less reactive, more peaceful heart. Selected readings, live and recorded dharma talks, and class discussion will all be a vital part of this class.

***"If you don't become the ocean, you'll be seasick every day."***  
***-Leonard Cohen***

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## **The Four Foundations of Mindfulness: Strengthening the Power of Mindfulness While Living in These Challenging Times**

Half-day workshops with Michael Grady

**Sunday, September 20; 10:00am - 1:00pm**

**Saturday, October 17; 10:00am - 1:00pm**

*Suggestion contribution : \$15-30 registration + teacher donation*

**The Four Foundations or Forms of Presence** are 1) the body; 2) feelings; 3) mind; 4) laws of experience. When facing the enormity of loss and uncertainty, we need more than ever to uncover and strengthen our inner resources.

In this wholistic approach to mindfulness practice, we nurture our capacity to calm the mind and learn to rest in the present moment. By taking up the practice of four foundations, we can awaken to a new and transformative way of relating to the ever-changing conditions in our lives. We can discover the fruit of inner freedom which allows us to respond with open-hearted awareness and compassion rather than habitually react by contracting when encountering the difficulties in every day life.

We will explore this theme in two separate 1/2 day workshops. You're welcome to register for either one but encouraged to take both if possible.

## **Virtual Town Hall: A Community Conversation**

with trellis stepter and the IPV Board of Directors

**Saturday, September 26; 11:00am**

In these times of uncertainty and social injustice, our Insight meditation center has adapted to meet the changing needs of our growing and diverse community. Rooted in the Buddha's teachings of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, please join trellis stepter and the board of directors as we share the latest on the transition process underway and listen to you as we seek to cultivate a collective vision for what's possible for our community. This town hall will include silent and guided meditation, small group discussion and a visioning exercise to support us on the path of making manifest Dr. Martin Luther King's dream of a Beloved Community.

*It's helpful for planning purposes if you register ahead of time, but if you forget, please come anyway.*

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## **Going Deeper: Resting the Mind in the Present Moment: Grounding, Enjoying and Spacious Allowing**

Experienced Student Group with Manny Mansbach

**Thursday, October 1; 7:00-8:30pm**

*Suggested contribution: \$8-25 registration + teacher donation*

This class is open for those who have established a regular practice, and are comfortable with the basics, but would like to ask questions and learn more. We will do a combination of sharing about our practices, exploring various meditation techniques and delving into some of the teachings which can be used to deepen practice.

This class will be running on first Thursdays with various teachers. Registration for each month is requested. Topics will be announced as early as we can. *Organized by Tara Mulay.*

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## **The Truth as the Path: A Sutta-Based Exploration of Wise View, Wise Speech, and Engaged Dharma Practice**

a class with Tara Mulay

**NEW DATE! Saturday, October 3; 10:00am - 11:30pm**

*Suggested contribution: \$8-25 registration + teacher donation*

In this morning community meditation and dharma talk, including breakout rooms and discussion, we will explore the Buddha's teachings of Wise View and Wise Speech. We will draw on the suttas as a frame for our exploration. The aim of our exploration will be to enliven both our meditation practice and our engaged practice in the world by cultivating a deeper understanding of these two

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## **Beginners/ Beginner's Mind Meditation**

Course with Kim Weeber

**6 Sundays, October 4 - November 8; 9:30 - 11:30am**

*Suggested contribution: \$48-120 registration + teacher donation*

This six-week course will include the Buddha's teachings on mindfulness and meditation. Learn about and practice basic meditation techniques including body meditations, mindfulness, lovingkindness, and how to collect the mind. We will also offer an overview of the Buddha's teachings as a way to bring our practice into our daily lives.

*Suitable for beginners and those who wish to "begin again."*

## ***Cultivating Fearlessness in Uncertain Times***

Course with Tara Mulay

**2 Mondays, October 19 - 26; 7:00 - 8:15pm**

*Suggested contribution: \$16-40 registration + teacher donation*

As our nation enters a decisive period and we do not know what is ahead, we can practice in the midst of it all. The energies of anxiety, fear and anticipation can be met with mindfulness, and when we meet them they can free us and break our hearts open. In this two-session sutta-based class, we will take refuge together as a community in the power of the dharma to instill courage and perseverance in uncertain times.

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## **Befriending the Body - Practicing with Illness and Pain**

Half-day retreat with Kim Weeber

**Saturday, October 24; 9:00am – 12:00pm**

*Suggested contribution: \$15-30 registration + teacher donation*

For those of us with chronic illness or pain, our bodies can seem at the worst like our enemies, or at the least like a heavy burden. Fortunately, the Buddha taught ways that we can start to disentangle from the suffering of bodily pain and the accompanying aversion.

Lets explore how we can enter our experience with more kindness, compassion, and some tools to explore our experience in new ways.

Open to all - new and experienced students, including those without chronic conditions who are interested in learning how to work with the pain which we all carry.

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## ***Going Deeper: Topic TBA***

Experienced Student Group with Jean Esther

**Thursday, November 5; 7:00-8:30pm**

*Suggested contribution: \$8-25 registration + teacher donation*

This class is open for those who have established a regular practice, and are comfortable with the basics, but would like to ask questions and learn more. We will do a combination of sharing about our practices, exploring various meditation techniques and delving into some of the teachings which can be used to deepen practice.

This class will be running on first Thursdays with various teachers. Registration for each month is requested. Topics will be announced as early as we can. *Organized by Tara Mulay.*

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## ***Morning Retreat***

with Devin Berry

**Saturday, November 7; 9:00-11:30am**

*Suggested contribution: \$15-30 registration + teacher donation*

Blurb to come soon.

## ***Brahamaviharas***

Course with Devin Berry

**3 Mondays, November 9-17; 7:15-8:45pm**

*Suggested contribution: \$ registration + teacher donation*

Blurb to come soon.

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## ***Cultivating Your Heart Wish through the Four Natural Touchstones of Spiritual Power***

Half weekend retreat with Jean Esther and Trellis Stepter

**Saturday, November 14, 2020 · 10:00am – 5:00pm**

**Sunday, November 15, 2020 · 9:30am – 12:30pm**

*Suggested contribution: \$40-100 registration + teacher donation*

Just as a bird needs two wings to fly so too does our practice in Buddhism need the two wings of wisdom and compassion to take flight. In this day and a half post-election retreat Jean and Trellis invite you to join them in the exploration of bringing the love of our heart to the power of our practice and vice versa. During this retreat we will have an opportunity to rest and turn toward our experience to touch into the essence of the practice-wisdom and compassion.

In the Samyutta Nikaya, the Buddha says, "Those who have undertaken the 4 bases for spiritual power have undertaken the noble path leading to the destruction of suffering." Iddhipada (Pali for base of spiritual power) refers to 1) Interest/Aspiration, 2) Effort/Will/Energy 3) Conscious-ness of Mind and 4) Investigation/Discrimination.

Through dialogue, meditation, movement, music and reflection, we will have an opportunity in community to rediscover what calls us to the practice. We will look at these four facets in our practice as touchstones to cultivate, refer to, and rely upon for a Heart/Mind that inclines towards the letting go of all suffering for oneself and for all beings.

If we have the good fortune to meet in person, we will end our weekend with a lunch together and an opportunity to share casually in conversation, music and song. Otherwise, we will have a shared closing circle on Zoom.

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## ***Easier Meditation through Neuroscience***

Course with Kim Weeber

**4 Mondays, November 30 - December 21; 7:15-8:45pm**

*Suggested contribution: \$40-100 registration + teacher donation*

Combining modern neuroscience to understand our brain, and the Buddha's teachings to work with our mind, we can meditate more easily. We will draw from the work of John Yates, PhD (Culadasa) in *The Mind Illuminated*, as well as Rick Hanson, PhD. Their techniques include using positive reinforcement to train ourselves to be more kind, mindful and to stabilize our attention. Learn to practice without fighting your mind's natural tendencies!

*Suitable for beginners and experienced students.*

### **Going Deeper: Topic TBA**

Experienced Student Group with Tara Mulay

**Thursday, December 3; 7:00-8:30pm**

*Suggested contribution: \$8-25 registration + teacher donation*

This class is open for those who have established a regular practice, and are comfortable with the basics, but would like to ask questions and learn more. We will do a combination of sharing about our practices, exploring various meditation techniques and delving into some of the teachings which can be used to deepen practice.

This class will be running on first Thursdays with various teachers. Registration for each month is requested. Topics will be announced as early as we can. *Organized by Tara Mulay.*

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### **Kindling the Light of Awareness: An Insight Dialogue Retreat**

Full-day with Janet Surrey and Florence Meleo-Meyer

**Saturday, December 5; 9:30am-4:30pm\***

*Suggested contribution: \$25-50 registration + teacher donation*

In this season of diminishing daylight, we cultivate and celebrate the light of awareness as we turn toward the darkness of night and winter. The words "make of yourself a light" are said to be the Buddha's last words. In this daylong retreat, we will introduce the engaged co-meditation practice of Insight Dialogue and explore the flow and rhythms of practicing alone in silent practice and together in contemplative relational practice. We will explore the power of cultivating mindfulness, concentration and loving kindness in relationship and the depth and brightness of illumination when "two or more are gathered" with the shared aspiration of awakening. There will be periods of silent practice, Insight Dialogue, and mindful movement.

*The timing of this event might change.*

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### **Rooting in The Dharma**

Class with Jean Esther

**Saturday, December 12, 10:00am - 12:00pm**

*Suggested contribution: \$5-25 registration + teacher donation*

Please join Jean in exploring these questions through guided meditation and a short selective Dharma talk followed by a period of reflective group inquiry. (Particular attention will be paid to the support and care of our nervous systems through meditative practices.) This series may be attended as a whole or as individual drop in sessions by themselves.

*For experienced practitioners and beginners. The specific topic will be announced later.*

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### **Winter Solstice Retreat**

Full-day retreat with Jesse Vega Frey

**Sunday, December 20; 9:30am - 4:30pm**

*Suggested contribution: \$15-30 registration + teacher donation*

Join us for a day of contemplation and silent fellowship as we settle below the hustle and bustle and find nourishment in the stillness at the heart of the season.

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### **New Year's Day Retreat and Potluck**

Afternoon retreat with Rebecca Bradshaw

**Wednesday, January 1, 2020; 2:00 - 6:00pm**

*Suggested contribution: \$15-30 registration + teacher donation*

Let's meditate together as our gift to the world, developing mindfulness and loving kindness in our hearts and minds so we can spread it outwardly in our families, with friends, with community, and with our planet. We'll sit and walk together (instruction provided) and have time to share and support our practice.

*We'll end with a potluck dinner together; please bring a vegetarian dish to share. Family and friends are welcome. (Potluck depends on whether we can meet in person.*

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