



Mid America Dharma News

Offering Insight Meditation to the Heartland

Insight Dialogue: a Method for Mindful Social Interactions

This May, Mid-America Dharma hosts Gregory Kramer for a 4-day residential Insight Dialogue retreat near Kansas City, MO. The following excerpts are from a previous interview with Gregory in *Insight Journal* (Spring 2006).

What is Insight Dialogue, in a nutshell?

GK: It's the extension of personal, silent meditation practice into the interpersonal sphere. The technique, the qualities cultivated, and the intentions of the vipassana tradition are all maintained—sati (mindfulness), samadhi (concentration), and samma ditthi (right view) remain central to the process—and these qualities are brought to the interpersonal engagement with others. Just as you carefully attend to sense data and bring awareness to mental states during silent vipassana retreats, you can also attend to the words being spoken to you by others, along with all sorts of nonverbal signals that come along with communication. The heart vibrates, the organism vibrates, and this is known.

What is the precedent for this practice in the early tradition?

GK: The evidence is everywhere in the discourses, but the most striking, clear statement of it is right there in the Satipatthana Sutta, the Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness. In the refrain repeated again and again in that text, the Buddha speaks about

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Did you know we offer 2 ways to register for our retreats?

Online

Visit midamericadharma.org
Click the link Mid America Dharma Retreats
Register for your preferred retreat by clicking *On-line Registration*

By Mail

Complete and mail-in the registration form on p 7



Like Us on Facebook!
Log into your Facebook account and type

Mid America Dharma in the search bar.

We post up-to-date retreat and community info on our page. Feel free to comment or message us anytime. We love to hear from you!

[Continued from page 1, Mindfulness in Relation to Others]

observing the whole range of phenomena internally, externally, and both internally and externally. This passage is so often glossed over, and emphasis is usually placed upon an introspective and even introverted approach to vipassana meditation. But as I understand the instructions here, the practice is not complete unless one learns to attend just as carefully and precisely to external, or perhaps objective, phenomena. This must include interpersonal phenomena, a huge aspect of our lives as relational, social beings.

Looking at mindfulness meditation in the way I've come to understand and implement the teachings, the internal and external refers to the entire relational moment, to what Martin Buber called the between. It involves finding a whole notion of interpersonal contact—this voice of mine speaking and reaching your ears; a moment of ear contact; then you speak to me and your voice reaches my ears. Out of this language there is mind contact. There is visual contact and other kinds of energetic contact, and a relational moment unfolds, with both internal and external aspects. This can be directly experienced in Insight Dialogue, where we meditate together.

The noble truth of suffering is another example that easily comes to hand. Yes, suffering is personal, including as it does bodily pain and aging and death, and the existential issues of what am I doing with my life and so forth. But look at what a tremendous amount of our suffering is interpersonal. Not only

are others often the source of my pain (have you ever been in relationship?), but so much of what I do causes suffering to others, either directly or quite indirectly—we discern the seeds of compassion.

“...the practice is not complete unless one learns to attend...to interpersonal phenomena, a huge aspect of our lives as social beings.”

Then you go on to say, if that's the case, then the cause of this interpersonal suffering must also be interpersonal *tanha*, that is, craving, hunger.

Of course, if you've gone that far, you can't help but take the next step and ask, is the third noble truth true, interpersonally? What might my life look like with the cessation of interpersonal hunger?

Can I live with others in the world with the expansiveness, openness, availability, and tranquility of heart that comes from the cessation of these social or interpersonal hungers, and the grasping they create? Lovingkindness and compassion are not theory: they are lived experience.

Excerpted from Insight Journal Spring 2006, available online at Gregory's website, <http://metta.org/teachings/1044/?file=true>.

Mid America Dharma Retreats

Rebecca Bradshaw ❖ *April 24–27, 2014**Pallottine Renewal Center, St. Louis, MO – Residential**Fee Range: \$420-\$630**Registration opens February 24, 2014*

Rebecca Bradshaw is the Guiding Teacher at the Insight Meditation Center of Pioneer Valley in Easthampton, MA. She has been practicing Vipassana meditation since 1983 in the United States and Myanmar (Burma) and teaching since 1993. Rebecca has a master's degree in Counseling Psychology, is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC), and works as a psychotherapist with meditators interested in supplementing their meditation practice with psychotherapeutic work. Her teaching explores the convergence of love and wisdom.

Gregory Kramer ❖ *May 22–27, 2014**Lake Doniphan Conference & Retreat Center, Excelsior Springs, MO (Kansas City area) – Residential**Fee Range: Single Room \$625-\$940, Double Room \$485-\$730**Registration opens March 22, 2014*

Gregory Kramer is the Founder and Guiding Teacher of Metta Programs and has been teaching Insight Meditation since 1980. He developed the practice of Insight Dialogue and has been teaching it since 1995, offering retreats in North America, Asia, Europe, and Australia. He has studied with esteemed teachers, including Anagarika Dhammadina, Ven. Balangoda Ananda Maitreya Mahanayaka Thero, Achan Sobin Namto, and Ven. Punnaji Maha Thero. Gregory is the author of: *Insight Dialogue: The Interpersonal Path to Freedom* (Shambhala), *Seeding the Heart: Practicing Lovingkindness with Children*, *Meditating Together*, *Speaking from Silence: the Practice of Insight Dialogue*, and *Dharma Contemplation: Meditating Together with Wisdom Texts*.

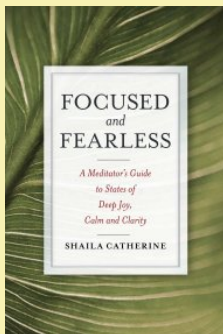
Mid America Dharma Retreats

Philip Jones ❖ *July 25-27, 2014**Maria Center, St. Louis, MO – Non-Residential**Fee Range: \$ 60-90**Registration opens May 25, 2014*

Philip Jones has practiced meditation since 1987 and has been teaching Insight Meditation since 1996. He has studied with teachers from Spirit Rock and the Insight Meditation Society and graduated from the first Community Dharma Leader program in 2000. He also studied for a number of years with Matthew Flickstein and more recently has been practicing with teachers from IMS. He has served on the board of directors of Mid America Dharma, the regional retreat organization, since the mid-'90's. Many of his talks and writings can be found at <http://silentmindopenheart.org>.

Fall Retreat ❖ *October 2014*

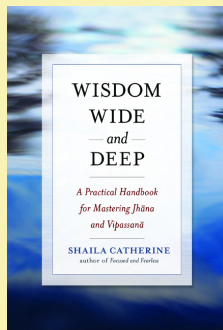
We are still finalizing the details for a fall retreat. Please check our Facebook page or www.midamericadharm.org for further information.

**Interested in Developing Your Concentration Practice?**

We have several books by Shaila Catherine, a popular Mid-America Dharma retreat teacher and highly-regarded scholar of concentration (jhana) practice.

Her first book, *Focused and Fearless* (\$20), is suitable for beginning meditators. Her second book, *Wisdom Wide and Deep* (\$25), is intended for more seasoned practitioners.

If you would like to purchase a book, please send a check made payable to *Mid-America Dharma* at:



Mid-America Dharma
455 E 80th Terrace
Kansas City, MO 64131

Proceeds will be given to Shaila Catherine.

Mid America Dharma Retreats

Following the Five Precepts on Retreat

We ask everyone participating in our retreats to make a commitment to follow the Five Ethical Precepts. These are a foundation for our practice. The precepts create the community of harmony and safety which is so necessary for our work of turning inward, to explore and train the mind to be happy and free of distress. The self-restraint we show by following the Precepts is essential to settle and focus the mind. Through this we develop confidence in our worth and ability to do the practice. Following the Precepts bestows a sense of happiness with our own goodness.

The Five Precepts

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 rule to abstain from sexual misconduct," but at retreat we commit to the fuller 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 plain vegetarian. 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 and on the mail-in registration form at the end of this newsletter.

Sliding Scale: Each retreat cost is listed as a range. The lowest fee listed is the base cost of providing the retreat for each retreatant. Any amount paid above that will be a tax-deductible contribution used to defray retreat expenses, scholarships and other activities.

Residential: a minimum deposit of \$75 must accompany registration; full payment is due at 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, and have established a scholarship fund to provide assistance where needed. Deferred payment is also available. You can read about and apply for assistance when registering via any of our retreat websites or the registrar can mail you written materials. Applications must be received by the Registrar no later than three weeks prior to the retreat

Dana (or generosity): Our retreats are led by teachers who freely give the teachings without any 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 donations. There is no expected amount, but please give to the extent you are able. Dana is completely voluntary.

Mail-in Registration Form

Retreat registration is available online or via mail. To register online, go to www.midamericadharmadharma.org/retreats.

To register by mail, send this form with a check payable to: **Mid America Dharma, c/o Jon Yaffe, 3222 Walter Ave, Maplewood, MO 63143**. If registering for multiple retreats, please send a separate copy of this form with payment to the registrar for each retreat. A \$75 deposit is required for all residential retreats. Please register as early as you can, as this greatly helps our planning.

_____ April 24-27, 2014
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Pallottine Renewal Center, St. Louis, MO
Fee range: \$420-630

Fee Amount _____

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Fee range: \$625-940 (single), \$485-730 (double)

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Maria Center, St. Louis, MO
Fee range: \$ 60-90

Fee Amount _____

October 2014
We are finalizing plans for a fall retreat.
Please check our Facebook page or
www.midamericadharmadharma.org for details.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Required of all retreatants: Please check the box below to indicate you agree to honor The Five Precepts during your retreat. The Five Precepts assure everyone has a safe & wholesome retreat experience (see p 5 for details).

Yes, I agree to honor The Five Precepts during retreat.

For Residential Retreatants only:

Gender: M F
Will you arrive after 7pm on the first day? Y N
Is this your first insight meditation retreat? Y N
Do you snore? Y N

If you have special needs, please contact the registrar at registrar@midamericadharmadharma.org or (314) 669-6524

A note about retreats with Shinzen Young

We had hoped to host Shinzen Young in 2015 for another MAD retreat, but due to travel concerns and a busy schedule, Shinzen is unavailable.

If you would like more information about Shinzen's current schedule, please check <http://www.shinzen.org>.

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Kansas City, MO 64131-2120

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Mid America Dharma Upcoming Retreats

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- May 22-27, 2014* Residential Retreat **Gregory Kramer**, Lake Doniphan Center, Excelsior Springs, MO
- July 25-27, 2014* Non-Residential Retreat **Philip Jones**, Maria Center, St. Louis, MO
- October 2014* Fall Retreat, *To be determined*. Check our Facebook page or website for further details

For the latest information on retreats and a full listing of Midwestern Buddhist groups please visit our website:

www.midamericadharm.org