

Dear Friends,

Here are the initial details and guidelines for the retreat.

PREPARING FOR THE RETREAT

1. Setting your Retreat Space

- A) If at all possible, set up a dedicated space for the retreat where you have internet access.
- B) Find a place for walking meditation. Ideally, this would be outside about 20-30 paces long. Other options include walking around the block or in a hallway or larger room. It is preferable not to have to navigate street crossings or traffic.
- C) Print this document and the retreat schedule prior to the retreat.

2. Electronic Media

- A) We will be using the Zoom video-conferencing for our retreat. Details about how to use Zoom will be covered before the retreat begins. To support yourself and the group we ask that you **close all programs except Zoom and turn off all of notifications on your devices**. If you need help with this, please let us know.
- B) Set up auto-reply **for email and phone as if you were out of town**.

3. Meals

- A) If possible, do all of your food shopping before the retreat begins.
- B) Keep the meals simple, perhaps pre-preparing some food that can be eaten throughout the week. Example: a large pot of soup for dinners.
- C) Consider writing a meal plan so you do not have to decide what to prepare for each meal.

4. Navigating housemates, spouses, partners, and children in the home

- A) Have a conversation about your retreat time. Here are some things you might want to cover:
 - i) Acknowledge that it will most likely feel awkward and strange at first, but a rhythm can develop that can work for everyone.
 - ii) Talk about noble silence and see if you can get support in being in noble silence for the duration of the retreat. If necessary, you might want to discuss a specific time of the day to connect verbally so that the communication is contained.
 - iii) If possible, ask for support in having a quieter overall living space. Ask people to use earbuds or headphones or at least keep the volume low in a separate room. If it is not possible to get support for this, consider how to incorporate this into your practice.
 - iv) Post your retreat schedule.

- v) It may work better for you to switch a sit time with a meal time to limit interactions in the kitchen.
- vi) Suggestions for if you have children
 - (a) Keep your child care arrangements that you made for the retreat.
 - (b) If they are old enough, talk with your kids about what you are doing and ask their input for how to create a supportive environment. Enlist them as allies.
 - (c) Assess whether it might be easier to ask a friend if you can do the retreat at their house to support both your practice and their lives being uninterrupted.
 - (d) Feel free to contact Brian and/or Robin about your specific situation.
- B) Navigating those you live with will be part of the retreat and we will be checking in about how this is going during the retreat. Don't worry if it gets weird and challenging. We will learn together how to turn toward such challenges with our practice.

DURING THE RETREAT

1. Online Format & Etiquette

- A) As was mentioned earlier, we will be gathering for group sits, dharma talks, and practice discussions using Zoom Video-conferencing. Links to Zoom for all gatherings will be sent to you once you have RSVP'd and have committed to doing this retreat.
- B) Friday April 24 at 3:30pm there will be an optional meeting where I will go over how to use Zoom. Instructions on how to attend this meeting online will be sent beforehand.
- C) We invite you to allow your video to be on during the meetings if you feel comfortable so that we can more easily feel interconnected.
- D) Please don't multitask while online with our community. Engage as fully as you would if we were in person.
- E) Everyone will be muted when entering or exiting the rooms to cut down on feedback and extraneous sounds. Instructions for unmuting during Q&A and practice discussions will be provided.

2. Retreat Schedule

- A) I will be going over how to relate to the schedule in the orientation on the first evening.

3. Submitting questions during the retreat

- A) **PRACTICE QUESTIONS** During practice discussions and group Q&A you will be able to unmute to ask questions verbally or you can submit them through the Zoom chat box. Questions can be submitted only to Brian if you prefer them to be anonymous
- B) **GENERAL RETREAT QUESTIONS** If you have general retreat questions you can submit them during the daily Q&A time.

2. Media, phones, and other technology

- A) As with our in-person retreats, one of the requirements for this online retreat is to refrain from using electronic devices for anything other than connecting through the Zoom Video-conferencing.
- C) One of the transformative things that can come from home retreats is having time in your own living space in which you are not engaging in technology and media. This alone is helpful in touching a different way of being in your life.

3. Commitment to Practice

- A) **Self-discipline** – One of the challenges of home practice is getting swept away and forgetting about formal practice. This is a normal challenge to have. It is very helpful if you can be open and honest about this so we can address it.