

**PREPARING FOR GREG SCHARF'S 5 DAY ONLINE
RECOGNIZING NATURAL AWARENESS RETREAT AUGUST 13-18, 2021**

1. SETTING UP YOUR RETREAT SPACE

- A) It will be necessary to set up a dedicated space for the retreat where you have internet access.
- B) Find a place for walking meditation. Ideally and weather permitting, 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 at our **required** Technical meeting on Thursday, August 12, 2021 at 11am (MDT) To support yourself and the group we ask that you close all programs except Zoom and turn off all of notifications on your devices.

B) Set up auto-reply for email and phone as if you were out of town.

3. Meals

A) Please 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 for the time period, so you do not have to stress out over what to prepare for each meal during your retreat time.

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) An online retreat requires a more cloistered environment. 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 quite 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) Suggestions for if you have children
 - (a) Keep child care arrangements that you would make for an "away" 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 and appropriate to ask a friend if you can do this online retreat at their house.

- (d) Feel free to contact Kathy about your specific situation.
- B) Navigating those you live with will be part of the retreat and you can always communicate with the retreat manager(s) during the retreat if you need to.

DURING THE RETREAT

1. Online Format & Etiquette

- A) As mentioned in the Practice Guidelines document, we will be gathering for group sats, Dhamma talks, and practice meetings using Zoom video conferencing. Zoom links for all gatherings will be sent to you before the retreat begins.
- B) On Thursday, August 12th (11am MDT) there will be a meeting where we will go over how to use all the Zoom links and the Google Drive "bulletin board". **Everyone please attend this meeting.** Instructions on how to attend this meeting online will be sent beforehand.
- C) We invite you to leave your video camera on during all the Zoom "happenings," if you feel comfortable, so that we can all feel interconnected.
- D) **Please don't multitask while online with the retreat.** 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 meetings will be provided.

2. Retreat Schedule

- A) Please see the attached document and let Kathy know if you have any questions about it or time zones or whatever.

3. Submitting questions during the retreat

- A) PRACTICE QUESTIONS Greg will respond to practice questions directly during practice meetings and during Q&A sessions. All other practice related questions can be sent to the retreat manager(s) More on this during our pre-retreat meeting.
- B) GENERAL RETREAT QUESTIONS If you have general retreat questions you can submit them to the retreat manager(s) using the system that we will set up.

4. 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.
- B) 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.