

Newsletter of Southern Insight Meditation, Christchurch, New Zealand

August 2016

All retreats are suitable for both new and experienced meditators, and are accessible to people of any or no religious affiliation. The cost of each retreat covers all food and accommodation. Teachers receive donations.

This six-week course provides instruction for insight meditation and mindfulness. The classes include instructions, guided practices and discussions. The course is suitable for beginners or those wanting a refresher. Di Robertson will teach the course. She has been practicing meditating for over 20 years, has undertaken many meditation retreats, and taught courses since 2000.

These half day retreats are a chance to take a break in the midst of busy-ness, to connect with ourselves and others, to attend to our wellbeing, and to cultivate the benefits of practice. The focus of this day will be to look at our practice of mindfulness and see what else is important to cultivate for happiness and wellbeing.

Through meditation our capacity to be compassionately present for our immediate experience grows. It enables us to be fully present for joyful moments, and to open to and tenderly hold the most difficult parts of ourselves. It deepens and enriches our experience of life, allowing us to move beyond conditioned patterns and to respond to life creatively. Jeremy and Di are warm and grounded teachers with a great capacity to help us find the wisdom to work in daily life. This will be a great experience for beginners and experienced practitioners alike.

We will once again be running a week-long silent insight meditation retreat early in the year of 2017. This is a wonderful way to being the year and is suitable for beginners or experienced practitioners. Details to be confirmed. Please check our website for updates.

Costs: Retreats and courses are set to be as affordable as possible. *A sliding scale or subsidised rates for those on a limited income is available. See also “top up” fund information in this newsletter. Please enquire.

Southern Insight Meditation is a non-profit, non-sectarian group run by volunteers with the aim of making available the teachings and practice of Insight (Vipassana) Meditation through retreats, courses and talks. Our website is <http://southern-insight.org.nz>



Life is so very short. There is no time to
waste. Bang down the
doors of your own true knowing. Smash your
own heart
with fists of flowers. Wish them freedom
and fill your mouth with
truth and kindness. Love first your own
hunger and your
wisdom and your unknowns, and never look
back

from salt + honey by Isabel Faith Abbott

Future retreat events:

In 2017 we will be again be welcoming back
Sharda Rogell for a one day retreat in March
2107 – look out on our website and in our
newsletters for more information.

Enquiries:

Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com

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sectarian group run by volunteers with the aim of
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Insight (Vipassana) Meditation through retreats,
courses and talks. We are also a charitable trust and
donations are tax exempt. Our website is
<http://southern-insight.org.nz>

Greetings all,

What is meditation? Why do we do it? Why do
we keep coming back to it? If you are reading
this newsletter, chances are you have asked
yourself this question – probably more than once.

Examining our relationship to meditation,
mindfulness and the wisdom that walking this
path can bring into our life is a feature of a
number of articles and poems in this newsletter –
and of the Southern Insight events coming up.

Di Robertson will again be leading an introduction
to mindfulness and meditation course that starts
on August 9th and runs for six weeks. You don't
have to be a complete beginner to benefit from
and enjoy this course. It can be a great way to
reconnect with your practice- even for old hands.

Later in August Julie Downard will lead a half day
retreat that is not only a wonderful chance to
take a break in the midst of busy-ness but also an
opportunity to look closely at this practice of
mindfulness and ask what else is important to
cultivate for happiness and wellbeing.

Then of course there is the spring retreat – so
much opportunity here! We are again lucky to
have a combination of teachers in Jeremy Logan
and Di Robertson who bring a great deal of
grounded experience and compassion into the
practice and will help us walk the practice of
mindfulness and insight.

We are also looking for help with all the bits and
pieces that go into setting up a retreat. Because,
we at Southern Insight, don't have the resources
of a dedicated retreat centre we effectively
become the retreat centre every time we run an
event. This is a wonderful busy experience –
made possible every time by the miracle of many
many helping hands. If you have a little bit of
time to share with us this spring to help out
please get in touch with Rachel via the Southern
Insight Meditation E-mail (see more about this
inside the newsletter).

If you receive the paper version of this newsletter
it will also include a poster for the Spring Retreat
– please feel free to stick this up in a place where
someone might see it and be inspired!

Enjoy ☺ Meg

Mindfulness and Meditation Course



August 9th – Sept 13th
7.00pm – 8.30pm
Led by Di Robertson

Venue: Addington Haven (corner Church Square and Grove Road, Addington) Christchurch

Cost \$120*

This six-week course provides instruction for insight meditation and mindfulness. The practices calm the mind and body, allowing us to live more fully in the present moment. When we cultivate this kind, curious presence, we become more at ease with our lives and able to accept and open to both unpleasant and pleasant experiences. Qualities of clarity, joy, wisdom and compassion arise more freely in the heart, adding to our resilience and wellbeing.

The classes include instructions, guided practices and discussions. The course is suitable for beginners or those wanting a refresher.

Di Robertson will teach the course. She has been practicing meditation for over 20 years, has undertaken many meditation retreats, and taught courses since 2001. Di is a steering group member, trustee and teacher for Southern Insight Meditation.

For further information and registration: Contact Di at diana.r@xtra.co.nz

*Subsidy available, if the cost is a barrier for attendance.

Guardians of the World

Half day meditation and mindfulness retreat

With Julie Downard
Sunday 21st August
12:15-4:30 pm

Venue: **Mary Potter Centre**, 442 Durham St, North, St Albans, Christchurch

Cost:: \$15 (covers venue and admin) can be paid online or cash on the day. Dana* is invited for the teacher on the day.

Southern Insight Meditation warmly invites you to a half day retreat lead by Julie Downard.

With the rise to prominence of mindfulness, it's timely to consider what additional qualities we need to cultivate to provide a beneficial foundation for our mindfulness practice, to allow our deepening into wisdom, the development of happiness and wellbeing, and to engender a harmonious and just society where all are protected and nurtured.

This half day will focus on awareness of two forces of the human heart said by the Buddha to be the '*Bright Guardians of the World*', protectors both of ourselves and of our world. In the current era of political and environmental uncertainty cultivation of these qualities has never been more urgent. We will have time for sitting and walking, some teachings and guided practice.

This is suitable for those new or experienced in insight meditation.

More information: : Email southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com or call Sarah Tritt on 027 669 3824

To register: Email southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com by Friday 19 August. Payment can be via online direct deposit or cash on the day. (see final page of newsletter for payment instructions). Please let us know how you will pay the registration fee in your e-mail.

A note on Dana: you may notice that most of our retreats mention the word “dana”. The registration costs do not cover any payment to teachers for their teaching. They will receive only what you offer as dana. Dana is a gift by each person in the spirit of generosity to reciprocate the teachers’ sharing of their depth of knowledge and expertise. The amount given is up to the giver.

About the teachers



Di Robertson has over 20 years’ experience in insight meditation, with intensive retreats and daily life practice in England and New Zealand. She has taught beginners’ courses since 2000 and led several

half-day retreats. She lives in Christchurch and is a co-founder and trustee of Southern Insight Meditation.

Julie Downard has been practising meditation since 1991 when she was living in England. Over the past twenty-three years she has done intensive practice with teachers in both the Insight and Zen traditions in India, England and California. Julie has been teaching on retreats and Dharma Gatherings for the past seven years. She lives in Christchurch, and is a co-founder and trustee of Southern Insight Meditation.



Jeremy Logan has studied and practiced insight meditation for the past twenty-seven years, and has been teaching retreats throughout New Zealand since 1993.

He lives in the Wairarapa and works as a counsellor, supervisor and facilitator of change programmes.



Subhana Barzaghi has been dedicated to a meditative and engaged spiritual life of inquiry since first encountering Buddhism in India in 1974.

Christopher Titmuss invited

Subhana to teach in the early 1990’s and she has since taught numerous silent retreats and Dharma gatherings. Subhana is a guiding teacher for the Insight meditation teachers’ community in Australia and New Zealand, Kuan Yin Meditation Centre, Blue Gum Sangha, Southern Insight NZ, and Melbourne Insight Group.

Spring Retreat – helping hands



We are looking for helping hands for the upcoming spring retreat – if you can help with jobs like shopping and picking up people and goods to take out to Staveley – let Rachel know via E-mail at

Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com

If you think you would like to try your hand at a job on retreat – such as being a retreat cook – this is a very supportive environment to give that go!

Send E-mail to Rachel with words “spring retreat helping hands” in the title ☺

And also don’t forget to register for the retreat!

Christchurch Sitting Group



Fourth Wednesdays – Dharma talk

Di will now be facilitating the Sitting Group on the 4th Wednesday of the month (at the Opawa Zendo)

The evenings will include a guided sit, a short dharma talk and a facilitated discussion on the topic or other matters arising in daily life. The topics will explore applying the teachings on mindfulness, wisdom and compassion to our lives in the contemporary context - including the challenges, issues and opportunities.

As with the third Wednesdays, the topic will be emailed out (to the local sangha email list) a few days prior to the night.

Normal schedule for 2016

Wednesdays 7.30pm – 9.15pm

Our “two venue” format for Sitting Group is working well. All are welcome to join us.

1st Weds of the month: Ferndale School

2nd Weds of the month Opawa Zendo

3rd Weds of the month Ferndale School

Facilitated session

4th Weds of month: Opawa Zendo

Dharma Talk

If there are **five Wednesday's** in a month, the default for the 5th Wednesday will be Ferndale School.

Addresses:

Ferndale School 104 Merivale Lane, staffroom

Opawa Zendo 4 Kennedy Place, (off Opawa Rd)

Face up to the Dharma – it's out there!

Have you checked out our Facebook page? You don't have to be registered with Facebook to access this. It has information about upcoming events as well as an ever-changing array of wonderful articles, links and snippets to inspire. This is dharma everywhere – thoughtful, funny and heartfelt.

<https://www.facebook.com/SouthernInsight>

A couple on the front page right now certainly seemed really topical to me....so see these below.

Of course the beauty of facebook is that you too can also share interesting ideas and use this as a way to connect with others in the sangha from all sorts of places.

Enjoy!

1

On the front page at the moment is a link to this page: “**Urban confessional**”.

Benjamin Mathes writes of his experiences in a recent project where he sets out to be a listener. He poignantly explores what it is like to really listen ...*really* listen - to someone who seems to hold a view that you don't just disagree with but which gives you pain to hear....

Here is an excerpt from the short article...

If there's one question I get asked more than any other question, it's this: “How do I listen to someone when I disagree with them?”

There are many ways to answer this. It takes a lot of forgiveness, compassion, patience, and courage to listen in the face of disagreement. I could write pages on each of these principles, but let's start with the one thing that makes forgiveness, compassion, patience, and courage possible.

We must work to hear the person not just the opinion.

My friend, Agape, says it like this:

“Hear the Biography, not the ideology”

— Agape

When someone has a point of view we find difficult to understand, disagreeable, or even offensive, we must look to the set of circumstances that person has experienced that resulted in that point of view.

Get their story, their biography, and you'll open up the real possibility of an understanding that transcends disagreement.

Like the roots of a tree, our stories, which can create our beliefs, are completely unique, and also connected. It is through story that we can find common ground enough to co-exist in the face of great, often necessary, tension.

When you find yourself in disagreement, just ask one question:

“Will you tell me your story? I'd love to know how you came to this point of view.”

Check out the rest of this article and a particularly potent example that he gives at <http://urbanconfessional.org/blog/howtodisagree>

2

Looking for someone to hold responsible when events cause us pain? Researcher and story teller Brené Brown writes beautifully about that common feeling

I woke up this morning looking for someone to blame. Someone to hate. Someone who I could make the single target of my fear about the officers killed in Dallas and the killing of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile. It was such a desperate feeling to want to discharge the uncertainty and scarcity. Then it dawned on me that this is the exact drive that fueled what's happening right now.

Instead of feeling hurt we act out our hurt. Rather than acknowledging our pain, we inflict it on others. Neither hate nor blame will lead to the justice and peace that we all want - it will only move us further apart. But we can't forget that hate and blame are seductive. Anger is easier than grief. Blame is easier than real

accountability. When we choose instant relief in the form of rage, we're in many ways choosing permanent grief for the world.

Love is beautiful when it is professed but it is only meaningful when it is practiced

Words by
Brené Brown

You can see more from Brené Brown here:
<https://www.facebook.com/brenebrown>

Hatreds never cease through hatred in this world; through love alone they cease.

This is an eternal law

Words from Buddhist Pali text

A Gift Of The Dharma.

As I was walking to the supermarket the other day my attention settled on my feet; not in any deliberate way but spontaneously and easily, one foot meeting the footpath then the other. There was a feeling of my mind calming and awareness expanding, my feet, my weight, the warmth and light of the sun, sound of traffic and children playing.

Settling into the unfolding experience; being immersed in the moment.

Instead of dismissing this as a pleasant experience on a nice day I noticed a rising feeling of wellbeing and belonging and realised that noticing in the moment was a fruit of mindfulness practice, that there could be effortless awareness and it gives strength and peace not dependant on externalities.

With a bright feeling of wellbeing I entered the supermarket.

Dermot

WHAT IS MEDITATION?

Sitting

with breathing with body aches with pillows,
bright lights
with wondering if you can really call this
meditation,
it feels like driving on the 405 freeway.

Sitting
and sleeping

Sitting
and ruminating

Sitting and waiting not moving, not running, not
doing anything.

Sitting
And making to do lists,
redecorating the kitchen,
writing an email to Soma,
did she get stood up on Valentine's day or not?

Sitting
Wallowing

Sitting
Swallowing

Sitting and forgetting, and forgetting, and
wanting to forget.
The song "*You can't always get what you want*"
I hate the Rolling Stones
Or
"*Hold the pickles, hold the Lettuce, Special
Orders don't Upset Us, All we ask is that you let
us serve it your way*".

Sitting
from a young age.

Sitting
into old age.

Sitting from habit, it's good for you, everyone
says so.

Sitting per doctor's orders. He does not know
what other anti-depressants, anti-anxiety,
painkiller, sleeping pills to give you.

Sitting
over a break up.

Sitting
over the summer
over the high holidays, the trip to Kenya, over
the river and through the woods.

Sitting
just to get through the forty minutes because
your lower back and knees scream like glass
lodged in your bones.
"*Hold the pickles, hold the lettuce, special orders
don't upset us.*"
Again?

Sitting

Sitting
when your sister hanged herself from the
second story balcony in San Francisco
with a bed sheet around her neck and a rosary
in her pocket.

Sitting with this life.

Sitting though this life
Through past lives, through car alarms, erotica,
menopause, cancer, through your early morning
"*you'd better be there*" meeting with the Board
of Directors because the volume of the Insight
Timer on your new Samsung Galaxy phone was
turned off.

Sitting
Whatever
you experience
while you sit with the intention to meditate
is
meditation.

Linda Modaro
Skillful Meditation
<http://skillfulmeditation.org/Linda.html>

What is meditation?.....

If
the ocean
can calm itself
so can you.
we
are both
salt water
mixed
with
air.

—meditation
Isabel Faith Abbott

Visiting (as energy allows)
the very heart
of it all,
quietly awakening
to this, and this
in stillness, opening
opening
held by some
mysterious wider warmth
long courted
a radiance
here in the heart
of the unfolding.

Guy.



We can grow love
and wherever we go
we can take love with us
if the worst of all
feelings flush through us
vibrate in us
then being mindful of love
reminded of love
whatever is born
in the cauldron of mind
if fine or if foul
if kind or divisive
greet these with love
remember to love
remembering the practice
the growing of love.

-Hut book entry, Arthurs Pass National Park.



Stiff neck during sitting...

Southern Insight Meditation Steering Group

If you have any questions about retreats or other events, or would like to get more involved, here are the contact details of the steering group, all of whom would be happy to talk with you:

Di	338 7070
Dermot	381 4617
Sarah	027 669 3824
Chrys	338 0313
Lois	3326106
Meg	328 8052
Rachel	382 2019

E-mail: southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com

Post: 16 Ward Street, Christchurch

Website: <http://southern-insight.org.nz>

E-mail is generally checked weekly. For a more immediate response, call one of the steering group members listed above.

Registration for retreats –

We offer two options for registering for our multiday retreats: e-mail and post. Instructions are below:

Email registration:

1. Visit www.southern-insight.org.nz/ and download a pdf or Word file of the registration form.
2. Complete this form by hand or on your computer.
3. Send a scanned version or Word file via e-mail to: Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com with the words “Registration for XXX retreat” in the title.
4. **Please note on your form whether you are paying online or by cheque and how much you have paid.**
Your \$50 deposit can be paid online (see instructions below) or by cheque posted to the address provided in the retreat information.
5. You will receive a response acknowledging receipt of your registration, along with more information about the retreat.

Postal registration

1. Go to our website (<http://www.southern-insight.org.nz/>) and download a pdf of the Registration form. Alternatively, email [Southern Insight](mailto:Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com) and request a form by post.
2. Complete the registration form and post to the address shown for that retreat
3. **Note on your form whether you are paying online or by cheque and how much you have paid.**

Your \$50 deposit can be paid online (see instructions below) or by cheque posted with the registration form.

Please include your return address for correspondence (a stamp addressed envelope is appreciated).

Online payment instructions

Account for payment: Southern Insight Meditation...

Account Number: Kiwi bank 38-9017-0230890-04

Please note the following in your payment:

In the *Particulars* box, put the initials of the teacher followed by “rt” and the year (e.g. JLDR2016 for Jeremy Logan & Di Robertson retreat).

In the *Code* box, put how many people you are paying for (e.g. 1 person).

In the *Reference* box, put your name

e.g. Particulars Code Reference SB RT 2015 2 people J Smith

Please note on your registration form that you have paid your deposit online and say how much you have paid.

Refunds of Deposits

The deposit for retreats is refundable up to the closing date of the retreat booked, less a \$10.00 charge for administration costs. Deposits cannot be refunded after the retreat closing date. That money will be put into the Top-Up Fund.

Top-Up Fund

The top-up fund is for those who are unable to afford the cost of a retreat. Southern Insight aims to make retreats as accessible as possible to all, and it is possible to pay less than the lower amount in the sliding scale for a retreat. We encourage people to make use of this fund, which, thanks to the generosity of others who attend our retreats, is currently in a healthy state.

To pay less than the full retreat cost, you must talk with a committee member before coming on retreat.

If undelivered, please return to:
13 Dacre Street
Christchurch

