



Mindful Manners and the Still Water Community

One of the joys of being at Plum Village or traveling with the Plum Village Sangha is being surrounded by people on the same spiritual path. Daily activities are seen as opportunities to deepen one's mindfulness practice and to support others in deepening their practices. The Still Water Mindfulness Practice Center invites those who practice with us to follow these simple suggestions as a way of nourishing our collective practice of mindfulness:

- When coming to Still Water events, so as not to distract others, please dress simply and refrain from wearing perfumes or oils that might disturb those with sensitivities.
- Before entering the meditation hall, you are invited to pause. Notice what you are bringing with you, literally and figuratively, and what you would like to leave outside in the hallway. (Also, please double check to make sure your cell phone is turned off.) When you are centered, enter in freedom.
- If you enter the meditation space when people are setting up, your calm assistance would be appreciated. If assistance is not needed, please select a place to sit and silently prepare yourself for meditation.
- If the meditation is under way, please walk to your place with quiet mindfulness, as if walking not to wake a sleeping child. Similarly, please settle yourself onto your cushions or chair with as little noise as possible.
- Each encounter with a fellow Sangha member is a moment of potential connection and support. When you pass something to the person next to you, please follow the Plum Village tradition of making eye contact with the recipient, offering the item with both hands, and bowing to the recipient. Similarly, if you are receiving an item, make eye contact, offer a slight bow, and receive the item with both hands.
- The sound of the bell is often called "the voice of the Buddha" and encourages us to return to our "true home." During an event or on a retreat, when you hear the sound of the bell, whether you are walking, talking, seated, or lost in thought, please stop, and take three mindful breaths. (However, there are some exceptions to the "stop and take three breath rule," including bells before bowing and during walking meditation.)

The suggestions above are just a few of the Mindful Manners taught to lay practitioners and novice monks and nuns in the Plum Village tradition. We hope that the practice of Mindful Manners will bring you solidity and joy and nourish everyone in the Still Water community.