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True Presence: Wholeheartedly Embracing Joy and Pain

**Still Water Spring 2022 Online Practice Retreat
with Dharma Teachers Mitchell Ratner and Barbara Newell**

Friday, June 10, 7:00 pm – Sunday, June 12, 12:30 pm



When you throw a rock into a river it will sink to the bottom; but if you have a boat, you can put kilograms of rocks in it and the boat will still float.

So with this amount of suffering in you, if you manage to have a boat, then you can still float.

You can enjoy your rowing back and forth across the river.

Learn the art of generating the energy of mindfulness.

Mindfulness is the boat that can embrace, that can transport, that can transform.

You know you can do it.

— Thich Nhat Hanh

There is pain around us. There is pain inside us. We may feel overwhelmed by uncertainty... anger... hopelessness.

In this online retreat we will explore the nature of true presence, and develop our capacities to fully enjoy the beauty and pleasures of life and to heal the suffering in and around us.

We'll practice together with guided and silent meditations, Dharma talks, group sharing, mindful songs and movements, and mindfully engaging in the activities of everyday life. Periods of being together in a Zoom meeting will alternate with time offline enjoying practices such as meals, walking meditation, and mindful exercise.

We will begin on Friday evening with instruction and encouragement for settling deeply into the present moment throughout the retreat. On Saturday morning, we'll focus on the question: What is true presence? Saturday afternoon and evening we'll explore mindful practices to enjoy the beauty and pleasures of life and, also, to lean into fear and suffering. On Sunday we will have time for questions and answers, sharing, and retreat reflections. (The full schedule is below.)

The retreat will be led by Dharma Teachers Mitchell Ratner and Barbara Newell and by experienced members of the Still Water community. Participants with little meditation experience are welcome, as well as longtime practitioners. To fully benefit from and contribute to our shared retreat experience, all participants are requested to minimize outside commitments.

Mitchell Ratner, the Senior Teacher of the Still Water Mindfulness Practice Center, has been a lay member of the Tiep Hien Buddhist order since 1993 and in 2001 received the Dharmacharya (Dharma Teacher) transmission. An applied anthropologist and the founder of the Still Water MPC, since 1994 he has taught classes and workshops focused on integrating mindfulness meditation with work, meaningful relationships, and the challenges of everyday life. When Mitchell Ratner became a Dharma teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh counseled him, "Your life is your Dharma talk."

Barbara Newell practiced with the Still Water MPC before 2003 when she became a Plum Village nun. During her 12 years of monastic life she helped run retreats, mentored new community members, and edited books for Thich Nhat Hanh. She received Dharmacharya transmission in 2010. Since returning to lay life in 2016, Barbara has lived in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where she mentors meditation and mindfulness practitioners individually and in small groups online and in person. She finds joy in helping people rediscover how to embody genuine presence, connect meaningfully with others, tap into fresh insight, and enliven the everyday.

Dana The Still Water MPC is a religious nonprofit organization that depends on voluntary donations for its continued existence. With your contributions, Still Water is able to support its teachers, develop new programs, support other mindfulness communities (regionally, nationally, and internationally), enable participation by those with limited incomes, and offer no-cost community events.

You are invited to make a tax-deductible donation to Still Water in accord with the urging of your heart and your means and circumstances. Your donation will support the Still Water community and the teachers offering this retreat. All donations are appreciated. No one will be turned away.

The amounts below are offered as guidelines:

- The suggested donation for this retreat is \$150 or more per person.
- The supporting donation is \$300 or more per person.

Questions? We hope you can join us in this retreat. If you have questions, please contact the Retreat Registrar, Gary Stone, at garold.stone@gmail.com or (301) 509-0983 voice/text. [Please register with this link.](#)

Retreat Schedule

True Presence: The Courage to Whole-Heartedly Embrace Joy and Suffering Still Water Online Retreat, Friday, June 10 – Sunday, June 12, 2022

Online activities have a yellow background. Offline activities have a green background.
All times approximate — changes may occur.

Friday	7:00 pm	Greetings, introductions, orientation, and intentions
	8:00	Evening chant, sitting, Dharma reading
	8:30	The practice of noble silence
Saturday	6:30 am	Suggested wake-up
	6:45	Stretching, yoga, tai-chi, or outdoor walking
	7:30	Morning chant, sitting meditation
	9:00	Breakfast and outdoor walking
	10:30	Dharma talk
	11:30	Lunch and outdoor walking
	1:30	Focused reflective writing
	2:30	Dharma sharing
	3:45	Personal practice
	4:00	Guided deep relaxation
	4:55	Outdoor walking, dinner, and personal practice
	7:00	Dharma talk
	8:15	Evening chant, sitting
	8:30	The practice of noble silence
Sunday	6:30 am	Suggested wake-up
	6:45	Stretching, yoga, tai-chi, or outdoor walking
	7:30	Morning chant, sitting meditation
	8:30	Breakfast and outdoor walking
	10:00	Questions and Answers
	11:00	Indoor walking, outdoor walking, or other movement.
	11:45	Reflections and sharing
	12:45 pm	End of retreat

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