

THE WAY OF SHAMBHALA
Meditation in Everyday Life
Teacher's Manual

An Introduction to Meditation in Everyday Life

Meditation in Everyday Life has five main goals:

1. Introduce and clarify instructions on basic mindfulness-awareness meditation practice, infused with the view of basic goodness. When students complete this course, they will feel confident that they know the view and technique of meditation practice.
2. Provide an open and genuine community in which to discuss and clarify basic sitting meditation, and how it can be part of everyday life. Help participants establish a daily practice.
3. Provide an accessible entry into the *Way of Shambhala*, especially Shambhala Training Level I and, and/or continuity between Shambhala Training Levels I and II. This also provides a doorway into Shambhala altogether.
4. Introduce the meditation instructions of the two Sakyongs: the principles of *shamatha* as presented in *Turning the Mind into an Ally*, the emphasis on basic goodness, and the range of oral instructions on mindfulness and awareness presented by Trungpa Rinpoche.
5. Introduce the relationship between meditation, basic goodness, everyday life, and the Shambhala vision of enlightened society.

Introduction

Meditation in Everyday Life (MIEL) provides an introduction to meditation for new students, with practical suggestions for establishing a sitting practice in the midst of our speedy society. Each evening class allows for open discussion of the challenges that students are facing in their practice. This open discussion is as important than as the “content” of the classes. While it is important to teach the logic of mindfulness-awareness, a community of fellow practitioners and teachers sharing their experience and questions is often most helpful for beginning meditators. The primary focus for MIEL is therefore community discussion, guided by the teacher, responding to the exact questions and needs of the students. If a teacher has to choose between communicating the content or leaving space for discussion, please focus on the discussion, leaving room for students to express their own experience, inspiration, or obstacles. The teachers could think of themselves as “spiritual

elders” and fellow meditators who are there to listen and give suggestions from the lineage about working with meditation in everyday life.

The content of the classes provides the structure or skeleton on which to hang the “meat” of the discussion. The content introduces the basic logic of mindfulness and awareness and the view of mind, emotions, etc. that can help to support the meditation technique. This brings out intelligence, and reveals the sophistication and clarity of a genuine meditation lineage.

Further, this series of classes offers a glimpse of the Shambhala vision of enlightened society by suggesting the ways in which meditation can impact our daily lives, our homes, families, and work, and can therefore expand to impact our whole society. This view is based upon the teachings of meditation in *Turning the Mind into An Ally*, *The Shambhala Principle*, and *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*.

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Peaceful Abiding and Basic Goodness	Mindfulness, Awareness and Gathering the Mind	Obstacles and Antidotes	Genuine Heart of Sadness	Everyday Life and Enlightened Society

Meditation

Our two Sakyong’s have presented many approaches and techniques of meditation. Though they each have slightly different intentions, they are all various methods to reveal basic goodness. The Shambhala Training Levels introduce a gradual unfolding of meditation, moving through “precise” “open” and “beyond” techniques. In *Turning the Mind into an Ally*, the Sakyong presented a fresh approach to traditional *shamatha* practice. In his teachings on Shambhala Meditation, the Sakyong introduces us to a simple experience of basic goodness that is almost *before* meditation.

The approach to meditation as presented in *Turning the Mind into an Ally* is excellent for new practitioners because it meets most of us where we are when we first connect with meditation. It is very practical and approaches meditation from the perspective of our everyday, conceptual mind. The conceptual mind function through a relationship between a subject and object. The subject is the mind, the

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object is whatever that mind perceives or thinks. Peaceful abiding is an approach that is designed to tame or relax the conceptual mind by placing it on the breathing. This develops mindfulness, stability, clarity and strength. It is healing and good for the mind and body.

Gentleness, Peace, and Basic Goodness

However, for many of us, the experience of working with mind is very difficult and practice is far from peaceful. Self-aggression, judgment, and harshness often arise. The Shambhala approach to meditation emphasizes tremendous gentleness as a way to work with this self-aggression. Friendliness to oneself is key. This is true for basic mindfulness and awareness practice as well as the more spacious techniques. We cannot underestimate the importance of emphasizing loving-kindness as our approach to meditation. As we follow the breathing in the present, we are cultivating a gentle openness to our experience. Rather than trying to fight with thoughts, suppress emotions, or silence the mind, we are learning to finally allow ourselves to be as we are. The instruction that we give in *Meditation in Everyday life* is basic mindfulness and awareness infused with the view of basic goodness and especially a sense of gentleness.

“Ultimately meditation is a deep relaxation of the mind. However, if that mind feels insecure about its nature—basic goodness—then it can never truly relax. When it does attempt to relax it will eventually come to rest in what appears to be the nature of the mind—inadequacy. That seeming inadequacy comes from being brought up in a culture of doubting basic goodness. When we meditate from the perspective of confidence in basic goodness, there is no doubt, and we can relax.” —Sakyong Mipham, *Shambhala Meditation*, “Creating a Culture”

“The key point of meditation practice is to develop sympathy for yourself. You could enjoy being yourself. You don’t have to borrow anything or bring any foreign influences into your life. You are self-sufficient therefore you can make yourself comfortable. In meditation, you create a very natural situation for yourself... Meditation practice is based on the idea of being yourself, as you are—something you have rarely done. All along you have had problems with that.” —Chögyam Trungpa, *The Path of Individual Liberation*, Chapter 23.

“To meet our basic goodness, we meditate. Through peaceful abiding, we learn to rest fearlessly in our natural state. We see what an enlightened being sees: basic goodness is the ground of being, the nature of everything. It’s an

indestructible continuum, a diamond hologram with infinite facets...We experience basic goodness when we relax deeply into how things are, without wanting to change them.” —Sakyong Mipham, *Turning the Mind into an Ally*

Below, are notes quoting the Dorje Dradül’s Shambhala Training Director talks on January 3 and 10 of 1978. They describe the heart of the Shambhala approach:

Basic Goodness

Everybody's opinions and attitudes about himself are very important in this case. If there is a slightest tendency within you to feel a little bit wretched, inadequate and fundamentally distrustful of yourself, it shows through. That doesn't mean that you are not allowed to think anything bad about yourself, particularly, but there is another side of you, which is good. It is just a simple attitude to ourselves... That kind of spark, which exists in you, is the seed that we are trying to spread to the rest of the world.

...And the first thought that comes to mind when we think about what we can do with this is some sense of friendliness to ourselves. Some sense of friendliness begins there, that it is worthwhile and you are worthwhile. And some sense of softness to ourselves begins to develop.

...And when we present these things to ourselves, they should be moving rather than a big deal. It is almost like touching the aspect of whatever exists in us, which is positive, but at the same time, slightly sad. Because it is very positive, it's very tender. So it has to be truly human, you see, a very human kind of thing. So we are talking about a human situation and how to feel like a human being. And the human thing, which exists in us is a kind of positive cervix which is very tender. That seems to be the heart of the Shambhala approach, if you like, that kind of tremendous gentleness. That has been one of the problems of the world, that people don't feel themselves. So we are trying to feel ourselves from that point of view.

Our Basic Instruction

Based on all of the above, the basic instruction that we offer in MIEL and in our entry programs in Shambhala is:

- **View:** Based on the view of basic goodness: whatever arises in the meditation session can be embraced with gentle awareness infused with tenderness, care, trust, and precise simplicity. We do not have to be afraid of who we are.

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- **Posture:** The posture is natural and uplifted, relying on the 7 points of posture, with a soft, open gaze looking slightly downwards, a few feet in front.
- **Breath:** We settle into the present by feeling the body breathing. We can feel the breath come in and fill the body; then we feel the breath dissolve out into the space around us. We let go as we go out with the breath, and then we feel the breath coming in again in an ongoing flow.
- **Mind:** We feel whatever arises, letting our self be human, and be as we are. If the mind wanders into the past or future, we simply and gently notice this. Then we let go and return to the posture and the breathing in the present. There is no problem with thinking—that is part of being human. We include thoughts as part of the practice. We gently notice if the mind wanders and return to being as we are, again and again.

The Classes

For many students, this course will be their first set of evening classes at the Shambhala Center. The container should be both uplifted and relaxed, utilizing the forms of the Shambhala Training levels, and also creating a warm, communal environment. If the course is taking place in a Center, the shrine should be lit and cushions can be arranged in either rows or a circle, depending on the context. At some point in the course, clarify that the shrine, and any other forms of sacred art in the meditation hall, are symbols for the qualities of the nature of our own mind, the mind of meditation. We are not “worshipping” the images and they are ultimately inseparable from our own mind. They are there as supports for meditation, and are arranged to create an uplifted atmosphere. There should be no chants or dedication of merit—keep things simple and free from ritual and jargon.

Open Community, No Religious Commitment Involved

Clarify that this course, and the practice of meditation in general, is not a particularly religious practice. It is a basic human practice, open to all people, regardless of their religious background. Meditation practice is a simple training that can be of benefit for people in their daily lives, or with their involvement in sports, yoga, business, family life, or a spiritual path. This is a practice that can be a support for many aspects of life. It is also the necessary foundation for going forward on the Shambhala journey.

Genuine Peace and Relaxation

Creating a relaxed, friendly, and settled atmosphere is particularly important for the MIEL class. This atmosphere will help beginning students to settle into the practice.

Classes should include a period of sitting, some walking meditation, and a round of Shamatha Yoga or other movement series. Many participants are tired after a busy day, and really find that their ability to focus and participate is enhanced by including a few stretches or 5-10 minutes of shamatha yoga as part of the class. Someone with experience leading shamatha yoga could simply say that people who wish could participate in this short yoga sequence, being careful not to exceed one's capacity. Mention that yoga is a mind practice as well as a body practice, as we gently bring our awareness to the movements and postures, just as in walking meditation.

The class could end with a short period of sitting that brings together the themes of the evening. It would be good if students left each class feeling somewhat refreshed, relaxed, or softened, and looking forward to next week's class.

Sample Suggested Schedule (for most evenings, except the first class):

7:00 Welcome, Shamatha Yoga, Guided practice
7:45 Check in; how is practice going?
8:00 Talk
8:30 Discussion, dialogues, or discussion groups
8:55 Concluding practice and advice for the week

Teaching Method: Bringing out the Student's Experience

The Way of Shambhala employs various teaching methods to engage the participants' innate intelligence, and bring the teachings home to them, rather than emphasizing the director's "brilliant long talk". Here, talks are short and "essential." The Sakyong has asked us all to "say less and mean more"—to make shorter talks that are even more potent and clear. There are also several contemplative methods recommended during each of the classes to bring out the genuine experience and insight of the participants, and inspire them to be active learners.

Many people are extremely busy, under tremendous pressure or experiencing great difficulty when they arrive at the Shambhala Center for the class. Therefore, in

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addition to practicing meditation for some time, we need to use methods to bring our teachings into personal experience. This means allowing the students an opportunity to explore the teachings in a direct way.

In most classes, a main theme will be presented. We will then explore this theme experientially, using a contemplation, a dialogue, or another exercise.

“Contemplation” is a formal practice where we explore the theme meditatively, by mixing the stability of shamatha with an aspect of the teachings. We think about and investigate the dharma.

Dialogue

A “dialogue” is an exercise where two or more people explore their understanding and experience of the topic. It is something like an open-ended warrior exchange. It may be akin to a moment when your teacher asks you a direct question about yourself, and you have to answer genuinely, on the spot. The process of talking and listening can bring the topic of the class into experience, requires that the student use their own words, and begins to mix the topic with everyday life. It also allows for students to learn about themselves in a very direct way. Questions could be simple: “Please turn to a partner and talk for a few minutes about how your meditation practice has been going for you?” Questions could also be directly connected to the content of a class. For example, when presenting the teachings on the obstacles and antidotes, the dialogue asks the students to consider how they experience being too tight or too loose. While talking about these challenging questions, the student has to connect the teaching with their own emotions, their own life experience, and their meditation practice. When leaving a class, it is often this experience of talking and listening that will stay with the student, sometimes even more than the content of the talk.

Following a dialogue or contemplation, we always come back together as a group and discuss the experience. Therefore, most classes have 1) a period of meditation 2) a teaching, 3) a method to bring this teaching into experience, and 4) a discussion. In order to leave time for these dialogues and contemplations, talks need to be precise and evocative. It will be a challenge for us to present the material, bring in personal examples, and use the time skillfully. However, it is important to find a way to give shorter and more potent talks, and leave time for the students to work with the dialogues and contemplations.

Please do not feel that you have to do exactly what manual suggests; use your own intelligence about what you think is needed for the specific students and community with whom you are working.

On Using this Manual:

- The notes for each class below begin with a “Teacher’s Summary” which can be printed out as class notes.
- *Anything written italics is a note to the teacher. Anything in ordinary print is the content to be presented to the students.*
- There are many suggestions throughout the manual, (such as “at this point, ask the class what obstacles you have experienced, etc). These are suggestions; obviously you have to do what you feel is helpful. Please allow this manual to be an inspiration for bringing your own experience, style, and creativity to the course. Please don’t let the details of this manual be a constraint or a rulebook.

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Class One Teacher's Summary
Peaceful Abiding and Basic Goodness

Threefold Logic:

Ground:	Basic Goodness
Path:	Becoming familiar with Natural Peace
Fruition:	Harmony/friendship with our Mind

- I. Welcome. Introduce the purpose of the course.
- II. Ask Students what has brought them to this class
- III. Talk: Basic Goodness and Peaceful Abiding
 - a. **Ground:** Why meditate? Basic Goodness
 - b. **Path:** Becoming familiar with Natural Peace
 - In peaceful abiding practice, we ground the mind in the present by placing it on the breath.
 - We learn to rest in our own, natural peace. We become familiar with basic goodness.
 - Underneath the movement and distraction is underlying stillness
 - We become more familiar with the ground of basic goodness, the natural peace of our own mind.
 - c. **Fruition:** Friendship with our own Mind
- IV. Meditation Instruction and Guided Practice
- V. Discussion and Advice for Daily Practice

Time: Consider your schedule and choose a good time

Place: Find a good place to practice

Enjoy the Practice: Don't be disheartened. Look forward to the practice.

Personal Commitment: Pause and make a commitment to practice this week.

Distribute the handout.

Class One
Peaceful Abiding and Basic Goodness

Threefold Logic:

Ground:	Basic Goodness
Path:	Becoming familiar with Natural Peace
Fruition:	Harmony/friendship with our Mind

Class 1 Detailed Suggested Schedule:

7:00 Welcome, Introduce the purposes of the Meditation in Everyday Life Course
7:10 Ask students what has brought them to the class. This could be as a group, or in small groups of 2 or 3. Hear from the students.
7:25 Talk: Peaceful Abiding and Basic Goodness
7:45 Stretch and Initial meditation instructions. Guided shamatha practice periods.
8:25 Ask for questions about the meditation technique.
8:35 Discussion and small groups
8:50 Concluding advice for the week
9:00 Conclude, refreshments

In some sense, Class One is just a long, meditation instruction. The talk provides the view or attitude of the practice, the instructions provide the technique of how to actually do this.

Opening:

Welcome the class and introduce the course. Present the open view that this is a basic human practice, and not about becoming part of any particular religion or tradition. Present the basic intentions for the five weeks. You may want to allow students to introduce themselves and get to know each other. If it is a relatively small group, you could go around and ask people to say their name, and why they have come to learn about meditation. If it is a larger group, ask students to get into groups of 2, 3 or 4. Students have a chance to talk about what has brought them to this class and what they are looking for in meditation. After a few minutes, come back together and hear from the students. What has brought them here tonight?

The Talk: Peaceful Abiding and Basic Goodness

Ground: Why Meditate? The Ground of Basic Goodness

The Ground emphasizes the connection between basic goodness and sitting meditation.

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“By meditation here we mean something very basic and simple that is not tied to any one culture. We are talking about a very basic act: sitting on the ground, assuming a good posture, and developing a sense of our spot, our place on this earth. This is the means of rediscovering ourselves and our basic goodness, the means to tune ourselves in to genuine reality, without any expectations or preconceptions.” —*Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*

As human beings, our mind is naturally open, fresh, aware, and good. Even though we experience agitation, difficult emotions, stress, anxiety, and anger, beneath or within all of these experiences, we can contact a state of being that is clear and fresh. Meditation is the practice to discover and rest in this uncluttered and open state of mind. Why meditate? Meditation is a simple practice, available to all human beings without exception, which enables us to discover and rest in the natural peace and goodness of our mind.

“Turning the mind into an ally is a matter of learning to see ourselves as we are. Ordinarily we just can’t handle the natural joy of our mind, so we end up churning up intense emotions. These emotions keep us trapped in suffering...

“Peaceful abiding” describes the mind as it naturally is. The word *peace* tells the whole story. The human mind is by nature joyous, calm, and very clear. In shamatha meditation, we aren’t creating a peaceful state—we’re letting our mind be as it is to begin with. This doesn’t mean that we’re peacefully ignoring things. It means that the mind is able to be in itself without constantly leaving.” —TMA 25

“In *shamatha* meditation —“peaceful abiding”—we train our minds in stability, clarity, and strength. Through this most basic form of sitting meditation, we discover that we can abide peacefully. Knowing our natural peace is the basis for any spiritual path —the beginning and the ground for anyone curious enough to seek true happiness.” —TMA 5

“This is a practice that anyone can do. Although it has its roots in Buddhism, it is a compliment to any spiritual tradition. If we want to undo our suffering and be of benefit to others and the planet, we’re going to have to be responsible for learning what our own mind is and how it works, no matter what beliefs we hold.” —TMA 5

“It seems we all agree that training the body through exercise, diet, and relaxation is a good idea, but why don’t we think about training our mind? Working with our mind and emotional states can help us in any activity in which we engage, whether its sports or business or study—or a religious path.”
—TMA p. 3

Path: Becoming Familiar with Natural Peace

The Path describes how we become familiar with this natural peace and goodness of the mind. Clarify the meaning of “peaceful abiding” (TMA Chapter 3) and present the notion of “becoming familiar with an object of meditation” (TMA Chapter 4).

Define *shamatha*: “If we can remember what the word *shamatha* means we can always use it as a reference point. We can say, “What is this meditation that I am doing? It is calm, peaceful abiding.” TMA- 26

The teacher could provide a description of the logic of mindfulness-awareness practice from TMA:

- The mind is always meditating and placing itself on an object of thought or perception.
- Usually we take “me” (habitual, discursive mind) as the object. We worry, hope, fear, plan, we feel agitated or stressed, or stuck in depression. When we are stuck in this habitual current of the mind, we miss the open, fresh, clarity of our mind. It is like being stuck in the surface waves and agitation of the ocean, and missing the depth and clarity beneath the surface.
- In peaceful abiding practice, we ground the mind in the present by placing it on the body breathing in the present.
- We notice thoughts and continually return to the breathing and the fullness of our experience in the present.
- We switch allegiance from the bewildered mind to the stable, clear, and strong mind. We allow ourselves to rest gently with nowness.
- We learn to rest in our own, natural peace. We become familiar with basic goodness.
- We can understand our thoughts and emotional patterns.
We can see:
 - The mind is always placing itself on something
 - The current of the mind is always fluctuating
 - Underneath the movement and distraction is underlying stillness

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- We become more familiar with the ground of basic goodness, the natural peace of our own mind.

Fruition: Friendship with our own Mind

The Fruition of meditation practice is the basic human possibility of friendship with our own mind and emotions.

The basic message of the meditation tradition is: We do not have to be afraid of who we are. We do not have to be afraid of our own mind, emotions, and thoughts. We do not have to be afraid of our lives and our world.

We can discover that the mind is workable, fundamentally open, and good. But this takes practice. Meditation is the practice that can help us discover this for ourselves, so that it is not just an idea or wishful thinking. We can develop a friendly relationship with our own mind.

Just as in riding a horse, we can eventually develop a harmonious and balanced relationship with riding our own mind. We can “create a synergistic bond, a wordless rapport. It’s that kind of connection that I think we can all have with our own minds.” TMA- 5

“Training our mind through peaceful abiding, we can create an alliance that allows us to actually use our mind, rather than be used by it.” TMA- 5

But this is not just something that will happen “Eventually” or in the future. In Shambhala, from the very beginning we can adopt an attitude of gentleness towards ourselves. We can have friendship with our mind throughout the journey of meditation. As the Sakyong says, mindfulness happens naturally when there is care for the present. If we love and care for a small child, we do not have to forcefully remind ourselves to watch them. We naturally extend awareness in their direction. Similarly, with an attitude of gentleness, basic goodness, and care, we can cultivate friendship with ourselves as the very path of meditation. Each time we sit, we are strengthening this sense of friendship with our own being, letting us be as we already are. This is a natural, human approach to meditation.

Note: *The teacher might also mention some of the health benefits that come from a regular mindfulness practice. We will provide some literature and articles on the subject. We could suggest some of the ways in which peaceful abiding meditation can impact our physical and psychological health. The question is: what is true health and true peace? The basic message is that the mind and the body are interconnected with our overall state of well-being in very*

profound ways. We can offer some of the most recent studies of the impact of meditation on health.

Initial Meditation Instruction:

Give a gentle and spacious introduction to basic technique. Although there is attention placed on the full cycle of the breathing, this does NOT mean that we are tight or claustrophobic. This is a spacious and gentle attention on the breathing as our object of meditation. We could refer to this kind of practice as “mindfulness-awareness,” “peaceful abiding meditation,” or just “basic sitting.”

The talk presents the basic view and logic of mindfulness-awareness meditation, the attitude and approach that we take. Now the instructions provide the technique of how to actually do this. Class One introduces the basic meditation instruction. Slowly and skillfully guide the class into the meditation practice, aware of your tone of voice and choosing your words carefully. It might help to do some stretching, or standing for a few minutes before shifting from the talk to the meditation instructions. You want to provide as much support as possible for students to experience a sense of the mind settling.

Give the instructions in a slow and gentle tone and with a lot of space to experience abiding peacefully and gently in the present, feeling all that arises with a sense of care.

Sit for ten to twenty minutes depending on time and energy in the room.

Emphasize the 3 aspects of the meditation technique:

- **Body:** The posture is natural and uplifted, relying on the 7 points of posture, with a soft, open gaze looking slightly downwards, a few feet in front.
- **Breath:** We settle into the present by feeling the body breathing. We can feel the breath come in and fill the body; then we feel the breath dissolve out into the space around us. We let go as we go out with the breath, and then we feel the breath coming in again in an ongoing flow.
- **Mind:** We feel whatever arises, letting our self be human, and be as we are. If the mind wanders into the past or future, we simply and gently notice this. Then we let go and return to the posture and the breathing in the present. There is no problem with thinking—that is part of being human. We include thoughts as part of the practice. We gently notice if the mind wanders and return to being as we are, again and again.

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Gentleness: *Emphasize gentleness and friendliness towards oneself.*

Thoughts are natural, not a problem, and are part of the practice. We are not fighting ourselves, beating thoughts away, or struggling to hold the mind to complete stillness. The practice is gentle, and inclusive. Of course there will be thoughts. We simply notice them, notice that the mind has moved, label, and come back again. This is performed without judgment or blame. Gentleness is the key to mindfulness.

You might pause after the session and clarify the three aspects of the technique, making sure that students can repeat these three steps back to you. Remind students that these three simple aspects of the practice are all that we need. Anything extra—such as chanting mantras, thinking certain thoughts, or playing soothing music, etc.—takes away from the simplicity and power of the practice. We are learning to let ourselves just be—simple human beings sitting on this earth.

Concluding Advice:

After some discussion and Q+A, conclude the class with suggestions for establishing a basic sitting practice in everyday life. Teachers should rely on Appendix A in TMA “Preparing to Practice” in order to make practical suggestions for daily practice. It would be good for students to read Appendix A.

Remind students of the 3 basic components of the meditation technique: body, breath, and mind.

Try to sit a few times before class next week.

Time: Consider what days of the week work well, and what time of the day is best for you. Mornings or evenings are usually best. 10-20 minutes of peaceful abiding practice, just a few times a week, is great. Don't set yourself up for disappointment by trying to sit for 2 hours, every day. Short, consistent practice sessions are the best. (Of course, sitting longer is fine, too.)

Place: Find a room, or corner of your apartment that would be a good place to sit. You might want to clear it out, clean it, and generally uplift the spot. But don't try to make it perfect. If you wait for the perfect time and place, you will never sit.

Enjoy the Practice: Don't feel discouraged. This is not easy, and does not come instantaneously. This is not a quick fix, but a way of life. Results from meditation

practice come through a consistent practice that becomes part of our daily life, just like drinking water, or brushing our teeth. The best advice for establishing a daily practice is to really enjoy the practice. Look forward to this as an opportunity to let yourself be. This is a period of time each day to rest with yourself and discover more about your mind.

Personal Commitment: *At the end of the class, you may choose to invite students to pause and make a personal commitment to practice meditation at some point during this next week. Just ask students to pause and reflect and make a personal commitment to practice, if they would like.*

Distribute the handout, which summarizes the class in note form. We will go over all the points on the handout throughout the course.

Class Readings: *Encourage students to purchase Turning the Mind into an Ally. Try to have copies available for purchase at the first class. (It is not essential that students complete the readings for each class. The teacher will present the material without assuming prior knowledge). The readings are assigned in such a way that the content presented in class is reinforced by the reading. Usually, we read the relevant chapters before the class, and then discuss the reading in class. Here, we are suggesting the other way around: we introduce the material in the class in person, and then ask students to read about it. If you would like to do it in the more traditional order, that is fine too.*

Readings for next week:

TMA Chapters 1, 3, 4, and Appendix A

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Class Two Teacher's Summary
Mindfulness and Awareness and Gathering the Mind

Threefold Logic:

Ground: Natural mindfulness
Path: Gathering the mind. Touch and Go.
Fruition: Confidence that we can work with our mind and emotions

- I. Welcome, Shamatha Yoga and Guided Practice
- II. Check In: How did practice go this week?
- III. Talk: Mindfulness, Awareness and Gathering the Mind

Ground:

- Review
- Mindfulness and awareness are intrinsic aspects of the mind
Mindfulness has 3 qualities:

- 1. familiarity
- 2. remembering
- 3. nondistracted

- Awareness: *Sheshin*, “presently knowing”
The “spy” and the “sheriff”

Path: Gathering the Mind

- Describe what we mean by “gathering”
- Pass out “Concentric Circles” and Describe each ring

Fruition: Touch and go. Fresh start. Confident that we can work with our mind

IV. Dialogue

“Which of these concentric circles feel meaningful to you? What is your experience of “gathering the mind”? What questions do you have about working with emotions?”

V. Discussion

Class Two

Mindfulness and Awareness and Gathering the Mind

Having reviewed the basic logic of shamatha in the first class, Class Two defines the meaning of mindfulness and awareness (Chapter 5) and gathering the mind (Chapter 6).

Threefold Logic:

Ground:	Natural mindfulness
Path:	Gathering the mind. Touch and go.
Fruition:	Confidence that we can work with our mind

Class 2 Suggested Schedule:

7:00 Welcome, Shamatha Yoga, Guided practice.
7:45 Check in; how was practice for you this week?
8:00 Talk: Mindfulness and Awareness and Gathering the Mind
8:30 Dialogue Groups and Discussion
8:55 Concluding practice and/or advice for week
9:00 Conclude, refreshments

After a period of sitting meditation, hear from the class about how practice went for them this week. Were they able to practice? What did they experience? You also might choose to begin class by hearing how practice is going first, and then review the technique and sit.

Talk: Mindfulness and Awareness and Gathering the Mind

Ground: Natural Mindfulness

The Ground of natural mindfulness is an opportunity to both review material from last week's class as well as define mindfulness and awareness.

Review: *Assume that most of the content of class last week needs to be reviewed again and again. Summarize the view of basic goodness, and learning to rest the mind in natural peace. Remind the class of gentleness. A harsh and judgmental approach to practice does not help. We are learning to relax and trust ourselves as we are. This is the personal experience of the view of basic goodness.*

Mindfulness:

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Just as the mind is naturally open, fresh, and clear, we naturally have mindfulness. Mindfulness is not something that we need to “add” to our mind—it is an inherent capacity that we all have.

“The good news is that mindfulness and awareness are intrinsic aspects of the mind—not something foreign that we are trying to bring in. Mindfulness is what we use to hold our mind to any object—the breath, a rock, a banana—and awareness is the intelligence that tells us what we’re doing. Awareness is what tells us that the phone is ringing. When we answer the telephone, it’s mindfulness that holds us to the voice at the other end long enough to know that our mother is calling. So, in meditating properly, we’re strengthening aspects of the mind that are already there. It’s like working out. In developing mindfulness and awareness, the mind begins to feel its strength and its ability to simply be present.” TMA- 50

Mindfulness has 3 qualities:

1. familiarity
2. remembering
3. nondistracted

Awareness: Awareness is here *sheshin*, or “presently knowing.”¹ It is the capacity for the mind to know what is going on in the present. This sense of “presently knowing” is non-judgmental awareness of our present experience: “my mind feels like this, my body feels like this, there are a lot of thoughts, there are not a lot of thoughts, I am perceiving, etc.” This is a very simple, ordinary quality of our mind, and it is natural to consciousness. We are learning to recognize this awareness that knows the present. We are strengthening this awareness through practice. Ultimately, we are learning to rest in this awareness.

¹ *Sheshin* is distinct from *lhaktong/vipashyana*. *Sheshin* is more mundane—it just knows whatever is going on. *Vipashyana* is usually associated with seeing the nature or reality of what is going on. So, *sheshin* is a very basic kind of knowing (though it can transform into *prajna* and *vipashyana* along the path). *Sheshin* is a Tibetan word. *She* (*shes pa*) literally means knowing while *shin* (*bzhin pa*) is a present particle. It is therefore something like “knowing” “just knowing” or “presently knowing.” It also may be translated as “attentiveness” or “introspection.” It is sometimes defined in meditation manuals as “the mental faculty that guards or watches over mindfulness.” For new meditators it is important to clarify that it is just what knows what is happening. It is also a capacity that we cultivate on the path: as meditators we know that we are now angry, or now we are tired, or now we are distracted, or now we are defensive, etc. This continues throughout our postmeditation experience as well.

The Sakyong sometimes gives two similies for *sheshin*: the spy and the sheriff.

The **spy** knows what is going on in the present. It is the sense that awareness is constantly “spying” or looking around the mind to see if mindfulness has begun to wander. Awareness knows when the mind has wandered, and tells mindfulness to bring it back.

The **sheriff** is the sense in which awareness can “sense trouble brewing before it even hits the horizon” TMA- 55. Like in a Wild West movie, the sheriff rides out to the bad guys before they even get to town. In this sense, awareness knows that the mind is *about* to wander, even before it does. This is how mindfulness is able to stay with the breath for longer and longer periods of time. Awareness knows that a distracting thought is about to happen, and tells mindfulness to apply even more. This way, awareness and mindfulness work together.

Path: Gathering the Mind, Touch and Go

Having defined mindfulness and awareness, in Chapter 6 the Sakyong provides a map for gradually gathering the mind. We use mindfulness and awareness in different ways to gather the mind. There is a sense that mindfulness and awareness are the basic tools, and gathering the mind is the activity in which we use these tools. We could use this as an opportunity to discuss how to work with fantasies, emotions, and subtle thoughts. This also provides an experiential map for meditation experience. The class could leave space for people to ask about the emotional content of their practice. The point is not to give all the details in the chapter, but to give an over all sense of what we mean by mindfulness, awareness, and a practical map of how to work with fantasy, emotion, discursive thought etc.

Mindfulness and awareness are our two main tools as meditators. They allow us to “gather the mind.” Ordinarily, our mind is scattered and dispersed, like a light that is diffused throughout a large space.

“Gathering the mind is a gradual process. We can imagine the mind’s activity as circles of light radiating outward. Peaceful abiding is like taking the dispersed light and gathering it into ourselves. As we gather it closer, it grows brighter. The outermost circle represents our daily life. As we move in toward the center, we work with different levels of thoughts- from the gross to the subtle. The light grows gradually more focused. The pointing the middle of the circle represents the fortitude and clarity that underlie the wildness of our scattered mind.”-TMA pg. 59

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The “Concentric Circles of Shamatha” image on page 59 can be photocopied and distributed as the basis of the class. The teacher could present each ring and then discuss how students relate to that aspect of the practice. In this way, the teacher could guide the class through all of the rings.

These “Concentric Circles of Shamatha” represent some of the major stages that we pass through as we gather the mind.

Describe each Circle, and the meditation advice from Turning the Mind into an Ally. Be sure to emphasize the outer circle of “our life.” Give the suggestion to pause before you actually practice and just check in with yourself. See what is going on and think about it for a few minutes. Then, after letting this come up, make the conscious decision to let those thoughts go, and turn to the meditation technique itself.

Working with Emotions: Not Suppressing

****The description of working with emotions in Turning the Mind into an Ally emphasizes a basic approach in which we “dismantle” emotions by seeing that they are not solid. This can be helpful in that we recognize that the struggles, fear, regret, depression etc. are not fixed. They are changing and made of many thoughts, habits, energies, and images. We can distinguish these patterns with precision and intelligence and not be swept away.*

However, it is very important to remind participants that this approach of dismantling is not a way to suppress or “get rid of” emotions. In fact, emotions are basically good, part of our humanity.

“Emotion is the very pathway on which we experience life. To be emotionless is not to experience life at all: we are no longer moved, we no longer make contact with the world, and the world we live in becomes conceptual and isolated. By understanding emotions, we become more aware and more intelligent. Thus, in the purest sense, emotion is related to humanity...

If we have no emotion, we have no access to experience: love, compassion, and gratitude are only theoretical. At the same time, if emotions become overly agitated, our mind moves from being stimulated with intelligence to becoming fixated on its object, and anger or jealousy blocks the pathways of feeling. Without the benefit of objective insight, we lose our intelligence to ignorance as numbness replaces the sensation of feeling.”

-Sakyong Mipham, *Shambhala Meditation*,
“Emotional Connectivity and Culture”

Emotions, and indeed each of the rings of concentric circles, are the display of basic goodness. They are ultimately part of our human richness and do not need to be rejected. We are not trying to eliminate emotions, fantasies, subtle thoughts etc. We are not trying to just “stay” in the center of the circles. Rather, we are learning to mindfully embrace the full-range of our human experience. We are learning to work with whatever arises with a sense of confidence, intelligence, and loving-kindness. ALL of the concentric circles are basically good.

Touch and Go

One way we work with emotions and overwhelming thoughts is the approach of “touch and go.”

“As an individual you relate with what is happening around you. We could use the phrase “touch and go.” You touch or contact the experience of actually being there, then you let go. That touch-and-go process applies to your awareness of your breath and also to your awareness of day-to-day living. Touch is the sense of existence, that you are who you are...The go part is that you do not hang on to that. You do not sustain your sense of being, but you let go of it...

Touch is not simply the general awareness of being. It also applies to mindfulness of your individual states of mind. That is, your mental state of aggression or lust also has to be touched. Such states have to be acknowledged. However, you do not just acknowledge them and push them off. You need to look at them without suppression or shying away...In shamatha, you don’t just sign off. You acknowledge what is happening and you look at it...

It is possible to twist the logic, and relate to mediating and coming back to the breath as a way of avoiding problems, but such avoidance is itself a problem...You might think that you don’t have to pay attention to all those little embarrassments that happen in your life; instead, you could regard them as unimportant and come back to the breath. However, in doing so, you are patching over your problems...It is important to look at those embarrassments and *then* come back to the breath. —Trungpa Rinpoche, *The Path of Individual Liberation*, Chapter 28, “Touch and Go”

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So if the mind wander into difficult emotions, images, and feelings, we first “touch” or acknowledge this energy. Only after touching do we then let go. Touch does not mean analyze. We are not thinking about these emotions and energies. Rather we lightly touch and acknowledge that something difficult has arisen, and *then* we let go, disown, and return to just being and breathing. Touch brings a further sense of gentleness and humanity. Letting go helps us not get stuck, or “hooked” by the emotion. We need both the touch and the go.

Fresh Start

At any point during the practice session, especially if there are difficult emotions or physical pains, we can always take a fresh start. We can relax, let go, and begin with a sense of innocence or freshness. Each moment is an opportunity for freshness. This is another helpful way to work with emotions. There is always more room, more space, more freshness.

Note: *The teacher can note that the rest of “The Way of Shambhala” has a precise path of working with emotions and presents teachings on Buddhist psychology. The basis of that path is confidence in the mind resting in itself, and some sense of peace. Shamatha, and a sane relationship with the movements of mind, is the foundation for future mind training.*

Fruition: Confidence that we can work with our mind

“At the center of the circles, we meet our mind abiding in basic goodness.”
TMA- 75

Through the process of moving through these various concentric circles, we learn more about our mind and emotions, and we learn to gather the power and strength of our inherent mindfulness. This gives us increasing confidence that we know how to work with our life, fantasies, discursive thoughts, subtle thoughts etc. We can have a personal experience of the basic workability of our mind, even if this is just a glimpse. This confidence is very precious as a human being.

Dialogues:

After presenting the Ground, Path, and Fruition, allow the participants an opportunity to reflect on what these teachings mean for them. The purpose of the Dialogue is to turn the learning over to the participants and ask them to explore for themselves. This mixes the teachings with personal experience. After the talk and some Q+A and discussion, ask the students to get into pairs. Turn the cushions or

chairs to face each other. The partners should introduce themselves if they have not yet met. Each student will have an opportunity to speak as well as listen.

Ask the participants to reflect on these questions:

“Which of these concentric circles feel meaningful to you? What is your experience of “gathering the mind”? What questions do you have about working with emotions?”

Participants are invited to speak openly about their response to these questions for a few minutes. The teacher may give these instructions:

“Just see what arises as you speak about your response to these questions. There is no need to reveal things that you do not want to say. Simply say whatever arises in the present. Whatever is said is confidential. The purpose is to learn more about our self and our relationship with these teachings.”

Speak Genuinely

This is a practice of learning to speak genuinely, from personal experience. Stay with your experience as you speak and simply notice what happens. There are no right or wrong answers. We are not supposed to say something particular or realize something. We are simply learning more about ourselves.

Listen Fully

Give the instruction to listen fully, with an open heart and non-judgmental mind. We do not make comments or suggestions to our partner; we just listen. This is a practice of learning to listen gently and mindfully. We let go of our habits, and really become present with someone else. Often, it is the listening aspect that is most insightful and challenging.

One student speaks for 5 minutes and the other simply listens, without making comments. After 5 minutes, ring the bell for the next student to begin. Let the participants know that you will take care of timing, and that you will ring the bell to change roles. The entire exercise takes 15 minutes or so.

Discussion: *After the 15 minutes come back together and ask the students how that was. What came up for them during the dialogue? Is there anything that they would like to pursue or ask about?*

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Personal Commitment: *After discussion, at the end of the class, you may choose to invite students to pause and make a personal commitment to practice meditation at some point during this next week. Just ask students to pause and reflect and make a personal commitment to practice a few times during this next week, if they would like.*

Reading for Week 3: TMA Chapters 5, 6, 7 (again, the reading is only suggested and the classes will be presented without assuming any prior knowledge).

Class Three Teacher's Summary
Obstacles and Antidotes

Threefold Logic:

Ground: Peaceful Abiding

Path: Obstacles

Fruition: Antidotes

- I. Extended Check In: "How is practice going?"
- II. Meditation
- III. Talk: Obstacles and Antidotes

Obstacles and Antidotes:

- Obstacle: Laziness
 - 1. Ordinary laziness
 - 2. Speed-busy-ness and procrastination
 - 3. Disheartenment
- Antidotes:
 - 1. Suppleness
 - 2. Trust
 - 3. Aspiration
 - 4. Effort
- Obstacle: Forgetting the instructions
- Antidote:
 - Remember the instructions/ Folksy Attitude
- Obstacle: Laxity and Elation
- Antidote: Awareness

IV. Dialogue: Too Tight and Too Loose

In Pairs:

1. "How are you too tight?" (5-7 minutes each)
2. "How are you too loose?" (5-7 minutes each)

V. Discussion

Class Three Obstacles and Antidotes

Class 3 allows students a chance to discuss the obstacles that they are facing in their practice. The content of the talk describes the main obstacles of laziness (Chapter 8) forgetting the instructions (Chapter 9) and laxity/elation (Chapter 10) as well as the corresponding antidotes. In addition, the teacher should address the specific obstacles that students bring up in an open discussion.

Threefold Logic:

Ground:	Peaceful Abiding
Path:	Obstacles
Fruition:	Antidotes

Class 3 Suggested Schedule:

7:00 Extended Check in: "How is practice going?"
7:20 Shamatha Yoga, Guided practice
7:50 Talk: Obstacles and Antidotes
8:20 Dialogues on Too Tight and Too Loose
8:50 Concluding discussion and advice for the week
9:00 Conclude, refreshments

Extended Check In: *The suggestion is to begin class with an open and extended check in and discussion. How is practice going? What are students meeting and experiencing? How has practice been working in daily schedules? During this check in, make sure to ask whether students are experiencing a sense of judgment or harshness towards themselves. Is guilt or self-aggression part of their experience before or during meditation? Remind students of the view of basic goodness and gentleness. We are not beating ourselves into a meditative state. We are learning to relax and let ourselves be. This is an act of kindness towards ourselves.*

Talk: Obstacles and Antidotes

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Working with Obstacles: Many of us may feel that our mind is more wild and untamed than everyone else. We may feel that we just can't do this, or that our mind is just too discursive for meditation. Many people feel like this. In fact, this has been true for the entire history of meditation traditions from around the world. Meditators in the past also faced obstacles. They also left us with clear signs of the obstacles and advice for how to work with them.

Obstacles are a natural part of path. In a sense, they are good news. Experiencing an obstacle really means that we are on the path, and are working with the mind. It is like running and feeling burning in your thighs—you know that you are really working.

Our minds, and our lives, are accustomed to a lot of speed and entertainment. It is no wonder that we experience a sense of racing mind, agitation, or sunken-ness. These are all part of the path. In today's class, we will discuss the main obstacles that have been described by the meditation tradition, as well as the antidotes that will help us to work with them.

Ask the Class: What obstacles have you experienced so far?

Today, we will discuss a few primary obstacles: Laziness, forgetting the instructions, laxity and elation.

Laziness:

"Laziness can be an obstacle even before we reach our seat, because it can keep us from ever getting there." TMA-87

"Laziness has a draining quality to it, as if we're low in life force. Sometimes is hard to see it because it feels like who we are. It encroaches on our most intimate ground. It manifests as an allegiance to comfort. We may get plenty of sleep but we are completely uninspired."

The Sakyong describes three main forms of laziness:

1. Ordinary laziness, where the mind is sunken into itself. No energy. Can't get to the meditation seat, or once we get there we just daydream.
2. Speedy-busyness. Here there is a sense that our speedy mind is a way to avoid ourselves, and avoid our meditation. We fill up our life so that we

actually don't have to look at ourselves or practice. This is procrastination. We will do anything to avoid openness.

3. Disheartenment. "We feel discouraged, deflated, or outnumbered by the obstacles that arise in our practice" TMA- 92. We give up on ourselves, which is a form of laziness.

Antidotes to Laziness:

There are 4 Antidotes to this sunken state of mind:

1. Suppleness
2. Trust
3. Aspiration
4. Effort

Trungpa Rinpoche On Suppleness:

"You are simply learning to make friends with yourself. You have a sense of relaxation. You are beginning to trust in yourself, and you are less paranoid about your own mind. You realize that your mind is workable and that there is an end to its suffering." *The Path of Individual Liberation*, Ch. 33

"Antidotes to the Obstacles to Shamatha"

Obstacle: Forgetting the instruction.

This obstacle refers to when we are formally practicing. We are sitting there, but we basically forget what we are doing. We lack a sense of perspective; we don't really know why we are sitting there. It is as if we expect something to happen to us.

Antidote: The antidote is, of course, to remember the instructions. But how do we do this? Through really understanding the purpose of and instructions for meditation practice. We check in with ourselves and notice if we are applying the technique, if we are being too harsh with ourselves, how our posture feels, etc.

Trungpa Rinpoche referred to this antidote as "developing a folksy attitude:"

"When you have put toothpaste on your toothbrush, you don't forget what you do next; you automatically brush your teeth. You naturally develop such folksy and ordinary behavior patterns. Likewise, during sitting practice, when you forget to work with the technique or the posture, your mind is brought back as an act of natural coordination. Whether you are sitting on

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your cushion or talking with someone afterward, you naturally and automatically maintain mindfulness. Mindfulness has become a natural process, almost a habitual pattern...Developing a folksy attitude means that you have made friends with your practice. You do not regard it as something foreign or unusual, or something that someone has made you do."

- *The Path of Individual Liberation*, Ch. 33 "Antidotes to the Obstacles to Shamatha"

Obstacle: Laxity "Too Loose"

Laxity is the state of the mind being sunken into itself. We are fuzzy and distant from the breath. We are "too loose" with our mindfulness. The mind has become deadened and flat.

Obstacle: Elation "Too Tight"

Elation is the opposite of laxity. The mind is jumping out of itself. We are focused "too tightly" on the breath. Now the mind bolts and just jump at whatever thought arises to distract itself.

Antidote: The antidote to both laxity and elation is awareness, *sheshin*. Trungpa Rinpoche also referred to this as a "light handed warning system" which is a sense of aware alertness, but with a light touch. We have to *know* that the mind is sunken in and that we are being "too loose." Then, we can apply more sharpness and life to the practice, really feeling the texture of the breath, paying attention to the posture etc. We need to freshen things up. Or, we have to *know* that the mind is leaping out and that we are being "too tight." We need to relax a bit, and allow more space and freedom into the practice.

Dialogue: Too Tight, Too Loose

After presenting the obstacles and antidotes, and some open discussion, ask students to get into pairs. One person speaks for 5-7 minutes, the other simply listens. These questions can refer both to meditation experience as well as everyday life—they are interrelated. The question is:

1. "How are you too tight?"

You can reflect on anything: your meditation practice or your life in general. After 5-7 minutes, the next partner has a turn to speak.

Then, repeat the same process again. The person who first spoke speaks again, but now the question is:

2. “How are you too loose?”

Both partners have a chance to respond to this second question as well. The whole dialogue exercise will take about 30 minutes.

Discussion: *After this 30 minute period or so, come back together and ask the students how that was. What came up for them during the dialogue? Is there anything that they would like to pursue or ask about?*

Personal Commitment: *After discussion, at the end of the class, you may choose to invite students to pause and make a personal commitment to practice meditation at some point during this next week. Just ask students to pause and reflect and make a personal commitment to practice a few times during this next week, if they would like.*

Reading for Class Four: TMA Chapters 8,9,10

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Class Four Teacher's Summary
The Genuine Heart of Sadness

Threefold Logic:

Ground: Genuine heart
Path: Sadness
Fruition: Willing to open

- I. Shamatha Yoga and Meditation
- II. Check In: How is Practice Going?
- III. Talk: The Genuine Heart of Sadness

Ground: Genuine Heart

- Review Classes One-Three
- Genuineness is simplicity and letting yourself be as you are
- Basic relaxation and appreciation

Path: Sadness

- Meditation is learning to let our hearts be exposed, and learning to allow our selves to feel that sad-tender-joy.

Fruition: Willing to Open

- “When tenderness evolves in that direction, then you can truly appreciate the world around you. Sense perceptions become very interesting things. You are so tender and open already that you cannot help opening yourself to what takes place all around you.”
Shambhala: Sacred Path of the Warrior

IV. Discussion and/or Dialogues on Genuine Heart of Sadness

In Pairs: 5-7 minutes each

How do you experience a sense of simplicity or genuineness? What does the heart of sadness mean to you? Do you feel open in your life and your meditation practice? What feels challenging about this?

Class Four The Genuine Heart of Sadness

Thus far we have reviewed the basic logic of shamatha, refined our understanding of mindfulness and awareness, gathering the mind, and discussed some of the major emotions and obstacles that we meet on the journey. Now in Class 4 we emphasize the “heart” aspect of the practice. Following Chapter 3 of Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior, we explore the complete acceptance and tenderness of the warrior. The meditation instruction could emphasize these elements and the discussion can allow people a chance to discuss their own experience. How is sadness and boredom connected with peace and basic goodness?

Threefold Logic:

Ground: Genuine heart
Path: Sadness
Fruition: Willing to open

Suggested Schedule:

7:00 Welcome, Shamatha Yoga, Guided practice
7:45 Check in; how is practice going?
8:00 Talk: The Genuine Heart of Sadness
8:30 Discussion, dialogues, or discussion groups
8:55 Concluding practice and advice for the week

Talk: Genuine Heart of Sadness

Ground: Genuine Heart

Review:

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1. In Class One we introduced the view that meditation practice is learning to rest with our mind as it naturally is. The mind is basically good, clear, open, and fresh. In peaceful abiding practice, we are not adding something to our minds, or fixing ourselves. We are fully resting our mind; we are learning to *feel* whatever arises during practice, and just *be*.

2. In Class Two we defined mindfulness and awareness. *Ask the students to describe their understanding of these terms.* We also took a journey through the “concentric circles” with an emphasis on gently working with emotions.

3. In Class Three we explored obstacles and antidotes to peaceful abiding. *Ask the class to describe the main obstacles and their antidotes.* We explored “too tight” and “too loose” in our life and practice.

Today, we will further discuss some of the experiential subtlety and simplicity of this practice, and the genuineness of our human heart.

Ground: Genuine Heart

A basic element of meditation practice is simplicity. This leads to genuineness. We simply let ourselves be, on this earth, exactly as we are. Such simplicity is rare in our speedy lives and we don't get a lot of support for simply being, and appreciating our life. Mindfulness and awareness meditation allows us to just sit, just be a human, and appreciate this basic situation. This is genuineness—we are not trying to be something, we are letting ourselves be as we are.

“A great deal of chaos in the world occurs because people don't appreciate themselves. Having never developed sympathy or gentleness toward themselves, they cannot experience harmony or peace within themselves, and therefore what they project to others is also inharmonious and confused.”—*Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*

“By meditation here we mean something very basic and simple that is not tied to any one culture. We are talking about a very basic act: sitting on the ground, assuming a good posture, and developing a sense of our spot, our place on this earth. This is the means of rediscovering ourselves and our basic goodness, the means to tune ourselves in to genuine reality, without any expectations or preconceptions.” —*Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*

“When you don’t punish yourself or condemn yourself, when you relax more and appreciate your body and mind, you begin to contact the fundamental notion of basic goodness in yourself. So it is extremely important to be willing to open yourself to yourself. Developing tenderness toward yourself allows you to see both your problems and your potential accurately. You don’t feel that you have to ignore your problems or exaggerate your potential. That kind of gentleness toward yourself and appreciation of yourself is very necessary. It provides the ground for helping yourself and others.” – *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*, “Discovering Basic Goodness”

Path: Sadness

There is nothing extra-ordinary about simply being genuine. In fact, meditation can feel boring. We may feel that there is too much space, too much stillness. We may want to entertain ourselves in order to fill up that space. However, if we let ourselves rest in that spaciousness and feel that boredom, we begin to soften. We let our hearts open. It turns out that much of our own speed, agitation, and anxiety are trying to cover over this soft, open heart. Meditation is learning to let our hearts be exposed, and allow ourselves to feel that sad-tender-joy.

“When you sit upright but relaxed in the posture of meditation, your heart is naked. Your entire being is exposed—to yourself, first of all, but to others as well. So through the practice of sitting still and following the breath as it goes out and dissolves, you are connecting with your heart. By simply letting yourself be, you are developing genuine sympathy toward yourself.—*Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*, “The Genuine Heart of Sadness”

“If you search for awakened heart, if you put your hand through your rib cage and feel for it, there is nothing there except for tenderness. You feel sore and soft, and if you open your eyes to the rest of the world, you feel tremendous sadness. This kind of sadness doesn’t come from being mistreated. You don’t feel sad because someone has insulted you or because you feel impoverished. Rather, this experience of sadness is unconditioned. It occurs because your heart is completely exposed.” —*Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*, “The Genuine Heart of Sadness”

Fruition: Willing to Open

Meditation practice is training in opening ourselves up. When we allow ourselves to be tender and open, we discover that the world is good. We may get hurt at

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times, but through meditation we can develop confidence that we can work with our mind. This confidence, helps us to open more. We can appreciate our lives, and appreciate the simple things in our world. We can open up, even if it just a tiny bit more than before.

“Real fearlessness is the product of tenderness. It comes from letting the world tickle your heart, your raw and beautiful heart. You are willing to open up, without resistance or shyness, and face the world. You are willing to share your heart with others.” —*Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*, “The Genuine Heart of Sadness”

“When tenderness evolves in that direction, then you can truly appreciate the world around you. Sense perceptions become very interesting things. You are so tender and open already that you cannot help opening yourself to what takes place all around you. When you see red or green or yellow or black, you respond to them from the bottom of your heart. When you see someone else crying or laughing or being afraid, you respond to them as well.” —*Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*, “Fear and Fearlessness”

Dialogue: *After some open discussion and Q+A, get a feeling for the basic atmosphere of the class. If you have a class that is in general very open and moved by this material, and they would like to go deeper, you may choose to have a dialogue. This will allow the students a chance to explore these themes more directly and intimately.*

Ask students to get into pairs. Remind them of genuine speaking and open listening. For 5-7 minutes each, simply explore your relationship with genuine heart, sadness, and willingness to open. Speak openly about these questions:

How do you experience a sense of simplicity or genuineness? What does the heart of sadness mean to you? Do you feel open in your life and your meditation practice? What feels challenging about this?

Discussion: *Be sure to come back together after the dialogue and hear what arose for the students. Offer any advice or guidance.*

Reading: *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*, Chapters 1, 2 and 3

Teacher Reading: Talk One, “Basic Goodness,” in *The Dignities of Shambhala Sourcebook*

Class Five Teacher's Summary
Everyday Life and Enlightened Society

Threefold Logic:

Ground: Meditation
Path: helps us appreciate the details of Everyday Life
Fruition: which expands into Society

- I. Shamatha Yoga and Meditation
- II. Final Check In
- III. Review, Almost as Group Oral Exam: Classes 1-4
- IV. Talk: Meditation in Everyday Life and Enlightened Society

Ground: Meditation

- Clarify any last questions

Path: in Everyday Life

- Peaceful abiding meditation is not only relevant during the formal period of practice. We are also training ourselves in mindfulness and awareness so that the mind of meditation can be with us throughout our whole lives.

Fruition: Enlightened Society

- Shambhala is not simply interested in our individual peace, but we are also interested in how basic goodness can influence our whole world.
- The Shambhala teachings are founded on the premise that there is basic human wisdom that can help to solve the world's problems.

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- Unless we can discover that ground of goodness in our own lives, we cannot hope to improve the lives of others.
- Meditation is how we discover this goodness. We can then manifest this goodness in our homes, workplaces, and all our activities.
- Here in Shambhala, we are a community of practitioners who are interested in how a genuine path of meditation can exist and thrive in our modern society. Further, we aspire to benefit society and help to respond to the challenges that we face by bringing greater awareness, peace, gentleness, confidence, and bravery to our world.

Continuing on the Path:

Describe how the Way of Shambhala continues through Shambhala Training Levels and the Contentment in Everyday Life (CIEL) course.

V. Celebration hosted by the Center Leadership. Membership presentation.

Class Five
Everyday Life and Enlightened Society

Ground: Meditation
Path: helps us appreciate the details of Everyday Life
Fruition: which expands into Society

This concluding class of MIEL explores the natural transition from the formal practice on the cushion to post-meditation practice in our everyday lives. How does all of this meditation affect my life? The class introduces basic mindfulness of simple living situations, appreciating washing dishes and making a proper cup of tea, as well as how meditation can support our sense of mindful speech and relationship. We introduce a notion of panoramic awareness on the cushion and off.

With this ground of appreciation and continual awareness, we can make the link between between our individual meditation practice and our society. Our own experience of peace, goodness, openness, confidence, and appreciation can spread to effect a greater situation. We can make a difference in our homes, our work places, and beyond. Ultimately, the path of training ourselves can help to meet the challenges that we face on this planet. This aspect of the class is closely connected to the chapter “Creating an Enlightened Society” in Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior.

Suggested Schedule:

7:00 Welcome, Shamatha Yoga, Guided practice
7:30 Final Check in: How has practice been going?
7:50 Review
8:10 Talk: Everyday Life and Enlightened Society
8:40 Discussion, dialogues, or discussion groups
8:55 Concluding practice and advice for the week

Ground: Meditation

Review, almost as a group oral exam:

What do students remember from Class One: Basic Goodness and Peaceful Abiding? How does meditation help us to rest in natural peace? What are the three main components of the meditation technique?

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What do they remember from Class Two: Mindfulness and Awareness and Gathering the Mind? What are the three aspects of mindfulness? What does *sheshin* mean and does anyone feel that they have experienced it? What does it mean to gather the mind? How do we work with emotions as meditators?

What do they remember about Class Three: Obstacles and Antidotes? What are the main obstacles and their antidotes? What obstacles and antidotes have students experienced (perhaps different obstacles from the traditional list)?

What struck them about Class Four: the Genuine Heart of Sadness? Have students noticed a sense of tenderness, sadness, or heart in their practice?

Take time to clarify these points and have open discussion. This is an opportunity to see what questions still remain; this is also a chance to feel out any remaining confused assumptions, expectations, or techniques. We really want students to feel confident about the meditation view and technique at this point. We should have a sense of having passed the meditation technique on to the students, so that it is now their own.

“Our life is an endless journey; it is like a broad highway that extends infinitely into the distance. The practice of meditation provides a vehicle to travel on that road. Our journey consists of constant ups and downs, hope and fear, but it is a good journey. The practice of meditation allows us to experience all the textures of the roadway, which is what the journey is all about. Through the practice of meditation, we begin to find that within ourselves, there is no fundamental complaint about anything or anyone at all.” –Chogyam Trungpa, *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*

Path: in Everyday Life

Mindfulness and awareness meditation is not only relevant during the formal period of practice. We are also training ourselves so that the mind of meditation can be with us throughout our whole lives. As the meditation path unfolds, we begin to notice that our practice effects our daily lives, and that our daily lives effect our practice. We can learn to become increasingly awake, alive, and aware of our everyday experience. We can experience the gentle mindfulness and open awareness of meditation as we move through our ordinary activities. We become friends with ourselves, and our mind is our ally. We can be present with our lives.

The way to experience nowness is to realize that this very moment, this very point in your life, is always *the* occasion. So the consideration of where you

are and what you are, on the spot, is very important. That is one reason that your family situation, your domestic everyday life, is so important. You should regard your home as sacred, as a golden opportunity to experience nowness. Appreciating sacredness begins very simply by taking an interest in all the details of your life. Interest is simply applying awareness to what goes on in your everyday life—awareness while you’re cooking, awareness while you’re driving, awareness while you’re changing diapers, even awareness while you’re arguing. Such awareness can help to free you from speed, chaos, neurosis, and resentment of all kinds. It can free you from the obstacles to nowness, so that you can cheer up on the spot, all the time. — *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*, “Nowness”

This is almost seeing our lives as a practice; seeing our lives as a work of art.

“It is a perpetually growing process in which we begin to appreciate our surroundings in life, whatever they may be—it doesn’t necessarily have to be good, beautiful, and pleasurable at all. The definition of art, from this point of view, is to be able to see the uniqueness of everyday experience. Every moment we might be doing the same things—brushing our teeth every day, combing our hair every day, cooking our dinner every day. A kind of intimacy takes place with the daily habits that you go through and the art involved in it.” *True Perception [Dharma Art]*, “Art in Everyday Life”

Fruition:

We have seen the challenge of allowing our mind to rest naturally in basic goodness and have also been given a glimpse into the possibilities of peaceful abiding. We have discussed how this can infuse the ordinary activities and relationships in our everyday life. This leads to a vaster vision: the vision that we call “enlightened society.” Shambhala is not simply interested in our individual peace, but we are also interested in how basic goodness can influence our whole world.

With the great problems now facing human society, it seems increasingly important to find simple and nonsectarian ways to work with ourselves and share our understanding with others. The Shambhala teachings or Shambhala vision, as this approach is more broadly called, is one such attempt to encourage a wholesome existence for ourselves and others.

The current state of world affairs is a source of concern to us all: the threat of nuclear war, widespread poverty and economic instability, social and political chaos, [we may add: ecological crises], and psychological upheavals of many

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kinds. The world is in absolute turmoil. The Shambhala teachings are founded on the premise that there is basic human wisdom that can help to solve the world's problems. This wisdom does not belong to any one culture or religion, nor does it come only from the West or the East. Rather, it is a tradition of human warriorship that has existed in many cultures at many times throughout history." —*Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* "Creating an Enlightened Society"

The Shambhala teachings are not based on converting the world to another theory. The premise of Shambhala vision is that, in order to establish enlightened society for others, we need to discover inherently what we have to offer the world. So to begin with, we should make an effort to examine our own experience, in order to see what it contains that is of value in helping ourselves and others to uplift their existence.

If we are willing to take an unbiased look, we will find that, in spite of all our problems and confusion, all our emotional ups and downs, there is something basically good about our existence as human beings. Unless we can discover that ground of goodness in our own lives, we cannot hope to improve the lives of others.—*Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* "Creating an Enlightened Society"

"Shambhala vision is tuning in to our ability to wake ourselves up and recognize that goodness can happen to us. In fact, it is happening already."—*Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* "Creating an Enlightened Society"

Meditation practice is our primary training to discover this goodness in our own experience. This is not just a theory or a fantasy, but something that we can all experience. Based on this experience, we may begin to become curious about living our everyday life tuned-in to this goodness. Further, we may long to bring this goodness out in our world.

Social Vision

In the Shambhala tradition, the wakefulness that rests naturally in basic goodness refers both to individual warriorship as well as a society of dignity and gentleness. Therefore, learning to work with agitated mind, speed, discontentment, and anxiety, also strike to the very heart of the challenges that we face as a society. As we practice resting in peace, we are simultaneously helping to bring more peace into society. The more we integrate mindfulness and awareness into our life, our relationships, our family and career, the more we expand the dignity of human

goodness. This is a slow, but patient and deep path of social transformation that goes to the very root of our society.² As global climate change continues to shake our world, we need to open our heart and intelligence to find new ways forward. Meditation can help.

Here in Shambhala, we are a community of practitioners who are interested in how a genuine path of meditation can exist and thrive in our modern society. Further, we aspire to benefit society and help to respond to the challenges that we face by bringing greater awareness, peace, gentleness, confidence, sustainability, and bravery to our world.

“There is an old saying that bringing Buddhism to a new culture is like bringing a flower and a rock together...

A society of hard and inflexible minds is a society that is incapable of nurturing the flowers of love and compassion. This is the source of the dark age. We tend to question our goodness and our wisdom. When we question these things, we begin to use seemingly more convenient ways to deal with our problems. We are less ready to use love and compassion, more ready to use aggression. So we have to continually remind ourselves of basic goodness. If we want to alleviate suffering on our planet, those of use who can make our minds pliable must plant a flower on the rock. This is how we can create a society based around the energy we get from experiencing our own basic goodness...

Tilling the grounds of our own minds through meditation is how we begin to create a community garden. In doing so, we are helping to create a new culture, a culture that can thrive in the modern world and can at the same time support our human journey in an uplifted a joyous way. Such a culture

² To be precise, the logic of the connection between meditation and relating to society works in two ways. 1. First, from the “outside in” we can realize that our own meditation practice is influenced by our society, our education, the pace of our career, economic pressures, our families, our living spaces, etc. Technology, entertainment, the speed and demands of our society all have an impact on our state of being. Therefore, we must acknowledge that a complete life of meditation includes relating to a bigger world. We cannot hide from the pain in our world. As the Sakyong says, when we sit down to meditate, all of society is sitting there with us. 2. Second, from the “inside out” we can come in contact with a natural desire to share our experience of peace, goodness, and confidence with others, and our wish to spread goodness can flow into our society.

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is called an enlightened society. Enlightened society is where the rock and the flower will meet.

—*Turning the Mind into An Ally*, “The Rock and the Flower”

Discussion:

Make a circle and invite an open conversation on meditation in everyday life and a larger social vision.

Continuing on the Path: One way that we can personally help to bring more sanity into our lives is through continuing on the meditation path, and continuing with “The Way of Shambhala” retreats and courses that are the next stages on the path. “The Way of Shambhala” teaches the path of the contentment, joy, fearlessness, and wisdom in everyday life.

Describe how the Way of Shambhala continues through Shambhala Training Levels and the Contentment in Everyday Life (CIEL) course.

Shambhala Training: For those who have not yet experienced Shambhala Training, this is an opportunity to go deeper with your meditation practice in a retreat environment. These weekend meditation retreats are designed to

Contentment in Everyday Life: specifically works with gentleness towards oneself. Can we learn to have a gentle and friendly relationship with meditation, rather than a relationship based on guilt or self-criticism? This is essential for going forward with meditation practice. The focus of this course is genuine contentment, free from struggle. CIEL also places more emphasis on basic Buddhist teachings on mind, psychology, and working with emotions. Further, CIEL emphasizes postmeditation, or how to bring the mind of meditation into everyday life.

Announce when CIEL begins. Strongly encourage students to continue with Shambhala Training levels as well as the Way of Shambhala courses.

The class should conclude with a festive celebration hosted by the Center leadership.

NOTE: *The Center leadership could offer an invitation to become a member.*

Teacher's Reading: *The Shambhala Principle*, *The Enlightened Society Treatise*, TMA
Chapter 1, "The Rock and the Flower" and *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*
Chapter 1, "Creating Enlightened Society,"