

DEEP SPRING CENTER

FOR MEDITATION AND SPIRITUAL INQUIRY

Self Retreat for Experienced Students **Weber Center** **1257 E Siena Heights Drive** **Adrian, MI 49221** **March 6-12, 2010**

Thank you for your registration for the upcoming meditation retreat with Barbara Brodsky.

The retreat will be held at the Weber Center on the Dominican Sisters Campus in Adrian, Michigan. Driving instructions to the Weber Center and some basic information is attached. The emergency contact number during the retreat is Hugh Danville – call cell telephone number 734-776-4718 and leave a message. The number will be checked regularly.

Check in at the retreat will begin at 10:00 am on Saturday, March 6. Retreat guidelines will be presented and lunch will be served at 12:00 pm. This will be the only opportunity for social interaction until breaking of the Noble Silence on Friday. Barbara strongly requests people arrive on time unless there is urgent reason for delay. The retreat program and Noble Silence are scheduled to begin at 1:00 pm on Saturday. The retreat ends Friday, March 12, after breakfast.

If you cannot arrive before the program begins at lunch on Saturday, please keep in mind that the Noble Silence will have begun before you arrive. Please take care to enter quietly. Your room assignment will be posted. Your retreat registration should all be paid prior to the retreat, so there is no reason to “formally” check in. Hugh Danville will be the Retreat Manager. Leave a note in Hugh's basket if you have questions or problems. Contact him verbally only if there is an urgent situation.

Detailed directions to Weber Center can be found at

<http://www.adriandominicans.org/WeberCenter/WeberCenter/FindingUs.aspx>

Self Retreats

A **self-retreat** is an experience of intensive meditation done individually according to your own rhythm and needs. It can bring new challenges and insights. There is little group practice and no group instruction; meditators will regulate their own schedule of sitting and walking meditation. Whole days are spent in investigating the mind/body phenomena, with as much attention as possible. Slowing down and finding a balance of effort and energy are part of the process of settling into the retreat. Patience and kindness to oneself are essential, as are honesty and persistence, in bringing continuous awareness to the changing nature of the moment-to-moment experience. The teacher will support and guide each meditator during the retreat through daily private meetings, where the two of you look at what's happening in your practice.

Throughout the days, meditation will be done alone, on one's own schedule, in one's room (or, if preferred, in the chapels). Each meditator will meet with Barbara privately on a regular schedule. In the evening there will be an optional period for group questions and practice. Retreatants will gather together on the first evening to take the refuges and precepts and also near the end of retreat to share experiences and discuss how to take the practice back to daily life.

Noble Silence

What is Noble Silence? When you arrive there will be time set aside for registration, unpacking, supper, and conversation. With the beginning of the opening talk, the retreat becomes a place of silence. Meditation students are asked not to talk, except with the teachers or with one another in appropriate ways in small group meetings. If there are cases of emergency or questions concerning the retreat schedule or process, you may talk with the retreat manager. In order to keep your concentration on the practice, it is requested that you do not read, write, or find other activities that would keep your mind busy. An exception is limited journal writing.

Quieting the body and the voice also helps to quiet the mind and create a space in which you can observe the mind.

Another aspect of silence is watching our movements, endeavoring to use mindfulness as we walk, shower, open and close doors, do our work assignments, so as to have minimal impact on others and the environment.

Noble Silence also fosters a sense of aloneness, even in a retreat full of people. It is important for you to resist urges to social contact by note, glance, or whisper in order to benefit most fully from this opportunity, as well as to respect the silence of others. We can learn a lot by watching the impulse to talk or make other contact and seeing what motivates that impulse. At first the thought of silence may be a bit frightening, but with more practice it will become a warm haven. The silence is broken at the end of the retreat to allow people to visit and share their experiences.

Retreat Basics

Towels and bed linens are provided. You will need to bring hangers and personal toiletries. Plan to bring warm clothes and walking shoes. You should bring a shawl or blanket to use while sitting in the meditation room in the early morning or evening, as it can be a little chilly. Plan to dress comfortably. The Weber Center has many walking paths and a labyrinth which you may wish to use.

All meals are provided and will include vegetarian dishes. Snacks, coffee, tea and water will be available at all times.

Everyone who is staying overnight will have an assigned a single room. If you have special room requirements, please call or email me and I will do my best to accommodate your request. Everyone will be living in relatively close quarters. Some people are allergic to incense, scented candles, scented toiletries, aftershave and perfumes. Please refrain from bringing them to the retreat. A couple of other notes: There is no smoking inside the building. Unscented candles are permitted only in the meditation room, but not in sleeping rooms.

Meditation Essentials

You should bring your own meditation cushions or whatever you use during meditation. A few cushions will be available for you to borrow, especially for people who have flown in to the retreat. Please note that formal meditation cushions are not necessary. A folded blanket for the floor and a firm cushion on which to sit are adequate. Some chairs are available, but you will probably be more comfortable if you bring along what you know works for you. Each day could include periods of sitting and walking meditation. A community altar will be located in the meditation meeting room. You are welcome to bring anything you would like to have on the altar (for example, pictures or totems). Please take personal items home with you when you depart.

Work Assignments

There will be no work assignments during the retreat.

Dana Offering

The retreat fee covers the cost of the retreat center rental, meals, teacher accommodation and transportation, advertising and some scholarship aid. In the tradition of offering these teachings freely, The instructors receive no payment from the retreat fee. They offer themselves to the retreat on a "Dana" basis. Dana is a Pali word which translated means "the spirit of generosity that is rooted in love and compassion for all beings." Dana baskets are available during the retreat for donations the teachers. They appreciate your support for their teachings. Since the time of Buddha this interdependency has existed between those who offer the teachings and those who receive them and the instructors feel that it is a beautiful tradition and appreciate the spirit of trust and generosity it engenders.

If you have any questions or concerns, I can be reached by phone at (734) 369-2628, by mail at my address below, or by e-mail at retreat@hps.com.

We wish you an excellent retreat!

Mary and Terry Gliedt