

# Insight Meditation



An Introduction to Buddhist Wisdom

## Insight Meditation



Insight meditation, also known as Vipassana, follows the Buddhist practice of mindfulness, which develops concentration and awareness by focusing the attention on the breath while freely monitoring sensations, feelings and thoughts. This practice promotes living more fully and peacefully in the present moment.

## History of Buddhism

Buddhism, based on the teachings of the Buddha, has been practiced in Asia for 2,500 years. It offers a practice for awakening to deeper realities of life and for living with wisdom. There are three major forms of Buddhism: Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana.

**Theravada**, the most ancient form of Buddhism, focuses on the study of ancient texts, meditating, and following the eightfold path of the Buddha. Insight Meditation belongs to this category.

**Mahayana** developed out of the Theravada tradition, and it has compassion as its central theme. It honors devotional figures, called bodhisattvas, that help liberate human beings from suffering. Zen and Tibetan Buddhism belong to this category.

**Vajrayana** uses physical practices to promote spiritual evolution. The practice, developed mostly in Tibet, encourages rituals, chanting, and tantra techniques, along with an understanding of the other two forms of Buddhism.



## Teachings of the Buddha



The teachings of the Buddha, called the Dharma, are an invitation for all of us to practice universal compassion and thus awaken to the nature of reality and our “buddha-nature.” By following the “Middle Path” of inner and outer balance in life, we can transcend our delusions and attain freedom from suffering, i.e. the liberation of enlightenment.

### To start:

We can realize the Three Marks of Existence:

- Impermanence (*anicca*)
- Suffering (*dukkha*)
- No Self (*anatta*)

and

We can realize The Four Noble Truths of life:

- There is suffering
- The origin of suffering is craving
- There is an end to suffering
- The way to the end of suffering is the Noble Eightfold Path

Along our way, The Three Refuges, which are Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, will guide and support us.



## The Eightfold Path

### Wisdom (*panna*) Factors:

1. Right Understanding (or view)
2. Right Thought (or intention)

### Ethical Conduct (*sila*) Factors:

3. Right Speech
4. Right Action
5. Right Livelihood

### Concentration (*samadhi*) Factors:

6. Right Effort
7. Right Mindfulness
8. Right Concentration



### The five primary Precepts of the Path are:

- To refrain from taking life
- To refrain from taking that which is not given
- To refrain from sexual misconduct
- To refrain from unwise/unskillful speech
- To refrain from intoxication



## The Seven Factors of Enlightenment

1. Mindfulness (*sati*)
2. Investigation of the dharma (*dhammavicaya*)
3. Energy (*viriyā*)
4. Joy (*pīti*)
5. Tranquility (*passaddhi*)
6. Concentration (*samadhi*)
7. Equanimity (*upekkha*)

### The five Hindrances of the Path are:

- Sensual desire (*kammachanda*)
- Anger or ill will (*byapada/vyapada*)
- Sloth and torpor (*thina/middha*)
- Restlessness (*uddhacca/kukkucca*)
- Doubt (*vicikiccha*)



## Insight Meditation Practices include:

### Mindfulness and Loving-kindness Meditations

#### Mindfulness Meditation



Mindfulness prepares us to experience “things as they are” by bringing our attention to whatever is occurring in the present moment, without judgment, avoidance or clinging.

#### The Four Foundations of Mindfulness are:

- Mindfulness of the body (e.g. breath)
- Mindfulness of feelings or sensations (pleasant, unpleasant or neutral)
- Mindfulness of the mind or consciousness
- Mindfulness of dhammas/ mental objects of the mind

#### To practice:

- Close your eyes and sit in a dignified posture
- Focus attention on your breath to calm your mind
- Let your mind be spacious and your heart soft
- Be aware of sensations of the body
- Notice sounds, feelings and thoughts
- Allow them to come and go, like waves in the ocean
- When your attention wanders, bring it back to the breath
- After about 30 minutes, open your eyes
- Move through the day with the same mindful awareness



#### Loving-kindness Meditation



Loving-kindness meditation guides us in our relationships with others. It is a heartfelt wish for the well-being of oneself and of others.

#### The Four Heavenly Abodes (*Brahmaviharas*) are:

- Loving-kindness (*metta*)
- Compassion (*karuna*)
- Empathetic Joy (*mudita*)
- Equanimity (*upekkha*)

#### To practice:

- Intend loving-kindness for yourself:  
May I be happy  
May I be well  
May I be safe  
May I be peaceful and at ease
- Intend loving-kindness for others:  
May you be happy  
May you be well  
May you be safe  
May you be peaceful and at ease



## Key Words:

<b>Vipassana</b> -	Insight meditation
<b>Buddha</b> -	“One who is awake”
<b>Dharma</b> -	“The Way,” the teachings of the Buddha
<b>Sangha</b> -	The community of practitioners
<b>Nirvana</b> -	Enlightenment; liberation from suffering and worldly delusions
<b>Sati</b> -	Mindfulness
<b>Samadhi</b> -	Concentration
<b>Metta</b> -	Loving-kindness



## Insight Meditation Houston

### **Weekly Meditation Practice:**

**Monday nights from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall at Covenant Church, 4949 Caroline St. Houston, TX 77004.**

**These weekly meditation sittings are open to people of all faiths, or none. Everyone is welcome!**