

Mindfulness Meditation Classes- 6 weekly Classes

Dates: Jan 7 – Feb 18, 2009: 6:00 – 8.30 pm

Saturday, February 14th, 2009, 9.00 am – 3.30 pm: Silent meditation retreat day

No Class Feb 4. Cost: \$250 Includes 3 CDs and weekly handouts

Pre-registration is required: Contact Susan Woods at (802) 253 2550



The practice of mindfulness is about relating to life by developing a moment to moment awareness. By placing the center of our attention on a single object of focus, the breath, we widen and expand our natural ability to notice things we often take for granted. When we pay attention in this way, we begin to notice the ebb and flow of thoughts, emotions and bodily sensations. We come to notice that nothing stays the same for very long, everything is in flux. Most usefully we can use the breath as a way to steady our awareness of the present moment whenever there is a sense of difficulty rather than be carried away by anxious thoughts about the future, or ruminating about the past.

Mindfulness also offers us a choice to open up to the possibility of noticing what is happening to our bodies, without trying to change it, or make it go away or be different. The mind constantly evaluates experience as pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. When we encounter unpleasantness in the form of pain, physical or emotional or both, we tend to contract around it, close down to what we are feeling and try to avoid it. With mindfulness practice, we can create space around all that is happening to us, by simply bringing an intention to be aware of the breath, moment by moment. Sometimes the best thing we can do is allow our breathing to bring us deeply in contact with ourselves. By relaxing and settling into each unfolding moment we tap into an understanding that often contains insight and wisdom. And by the gentle investigation of what is present we develop new ways of relating to stressful situations and therefore increase choices about how we respond.

The Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction program was founded in 1979 by Jon Kabat-Zinn at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. It is the largest hospital based stress reduction clinic in the country and has taken the lead in investigating and studying mindfulness and the mind-body connection. It is also a training institution for the development of mindfulness based programs nationally and internationally. Dr. Kabat-Zinn is the author of a number of books, and many research articles.

Susan Woods, M.S.W., L.I.C.S.W. has practiced meditation and yoga since 1981. Ms. Woods has been a long time teacher of Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and more recently Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) and is a certified MBSR instructor and yoga teacher. She trains health care professionals in mindfulness-based interventions and teaches Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy professional training programs nationally and internationally. She is a contributing author to the “Clinical Handbook of Mindfulness.”

