

What is Practice? Week 1 (7/10/25)

I will arrive at 6:45 each class for questions - Class will start at 7:00pm

- 1. Sitting & Standing:** For 10-30 minutes per day. Notice the attitude you have when you sit. How you practice is an important area of practice itself. **Standing:** Be aware of standing in your day.
- 2. Gratitude Practice:** Text or e-mail “your buddies” 3 things you are grateful for each day. Can be anything. No need to comment on anyone’s gratitude’s– just read them and feel them. For those new to Gratitude: Gratitude is appreciation, thankfulness, gratefulness. Gratitude is the capacity to take delight in life, in this moment, in being alive! Gratitude is the ability to let ourselves feel joy and wonder. We have so much to be grateful for. Our life rests on the lives of so many lives. (See poem at the end of for hints about gratitude practice) I will e-mail you your buddy groups
- 3. Ask once a day: What is your intention in practice?**
Reflect: What is your aspiration in practice? Why are you doing it? It’s very important for the motivation to arise out of your own heart, your own understanding. What is the deepest intention you have for your life? How does your practice fit into that? Does that deepest wish have to do with meditation practice? Or does practice support your deepest intention?
- 4. Notice in your formal sitting and daily life, How you practice?** How do you practice? Not judging, as best you can notice, be mindful of how you are practicing.
- 5. Reflect on the Honeyball Discourse:** “What we frequently think about, ponder and dwell upon becomes the shape of our mind/heart.” The shape of our mind/heart shapes our world experience. **Notice where you ponder or dwell.**
- 6. Practice kindness.** “There is no spiritual practice more profound than being kind to one’s family, neighbors, the cashier at the grocery store, an unexpected visitor, a stray cat or dog, an any other “invisible” beings who may cross our paths in the course of a normal day. Certainly there are great spiritual mysteries beyond description to explore, it becomes clear that those special experiences are only meaningful when they arise from, and return to, a life of ordinary kindness.”
- 7. Reflect on Dogen:** Being is always and only being in time; time is nothing other than being. To really live is to accept that you live “for the time being” and to fully enter that moment of time. To live is to embrace each moment as if it were the first, last, and all moments of time... This moment that is just for the time being, because it passes even as it arrives. Meditation is feeling the feeling of being alive for the time being.

8. Three Gratuities--by Carrie Newcomer

Every night before I go to sleep
I say out loud
Three things that I'm grateful for,
All the significant, insignificant
Extraordinary, ordinary stuff of my life.
It's a small practice and humble,
And yet, I find I sleep better
Holding what lightens and softens my life
Ever so briefly at the end of the day.
Sunlight, and blueberries,
Good dogs and wool socks,
A fine rain,
A good friend,
Fresh basil and wild phlox,
My father's good health,
My daughter's new job,
The song that always makes me cry,
Always at the same part,
No matter how many times I hear it.
Decent coffee at the airport,
And your quiet breathing,
The stories you told me,
The frost patterns on the windows,
English horns and banjos,
Wood Thrush and June bugs,
The smooth glassy calm of the morning pond,
An old coat,
A new poem,
My library card,
And that my car keeps running
Despite all the miles.

And after three things,
More often than not,
I get on a roll and I just keep on going,
I keep naming and listing,
Until I lie grinning,
Blankets pulled up to my chin,
Awash with wonder
At the sweetness of it all.