

Information for your weekend Retreat with Howard Cohn  
Friday, Sat & Sun, March 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Franciscan Renewal Center

Friday night: 7pm- 8:30pm  
Saturday morning: 9am – 5pm  
Sunday morning: 8:30am – 3pm

**HIGH PRIORITY INFO:** This year the retreat OPENING IS ON FRIDAY EVENING & WILL BE LOCATED AT THE FRANCISCAN RENEWAL CENTER IN ITS ENTIRETY!

(This year we are returning to the Franciscan Center again; and we are also moving the Friday night public event to the Franciscan Center and holding this as the retreat opening)

What to expect and what to bring:

**Location:**

The retreat will take place at **Franciscan Renewal Center**. We will meet in the **Guadalupe Room** which is located at the rear of the Center. Parking at the back and along the East side of the Center will be closest to our room.

**Franciscan Renewal Center: 5802 E. Lincoln Drive, Scottsdale AZ 85253**

**Registration/Check-in:**

Please plan to arrive at the center at least 20-30 minutes before the start time; to allow for parking, checking in and settling into the room. . When many people arrive late (or all arrive right at the start time!), it disrupts the retreat start.

**Parking:**

Please familiarize yourself with the map of the retreat center sent along with this email– The Guadalupe room is in toward the back of the retreat center, and directly behind the pool. There is unmarked dirt-lot parking behind the Sr. Luca Room and along the East side of the Center; these areas are closest parking to our room.

**Schedule:**

The retreat schedule starts on Friday evening at 7pm, then 9-5 on Saturday and 9-3 on Sunday. The schedule will consist of instruction and talks by Howie and periods of sitting and walking meditation. Howie will offer opportunities for group interviews throughout the day. We will have time for lunch each day, **please bring your lunch so that you do not have to interrupt the flow of your practice by leaving in the middle of the day.** We encourage participants to maintain the schedule, and Howie requests a commitment to both days, to gain full benefit from the retreat.

**What to Bring:**

- **Chairs with padding will be available.** If you prefer to sit on the floor you will need to **bring your own cushions or bench.**
- **Bring your lunch.** And if you'd like, **a snack to share.** It is strongly encouraged, *to hold the container and continuity for your practice, to stay on campus for lunch.* There is a refrigerator where you can store food and a microwave available for use during lunch. There will be a tea table set up throughout the retreat with coffee and tea available and any snacks brought for sharing.
- **Wear comfortable, layered, and loose-fitting clothing appropriate for the temperature** (predicted to be over about 75-80 degrees.) It's recommended to wear **easily removable shoes**
- **Cash or check for Dana/donations (see below for information about how Howie is supported in his teaching)**

### **Please Avoid:**

- Perfume, scented products such as scented deodorants, lotions or strong smelling salves. This includes 'natural' scents or essential oils. Be aware that some participants have chemical sensitivity to fragrances and our practice increases sensitivity to the environment. We will be sitting in close proximity to one-another.
- Cell phones, ticking (or talking!) watches/smart watches, etc. **Please leave phones at home or in your car. We will be requesting that all retreatants respect this guideline for the retreat without exception.**

### **Noble Silence:**

**Silence is observed throughout the retreat** except during instruction and question and answer periods. This is to provide an optimal environment to turn inwards, since talking invites our energies outward. By reserving the energy normally directed toward speech, we begin to attend to the forces that drive compulsive thinking. When you experience the urge to talk, please remain silent and observe your body sensations, thoughts and emotions. This will enrich your own experience and respect the practice of others. You are also encouraged to avoid eye contact and non-verbal communication whenever possible.

### **Dana ('generosity') – supporting our Teacher:**

In the Western Vipassana tradition which this retreat is held, the teacher offers the teachings as an act of generosity as has been done from the time of the Buddha. Your payment for the retreat has been kept to a minimum, amidst the rising costs for us all, and covers the costs of putting on a retreat; there is also no paid staff; all work is done on a volunteer and donation basis, and **Howie is not paid with these funds, but is supported by Dana offered at the retreat.**

The tradition of **Dana** goes back to the time of the Buddha, where the monastic community was entirely dependent upon the lay community for their needs (food, shelter and clothing) in order to encourage the understanding of inter-connectivity and the cultivation of wholesome states to open the heart. Dana is not considered a 'tip', but rather a heart-felt offering meant to support the teacher and teachings. Full time teachers like Howie rely on the support they receive for their livelihood. Retreat participants typically make a personal donation to the teacher in any amount consistent with their financial situation. There will be an opportunity to offer a gift of Dana directly to the teacher by placing cash or a check in an envelope at the end of the retreat on Sunday, we will also provide a Paypal and venmo link at that time.

### **Meditation Hall Protocol:**

These guidelines help to provide an optimal environment for meditation. This is a large retreat and it will be each of our responsibility to uphold these protections:

- Maintain complete silence and avoid eye contact. Please respect other retreatants' silence and practice and do not attempt to communicate or engage them. If you must communicate with anyone, by mutual agreement, please tap them on the shoulder and take the discussion outside and away from other retreatants. Please keep the meditation hall **completely silent**.
- Practice only sitting and standing meditation in the meditation hall. Do not lie down or practice walking meditation in the hall unless instructed. Exceptions are made for individuals with physical limitations who have received permission from the teacher; and for those wishing to lie down in the hall during the lunch period.
- Enter and leave the hall only at the beginning and end of a sit. **It is very important to arrive at each sit on time.**
- Do not wear perfume, scented lotions, scented hair products, scented deodorants or lotions, this includes muscle salves or 'natural', essential oils.
- **We request that you do not bring cell phones, smart or ticking watches into the hall.**

If you have any questions concerning the retreat, please contact me at:

[Insight.meditation.scottsdale@gmail.com](mailto:Insight.meditation.scottsdale@gmail.com)

With Metta, Genevieve Tregor