

Information sheet.

Mindfulness and the four heart qualities five-day silent retreat.

LOKANANDA RETREAT CENTRE
9 Main Street Point Pass, SA 5374
www.lokananda.com.au 08 85811758

April 6-11 2018

Meditation Teacher: Mal Huxter

Yoga Teacher: Monique Leverington

Venue: Lokananda Retreat Centre – www.lokananda.com.au – 9 Main Street Point Pass, South Australia 5374

Food: The food served will be gluten free and vegetarian. Vegan's can also be catered for. Please indicate if you are Dairy Free/ Gluten Free or Vegan

Dates and times: begins Friday the 6th at 3pm (arrive 2pm to be shown your room and get settled) and ends Monday the 9th at midday or Wednesday the 11th at midday

Fee 3 x nights is \$450 5 x nights is \$650

Website link: <http://www.synergyyogapilates.com.au/yoga-retreats>

Secondary link: <http://www.malhuxter.com/retreat/>

Background:

What is mindfulness and what are the four heart qualities?

Mindfulness is considered as a meditation practice, a way of being, a cognitive style, a mental skill, a core therapeutic process and a coping skill. Mindfulness has become a powerful psychological strategy for an array of mental health presentations as well as a practice increase psychological wellbeing and enhance effectiveness in areas that include parenting, education, relationships, the workplace and more. Some of the core contemporary third wave approaches that use mindfulness include: Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT).

The health and relationship benefits of compassion and loving kindness are becoming evident with current scientific research. The development of therapeutic and educational approaches such as Compassion Focussed Therapy (CFT), Cultivating Emotional Balance (CEB), Mindful Self Compassion (MSC) and Rick Hanson's Positive Neuroplasticity Training (PNT) are gaining popularity with therapists and educators because they work to reduce mental and emotional suffering, harmonise interpersonal relationships, increase wellbeing peace and joy and generally enhance functional agility in our complex modern world.

Two and a half millennia ago the Buddha taught the meditative development of mindfulness (satipatthana-Pali) and four heart qualities that he called the divine abodes.

According to Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, a one-line description of mindfulness is: “to remember to pay attention to what is occurring in one’s immediate experience with care and discernment”. The Buddha named the four divine abodes in Pali (the language closest to what he spoke): metta (warm friendliness or loving kindness), karuna (compassion), mudita (appreciative or empathetic joy) and upekkhā (deep peacefulness or equanimity).

Mindfulness and the four heart qualities were taught in order to gain psychological freedom. The heart qualities in particular were taught in ways that would provide antidotes for unhealthy, divisive and destructive relationships towards ones self and others. Like medicine for an illness, the different qualities and different ways to cultivate them were prescribed dependent on the nature of the afflictive relationship.

Why it is helpful to attend retreats?

Silent retreats are opportunities to focus on cultivating the heart and mind and awakening psychological freedom. They provide the external circumstances conducive to inner transformation, peace and harmony with oneself and others.

Retreats provide a break to recharge and remember what is important in our lives. For professionals, such as teachers or therapists, retreats give us the opportunity to refine the skills we teach to our students and clients. Meditation retreats provide an opportunity for personal stress management and self-reflection. They often clarify life’s directions so that there is renewed vitality and enthusiasm towards that which is important. These personal gains help individuals become more effective in what ever they do including their professional roles. For those therapists who wish to use mindfulness, compassion and loving kindness in therapeutic settings, retreats provide the opportunity to deepen therapeutic skills and understanding of these interventions. In some mindfulness and mindful compassion approaches (e.g. MBSR and MSC) attending cloistered silent residential retreats are essential qualifications for teacher training programmes.

General aims of the retreat:

- To provide the opportunity to experience first hand the cultivation of mindfulness and the heart qualities (loving kindness, compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity).
- To free oneself and others from psychological suffering and cultivate wellbeing and genuine happiness.
- To enhance the skills and understanding of anyone wishing to develop these qualities as well as provide new ideas for therapists, programme leaders and other professionals

who already use mindfulness, compassion, loving kindness and other related skills as part of their therapeutic and coaching repertoire.

Who is this retreat for?

This silent residential retreat is for anyone who has had some prior experience with meditation and wishes to enhance and practise their skills. The retreat is suited to the general public as well as therapists, educators and programme leaders. For those with aspirations to teach, this silent retreat will partially fulfil requirements for teacher training in programmes such as Mindful Self Compassion (MSC) and MBSR.

What will the retreat involve?

Mal's teaching will draw on his training in ancient Buddhist as well as contemporary psychological practices. This retreat will involve evening talks, morning guidance and discussion, time to be silently present in meditation and optional yoga sessions with Monique. For those who are staying for 5 days there will be opportunities to book in for 1:1 meetings in the last two days of the retreat.

The retreat will follow normal silent retreat protocols. Though in silence, participants will have the opportunity to question, comment and discuss about the practices during workshops style morning guidance sessions. All experiential exercises will be voluntary and there will be the choice to lie on the floor, move, sit in chairs or on cushions. On the final day some of these exercises will involve pairing up with another and engaging in interpersonal meditation practices.

The Venue Lokananda

“Lokananda” means “the bliss of the place”. With a large and spacious yoga /meditation hall and dining room, panoramic views, beautiful gardens and wholesome meals, Lokananda offers a place of peace for cultivating the heart and awakening. The venue provides vegetarian and gluten free meals with vegan options made from home grown produce. There are five shared bedrooms that open onto gardens. Camping options are also available. Please contact Monique should you wish to camp. For more information about Lokananda please go to <http://lokananda.com.au/>.

Lokananda guest guidelines

A bottom sheet will be provided. Guests are asked to bring a towel and their own blankets and pillows for the duration of the retreat. Linen can be provided for an additional \$25. Lokananda asks that guests treat the space with respect. Guests are asked to live as a compassionate community and clean up after themselves. Ample street parking is available. The retreat will be able to house up to 17 participants. So numbers are limited.

The fee for the retreat is \$450 for 3 nights and \$650 for 5 nights, which will cover food /accommodation and contribute towards the teacher's accommodation and airfare.

In accordance with Buddhist traditions, the fee for this retreat is dana based. Dana refers to the economy of generosity where the teachings are given freely and those who receive the teaching have the opportunity to reciprocate with a financial gift that they feel is suitable, after the retreat has finished.

Meditation Teacher: Mal Huxter (MAPS, AABCAP) is a clinical psychologist in private practice. He is the author of "Healing the Heart and Mind with Mindfulness." Routledge 2016. <http://www.amazon.com/Healing-Heart-Mind-Mindfulness-Ancient/dp/1138851353>

A practicing psychologist for 27 years, he has been teaching mindfulness and the four heart qualities to the general public, clinical populations, therapists and other professionals since 1991. He began training in Buddhist meditation practices in 1975, living in Thailand as a Buddhist monk for two years in the late 1970's. As well as Theravada he has trained in other Buddhist and spiritual traditions.

Website: www.malhuxter.com Email: malhuxter@gmail.com

Yoga Teacher: Monique Leverington is the owner of studio Synergy Yoga Pilates, qualified in Behavioural Sciences and Education, Monique has also recently completed training in MBSR (mindfulness based stress reduction) and is qualified in Yoga and Pilates. Monique is first and foremost the loving mother of her dear daughter Ella and wife of Michael. Monique and her family have a great love and passion for travelling to far and distant places.

Website: www.synergyyogapilates.com.au Email: synergyyogapilates@gmail.com