**Alive & Awake:**

**Creativity & Resilience in Times of Change**

 **Mindfulness Retreat**

**Friday 12 June – Sunday 14 June**

Dear All

Whilst we will miss being at The Burn, we are delighted to invite you to our special online retreat (using Zoom) over the 2nd weekend of June 2020.  Led by Susanne Olbrich and Lesley Collington, both experienced mindfulness practitioners and lay teachers in the tradition of Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh.

On this weekend we will be offered a range of opportunities to discover life in the present moment, to learn about mindfulness and to practice together. Beginners as well as those with experience are welcome to join.

With best wishes

Christine Brown on behalf of Touching the Earth Sangha in Banchory.

**THE RETREAT**

“Mindfulness is at the heart of awakening. Restoring balance to ourselves, we can begin the work of restoring balance to the Earth. There is no difference between healing the planet and healing ourselves.”

**Thich Nhat Hanh**

How can we keep an open heart and mind in these times of change? Mindfulness and creativity can help us be the change that we want to see in the world.

The seeds we water determine the things we will grow in the garden of our mind and heart, and in the garden of our collective consciousness and society. On this weekend we will take time to nurture our aliveness and presence through meditation, creative explorations and connection with nature. We will explore ways to cultivate the art of grounding ourselves, including gentle and graceful Qi Gong exercises. Sitting, walking and eating in mindfulness, we can slow down and (re)discover peace and joy, which are the source of true resilience.

Can the Earth count on us in these times? Our time together will be an opportunity to celebrate the miracle of life, to strengthen our connections with each other and the land and to reflect on our contributions to a collective awakening.

**THE TEACHERS**

**Susanne Olbrich** is a musician, music educator and mindfulness teacher. She enjoys encouraging creative expression and deep listening in people of all ages and backgrounds.

Susanne discovered mindfulness practice in 1996 at Plum Village, Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh’s practice centre in France. Inspired by this experience, mindfulness practice became a nourishing, sustaining and transformative part of her daily life. Susanne trained as a teacher in Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and Mindfulness-based Living (MBLC), and in 2016 she received the Lamp Transmission as a Dharma teacher at Plum Village. She has led days of Mindfulness and Retreats within the UK Community of Interbeing and for the Mindful Artists Network, and she has taught Mindfulness for Musicians at the University of Aberdeen.

As a musician, Susanne has offered creative music workshops in Scotland and Germany, collaborating with music schools, the NHS and community groups, while also offering private piano tuition in her Findhorn studio. Her CD “ Continuations” includes original music inspired by classical, jazz, folk and world music.

Susanne practices mindfulness with the Northern Lights Sangha which she co-founded 17 years ago, and this summer she will complete the MSc in Mindfulness with the University of Aberdeen.

[www.susanneolbrich.net](http://www.susanneolbrich.net)

**Lesley Collington:** After a free-range childhood by the sea near Christchurch, Lesley went to Art College in 1979 to study pottery and calligraphy. She set up her first studio in the North of Scotland and then in Dorset, where she still works and lives. She trained in martial arts for many years and has taught Qi Gong and T’ai Chi for 33 years.

Having followed different spiritual paths from an early age, she felt she had finally come home when she visited Plum Village in 2000. In 2004 she received ordination in the Order of Interbeing and in 2016 received the lamp transmission as Dharma teacher at Plum Village. Since 2014 she has led retreats at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, where Quakers and Buddhists practice together; offered retreats within the Community of Interbeing in Poland, Germany and England, with a special soft spot for the Arts & Crafts Retreats, held over a number of years, combining mindfulness practice and creative practice with pop-up studios of pottery, print making, sumi, bookbinding, knitting, etc.

She enjoys teaching T’ai Chi and time spent in her studio, combining calligraphy, bookbinding and pottery. Her husband is also a potter and they often like to share projects. She is a passionate amateur gardener.

**THE PRACTICALITIES**

The retreat will begin on Friday 12 June at 19.30

It will be a very different retreat in that we’ll all be in our own homes which may bring its own joys and challenges. The programme is organised in a spacious way, so we won’t get tired by too much screen time. There will be breaks for which we will suggest mindfulness practices to suit your own rhythms and circumstances. This will include your own mindful meals and some mindful walking.

You can find the schedule below, which hopefully will help you plan your days.

Please note that occasionally sessions may run slightly longer or shorter, depending on the group energy and needs.

**SCHEDULE**

**Friday:**

Introduction 19.30 - 2100

**Saturday:**

Morning session 10.00 – 1200

Afternoon session 1400 – 15.30

Sharing groups 16.30 – 17.30

Evening session 2000 – 2100

**Sunday:**

Morning session 1000 – 1200

Afternoon session 1400 - 1600

As usual, we’ll send out a more detailed programme nearer the time.

We are anticipating a high demand for this retreat so we recommend early booking using the attached form.

Many of you may already be familiar with Zoom. For those who are not, all you need to do is download it onto your computer or device from www.zoom.us and you’ll receive a link from us to join the sessions. It generally works well and it’s simple to join, which has to be the case given I’ve been successfully doing so and I’m not good with technology.

**Booking Form – Summer Mindfulness Retreat on Zoom**

**12 June - 14 June 2020**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Your name(s) |  |
| Email address |  |
| Telephone Numbers: | Mobile: Home:  |
| If more than 1 person is attending from the same residence & will be screen sharing, could you please let us know as this will free up a space for someone else. Spaces are limited to 25 screens so we’re all present in the Zoom room though we will break up into smaller groups for sharing. |  |
| Any disability that is likely to need our consideration? |  |

**DANA**

The retreat is freely offered but there will be the opportunity to offer Dana (a voluntary contribution) at the end of the retreat to express appreciation to Susanne and Lesley to support their work. 50% of the Dana collected will be offered to the monastic Brothers and Sisters at the Plum Village monasteries who are facing financial hardship due to the lockdown.There will be an invitation to give Dana at the end of the retreat and details of how to do that will be sent with the more detailed programme.

Please send your completed form to christine.brown2@nhs.net

Thank you and looking forward to seeing you at the retreat.