

Vassar Lifelong Learning Institute (Fall 2024)

Attached is a copy of the readings and a list of the music played during our 6 week *Meditation and Mindfulness* class, in the Autumn of 2024.

Meditation and Mindfulness

Presenters: Linda Cantor and Ed Rosenberg

Meditation and contemplation have been part of wisdom traditions for thousands of years. In today's tumultuous world, with its media overload and daily stress, it is important to find ways to focus and be present with whatever life brings us. Using meditative practices, music and wisdom teachings from different traditions, we will practice together to grow in compassion, increase our equanimity and our ability to live more fully in the present moment. Together we will develop practices that we can incorporate into our daily lives. This course is open both to beginners and experienced meditators.

Linda Cantor and Ed Rosenberg have been practicing and studying meditation for the past 30 years. Each has attended many silent retreats and has been part of training programs for facilitators. Linda has studied and attended silent retreats with Rabbi David Cooper, Thich Nhat Hahn, Norman Fischer, Jack Kornfeld, Shoshana Cooper and Tara Brach. Ed participated in a four year training program with Jason Schulman and then did advanced work with Jason. He attended silent retreats with Sylvia Boorstein, Jeff Roth, David and Shoshana Cooper, Jay Michaelson, Beth Resnick and others. Ed and Linda have taught meditation at both Marist CLS and Vassar LLI.

Imperfection

I am falling in love
with my imperfections –

The way I never get the sink really clean,
forget to check my oil,
lose my car in parking lots,
miss appointments I have written down,
am just a little late.

I am learning to love
the small bumps on my face
the big bump of my nose,
my hairless scalp,
chipped nail polish,
toes that overlap.

Learning to love
the open-ended mystery
of not knowing why.

I am learning to fail
to make lists,
use my time wisely,
read the books I should.

Instead I practice inconsistency,
irrationality, forgetfulness.

Probably, I should
hang my clothes neatly in the closet,
all the shirts together, then the pants,
send Christmas cards, or better yet
a letter telling of

my perfect family.

But I'd rather waste time
listening to the rain,
or lying underneath my cat
learning to purr.

I used to fill every moment
with something I could
cross off later.

Perfect was
the laundry done and folded,
all my papers graded,
the whole truth and nothing but

Now the empty mind is what I seek,
the formless shape
the strange off center
sometimes fictional
me.

"Imperfection" by Elizabeth Carlson, from Teaching with
Fire: Poetry That Sustains the Courage to Teach

Keeping Quiet

Now we will count to twelve and we will all keep still
for once on the face of the earth, let's not speak in any language;
let's stop for a second, and not move our arms too much.

It would be an exotic moment without rush, without engines;
we would all be together in a sudden strangeness.

Fisherman in the cold sea would not harm the whales
and the man gathering salt would not hurt his hands.

Those who prepare green wars, wars with gas, wars with fire,
victories with no survivors, would put on clean clothes
and walk about with their brothers in the shade, doing nothing.

What I want should not be confused with total inactivity.

Life is what it is about...

If we were not so single-minded about keeping our lives moving,
and for once could do nothing, perhaps a huge silence
might interrupt this sadness of never understanding ourselves
and of threatening ourselves with death.

Perhaps the earth can teach us as when everything seems to be dead in
winter and later proves to be alive. Now I'll count to twelve and you keep
quiet and I will go.

Pablo Neruda

When Someone Deeply Listens to You

When someone deeply listens to you
it is like holding out a dented cup
you've had since childhood
and watching it fill up with
cold, fresh water.

When it balances on top of the brim,
you are understood.
When it overflows and touches your skin,
You are loved.

When someone deeply listens to you,
the room where you stay
starts a new life
and the place where you wrote
your first poem
begins to glow in your mind's eye.
It is as if gold has been discovered!

When someone deeply listens to you,
your bare feet are on the earth
and a beloved land that seemed distant
is now at home within you.

by John Fox in

Our relationships with one another
are like the chance meeting
of two strangers in a parking lot.
They look at each other and smile.
That is all there is between them.
They leave and never see each other again.

That is what life is--
just a moment, a meeting, a
passing, and then it is gone.

If you understand this,
then there is no time to fight.
There is no time to argue.
There is no time to hurt one another.

Whether you think about it in terms of humanity, nations,
communities or individuals--
there is no time for anything less
than truly appreciating the brief
interaction we have with one another.

--Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche

The Peace of Wild Things

By Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Turn Turn Turn

To everything turn, turn, turn
There is a season turn, turn, turn
And a time to every purpose under Heaven
A time to be born, a time to die
A time to plant, a time to reap
A time to kill, a time to heal
A time to laugh, a time to weep
To everything turn, turn, turn
There is a season turn, turn, turn
And a time to every purpose under Heaven
A time to build up, a time to break down
A time to dance, a time to mourn
A time to cast away stones
A time to gather stones together
To everything turn, turn, turn
There is a season turn, turn, turn
And a time to every purpose under Heaven
A time of love, a time of hate
A time of war, a time of peace
A time you may embrace
A time to refrain from embracing
To everything turn, turn, turn
There is a season turn, turn, turn
And a time to every purpose under Heaven
A time to gain, a time to lose
A time to rain, a time to sow
A time for love, a time for hate
A time for peace, I swear it's not too late

Source: [Musixmatch](#)

Songwriters: Peter Seeger

Turn! Turn! Turn! lyrics © Melody Trails Inc. C/o The Richmond Organizational, Melody Trails Inc.

Tur

Poems- Readings-Music

Poems read in class 2024

1. Imperfection – Elizabeth Carlson
2. Keeping Quiet – Pablo Neruda
3. When Someone Deeply Listens To You – Jonathan Fox
4. Relationships – Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche
5. The Peace of Wild Things – Wendell Berry
6. Turn, Turn, Turn

Other Poems

1. Mindful – Mary Oliver
2. I worried – Mary Oliver
3. The Guest House – Rumi
4. Sharing Silence – Gunilla Norris
5. Gathering Up Crumbs – Gunilla Norris
6. Love After Love – Derek Walcott
7. For the Sake of Strangers – Dorianne Laux
8. Start Close In – David Whyte
9. Becoming Human – Hafiz
10. Walk Slowly – Danna Faulds
11. Kindness- Bo Lozoff
12. Joy - Mary Oliver

Poetry Collections:

1. The Gift – Poems by Hafiz, translated by Daniel Ladinsky
2. Essentials – Poems by David Whyte
3. Love Poems from God, translated by Daniel Ladinsky
4. Risking Everything, 110 Poems of Love and Revelation, edited by Roger Housden
5. The Essential Rumi, translated by Coleman Barks
- 6.. Thirst – Poems by, Mary Oliver
7. Still Possible – Poems by David Whyte

Short Stories or Writings:

1. Invisible Lines of Connection, Lawrence Kushner
2. I asked for Wonder, Abraham Heschke
3. The Instruction Manual for Receiving God, Jason Shulman
4. Kitchen Table Wisdom, Rachel Naomi Remen
5. Tao Te Ching, translated by Stephen Mitchell

Authors:

1. David Cooper
2. Maya Angelou
3. Tara Brach
4. Pema Chodren
5. Jack Kornfield
6. Thich Nhat Hahn
7. Wendell Berry
8. Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Music in 2024 Class:

1. Faure Requiem, Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, Pavane Op. 50 by Gabriel Faure
2. Barber's Adagio for strings – Leonard Bernstein
3. Into Silence – Deva Premal – Aad Guray
4. Joshua Bell: Romance of the Violin, String Quartet No. 2 in D Major: Nocturne – Borodin
5. The Rose (Original Sound Track Recording) – Bette Midler