



Butler Buddhist Sangha

“The quieter you
become, the more
you can hear.”

Join Us For Our Monthly Dharma Classes

The Maridon Museum

On the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Thursday of each month we offer a Buddhist Dharma talk and meditation from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at The Maridon. Donations are welcome. All proceeds benefit The Maridon Museum.

Holly Pointe, Main Street

On the 4th Thursday of each month we offer Zen instruction by Roshi Cynthia Marshall from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the large first floor room at Holly Pointe.

For all four Thursday events we also offer Zoom access. Please call 724.679.6008.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a Dharma talk?

A Dharma talk is a lesson which applies Buddhist philosophy to issues that arise from simply living the life of a human being. They are mostly contemplative, gentle reminders that we all have common fears, obstructions, anxieties, and dilemmas. The concept is that problems don't seem so large or insurmountable when we contemplate and meditate with others.

2. Should I take notes during Dharma talks?

Not unless you have decided to become a student of Zen philosophy and Buddhism. Simply, listen and reflect.

3. During meditation, my mind is a jumble. I feel uncomfortable in the silence. How can I learn to be as calm as some of the people around me?

Meditation is called a practice. Try not to judge or evaluate your experience. It is neither a good meditation or a bad meditation. If you decide to meditate, once a day, three times a week, and so forth, you will find that there will be a point where it takes much less time for your mind to settle during meditation. You will experience moments and minutes of full space and calmness. Everyone's meditation experience differs. There is no right or wrong. And please remember, some of the people you are seeing meditate have been meditating for years. They are completely compassionate towards you, and they are not judging you.

4. What should I be thinking about while meditating?

In Zen meditation, we sit in silence with straight backs, so we do not fall asleep or get lazy. Sometimes we say, "Strong backs, soft hearts." We use a phrase called "allowing things/ideas/emotions to arise." What this means is that when a thought comes into your head, you gently identify it, as "Oh, that's about that argument I had today." And then like clouds in the sky, you let the idea/thought move away. Gently let go. Also, you might begin identifying emotions you are feeling during meditation. You might think, "Oh, that's jealousy." And then, let the cloud move away. Continue to gently push ideas, emotions, thoughts, histories and past anger, away to clear your mind. After awhile, you will notice that you aren't really thinking, but have entered a brain wave zone in which you are comfortable just to "be."

5. I think I have felt this calmness or zoned brain wave when I am in the woods, when I am gardening, playing the piano and/or praying in church. Is this similar?

Yes

6. I think I would be more comfortable if music were playing during meditation or if we had a guided, talking meditation. Why don't we do that?

Because in Zen practice, meditation is somewhat uncomfortable intentionally. You are learning how to not talk, be still, accept your body, emotions, mind, and state of being. This is difficult. It is not uncommon during learning meditation to want to get up and leave the room. Meditating for one hour can seem an eternity. But as you become more settled in your practice, you will find that an hour passes very quickly, and you will yearn to meditate more often because it has many benefits. In Zen meditation, you are facing yourself, and you are alone and quiet. This is different from our constantly talking, connecting, gesturing, acting, emoting, responding, and reacting world. Ram Dass says, BE HERE NOW. Three words that explain meditation: Be Here Now. Difficult to do! That's why it's called a practice.

7. What can I read about meditation, Buddhism, and the Dharma?

Feel free to discuss your questions and reading interests with any member of the sangha. They can make suggestions for you. Also, let's face reality: go to Amazon.com! Once again, you will find your path if you take a step, any step. Keep meditating!