

## Change Your Mind Day 2017

### Workshop Descriptions

**Qigong** (pronounced Chee-Gong) is a unique synergy between movement, meditation, visualization, energy work, breath work and sometimes vocalization. One way to describe Qigong is meditation through movement, or meditation on movement. People who have a hard time meditating, find that Qigong can help them keep their mind calm.

**Deep Relaxation Meditation** - offered by Tamara Geveci

So often we rush through life, not pausing to notice and appreciate the wonderful miracle of being alive. Deep relaxation is a guided meditation practice shared by Thich Nhat Hanh that allows us to bring mindful attention to our physical selves, generating gratitude and love. Participants will lie on yoga mats or sit in a chair while being guided in this restorative meditation, allowing our bodies and minds to fully relax. There is no time like this moment to become truly present to yourself.

**The Power of Chanting** - offered by Tamara Geveci and Kingfisher Sangha

In Buddhism Avalokiteshvara is the Bodhisattva of Compassion. She hears the cries of the world and listens deeply in order to relieve suffering. When we chant we begin to awaken our own abilities to listen, understand and heal, creating an energy of compassion that embraces our own suffering as well as the suffering present in our loved ones and in the world. Come join us as we learn about and chant Namó Avalokiteshvara.

**Connecting Mind and Body** offered by Elissa Kane, Shambhala Meditation Center of Albany

Drawing on the arts and contemplative traditions, the embodiment practice of Social Presencing Theater (SPT) brings body-based, experiential learning into individual, organizational and social change efforts. It quickly generates information about patterns and relationships that are “stuck” in a system, and offers methods for working with emerging futures that promote the wellbeing of all stakeholders in a system. This is not “theater” in the conventional sense, but uses simple body postures and movements to dissolve limiting concepts, to communicate directly, to access intuition, and to make visible both current reality, and the deeper – often invisible – leverage points for creating profound change.

**Learn To Meditate**, Shambhala Meditation Albany & Troy - Jeff Wigman

Mindfulness/awareness meditation is the foundation of all that we do at the Shambhala Meditation Center. This ancient practice of self-discovery is rooted in the simple but

revolutionary premise that every human being has the ability to cultivate the mind's inherent stability, clarity and strength in order to be more awake and to develop the compassion and insight necessary to care for oneself and the world genuinely.

This basic meditation class is for beginners, as well as anyone who would like to refresh their understanding of the technique.

**Contemplative End of Life Care, offered by Lenore Flynn MA, RN, GC-C-Buddhism** focuses intentionally on how to live fully in the presence of death. When we are directly confronted with death or dying, our own or of someone we love, being fully present and compassionate can become a precious opening for practice. Contemplative End of Life Care invites us to embrace the experience with an open, aware heart.

**Mindfulness Based Relapse Prevention, offered by Steve Flynn, MA, GC-C-Traditional** 12-step programs focus on behavioral change, making amends and reliance on a higher power. Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention focuses on cultivating your own inner resources and moment-to-moment awareness through mindfulness-based practices as the primary resource for avoiding relapse.

**Albany Peace Project**-Bethany Gonyea will be demonstrating through heart rate variability biofeedback instruments what it means to access "heartmind" espoused by all religious traditions. Researchers refer to this state in our nervous system as "coherence" and have found that in this state we gain greater clarity, make better decisions and perform more optimally in all areas of life.

**Chair Yoga, offered by Judi England, RN, LMT**-Yoga is a centuries-old practice designed to reconnect the body, mind and spirit through gentle movements, breath, and deep relaxation. No previous yoga experience is needed to take part in this workshop. All movements will be done seated or standing with a chair for support. All are welcome to enjoy the benefits of this practice-regardless of physical ability or limitations.

**Demystifying the Bodhisattva of Compassion: Who is He and Why is His Practice So Important in the Mahayana?, offered by Lama Zopa**- A bodhisattva is one who vows to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all beings. The most beloved bodhisattva is Avaloketishvara, the embodiment of compassion, known as Chenrezig in Tibet, Kuan Yin in China and Kannon in Japan. We venerate and meditate upon this bodhisattva to develop our own qualities of love and compassion.

**The Four Immeasurables: Love, Compassion, Joy, and Equanimity Without Limit, offered by Lama Zopa**- Contemplations on Loving Kindness, compassion, Sympathetic Joy and Equanimity are practices by all Buddhist schools to develop these enlightened qualities.

**Silent Meditation**-Come practice meditation for the whole session, or for whatever time you have. We'll practice sitting meditation, walking meditation, and contemplation meditation. The basic meditation technique predates all religious traditions, though it is used in one way or another by each of them. Undertaken as a steady practice, meditation allows the mind to relax and settle and encourages our inherent qualities of stability, clarity and mental strength to emerge.

**Breathwork to assist Mindful Practice offered by Victor Anderson**-In this workshop we will practice balancing the breath while meditating. Deeper breathing brings calm to the body. It reduces roaming thought, one of the hardest things to manage to clear the space for effective practice. In the second half we will try conscious breathing with music to further open up the breathing. All are welcome!

**The Art of Resilience offered by Karen Beetle**- Using mindfulness to create stability, grounding and capacity in challenging times. The capacity to remain rooted and stable is one of the gifts of mindfulness practice. It is this stability that allows us to meet crisis and change without becoming overwhelmed and disoriented. In this workshop we will focus on practices and strategies for meeting fear and uncertainty and for supporting the mind and body in remaining rooted and spacious. In these challenging times, our stability is a gift to ourselves and a beacon for others.

**Sound Meditation offered by Mason McDermott**-Sound has been used throughout history to promote well-being and relaxation. Participants will be immersed with sound and music from various instruments during meditation with the intention of easing stress. The meditative state facilitated by sound can be insightful, relieving tension, and soothing our nervous systems with the potential to achieve balance in body, mind, and soul. We will discuss the importance of mindfulness and how the use of sound can aid in our own practice of meditation.

**Drum Circle offered by Mason McDermott**-Drum circles encourage us to actively participate and interact in a group setting while exploring the nature of sound and rhythms. Drumming also has the potential to enhance mood and can be used as a means towards cultivating mindfulness. We will discuss and practice how to form basic rhythms, the importance of grounding, enhancing our listening and interpersonal skills, and the creative flow and improvisation.

**What is a Labyrinth & Why You Should Walk It** - Found in virtually every time and culture, the Labyrinth is not a maze. There are no intersections, no decision points forcing a choice of direction. There is only one path inward to its center and then a retracing of that same path outward. "Walking the Labyrinth has reemerged today as a metaphor for the spiritual journey and a powerful tool for transformation. The walking meditation is an archetype, a mystical ritual found in all religious traditions. It quiets the mind and opens

the soul, evoking a feeling of wholeness....” (from *Walking a Sacred Path* by Laruen Artress). More information about this ancient tool for walking meditation can be found beside the Labyrinth.

The labyrinth is an ancient tool for walking meditation. With a history spanning at least 3,500 years, evidence of labyrinths have been found in virtually every culture on five continents. Over the last 30 years, there has been an American revival of the Labyrinth, beginning in the spiritual community and spreading to health care facilities, colleges, and social centers.

The labyrinth is a circle, a spiral, a meander, but it is not a maze. There are no intersections, no decision points forcing a choice of direction. It has a single path beginning at its edge and spiraling inward to its center. The same path is retraced outward. Walking the labyrinth may promote emotional, spiritual and physical health. On an emotional level, walking the labyrinth offers an opportunity to slow down, decompress, and gain a brief respite from the constant decision-making that is synonymous with every day life. Spiritually, we gain a new perspective.

Some see the labyrinth walk as a journey inward to our true self and back out to our everyday life. This combination of de-stressing and new perspective offers many physical benefits as well. Research by Dr. Herbert Benson at Harvard Medical School’s Mind/Body Medical Institute, has shown walking meditations to be highly effective in reducing anxiety, lowering blood pressure and breathing rates, and reducing depression. And Dr. John Kabat-Zinn, Director of the Stress Reduction Clinic at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center, has used walking meditation programs to treat stress-related disorders, chronic disease, and pain.

**Consult a Meditation Teacher** – Meditation is often described as simple but not easy. In minutes it is possible to learn the basic task of meeting the mind without judgment and opening to one's experience as it unfolds moment by moment. And yet this is anything but easy.

Finding our way with the sheer busyness of the mind, maintaining motivation for practice, dealing with obstacles like sleepiness or restlessness can so easily cause us to drop our fledgling meditation practice altogether.

And yet, research confirms that even minutes on the cushion are a deep support to our minds and bodies in innumerable ways. Often support makes the difference in sticking with our practice when obstacles arise.

In a retreat setting, teacher consultations help guide practice as it unfolds. Take advantage of this opportunity to talk with a meditation teacher about your meditation practice and get the support, advice and inspiration you need to help your practice thrive.

Sign up for a 15 minute consultation with the teacher of your choice.