

The Convergence of Vedanā, Our Mammalian Physiology, and Buddhist Awakening

Friday, August 12 - Sunday, August 14, 2016

Institute for Meditation and Psychotherapy

www.meditationandpsychotherapy.org

and

Barre Center for Buddhist Studies

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Program description

The Buddha spoke of “feeling tone” (*vedanā*)—pleasant, unpleasant, neutral—as one of the basic structures of our mind-body experience. Current physiological theories speak of the mammalian threat response we have inherited as part of our evolutionary journey. How do we navigate and honor this response and still move along the path of freedom the Buddha described in the Pali discourses? How do we fully embody our humanness in a way that does not detract from, but actually supports a path of Awakening? The confluence of the Buddha’s teachings as found in the Pali discourses and current theories of mammalian physiology provide fertile ground for freedom blossoming in our daily lives and in our society. Through study and practice, we will explore how feeling tone can be correlated with our mammalian threat responses to provide the basis for cultivating a skillful relationship to these responses. By combining the traditional teachings with information about our physiology we will seek a nuanced way of understanding freedom and a practical application for how we live our lives and how we interact with others. Selected readings from the Pali discourses on *vedanā* as well as readings on Stephen Porges’ Polyvagal Theory will be sent to participants prior to the course.

Preliminary schedule (subject to change)

- Friday
 - 4:00 – 6:00pm Check-in
 - 6:00 pm Dinner
 - 7:30 pm Course Opening in Meditation Hall
- Saturday
 - 6:30 am Wake-up Bell
 - 7:00 am Meditation
 - 7:30 - 9:00 am Breakfast/Free Period
 - 9:00 – 12 noon Morning Classroom Session
 - 12:00 - 2:00 pm Lunch/Free Period

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| ○ 2:00 – 5:00pm | Afternoon Session |
| ○ 5:00 - 6:30 pm | Dinner/Free Period |
| ○ 6:30 - 9:00 pm | Evening Session |
| • Sunday | |
| ○ 6:30 am | Wake-up Bell |
| ○ 7:00 am | Mindfulness Meditation |
| ○ 7:30 – 9:00 am | Breakfast/Free Period |
| ○ 9:00 – 12:00 am | Morning Session |
| ○ 12:00 noon | Lunch |

Goals and Learning Objectives

- 1. Participants will learn about mammalian physiological threat responses and the basic structure of the nervous system that is responsible for these threat responses.
- 2. Participants will learn how to navigate these threat responses when they are not commensurate with the environment as well as learn possible clinical interventions for such responses.
- 3. Participants will learn about the construction of our experience of mental suffering from ancient Buddhist teachings and the Buddhist system of psychology.
- 4. Participants will learn a range of mindfulness skills to help ameliorate mental suffering and can help a health professional remain balanced in a stressful clinical encounter.
- 5. Participants will learn about the dynamics of safety from a mammalian physiological perspective and ways to foster safety in a clinical setting from this perspective.
- 6. Participants will learn about the dynamics of safety from a Buddhist psychology perspective and ways to foster safety in a clinical setting from this perspective.
- This course is suitable for beginner, intermediate and experienced practitioners.
- The target audience for this course: teachers, educators, licensed mental health clinicians, and the general public

Faculty

Brian Lesage has practiced meditation for the last 27 years and has taught meditation for the last 15 years. He was ordained in the Rinzai Zen tradition in 1996 and spent 6 years living in a Zen Monastery. His training in meditation includes doing extended meditation retreats in Myanmar (Burma), Nepal, and India as well as numerous retreats in the U.S. Brian was a co-founder of Equanimity Development Institute, an organization that provided meditation instruction to a wide variety of populations such as medical care professionals, a drug rehabilitation center, colleges, adjudicated teens, and those within the penal system. He now leads retreats and teaches meditation courses nationwide. Brian holds a master's degree in

counseling and also has a private practice in Somatic Experiencing, which is a naturalistic approach to healing trauma.

Continuing Education

Psychologists: *This program is co-sponsored by the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies and the Institute for Meditation and Psychotherapy. The Institute for Meditation and Psychotherapy is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. The Institute for Meditation and Psychotherapy maintains responsibility for this program and its content. This course offers 12 hours of credit.*

Social Workers: *Application for 12 social work continuing education credits has been submitted. Please contact us at bcbs@dharma.org for the status of social work CE accreditation.”*

Register at www.bcbsdharma.org or by calling 978-355-2347 ext. 10.

Fee: \$198/\$250/\$300 (entire program, including accommodations and meals), donation to teacher is customary but not mandatory, plus \$25 processing fee for CEUs.

Location: Barre Center for Buddhist Studies (directions at www.bcbsdharma.org)