

Principles/Glossary

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There are of course a set of beliefs, definitions, assumptions or principles which govern this program. They can best be described as the following:

Context - understanding ourselves means awakening to the fullness of the context in which we have our being. Maturity is not only an internal pursuit, rather we grow as we take in a broader, deeper perspective of who we are in the world around us. Life is a benevolent life force assisting us in growing this awareness.

Spiritual Axis - this kind of formational work demands real motivation and effort on our part, as well as help from many external sources. “If we sincerely want to change our lives and take steps to do so we will be assisted. We are not without aid. Compassionate and benevolent guidance is available to us in this universe along the vertical axis.” Lynn Bauman

Spiritual Formation - is a process, whereby we transform egoic formation into wisdom through contemplative and heart-awareness practices. Ideally, spiritual formation leads us to a more contemplative/heart-aware life, characterized by a state of abiding joy and selflessness.

Egoic Formation - the complex mind is in many ways “programmed”, like a computer to see and react in different ways. Part of the programming is genetic, our heritage from birth, and another part is early learning and cultural upbringing. A further part is our own patterns of choices over the years. The inner programming largely determines the way we think, perceive, act and react. We have a modicum of freedom from which we can respond.

Reform- we invite wisdom into our life when we look at the painful patterns that are part of us, and find ways of thinking or acting in ways that are better for us. We are naturally resilient and made for change. Our personal transformation, which includes awareness and healing, affects the world around us.

Practical Understanding- transformation does not come merely by changing our ideas. Wisdom comes to us through understanding the experiences of the head, the heart, and the body. When we practice and take risks, change is possible.

Slow, Spacious and Steady - we are about gazing, slowing down, meandering thoughtfully through our inner and outer process. We have two luxurious years to do so. We need not rush. There is no end game. We are part of an open ended exportation that has no finality.

A New Moon teaches gradualness and deliberation and
how one gives birth to oneself slowly.

Patience with small details makes perfect a large work,
like the universe.

What nine months of attention does for an embryo forty
early mornings will do for your gradually growing wholeness.

- Rumi

Paradox- we mature as we develop a capacity to live with paradoxes. We are seekers AND treasure holders, we live by grace AND yet we participate in our own growth, the “Pure Land” is here now AND is also beyond our grasp, and so on. We have the capacity to discern and hold to multiple truths.

Community/Sangha - our learning cohort is integral to this program. "... the spiritual community is not about unthinking conformity or belonging to a comfortable group. Rather, it is the free association of developing individuals choosing to help each other along the path." Sangharakshita

Grace - we are the recipients of all that is good and wise. While our efforts are commendable, we are ultimately receivers. We must learn how to receive and to live graciously and gratefully. "We are life living itself. Grace has a thousand names and is rich with a sense of beauty and goodness and love freely given. We benefit from Grace as we align our actions and intentions within it." Kathleen Dowling Singh. Grace is simply the Sacred replete with all its Noble qualities it gives rise to form and is inseparable from form.

Spirituality - assumes a posture of faith. It is about that which is imminent and yet beyond, perceivable, and yet imperceivable. It begins with a longing and culminates in a ripening into the fullness of compassion.

Heart - refers to our innate nonconceptual capacity for knowing. In eastern Traditions it is known as chitta which derives from the root word that means to be conscious.

Interspirituality and Language- We are each unique. People drawn to spiritual formation may live within a religious tradition, see themselves outside of a tradition, be amalgamating two or more traditions, or not identify as religious at all. This is a sign of the times and we mustn't be afraid or shy away from this ambiguity, rather we can learn from it.

Likewise, when it comes to the use of particular words we each have biases and preferences. In order to form a learning community we need to be open and flexible.

Adult Learning - puts participants - you - at front and center of your own learning. Adult learners take responsibility for using the content and process to their benefit, using the material in practical ways that touch the reality of their personal lives. The most significant part of the program is the time in between sessions, when the principles, practices and reflections questions inform everyday life.