



Still Presence Spirituality Centre
Winter Newsletter / January 2012

Who We Are

"Finding Peace and Wisdom Within."

We believe that by practicing meditation we can free ourselves from being trapped in our thoughts and feelings, and break the cycle of stressful living.

As we learn to let go —quieting the mind, relaxing the body, witnessing our thoughts— we increasingly live in the *NOW*, and deepen our conscious response to the *Divine Presence* within.

Still Presence Spirituality Centre
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SEED THOUGHT

*A drop of water
can never be separate
from the vast ocean.*

*For even as the drop
circulates through clouds
and plants and the cells
of human beings,
bringing the blessing of life
to many forms,
it will reunite one day
with its Source*

*—the great ocean of Love
that creates and sustain
the wholeness of life. . . .*

And so shall we.

~Joan Borysenko~

*January - June 2012
at a Glance*

Open House

Monday, January 16, 7- 8.30 pm

Monday Meditation Circle, 7- 8.15 pm

January 16, 23, 30

February 6, 13, 20, 27

March 5, 12, 19, 26

April 2, 16, 23, 30

May 7, 14, 28

June 4

Workshop: Allowing Healing into the Heart

Saturday, May 5, 1- 4 pm

Words & Music Cafe

Monday, May 28, 7- 8.30 pm

All events at
Christ Church, Beaurepaire
455 Church St., Beaconsfield, QC
(514-697-2204)

Open House

Led by Michael Johnson and Cedric Cobb
Monday, January 16, 7 – 8:30 pm
Christ Church Beaurepaire
455 Church, Beaconsfield *(Free)*



To introduce ourselves to the wider community, we offer special **Open House** experiences twice a year. These evenings present opportunities for newcomers to learn about meditation while sharing in one of our regular Meditation Circles. They are also opportunities for regulars to refresh their own ongoing practice. The gathering ends with snacks, tea, and informal discussion. Our meditation circles provide a supportive atmosphere for cultivating one's inner journey of discovery, healing and growth.

Living Mindfully In Everyday Life

[Adapted from The Seeker's Guide by Elizabeth Lesser]

1. Quiet The Mind

Thoughts and dreams, fears and anxieties, all move through our minds like weather through the sky. Meditation practice gives us some distance from our thoughts, as if we were observing clouds from an observation tower.

Through our practice, we learn to hold the contents of our minds in a wide, friendly embrace, and let our sense of self expand.

2. Expect Resistance

Distractions will visit us in the form of pain, restlessness, sleepiness, doubts, and self-criticism. We do not resist these states of mind. Instead, we observe the fluid nature of our minds without judgment, irritation, or panic. Why? So that we can do the same in daily life, that is, meet painful situations with grace, difficult people with patience, and persistent problems with perspective.





Monday Meditation Circles

Led by Michael Johnson and Cedric Cobb
Mondays, 7 – 8:15 pm
Christ Church Beaurepaire
455 Church, Beaconsfield (514-697-2204)

Helpful Hints for Sustaining Your Practice

1. Sit every day, even if it's for a short period. It is a gift to the soul!
2. A few times during each day, pause for a mindfulness break. Establish contact with your body and breath, open to what is happening in the present moment.
3. Practice regularly with a group.
4. Use inspiring resources such as books, CD's or the internet.
5. Study or read a book on meditation.
6. Sign up for a retreat. The experience will deepen your practice and nourish spiritual awakening.
7. If you miss practice for a day, a week, or a month, simply begin again.
8. Don't judge your practice -- rather, accept what unfolds and trust your capacity to awaken and be free!

[Adapted from the work of Tara Brach]



Meditation Circle Dates

January	16 (<i>Open House</i>) , 23, 30
February	6, 13, 20, 27
March	5, 12, 19, 26
April	2, (<i>no Circle April 9</i>), 16, 23, 30
May	7, 14, (<i>no Circle May 21</i>), 28 (<i>Words & Music Cafe</i>)
June	4

“Quotable Quotes...”

When I breathe in and take refuge in my in-breath, I touch life deeply. When I take a step and I take refuge entirely in my step, I also touch life deeply, and by doing so I stop running.

Stopping running is a very important practice. We have been running all our lives. We believe that peace, happiness, and success are

present in some other place and time. We don't know that everything—peace, happiness, and stability—should be looked for in the here and the now.

This is the address of life—the intersection of here and now. When we practice this meditation, we arrive in each moment. Our true home is in the present moment.

~Thich Nhat Hanh~



A Still Presence Workshop

What to Do When It Hurts

Saturday, May 5, 1 - 4 pm
Led by Michael and Cedric
\$15 suggested donation

Christ Church Beaurepaire
455 Church, Beaconsfield

"Allowing Healing into the Heart"

Our workshops take place in an atmosphere of quiet and tranquility, with time for silent meditation, movement, guided visualizations, heart talks, and sharing. Each workshop is designed to cultivate openness, compassion, healing, and

contemplative living. They are open to both beginning and experienced practitioners, and light refreshments are provided. This particular workshop focuses on softening around both mental and physical pain.

We always have a choice—We can let the circumstances of our lives harden us and make us increasingly resentful and afraid, or we can let them soften us and make us kinder.

~Pema Chodron~

Still Presence presents
Words & Music Café

Monday, May 28, 1 - 4 pm

Freewill donation

Christ Church Beaurepaire
455 Church, Beaconsfield



Join us for our next Still Presence *Words & Music Café* for a time of meditative stillness, inspiration, and recorded music. Participants are encouraged to bring something to share, such as a poem, an inspirational reading, song, dance, or piece of art. After our last Café, we had many comments that this was a moving and inspiring event.

After the sharing, we transition into a time of being with each other in spiritual community. Snacks and tea are provided, or if you feel inspired, bring a treat yourself to share with the group. We start promptly at 7pm, and end at 8:30pm. Hope to see you there!

Friends of Still Presence

Epiphany Meditation Circle

Church of the Epiphany, 4322 rue Wellington, Verdun

Meditation Circle

Thursdays — January 5, 12, 19

Taizé Prayer

Thursday — January 26, 2012

Info: 514-363-6712 or meditationepiphany@gmail.com



Web Watch



New Year's Resolutions

As we start a New Year, we can learn to pause, to take small breaks. With such pausing we give ourselves a little time for time, a needed space for our true being and the rest that comes when we turn towards Spirit.

Learning to pause is one of the best, natural stress relievers. We can practice taking breath breaks instead of coffee breaks. It is giving our selves a sit-down time for that which needs nurturing in us.

Let's look at the benefits of a breath break. It costs nothing. It is available anywhere and is not only doable, it is easy. Taking breath breaks is a new habit that only needs our *intention*, our *willingness*, and *practice*.

Here are the nuts and bolts of what a breath break might be.

- It is stopping for two to five minutes. We actually do it already whenever we glance at a magazine or look out the window. Though in these ways of

stopping we are probably not aware of being with ourselves.

- It is taking the time to roll our shoulders backwards a few times as if we were shrugging off a backpack. As the shoulders go up we inhale, and as they go down we exhale as deeply as we can. It will sound like a sigh. Doing this we encourage ourselves to let go. Then it is continuing by simply breathing in deeply until the lungs expand but are not straining. It is imagining that we are breathing in Spirit.
- It is holding that sacred breath at the top of the inhalation for a second and really noticing it.
- It is exhaling deeply and at the bottom of the exhalation allowing for a rich, empty moment of resting.
- It is repeating these deep breaths for at least two minutes. Closing our breath break, it is acknowledging that we are breathtaking creatures in both senses of the word.
- And when our five minutes are up, it is consciously deciding to re-enter our day with more mindfulness and gratitude.

By taking little sips of holy leisure seven times a day we will not only reduce our stress we will become inspired to be more and more who we really are. What a wonderful New Year's resolution that is!

Excerpted from the Website of Gunilla Norris
www.gunillanorris.com

Accepting This by Mark Nepo



Yes, it is true. I confess,
I have thought great thoughts,
and sung great songs—all of it
rehearsal for the majesty
of being held.

The dream is awakened
when thinking I love you
and life begins
when saying I love you
and joy moves like blood
when embracing others with love.

My efforts now turn
from trying to outrun suffering
to accepting love wherever
I can find it.

Stripped of causes and plans
and things to strive for,
I have discovered everything
I could need or ask for
is right here—
in flawed abundance.

We cannot eliminate hunger,
but we can feed each other.
We cannot eliminate loneliness,
but we can hold each other.

We cannot eliminate pain,
but we can live a life
of compassion.

Ultimately,
we are small living things
awakened in the stream,
not gods who carve out rivers.

Like human fish,
we are asked to experience
meaning in the life that moves
through the gill of our heart.

There is nothing to do
and nowhere to go.
Accepting this,
we can do everything
and go anywhere.

We highly recommend ***The Book of Awakening*** by Mark Nepo. It is a year's supply of inspirational stories and beautifully written essays one can reflect on in daily doses.



The Last Word:

What Is Our Life About?



Our aspiration, our calling, our desire for a genuine life, is to see the truth of who we really are — that the nature of our Being is connectedness and love, not the illusion of a separate self to which our suffering clings. It is from this awareness that Life can flow through us; the Unconditioned manifesting freely as our conditioned body.

And what is the path?
To learn to reside in whatever Life presents.

To learn to attend to all of those things that block the flow of a more open life; and to see them as the very path to awakening — all of the constructs, the identities, the holding back, the protections, all of the fears, the self-judgments, the blame — all that separates us from letting Life be.

And what is the path?
To turn away from constantly seeking comfort and from trying to avoid pain.
To open to the willingness to just be, in this very moment, exactly as it is.

No longer so ready to be caught in the relentlessly spinning mind.

Practice is about awakening to the true Self; no one special to be, nowhere to go, just Being.

We are so much more than just this body, just this personal drama. As we cling to our fear, and our shame, and our suffering, we forsake the gratitude of living from our natural Being.

So where, *in this very moment*, do we cling to our views?

Softening around the mind's incessant judgment, we can awaken the heart that seeks to be awakened.

And when the veil of separation rises,

Life simply unfolds as it will.
No longer caught in the self-centered dream, we can give ourselves to others, like a white bird in the snow.

Time is fleeting.
Don't hold back.
Appreciate this precious Moment.

~ Ezra Bayda ~