

Dear friends,

I planned to be in residence at Southern Dharma again this year to settle into the meditation hall for yoga and meditation, share silence and delicious, nutritious meals, and enjoy the serene beauty of western North Carolina mountains. I never imagined that a virus would sweep the world, affect so many families and businesses, and require us to creatively alter this plan.

Fortunately, we're in the world of magic technology that allows us to be together in a different, yet intimate, way. Currently, I teach Zoom yoga classes from my home studio, during which I get to see inside people's homes, meet their pets and children, and see what kind of practice space they have set up. I'd be honored to be invited into your home, if you choose to participate in this retreat. Likewise, I look forward to welcoming you into my home. There's a special tenderness of being together in this way at a time when we're asked to isolate ourselves from others.

The home of the four immeasurables, the limitless ones, is a place of both release and outreach: when we observe ourselves being frightened and reaching for more chocolate, can we notice that behavior with compassion toward ourselves, without judgment? And if we eat the chocolate, well, okay! There's a pandemic going on...let's eat chocolate! If we interact with someone who isn't wearing a mask in the grocery store, can we tap into equanimity for that person who might be afraid in his or her own way?

Let's be honest. We are uncomfortable with uncertainty. We don't like not knowing.

Asana practice is a way to release into not knowing. During this time of emotional ups and downs, we have the opportunity to experience yoga as way to support our bodies and minds. We have the opportunity, on-line and at home, to stay embodied, soften our shoulders, and recognize our inter-dependency.

Southern Dharma and I are working together to create this at-home retreat as a way to support and comfort you, as well as to hone your tools of self-awareness.

No matter your personal situation, I'm confident you can find ways to participate in this retreat. It's an experiment, like life. Just show up and see what happens. There's no "wrong way" to do this!

Namaste,

Cindy Dollar