

**Insight Meditation 3-Day Retreat**  
**Thursday, April 21, to Sunday, April 24, 2016**

**Cost: \$275**

**Led by Howard Cohn**

**Sponsored by Insight Meditation Houston**

**at the**

**The Margaret Austin Center, Chappell Hill, Texas**

**Howie Cohn** has led the Mission Dharma meditation group in San Francisco for over 25 years. He has practiced meditation since 1972, has led Vipassana retreats since 1985, and is a senior teacher at the renowned Spirit Rock Meditation Center.

Widely admired for his kindheartedness and warm sense of humor, Howie has studied with many Asian and western teachers of several traditions, including Theravada, Zen, Dzogchen and Advaita Vedanta, and has been strongly influenced by the Indian master H.W.L. Poonja. He has done postgraduate work in East/West Psychology and has a private counseling practice.

**Natural Mind**

Your mind – the mind that allows you to read this page, to hear the sounds around you, to smell, to taste, to feel, to think and to know that these things are happening – is the mind of all the Buddhas of the past, present, and future. This natural mind is the source, substance and expression of innate freedom and ease; the ground and culmination of the Buddha's teachings. Yet few of us recognize and live from this place. On this retreat, we will quiet our incessant mind-chatter and look more deeply into the nature of our own experience. Anyone can benefit from this exploration, so this retreat is being offered to both new and experienced meditators.

**This silent nonresidential meditation retreat** is suitable for meditators of all levels of experience. There will be systematic instructions in both sitting and walking meditation, Dharma talks, and opportunities for discussions with the teacher.

**Insight meditation**, which has been practiced in Asia for 2,500 years, develops concentration and awareness through focusing the attention on the breath, thoughts, and emotions. It allows one to see the conditioning of the mind and live more fully in the present moment. This weekend we will come together to practice a natural and direct way of being, supported by the awareness practices of Buddhist meditation. Retreats are held in noble silence with alternating periods of sitting and walking meditation. Each day starts with easy yoga and includes instruction in meditation, a dharma talk, a work period (vegetable chopping, floor sweeping, etc.) and a rest period. Group or individual interviews with the instructor are held during the course of the weekend. Though based in Buddhist teachings, the retreat is non-sectarian and complements any spiritual or religious practice.

**Noble Silence**

During the retreat, you will be requested not to speak to your fellow retreatants. When the teacher gives lectures he may allow you to speak to ask questions.

"Thinking" about what to say often brings tension because we want to choose the right words to project a positive self-image to others and of seeking their recognition and approval. It helps us focus on present moment experiences and helps us maintain the meditative state for longer periods of time.

**The retreat** will begin with a light meal at 7 p.m. on Thursday, April 21, followed by the formal opening at 8:15 p.m. The retreat will end after lunch on Sunday, April 24.

**Cost:** The \$275 fee covers only the operating cost of the retreat, including fees to the Margaret Austin Center, the cook, and teacher travel. It does not include any teacher compensation. Participants customarily give good will donations (dana) to the teacher at the end of the retreat.

**Scholarships:** A very limited number of partial scholarships are available. You can find the details and an application on the website at <http://insighthouston.org>

Whether they be by check or electronic means, payments should be received within 10 days of the time that the reservation is made. If no payment is received by that time, the registrants will be transferred to a wait list. These policies will be stated in the registration materials posted on the website.

**Registration:** Registration instructions will be found on our website. To find the registration information, go to <http://insighthouston.org> and click on the retreats tab on the left-hand side. You can register online or you can fill out a form and mail it in with a check made payable to "Insight Meditation Houston" to Travis Hicks at 703 McGowen St. Unit 5112 Houston, TX 77006. The registration must be completed by April 11th.

**Accommodations**

All meals (vegetarian) will be provided. Separate bunkhouse sleeping accommodations are provided for men and women; each of the bunkhouses has two complete bathrooms. A limited number of handicap-accessible spots are available on first-come-first-serve basis. You may bring a tent if you wish to camp on the grounds. You will need to bring a sitting cushion, pad, and bench for meditation. Folding chairs are also available. In addition, you will need sheets, pillow, blanket, towels, toiletries, a flashlight, and earplugs, if you're a light sleeper.

We strongly encourage participants to reside at the Margaret Austin Center. Under special circumstances, however, permission will be granted to stay off campus. Requests, with an explanation of reasons, should be included in the “Special Comments” section of the on-line retreat application. Participants staying outside the Center are expected to participate in the full day’s schedule and to remain in retreat mode, keeping silence, in their off-site accommodations.

**Cancellation policy:** Those canceling no later than four weeks prior to the first day of the retreat would receive 100% refund, and between two and four weeks, 50%. Those cancelling less than two weeks prior would be eligible for refund only in cases of unforeseen emergencies.

### **Retreat Etiquette**

Please do not wear scented products or fragrances, such as scented shampoo, lotion, shaving cream, perfume, cosmetics, or any product containing fragrance while you are at the center.

Do not use your cell phone to call, text or email during the retreat. Use the telephone number at the Center (800-836-4757) for emergency calls.

### **Directions to the Margaret Austin Center**

- The Center is located about 65 miles from downtown Houston. The drive time is about one hour and twenty minutes.
- Travel Hwy 290 West through the town of Hempstead. Stay on Hwy 290.
- 2.5 miles beyond the Brazos River, turn left onto TRACKSIDE ROAD. Your first landmark is the Brazos River. Then you will see a large white stone sign saying “Welcome to Washington County.” The Chappell Hill Meat Market is your next landmark, on your right. Not too far after that, you will see “Log Homes” on your left, including three model homes. Get in the left lane. There are three left-turn turn-ins: one at the bottom of the hill where the log homes are, and two at the top of the hill. Take the second turn-in at the top of the hill, and that’s Trackside Road (there is a small green sign on the right of the highway, but it’s hard to see).
- If you reach a traffic light (Chappell Hill), you’ve passed the turnoff to Trackside Road. Turn around and go back 1.8 miles from the light back toward Houston to Trackside Road.
- On Trackside Road, go 1.6 miles to the gate of the Margaret Austin Center. The road winds. At 1.6 miles, it makes a 90-degree turn to your left; the Center is right in front of you, on the right-hand side of the road.

### **Questions**

If you have any questions, please email Travis Hicks at [travishicks@utexas.edu](mailto:travishicks@utexas.edu)