

## Creating the Container for Our Practice

On retreat, we intentionally and collectively create conditions that will be optimal to help us practice deeply. We refer to this as the “container.” The style of practice on TCVC retreats is open and relaxed. At the same time, paying diligent attention to some simple guidelines for maintaining the “container” will benefit everyone’s practice.

Silence: While on retreat, we practice “Noble Silence” in order to help us support our mindfulness practice. This practice is at the core of the ancient tradition that we follow. This means that we do not talk while on retreat, except during question and answer sessions or meetings with the teachers. Please make a diligent effort to maintain this silence, for the benefit of yourself and others. Take notice of those occasions where you feel the need to communicate something. Is the communication really necessary? If the situation is truly urgent enough to require the breaking of silence, then take steps to speak in a place where you cannot be heard by other yogis (behind closed doors, with a whisper or low voice).

Notes: There is a bulletin board where urgent notes can be left for the retreat manager and the teachers. Use discretion before leaving a note and mindfully consider whether it is necessary. Notes can be as a distraction for the person writing the note and the recipient. There is no need to leave notes for the retreat manager expressing thanks or gratitude during the retreat. With regard to the teachers, you should not expect that they will be able to respond to questions about practice. The question and answer sessions and practice meetings are the appropriate time for such questions. Please limit notes to the teachers to situations where something is troubling and you need more immediate assistance. Please do not leave notes for other yogis. This encourages them to break their practice. If there is truly something urgent that needs to be communicated to another yogi, you should leave a note for the retreat manager.

The Meditation Hall: The meditation hall is reserved for seated or standing meditation. Food and drink should not be brought into the hall. Enter the hall quietly, as there may be other yogis sitting in meditation. Pay attention to your movement within the hall—be aware of the presence of the others and try to move in such a way that you make a minimal impact. Please do not practice yoga or other movement practices in the hall.

Movement/Lying Down/Sleeping: There are designated spaces for yoga and mindful movement. Please do not practice yoga, tai chi, chi gong, or other types of movement outside of these spaces. Movement practices that are done in areas where people are practicing sitting or walking meditation are a distraction. If you are tired and feel the need to lay down or to sleep, you should do this in your room. Vipassana is a practice of wakefulness, and the energy of people lying down or sleeping in meditation areas (including walking rooms or outside spaces where people are walking) can negatively affect the practice of others in those areas.