

Body of Freedom Workshop Series 2018

Step by Step: An Introduction to Walking Meditation part 1 (and followed by optional weekly walking meditation classes) with Sara Elderfield

A life lived with few regrets implies a life lived fully. Mindfulness meditation teaches us to be present for our lives as fully as we can and, as we all discover when we begin to practice meditation, there is an abundance of time during the day when we are *mind-less* – when we have forgotten the delicate art of being steadfastly in the present moment, free of compulsive planning for the future, re-hashing the past or just absent. Of course, there is nothing wrong with using our minds to plan or remember – like many of our abilities they are necessary and useful skills. What is problematic is the compulsiveness of our habit to project ourselves into the future (worry, planning), to ‘worry’ the past or to have ‘zoned out’. It leaves little time to be in, and perhaps, to relish! the present moment.



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‘The practice of mindfulness meditation can be compared to boiling water. If one wants to boil water, one puts the water in a kettle, puts the kettle on a stove, and then turns the heat on. But if the heat is turned off, even for an instant, the water will not boil, even though the heat is turned on again later. If one continues to turn the heat on and off again, the water will never boil. In the same way, if there are gaps between the moments of mindfulness, one cannot gain momentum, and so one cannot attain concentration. That is why meditators at our retreats are instructed to practice mindfulness all the time that they are awake, from the moment they wake up in the morning until they fall asleep at night. Consequently, walking meditation is integral to the continuous development of mindfulness.’ Sayadaw U Silananda

Even if we are not in retreat, walking meditation can be an important tool in our weekly meditation practice as we aspire to build a continuum of presence throughout our day. It is one of the ways we can train ourselves to interrupt our habit of being mindlessly absent from our lives. In a set time period of walking meditation, the most basic instruction is to walk so that with each step you know and experience exactly where you are. Moment by moment, open, aware and responsively present. With each step, you realise ‘I am already here!’ Quite different from our usual orientation of walking to get something or get somewhere...! It is in fact, deeply refreshing...

This introductory workshop can benefit anyone interested in learning some walking meditation practices and when and how to incorporate walking meditation into your regular practice.

Sara Elderfield: Sara has been teaching movement as a form of meditation practice for 20 years. She is a yoga teacher, a Feldenkrais Method practitioner, long-term meditator and her teaching melds all three modalities as part of her ongoing interest in how our inner intentions are communicated through our posture and our way of moving through the world. (The gross and subtle shapes we make with ourselves colour our experience of ourselves and ‘others’). By becoming more aware of how we are with ourselves

in our yoga, Feldenkrais or meditation practices, we learn to have more choices physically, emotionally and in our thinking during our practice on the mat and, more importantly, in our day to day lives.

Sara grew up in Indonesia, Burma, country W.A. and Perth. She studied literature at U.W.A. for three years before meeting her teacher, Venerable Namgyal Rinpoche in 1993. She studied with him until his death in 2003 and has continued to study with other teachers since then. She is a Certified Feldenkrais Practitioner. Since 2009, Sara's classes have been based out of the Centre for Movement Studies Studio at Shenton Park and, in addition to the classes which run at the studio throughout the year, Sara has taught in numerous workplaces and schools throughout Perth and the south-west. She takes retreat groups to overseas for movement, meditation and walking (pilgrimage) retreats annually. Previously we have 'retreated' in Bali, Nepal, Tibet, Vietnam and most recently various parts of France.

Venue: Yoga Moves/Centre for Movement Studio, 45 Evans Street, Shenton Park (opposite Lake Jualbup, next to the Masonic Hall)

Time: 1pm – 5.30pm with breaks. Tea and coffee provided. Following the workshop, walking meditation will be offered on Tuesday mornings from 6.30am – 7.30am each week from 9th January to 23rd March.

Venue: The Yoga Moves/Centre for Movement Studies Studio is attached to the West Subiaco Masonic Hall (78 Herbert Road) but the entrance is 45 Evans Street, Shenton Park (opposite the Lake Jualbup).

What to bring: You will need to wear clothing that you can move and breath in (no tight waistbands, jeans or belts etc). Mats, cushions, bolsters and/or chairs are available at the studio for use but please bring your own if you prefer your own equipment.

Bookings and questions: Numbers will be limited to 16. We will be using movement as our main 'technique' which means that the lessons may not be suitable for some people with chronic pain issues and indeed, I will need to discuss medical conditions and injuries with anyone unknown to me or not currently attending my classes. Please register your interest in attending by contacting Sara: sara@yogamoves.net.au or 0415 363 313.

Cost: by dana (considered donation). *Dana is often taken to simply mean donation or gift. Dana is a Buddhist teaching about generosity of spirit or the sharing of blessings, the aspiration to generate health and goodwill in all the cycles of giving and receiving; the transactions of daily life. In reflecting on the practice of dana one begins to understand the interdependence of life. Dana is a gift that supports the livelihood of the teacher. In turn the teachings offered are to support you in meeting with life with wisdom and compassion. Each participant arrives at*

the amount of dana voluntarily. Teachers of the Dharma are supported by considerate donation. Following Buddhist tradition, Sara charges no fee for this teaching. It is customary to offer dana at the beginning of the class (there is usually a bowl at near the entrance). Giving prior to the teaching supports the experience of openness and generosity.

