



Taking Retreat as Part of Your Ongoing Development

East Coast Mindfulness asks its trainees to participate in a silent retreat each year while training to teach MBSR. The retreat is ideally at least 5 days in length, although there may be circumstances in which a shorter retreat may be acceptable. The retreat is to be teacher-led, in a group setting in the tradition of MBSR. Once you register for the retreat, please advise your mentor of the retreat date, teacher(s) and location/ sponsoring organization—or if you want your mentor to help you consider the retreat you're looking at, please let them know.

The purpose of attending retreat while in the teacher training pathway is to continuously live inside the experience of being alive and human, and to allow that experience to directly, intimately inform your understanding of mindfulness practice and life. It's important to recognize that participating in an extended retreat can be intense, rewarding, and challenging. As you prepare for retreat, you are encouraged to wrap up your work and home obligations a few days before beginning the retreat. And it's best to have a few days after the retreat closes where work and life pressures are as light as possible. This helps to make space for the best possible retreat experience.

After participating in the retreat, you'll reflect on and write about your retreat experience. Below are guiding questions for this reflection and writing. You can also include other insights and share beyond these questions.

- What personal intentions or learning goals, if any, did you bring with you into retreat?
- What was your experience during the retreat? Please speak to whatever was salient for you, as a person and perhaps also as a teacher.
- What are you aware of now, as you reflect on and write about your retreat experience?
- How might this retreat experience influence your understanding or embodied sense of teaching MBSR as you continue teaching?

This written reflection would ideally be about 2-3 pages long. **Please complete and send your written reflection to your assigned mentor within one month of completing your retreat.** Your mentor will notify you that they've received your written reflection, then read and consider the reflection. During your next cycle of mentorship, your mentor and you will explore the retreat experience together as an aspect of learning and development to become an MBSR teacher.

East Coast Mindfulness also strongly encourages participation in a yearly retreat even once you are a Certified MBSR Teacher.