



OPEN GATE SANGHA

## **Retreat at Home Preparation Guidelines**

***Retreat is a state of mind. ~ Adyashanti***

Engaging in a weeklong *Retreat at Home* can be a powerful opportunity to connect intimately to your essence and to dive deeper into spiritual inquiry and practice. While we encourage committing yourself to silence for a weeklong retreat (if possible), complete silence for an entire week is not required to obtain the benefits inherent in dedicating some time in your life (an afternoon, a day, or a weekend) to immerse yourself in a period of meditation, introspection, and inquiry.

Cultivating a “retreat state of mind” is a vital element to the creation and sustainment of a retreat at home. We invite you to review the following information to help foster a retreat state of mind before, during, and after your retreat.

### **The Elements of Retreat**

The essential elements of any retreat with Adyashanti are silence, the teachings, opportunities for inquiry, and the retreat structure itself. These elements, when combined together, can foster a deep and transformational unfolding of truth.

The following guidelines were created by Adyashanti and include all the essential retreat elements necessary to orient and support your awakening process during a retreat at home. Please give these guidelines your sincere consideration when planning and preparing for your retreat.

### **Before the Retreat**

- *Clarify the deepest impulse moving you to participate.* You may want to write this down before beginning your retreat and hold it as a living inquiry throughout the week.
- *Bring a beginner’s mind and an open heart,* without assumptions about how things should or will unfold.
- *See the retreat as a chance to discover what is already within you* rather than trying to use it to gather information.
- *Create a supportive home environment for your retreat.*
  - *Choose a quiet space in your home that you can dedicate for meditation and attending the talks.* You may regard this as a sacred space for the duration of the retreat and ask others in your household (if you live with others) to honor this space.

- *Set up your retreat space so that you feel comfortable and relaxed.* Prepare a cushion or supportive chair to sit on that also helps you to remain alert. You may wish to place a bouquet of flowers, candle, meditation bell, or other items in your meditation space to create a visual context for your retreat.
- *If your home environment is not suitable for a retreat,* consider if there are any other locations available for you at this time.
- *Clear your schedule* as much as possible so that you can focus on the retreat as fully as you can. Try to wrap up any personal business during the week prior to your retreat.
- *Do all your food shopping and other errands before starting your retreat.* This will allow you to be fully present on retreat, knowing that you have attended to your personal matters.
- *Inform your family members and friends of your retreat plans* to help minimize phone calls, peripheral distractions, and noise. Leave an “away” message on your phone to inform callers of your temporary schedule and to provide an emergency contact number if necessary.
- *Set up a support system* by asking someone if you can call them if you are in need of support during the retreat. It is not uncommon during retreat to move through a wide range of experiences: emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual. Some experiences may be pleasant, while others may be quite challenging. Having a support system in place before retreat starts, even if you don’t use it, enables you to let go more easily into the depths of silence and inquiry.

### **During the Retreat**

- *Create and follow a schedule.* The retreat schedule serves as the container of the retreat. Following a schedule can be a very powerful teaching in and of itself; it allows you to give yourself more fully to the silence and the teachings. It also removes the need to make decisions about what to do and when to do it, allowing your mind to rest.
  - Create a schedule that works for you. We have provided you with a template of a schedule that you could use or modify as you see fit.
  - You may want to post a copy of the schedule at various locations in your home or carry it with you. Consider setting a timer to ring at the end of your meditation and again five minutes before the next activity so you can rest into the rhythm of the schedule without needing to check a clock.
- *Use this opportunity for being silent outwardly so you may dwell more fully in inner silence.* Silence is the heart of this retreat and the very ground of liberation. Truth springs from this silence.
  - *Honor the inner and outer silence by not speaking with others* or using the telephone. Resist distracting yourself in other ways, such as watching television, using your

computer for activities other than for retreat sessions, listening to the radio, reading, opening the mail, running errands, or using drugs or alcohol.

- *Cover any television or computer screens when not attending retreat sessions.* Please turn off all phones, devices, watches, etc., except if being used as a timer, and please set cell phones on airplane mode. If external noises are unavoidable, try using headphones when you listen to talks or guided meditations.
- *It is strongly recommended that you not read anything during your retreat other than Adya's essay, *True Meditation*.*
- *Sit quietly for a few minutes before starting each session with Adyashanti.* Give your full attention to his talks and the Q&A recordings, and avoid doing any other activities during the sessions. We recommend you do not take notes while listening. You can journal after sessions or while working with the written exercises.
- *After listening to each talk, give yourself a period of quiet time for meditation, contemplation, or simply being present to whatever arises.*
- *Retreat is an opportunity to look freshly at patterns of conditioning that may arise.* Judgments, reactions, or resistance that arise toward yourself and/or others can be opportunities for reflection and revelation. Stay in an attitude of open inquiry by continuing to explore how the teachings can serve you and how you can apply them to each aspect of your life.
- *Allow what's happening to be what it is.* Instead of directing your experience toward what you *want* to be experiencing, be receptive to what you *are* experiencing.
- *Focus on just being and being well.* Be kind to yourself by nourishing your body, mind, and spirit.

#### **After the Retreat**

- *Give yourself time after retreat ends to slowly begin your usual life activities again.* Remember, retreat truly begins when it ends, and we bring into our lives what has been revealed during retreat.
- *Avoid trying to hold onto any experience that may have been significant for you.* Each person's experience is unique and precious and may reveal itself more deeply over time.
- *Deeper revelations often take time to reveal themselves, so be patient.* What are important are small moments of action that bring into your life what has been revealed.
- *Trust your own experience* as the teacher and guide to what is true.
- *Retreat as a state of mind never needs to end.* Carry it with you into your life and see how it may continue to unfold for you over time. Remember there is no finish line to awakening.