

Outreach Supporting Practice

Congressional Retreat 2011

We can support our outreach efforts by practicing loving speech and deep listening prior to engaging in our chosen method of communication with our congressional representatives. This practice should be done prior to making an office visit, writing a letter, or making a phone call. It will take about an hour and can be practiced individually or with a sangha. If you are with a sangha you can count off into pairs. If you are practicing more individually, you might like to invite a friend or family member to support you in this practice.

Invite the bell. Take 5 to 10 minutes to sit mindfully and practice awareness of breathing before inviting the bell once more.

Using loving speech and deep listening, take 5 minutes for each of the following questions to listen to your partner. Ring the bell every 5 minutes to ensure that everyone gets a change to practice articulating an answer to each of the three questions below. You can use the space provided under each question to take notes on yours or your partners' thoughts.

Questions:

- 1) Why is mindfulness important to me and how has it impacted my life?

- 2) What does "engaged" or "applied" Buddhism mean to me?

- 3) Why is it important to me that my members of congress learn about and practice mindfulness?

If you are practicing with a sangha, you might like to ask for some volunteers to report their partners' responses back to the group. Use the responses from these questions and any new insights you might have to serve as the raw material for the letter that you write or the message you intend to deliver in person or via the telephone.