

Pre-Aspiration Checklist

Checklist to help all determine your readiness for formal Aspiration.

- I practice regularly with my local sangha.
- I formally received The Five Mindfulness Trainings one or more years ago from Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh or a Tiep Hien Dharma Teacher.
- I am aware that by aspiring I am committing to practice 60 days of mindfulness each year; to study, practice, and observe the 14 Mindfulness Trainings; to regularly recite the trainings, and to actively participate in and support my Sangha.
- I recite the Five Mindfulness Trainings at least monthly.
- I study, practice, and observe all five mindfulness trainings.
- I have a daily practice that includes meditation.
- I am alcohol- and recreational chemical- free and will remain so.
- I have the support of my partner for becoming an Aspirant.
- I am familiar with the Order and the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings and the Charter of the Order as reflected in the book *Interbeing* and use and study the book.
- I am working with the reflection questions that are to be written as part of this application.
- I have identified a Dharma Teacher or a qualified OI Member(s) who is/are willing to serve as mentor(s). [See Appendix A on p. 7 for mentor qualifications.]
- A Tiep Hien Dharma Teacher has agreed to support my Aspirancy and work with my mentor(s). [This is necessary when the mentor is not a Dharma Teacher. See p. 7.]
- Notes and Comments as per the Checklist Making Comments or Notes is Optional
- I have begun to observe regular Days of Mindfulness

Pre-Aspirant and Aspirant Questions for Reflection

Overview

Please use these questions to more deeply examine and communicate your Aspiration. Remember that looking deeply at these questions is a practice. There are no "correct" answers. They are for reflection and practice, to help you get clarity about your own spiritual path, and to help open up dialog with your mentor(s). Please type responses you share with your mentor(s).

Questions

1. **Motivation** . What motivates me to wish to receive the Fourteen Mindfulness Trainings and thus join the Core Community of the Tiep Hien Order — the Order of Interbeing?
2. **Timing**. Why have I decided to state my desire to enter the aspiration process at this time?
3. **Practice**. How has my practice of mindfulness, expanding my capacity for understanding, love, and compassion, helped me to transform my own "ill-beings" — (e.g. anxiety, anger, fear, depression, regrets, craving, heedlessness, despair, distractedness?
 - specific relationships and past and current experiences of "ill-being.")?
 - What are the challenge. in the practice for me at this time?
 - Where do I meet resistance, discomfort, and fear?
4. **Commitment**. I understand that the basic commitment of this undertaking is serving the Sangha.
 - What gifts do I enjoy bringing to the Sangha?
 - How will I make time and energy available to take responsibility for cultivating the well-being of the Sangha(s) of which I am a part?
 - What barriers do I experience or anticipate in serving the sangha?
5. **Relationships**. How am I experiencing my relationships with my family, my Sangha family and with OI members?
 - Are there those with whom I feel in conflict or would like to be in better harmony?

- How am I practicing to transform these relationships and "resolve all conflicts however small"?
- Are there those with whom I need to practice Beginning Anew?
- Are there those with whom I would like to practice more and get to know better?
- How can I initiate this relationship building?

6. Consuming. How am I working with mindful consumption?

- Have I released my use of, and any craving for, alcohol and recreational drugs?
- Am I attentive to my consumption not only of edible foods, but also of media and electronic devices?
- How have the Mindfulness Trainings supported me?
- How do I nurture myself and others?
- With which Mindfulness Trainings do I most need to practice?
- How will I proceed to initiate the needed practice?

7. Plum Village Tradition. How long and in what context have I been practicing within Thay's tradition? (For example, local Sangha, retreats at one of our monasteries, other retreats, readings.)

- What areas of study would most assist me on the path?
- Am I familiar with the body of Thay's work reflected in his books? Sutra translations? practices?
- Which books, sutras, and practices might I particularly wish to incorporate into my practice?
- What is my plan for doing this;?

8. Root Spiritual Tradition. What was my root spiritual tradition and what is my relationship with it?

- How do I now relate to it (or them)?
- How do I integrate these roots with Thay's tradition in ways that are mutually enriching?

9. Other Tradition(s). If I have had experience with other meditative traditions, how long was that experience and what prompted my transition to Thay's practice?

- How have I reconciled any difficulties from this past?
- How do I incorporate the helpful elements from these practices into my current path?

10. **Engaging Practice.** How do I now use the practice of mindfulness in the context of my workplace and livelihood?

— How could I do this even more?

11. **Exploring Concerns.** What are my questions and concerns about my practice, the Fourteen Mind-fulness Trainings, and joining the Core Community of the Order of Interbeing?

12. **Personal Questions.** The following additional questions are particularly relevant for me to pursue. (Please share how you have been working with them.)