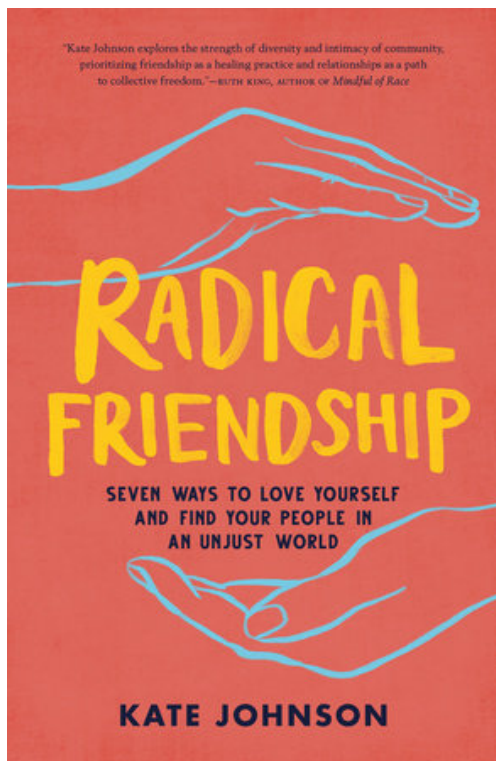




# Insight Meditation Community of Western Massachusetts

(formerly known as Insight Pioneer Valley)

## IWM Sangha-Wide Common Read



Please join us in creating a community-wide event! In January and February we will be hosting a “Common Read” of **Kate Johnson’s book *Radical Friendship***. This is a way for everyone to come together in reading and discussing this transformational book, which takes the Buddha’s teachings about friendship (the Mitta Sutta, AN 7.36) and applies them to our lives, and our care for others and for the world.

We encourage everyone who is involved with IWM in any way to choose a level of participation in this offering that is right for you. We are planning ongoing discussion groups (two Kalyana Mitta or Spiritual Friends groups) and a series of one-time drop-in groups, all of which are described below (most will be online). But if joining groups is not your thing, or you are too busy, you could decide to read the book and discuss it with a friend, or read the book and attend only our exciting event on February 25, when Kate Johnson is joining us herself in a, hopefully, hybrid gathering! **We would love it if you could [click HERE](#) and let us know by choosing a check box or two how you will join us**, as we experience our connections to each other and nourish our IWM sangha.

If you would like more information about Kate and/or the book, you can find it [here](#). If you would like to borrow a copy of the book from IWM, there will be a few copies to loan. Please email [leadership@insightwma.org](mailto:leadership@insightwma.org) if you would like to borrow one.

### **I. Kalyana Mitta Groups:**

Two new Kalyana Mitta Groups (pronounced Kal-ee-ahn-na Mee'-tah, a Pali term usually translated as Spiritual Friends) are starting in January, facilitated by Community Dharma Stewards. Group 1, facilitated by Holly Bishop and Jennifer Delozier, will meet twice a month on Tuesdays from 3:30-5:00 or 6:30-8:00, depending on what's best for most participants. Group 2, facilitated by Suzanne Artemieff and Hal Fales, will meet Sundays 4-5:30 every week or every other week, depending on participants' preference, for a total of 7 sessions.

The groups will begin as part of the sangha-wide Common Read of the book

*Radical Friendship* by Kate Johnson, published in 2021. Each group meeting will include time for practicing meditation together, check-ins/sharing, and a themed discussion focusing on one or more chapters of the book.

A Spiritual Friend can refer to anyone on the spiritual path, a guide, support, or co-traveler. Kate says in the book (p.20), "Kalyana Mitta is also the name for the quality of relationships between members of a community who are collectively committed to liberation."

A Kalyana Mitta or Spiritual Friends group usually consists of 5-12 members, small enough to make personal connections possible and allow people to share and explore teachings and practices

on the path. Both these groups are open to all meditation students interested in experiencing sangha/community at IWM, but Group 1 may continue after the conclusion of the Common Read of *Radical Friendship* to provide ongoing support with practice, whereas Group 2 will end after 7 sessions.

For the first 6-8 sessions Group 1 will focus on one or more chapters of the book. If group members want to continue after that, the group will decide together on the next focus, which could be reading another practice-oriented book together or structuring discussions around aspects of the teachings such as the Brahma Viharas (the heart practices of lovingkindness and compassion and others) or others.

If you are interested in registering for either group, [please click here and fill out the Registration Form](#). Space is limited to 12 participants in each group. [We will let you know by Monday January 2 if you have secured a place in one of the KM groups. Thanks for your interest.](#)

If you have any questions please contact one of the facilitators or email us at [leadership@insightwma.org](mailto:leadership@insightwma.org) and one of us will get back to you.

## **II. Facilitated drop-in discussion sessions:**

As another way to join with other sangha members to discuss *Radical Friendship*, there will be five drop-in groups offered in February, leading up to the final session with Kate Johnson on Feb 25. You can attend all five groups if you want, or however many work for you. Each group will focus on two chapters of the book, but it's fine to bring whatever questions or insights you might want to share about anything in the book to any of the groups.

Below is the schedule of the drop-in groups. Two are offered on Wednesday evenings in the slot usually filled by a Wed eve Dharma Talk; these two sessions on Feb 1 and Feb 15 will be led by teachers Candace Cassin and Jean Esther. You do not need to register for any of these drop-in discussion groups. They are all virtual, using the IWM public zoom link found on the front page of the website, except Sat Feb 18 at 10:30 AM, which will meet in person at the Center, 116 Pleasant St, Suite 242 in Eastworks. We may be able to do a hybrid meeting for this session. Much gratitude to all our volunteer facilitators!

**Wed Feb 1, 7:00pm:** Intro and Chapter 1 - "Friendship is Freedom" - facilitated by Candace Cassin

**Thurs Feb 9, 7:00pm:** Chapters 2 and 3 - "Give what is hard to give" and "Do what is hard to do" - facilitated by Jaya Karlson

**Wed Feb 15, 7:00pm:** Chapters 3 and 4 - "Do what is hard to do" and "Endure what is hard to endure" - facilitated by Jean Esther

**Sat Feb 18, 10:30 AM; In-person at IWM in Eastworks (hopefully in-person/hybrid):** Chapters 5 and 6 - "Tell secrets" and "Keep secrets" - facilitated by Cathy Repetti

**Mon Feb 20, 9:00 AM:** Chapters 7 and 8 - "Don't abandon" and "Don't look down" - facilitated by Lore Detenber

*Some themes and questions we might start from:*

*Intro & Chap 1: "Friendship as an inner fulcrum upon which all our actions can reliably hinge, a compass to offer us direction when we're lost, and a shield to protect us." Meditation as making friends with ourselves...Making friends with ourselves as essential to liberating our bodies, hearts, and minds from*

*the harmful societal messages we've absorbed...Friendship as a path of practice...*

*Chapters 2 & 3: Going beyond the edges of our comfortable habits of interaction to expand the boundaries of our hearts and minds.*

*Chapter 3: "Liberation" as the Third Noble Truth: "Where do I see the seed of that liberation beginning to sprout right here and now?"*

*Chapter 4 Anatta: How have you experienced the sense of self showing up in your relationships? Where do you find power and privilege intersecting with comfort and discomfort in your friendships?*

*Chapter 5 & 6: In the practice of radical friendship, "telling our secrets" is how we allow ourselves to be seen and known; Compassionate listening*

*Chapter 7 & 8 Belonging: What is a "good enough" community? Seeing the goodness in others and ourselves; Commitment to harmlessness; Equanimity.*

**III. Saturday Feb 25, 10:00am-12:00pm: Special session with Kate Johnson, hopefully hybrid. Registration will open soon.**