

INTRODUCTION

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BEGINNING WITH THE END

We begin this book by telling you how it ends. The final section gives detailed reflections from our students about their experience with “meditation in the classroom.” Students certify that meditation benefits them keenly, both in their academic work and as a lifelong skill. Their learning assessments through the years have confirmed over and over again that meditation refines the mind and hones the heart. As a teaching method, we know it works.

Yet, we also know that the prospect of meditation in the classroom produces concern for some educators who fear that contemplative methods may be intrusive and coercive to students at worst, or simply a waste of time at best. A book like this must speak to the cautions of our colleagues, even as it must remain true to the delight of our students. Certainly, we are well versed in the concerns raised against the use of meditation in the classroom, because we have had to resolve such questions within our own minds. This collection of essays represents a culmination of pedagogical self-examination and conversations among us that, in the case of some contributors, span nearly three decades.

This book is the first of its kind as a resource on meditation in the college classroom. Although meditation, mindfulness, and contemplative practices boast a pervasive presence in our culture, and although the prevailing literature on liberal education emphasizes the importance of the inner life, there has been little academic leadership to guide such ventures into the interior.

The twenty-five contributors to this book have risen to the challenges of articulation, reflection, and praxis. While in agreement as to the value of meditation in the classroom, our pedagogical practices and personal worldviews offer an enlightening diversity. We come from a variety of institutional contexts,

including state universities, private liberal arts institutions, and traditional church-related colleges. Some of the authors have been using contemplative pedagogy for decades, and some for little more than a year. Many of the authors cultivate a contemplative lifestyle, and for some, this self-cultivation takes place in the context of a religious tradition or spiritual community. For others, there is no specific religious identity or spiritual practice. We, as the two editors of this volume, exemplify the book's diversity.

Judith has been a visionary voice in the nation-wide contemplative education movement for the last three decades from her institutional base at Naropa University, a nonsectarian, Buddhist-inspired private college and graduate school. She has been a major contributor to the articulation of an ethic of pluralism for interreligious dialogue in the classroom.¹ She is one of the team leaders with the Center for the Advancement of Contemplative Education (CACE) at Naropa. In 2007, she designed and directed, with a group of her academic colleagues, Naropa's first annual seminar on contemplative teaching for university faculty from diverse disciplines across the country. Judith's training and work as a scholar-practitioner align principally with Indo-Tibetan Buddhism. She is on the steering committee of the Buddhist Critical-Constructive Reflection Group in the American Academy of Religion, and she served for a decade on the board of the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies.

Fran is a mid-career scholar-practitioner in a secular university community. In 2004, she underwent a profound inner shift that led her to develop contemplative pedagogies after a decade of fairly traditional teaching. In 2007, her university opened its Meditation Room, a spacious classroom equipped with meditation cushions and yoga mats, and she currently teaches all of her classes in this space dedicated for interior learning. Although her original training as a scholar and practitioner took place within the Christian tradition, she is now more integrative than tradition specific in her contemplative approach and research. She has served as a co-chair of the Teaching Religion section within the American Academy of Religion and as a workshop facilitator for the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion.

As the reader will see, there is no single contemplative pedagogy and no single prototype of the contemplative professor. With such a wide range of institutional settings and individual commitments expressed in this book, how could there be a single pedagogical way? But, as contributors, we do agree on one thing: there is a singular place for meditation in the classroom.

We came to this conclusion cautiously. Although familiar with the benefits of meditation through our own practice and studies of recent scientific research, we needed to ask whether the benefits of meditation were directly relevant to the students' development as "liberal artists." For, as we know, there are many beneficial human explorations that have no place in a classroom. Our years of collect-

ing and analyzing qualitative data from contemplative methods have brought us to the conclusion that meditation is not only a beneficial human endeavor, but also a fulfillment of the aims and purposes of liberal education.

INTERIORITY AND LIBERAL EDUCATION

In 2007, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) published *College Learning for the New Global Century*, a comprehensive analysis of higher education that outlines “Essential Learning Outcomes” such as “inquiry and analysis,” “critical and creative thinking,” “personal and social responsibility,” “ethical reasoning and action,” and the “foundation and skills for lifelong learning.”² These current learning outcomes are congruent with earlier documents. For example, *The Great Conversation: The Substance of a Liberal Education* (1952) proposed that liberal education aimed to foster “excellence, both private and public,” and to “train the mind.”³

At the heart of such documents is the importance of interior accomplishments as an outcome of liberal education. The *College Learning for the New Global Century* authors propose that it is precisely the inner learning that distinguishes “liberal” education from “instrumental” education:

Throughout history, liberal education—especially the arts and humanities—has been a constant resource not just for civic life but for the inner life of self-discovery, values, moral inspiration, spiritual quests and solace, and the deep pleasures of encountering beauty, insight, and expressive power. Ultimately, it is this dimension—serious engagement with questions of values, principles, and larger meanings—that marks the difference between instrumental learning and liberal learning.⁴

As to specific interior qualities that befit a “liberal artist,” the recent AAC&U document mentions “inner fortitude, self-knowledge, and personal renewal,” and it underscores “empathy, the ability to care about and even identify with perspectives and circumstances other than one’s own.” Ultimately, the AAC&U proposes a “liberating” college education.⁵ Throughout human history, contemplative process has been valued as one of the foremost means of liberation. Why is that?

First-person methodologies such as meditation train students to a subtle mastery of mind. For this reason, such methodologies certainly appear to fulfill the Socratic reflection that “The unexamined life is not worth living.” What does “the examined life” entail? Martha Nussbaum suggests that self-examination sparks the liberation of mind that makes possible a “cultivation of humanity”:

When we ask about the relationship of a liberal education to citizenship, we are asking a question with a long history in the Western philosophical tradition. We are drawing on Socrates' concept of "the examined life," on Aristotle's notions of reflective citizenship, and above all on Greek and Roman Stoic notions of an education that is "liberal" in that it liberates the mind from bondage of habit and custom, producing people who can function with sensitivity and alertness as citizens of the whole world. This is what Seneca means by the cultivation of humanity.⁶

Although not all of our contributors use meditation *per se* in the classroom, they have developed a range of contemplative teaching methods that fulfill the classical aims of liberal education. Each professor's contemplative pedagogy is based on his or her particular institutional setting, student population, personal background, and subject matter.

MEDITATION AND CONTEMPLATIVE EDUCATION

Since the 1990s, as professors across the spectrum of academic disciplines are exploring ways of integrating meditation into their course curricula, a movement called "contemplative education" has become increasingly popular in American universities.⁷ The American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), in partnership with the Fetzer Institute, has awarded over one hundred Contemplative Practice and Teaching Fellowships during the last decade. These Fellows have designed and implemented contemplative-based courses in literature, religious studies, art, music, math, environmental studies, and history, in over eighty different institutions. Fellowships have also been granted to institutions for the establishment of programs in contemplative studies.

Publications about contemplative education have appeared in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the *Teacher's College Record*, the *New York Times* (November 7, 2007), and most recently (December 3, 2007) in the national higher education online journal, *InsideHigherEd.Com*, with an article that featured meditative spaces on college campuses. The *Los Angeles Times* (May 5, 2007) described what appears to be a nationwide "trend" on college and university campuses: the establishment of meditation centers, contemplative areas, interfaith and interreligious centers, outdoor labyrinths, and special landscaping for meditation gardens.⁸

Academic initiatives like the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society are fostering the teaching of contemplative practice in the college classroom under the leadership of Arthur Zajonc (2006), physicist from Amherst, the academic program director. Ed Sarath (2006), professor of jazz from the University of Michigan, directs the Program in Creativity and Consciousness Studies at the

University of Michigan. In its thirty-five year history, Naropa University has developed contemplative education as the foundation across its curriculum, in all academic disciplines.⁹ Religious studies has begun to develop other programs as well: Harold Roth (2006), a professor in Chinese religions, directs the Contemplative Studies Initiative at Brown, and the University of Redlands Department of Religious Studies has developed a core of contemplative courses and opened a meditation/contemplative classroom in 2007.¹⁰ Rice University boasts an active core of faculty with a contemplative orientation to their courses and teaching. Emory University has just initiated a Contemplative Studies program as a collaboration between the medical school and the graduate Religious Studies department. These institutional initiatives led to a series of sessions and conversations on contemplative pedagogy at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion (2006–2008), sponsored by the Teaching Religion section. Outside the academy, the Garrison Institute and The Forge are developing initiatives to nurture contemplative pedagogy in education.

These initiatives have grown from the recognition of a central paradox in our academic teaching: liberal arts higher education, founded in part to promote enrichment of the inner lives of faculty and students, has lost the purpose and will to do so. Scientific studies are demonstrating the peril of neglecting the inner life and the promise of meditative disciplines to enhance it. Neurological research has expanded our understanding of the mind beyond previous views of merely discursive or logical functions.¹¹ Scientific studies of contemplatives have demonstrated that the meditative mind achieves states of concentration, attention, awareness, creativity, happiness, well-being, and compassion for others more frequently and more powerfully than the noncontemplative mind.¹² Alongside such neurological findings are multiple studies in the clinical applications of meditation, demonstrating its salutary effect on physical and emotional disturbances such as cancer, psoriasis, depression, and obsessive-compulsive disorders.¹³

Current university studies are exploring how meditation might cultivate human flourishing and happiness through inner balance beyond the physiological realm.¹⁴ For example, a study at the University of Kentucky found that students who did a forty-minute meditation showed more enhanced brain functioning than students who spent the forty minutes taking a nap, reading, talking to friends, or watching television. The meditation period appeared to refresh the mind in a unique way.¹⁵ The results from university research so far suggest strongly that a person's inner life, including subtle states of mental awareness, has a penetrating effect on his or her quality of life and contribution to the human collective.

Yet, despite these advances in the world of laboratories and clinical settings, many university professors have so far been hesitant to openly acknowledge the "inner lives" of students. Traditional pedagogical methods across the disciplines

address the student as if only one inner quality—discursive rationality—were present. University educators have focused on enabling students to learn the content of this or that idea/theory/history/doctrine and have assumed that they will learn how to process it interiorly, in their own lives, on their own. We somehow take for granted that students already know how their own minds work, so we do not teach them *how* to think, reflect, and attend—only *what* to think. Religious studies professors even ignore pedagogical applications of centuries of contemplative literature from the world's religions mapping highly sophisticated portraits of mental and inner life.

Conventional teaching aims, almost solely, at requiring students to “think *about*” rather than “know from *within*.” Brown University professor of East Asian Religions Harold Roth comments on the paradox of scientific and technological mastery that lacks inner self-mastery:

We can use our technology of the outer world to treat previously incurable diseases, but our mastery of the “technology” of the inner world is so rudimentary that we can barely contain the passions that lead us to destroy the very human life that we, paradoxically, struggle so hard to preserve. . . . We have never known more about how the mind works, yet our ability to apply this knowledge to our own experience has not been correspondingly developed.¹⁶

We professors notice that only a few students enter college in command of their own inner world. Few seem to know how to cultivate the mind for intellectual pursuit, aesthetic appreciation, or ethical development. Their mental landscapes can seem to storm with uncontrollable anxiety, fear, self-concern, a desire for approval, and sometimes immobilizing despair. They can be lost in random discursive thoughts as well, not able to think clearly about the matters at hand. Paradoxically, the mind can appear to be their worst enemy in the learning endeavor. Many professors testify that even intelligent and talented students are sometimes hampered in their learning by test anxiety, self-consciousness in the classroom, jumbled discursivity, and personal emotional problems. In a 2007 survey, 41.5 percent of college juniors reported that they “frequently” feel that their lives are “filled with stress and anxiety.”¹⁷ Undoubtedly, such interior turmoil impedes intellectual success and overall well-being.

When students learn meditation or contemplative process, they are learning that it is possible to release repetitive emotional and conceptual patterns and tune into the subtle potential of the mind. In this way, they learn to refine the mind so that it can actually be of service to learning and life-meaning rather than a distracting impediment. Some of them experience freedom from test anxiety, depression, rigid judgmental thinking, and eating disorders for the first time. They speak of a sense of empowerment in meditation when they realize

that they do not have to be victims of the distractive irrelevancies and repetitive negativities of the mind. They attest that this confidence enhances all areas of life, from their college learning, to interrelational maturity, and to a deeper appreciation of nature and, indeed, life itself.

Through the contemplative approach, students can learn to experience not only *which* thoughts they have, but the very nature of the thought process itself. They can see, not only *which* emotions arise, but the very nature of the emotional process. Instead of being tossed in the “waves” of thoughts and emotions, they can develop the inner discipline of riding “the crest of the wave” by attending to the precise moment at hand and discover the clarity and openness of the mind itself. Contemplative methods such as meditation facilitate the interior accomplishments of self-knowledge and self-mastery.

Self-knowledge and self-mastery are at the root of the liberal arts dictum “know thyself.” As Diana Chapman Walsh, president of Wellesley College, wrote in 2005: “Moral citizenship arises out of an inner core of integrity. . . . The liberal arts disciplines instill in students humility, awareness of the limits of their knowledge, eagerness to hear responsible critique, appreciation that the first and most difficult obligation of a citizen is the Socratic injunction to ‘know thyself.’”¹⁸ Meditation and contemplative practice have, for centuries, been recognized as an “inner science” for self-knowledge that makes accurate knowledge of the outer world possible.

Indeed, the much-discussed “critical thinking” may be possible only when scholars submit themselves to the rigor of self-examination first. Quantum physicist David Bohm saw the interrelation between self-inquiry and critical thinking in the sciences. He strongly recommended the practice of meditation for the scientist to clean the mirror of the mind so that it might reflect an accurate image of the world and discern the right measurements with which to investigate it. The fragmented, self-seeking mind designs a skewed measurement, and a skewed measurement results in a distorted outcome. He recommended “techniques of meditation that lead the whole process of mental operation nonverbally to the sort of quiet state of orderly and smooth flow needed to end fragmentation both in the actual process of thought and in its content.”¹⁹

Bohm linked the inner mental harmony of the scientist with an outer harmony of the investigated world. There is a porous interconnectivity between the inner and outer worlds. In fact, scientists, educators, social reformers, and religious leaders alike have reiterated something akin to this remark from the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso: “If there is no peace in one’s mind, there can be no peace in one’s approach to others, and thus no peaceful relations between individuals or between nations.” As the keynote speaker at Emory University’s conference *Educating the Heart and Mind* (October 2007), the Dalai Lama repeated this emphasis on inner education: “Inner disarmament first, then outer disarmament.”²⁰ The roots of social violence and fragmentation exist within all

of us, he explained. Therefore, we are not likely to achieve world peace without inner peace, nor outer disarmament without inner disarmament. Rigorous interior examination such as that learned in contemplative process can facilitate a self-chosen “disarmament” of anger, craving, hatred, biases, and pride, all of which prevent students from being aware of their connection to others and the world. Self-knowledge then becomes a solid foundation for self-transcendence and a sustainable life of service to local and global communities.

MEDITATION IN THE RELIGIOUS STUDIES CLASSROOM

Despite the call for interior cultivation as a goal of liberal arts education, religious studies has been slow to accept contemplative methods. University religious studies departments have particular challenges in the implementation of contemplative pedagogies, and yet, we would suggest, a particular urgency to do so. In the 1960s and 1970s, religious studies departments charted a course to become legitimate academic departments at public universities, freeing themselves from the often apologetic stance of church-affiliated private colleges and divinity schools at major universities. This process of legitimization required the honing of objective distance and the clarification of specific academic methodologies in working with religious phenomena.

But while religious studies has succeeded in establishing itself as a legitimate academic discipline in higher education, it has often exaggerated scholarly objectivity at the expense of personal meaning, subjectivity, and empirical self-knowledge in the study of religion. Perhaps in our vigilance to apply a hermeneutics of suspicion, we overlooked the possibility of a “hermeneutics of hunger” that would affirm people’s hunger for dignity and community, acknowledging that they often find it in religion, spirituality, or contemplative practice.²¹

College students seem to have this hunger, yet it appears to go mostly unsatisfied. Recent analysis of data related to introductory courses in religious studies in the United States postulates a “Great Divide” between the objective, content-based goals of professors and the subjective meaning-based goals of their students.²² The students want to pursue interior learning. According to the national survey of college students conducted by the UCLA Higher Education Research Institute, college students have high levels of interest in spiritual, religious, and existential matters. A majority of entering students expected their college education to develop their “self-understanding” and be supportive of their inquiries into the “meaning and purpose of life.” They also expressed the desire to become “more loving and compassionate people.” However, the students’ expectations were largely not met.²³

While pioneers in contemporary religious studies methodology, such as Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Mircea Eliade, and Ninian Smart, valued the personal

dimension of religious phenomena in human culture, subsequent influences from allied academic disciplines introduced increasingly objectivist scholarly methods from the social sciences. Previous emphasis upon “participatory”²⁴ study, or of “tradition” and “faith,”²⁵ coming from the first generation of religious studies scholars gave way to a reductive tendency to approach religion solely as a construct of social factors, understood through critical examination and deconstruction alone. Many contemporary religious studies scholars now write about religious phenomena from a scientific distance that sometimes appears contemptuous of religiousness, spirituality, or any living phenomena of religion.²⁶

While this may be a healthy trend in any truly academic field, this view now often dominates our departments and academic meetings, squelching creativity in participatory pedagogy or conversation about meaning. Contemplative pedagogy has tremendous potential to enliven the religious studies classroom and to deepen the learning that takes place there. With proper introduction and context, meditation and contemplation are content-appropriate activities that model religious experience and intuitive knowing described or expressed in our curricula. Students who yearn for relevant exposure to issues of the inner life welcome the opportunity to develop different ways of knowing in the religious studies classroom, and appreciate the nonproselytizing atmosphere of the university as a way to explore this. When this is balanced with appreciation for issues of pluralism, critical perspective, and dialogue between traditions, students learn life skills that will benefit them for years to come.

From a wider perspective, it is essential that the academic discipline of religious studies provides leadership in contemplative pedagogy. With the growing diversity of religious America, it is commonly acknowledged that the formerly WASP establishment has come undone, and individuals in every sphere of public life are becoming more explicit with their religious convictions, as indicated in recent political campaigns. At the same time, evangelical campus ministries have vociferously proselytized and pressed an agenda on college students. As many more of our faculty colleagues come out of the closet, albeit tentatively, to engage issues of religious identity, they are unsure how to do so. How are we to address religious identity and spiritual inquiry in the classroom without falling into extremes? Can we move from fearful retreat to responsible engagement? Religion and spirituality have become such powerful and manifest forces in civil society and in education that we in religious studies must do more than ruminate—we must participate and educate. We see this book as a first step toward addressing contemplative education from its disciplinary foundation in religious studies.

The growing popularity of contemplative process and meditation spaces in educational settings is exciting but comes with the risks of cultural appropriation, shallow faculty preparation, and hidden motivations to proselytize. Therefore, we see the clear need for a resource that grounds contemplative pedagogy in

its home discipline of religious studies where responsible methodologies can be critically fleshed out in a refereed academic discourse that has a long and rich history among scholars and practitioners of contemplative traditions. This book is a seasoned yet innovative response to the searching question posed by leaders in higher education who know that interior education is a crucial goal but do not know how to effectuate it:

How do we prepare students to cultivate their own inner resources of spirit and moral courage?

How do we enable them to engage moral and social dilemmas with clarity about their own values . . . ?

And, how, without proselytizing, do we foster students' own development of character, conscience, and examined values?

—Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2007²⁷

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

The book opens with essays from senior scholars within religious studies who have been at the forefront of contemplative education and contemplative studies initiatives. Tom Coburn and Bob Thurman describe particularly potent contemplative practices and meditative moments, which they situate historically in Western culture and South and Central Asian spiritual traditions. Given its power to bring about liberation from suffering and to catalyze noetic breakthroughs, they view contemplative insight as “inevitable” and “necessary” features of liberal education. Whereas Thurman (and many of the book’s contributors) see religious studies departments as the appropriate auspices under which “to restore to the curriculum the resources of the world’s great spiritual traditions for self-exploration, self-cultivation, self-liberation, and self-integration,” Harold Roth proposes that contemplative knowledge will thrive in the academic realm only if it is sustained by collaborative and interdisciplinary faculty and kept outside of religious studies departments, because of their problematic “Eurocentric” biases. Laurie Patton speaks further to collaborative synergies that can coalesce to support contemplative curricula. With an eye to administrative priorities, she emphasizes the pragmatic benefits of an alliance between religious studies and the sciences.

Although the book opens with the larger conversation about the place of contemplative study in relation to higher education, institutional initiatives, and department programs, it moves in section 2 to the inner journeys that have made those conversations possible. Without professors who have awakened to the potency of meditation, who would be interested in such initiatives? Taking the inward-outward journey of the Labyrinth as a metaphor for her development

as a professor, Fran Grace describes the inner evolution that came to express itself in three major pedagogical shifts, from content-based (third-person) to context-based (second-person) to contemplative-based (first-person) teaching. Chris Bache offers examples from decades of teaching that illumine his vision of the classroom as a “field of collective consciousness” in which the inner world of the professor is inevitably in sync with the inner worlds of students. If that collective dynamic truly happens, then professors become responsible for our inner state and for sustaining a classroom environment that attunes to coherence and attentiveness. Richard Brown, a longtime trainer of contemplative teachers, helps us with that challenge by providing concrete methods to facilitate a contemplative environment in the classroom and in oneself as the teacher. Drawing on several years as a workshop leader and meditation teacher outside of academe, John Makransky offers practical assistance to educators in need of tools to cultivate a human life that is sustainable from the inside-out. Louis Komjathy shares how his study and practice of Daoism inform his pedagogical work with students. In a disclosure that likely many of the authors and perhaps the readers will resonate with, he speaks of the allure of his meditation “hut” and the difficulty of coming out of it into the conventional academic world of discursive debate, multitasking, and institutional politics.

Section 3 deals with critical issues in contemplative teaching, questions that may arise in religious studies about our approaches, motivations, and the overall effect on our students. Judith Simmer-Brown proposes ethical standards for contemplative teaching, drawing from decades of conversation among academic colleagues both within and outside of Naropa University. Sid Brown explores the challenging dynamics of the inner motivations of the professor and the responses of students. In contrast to the many studies of meditation that emphasize the health and well-being aspects, researcher Tobin Hart brings what he calls the “neuro-phenomenology” of contemplation and meditation to bear on the learning process itself. How does meditation benefit learning? While the focus of the book is the religious studies classroom, we drew from three contemplative teachers in other fields who had special perspectives designed to enrich our religious studies teaching: history (Wu), psychology (Hart), and education (Richard Brown).

Our next two sections give case studies of what religious studies faculty are actually doing in the classroom. Section 4 introduces concrete examples of courses within religious studies departments that integrate meditation and contemplative pedagogy into learning. They demonstrate how to incorporate content-appropriate assignments while giving students choices in how to participate without a sense of coercion. They also model methods such as bringing in guest teachers, conducting reflective discussion, and engaging in contemplative fieldwork. Section 5 gives specific class exercises and activities that address course content in areas such as body awareness, ecology, and the arts. One chapter

addresses meditation methods in online teaching, while another addresses contemplative evaluation methods.

The final section of the book returns to the point at which we began—students' experience. These two chapters draw from student anecdotal report about their experiences in contemplative learning, addressing their general outcomes as well as their emotional development, their focus and commitment to their studies, their personal discoveries, and their experience in service learning environments. Comprehensive quantitative studies in meditation and learning have yet to be completed, but these student reports indicate the importance of deeper measures of student outcomes.

A note of clarification: the word "meditation" has a variety of meanings in this book, depending upon the context. Generally speaking, we can say it means a conscious and gentle focusing of the mind on an object such as the breath or a phrase or sound, and the continuous return of attention back to that object again and again. The object is a neutral one, but can be varied, depending upon the context—it is not inherently "religious" in any way. This cultivation is sometimes called "mindfulness," and refers to the ability to remain present with this focus of attention, at first in a formal session of practice and eventually in varied and distracting environments that are more challenging. The word "meditation" also is applied to the development of insight or awareness that may arise from such cultivation of attention.

In our chapters, we also speak of "contemplation" and the "contemplative," though these terms are used generically, meaning application of meditation methods to learning pedagogies where no meditation *per se* is taught. Generally speaking, we are pointing to interiority or personal reflection, which are first-person methods of investigation. For the purposes of this book, we are using the terms "meditation," "mindfulness," "awareness," and "contemplation" interchangeably, and not in the more technical ways the terms are used in specific religious traditions.²⁸ Each of them is often paired with the words "practice" or "pedagogy," demonstrating that these methods are properly considered praxis in our educational endeavors.

The book you hold in your hands invites you into an important conversation. This conversation about contemplative teaching and higher education has been going on most recently for three decades, and we hope it will continue long after us. It is like a flowing river and we put in our raft at different points along its course. This "river" of conversation is wide enough to hold many different viewpoints, as you will see from the range in this book. Each of us speaks from the place to which our "raft" of life experience has carried us, even as we are aware that the raft is neither the river nor the shore. This book is not the final destination but a mindful stop in the conversation to take stock of how far we have traveled and how much farther there is to go. Thank you for joining us at this momentous juncture.

NOTES

1. Judith Simmer-Brown, "Commitment and Openness: A Contemplative Approach to Pluralism," *The Heart of Learning*, ed. Steven Glazer (New York: Tarcher/Putnam, 1999), 97–112.
2. *College Learning for the New Global Century* (Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2007), 3.
3. *The Great Conversation: The Substance of a Liberal Education*, Vol. I, Great Books of the Western World (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), 3, 26.
4. *College Learning for the New Global Century*, 22.
5. *Ibid.*, 23, 6.
6. Martha Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 8.
7. To our knowledge, this is the first book on meditation in higher education. However, there are important related works from higher education experts that highlight the learning benefits of contemplative practices: Laura I. Rendon, *Sentipensante (Sensing/Thinking) Pedagogy* (Sterling: Stylus, 2009); John P. Miller, *The Holistic Curriculum*, second edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).
8. John Gravois, "Meditate on It: Can Adding Contemplation to the Classroom Lead Students to More Eureka Moments?," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (October 21 2005); Angie Green, "A Space Where Students Can Nurture Their Minds, Spirits," *Los Angeles Times* (5 May 2007), B2; Elizabeth Redden, "Meditative Spaces," *insidehighered.com* (3 December 2007): www.insidehighered.com/news/2007/12/03/meditation.
9. See www.naropa.edu/cace.
10. See www.brown.edu/Faculty/Contemplative_Studies_Initiative/; <http://www.redlands.edu/4875.asp>.
11. B. Alan Wallace, *Contemplative Science: Where Buddhism and Neuroscience Converge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).
12. See Michael Murphy, Steven Donovan, and Eugene Taylor, *The Physical and Psychological Effects of Meditation: A Review of Contemplative Research 1991–1996*, 2nd ed. (Petaluma: Institute of Noetic Sciences, 1997); A. Lutz et al., "Long-term Meditators Self-induce High Amplitude Gamma Synchrony during Mental Practice," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (2004), 101: 16369–73; Sarah Lazar et al., "Functional Brain Mapping of the Relaxation Response and Meditation," *NeuroReport* (15 May 2000): 1–5; Arthur Zajonc et al., *The New Physics and Cosmology Dialogues with the Dalai Lama* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Richard Davidson and Anne Harrington, *Visions of Compassion: Western Scientists and Tibetan Buddhists Examine Human Nature* (OUP, 2001); B. Alan

- Wallace, *Attention Revolution: Unlocking the Power of the Focused Mind* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2006).
13. Sharon Begley, *Train Your Mind, Change Your Brain* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2007), offers a cogent summary of the studies related to substantial enhancement of physical and mental health through the alleviation of problems such as depression, eating disorders, OCD, and PTSD. See also: "The Science and Clinical Applications of Meditation," Washington, D.C., 2005, hosted by the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Georgetown University, and the Mind and Life Institute (6-disc DVD).
 14. See the research results from the following projects: Santa Barbara Institute www.sbinstitute.com; Stanford University's Carstenson Life-Span Development Lab www.psych.stanford.edu/%7Elifespan/; University of California at Davis's Center for Mind and Brain www.mindbrain@ucdavis.edu; and University of California Los Angeles's Mindful Awareness Research Center www.marc.ucla.edu/.
 15. Bruce O'Hara, research presented at Society for Neuroscience, Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., 2005, reported in Alison Motluk, "Meditation Builds Up the Brain," *New Scientist* (15 November 2005).
 16. Harold D. Roth, "Contemplative Studies: Prospects for a New Field," *Teachers College Record* 108, no. 9 (September 2006): 1787.
 17. Based on the Higher Education Research Institute survey, reported by Elizabeth Redden, "More Spiritual, But Not in Church," *Inside Higher Ed.Com* (18 December 2007).
 18. www.collegenews.org/x3716.xml
 19. David Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), 25.
 20. *My Land, My People: The Original Autobiography of His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet* (New York: Time Warner Books, 1997), 28. For a report on the Emory University speech: en.epochtimes.com/news/7-10-26/61212.html.
 21. Dorothee Soelle, *Silent Cry: Mysticism and Resistance* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 48–51.
 22. Barbara E. Walvoord, *Teaching and Learning in the College Introductory Religion Courses* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008).
 23. Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), *The Spiritual Life of College Students: A National Study of College Students' Search for Meaning and Purpose: Executive Summary* (Los Angeles: University of California, Los Angeles, 2005); Elizabeth Redden, "More Spiritual, But Not in Church," *Inside Higher Ed.Com* (18 December 2007), under <http://www.insidehighered.com> (accessed 15 March 2009). For a range of viewpoints on the HERI data from Academy of American Religion members, see the special issue,

- “Spirituality in Higher Education: Problems, Practices, and Programs,” *Religion and Education* (Summer 2009).
24. This term is used by Ninian Smart to describe how the scholar of religion can participate in order to more deeply understand religious phenomena. Ninian Smart, “Beyond Ideology: Religion and the Future of Western Civilization,” lectures delivered at the University of Edinburgh, 1978–1980 (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), 47. For a recent revisioning, see Jorge Ferrer and Jacob Sherman, *The Participatory Turn: Spirituality, Mysticism, Religious Studies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008); Christopher M. Bache, *The Living Classroom: Teaching and the Collective Consciousness* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008).
 25. Smith spoke of faith as “inner religious experience or involvement of a particular person” rather than a classification, emphasizing that religion is about the particulars of human life in a larger context of history and culture. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 187.
 26. Examples of these views are found in Russell T. McCutcheon, *Critics Not Caretakers: Redescribing the Public Study of Religion* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001).
 27. *College Learning for the New Global Century*, 23.
 28. For example, in Buddhist traditions, meditation (*bhavana*) relates to this cultivation of one-pointed mind (*shamatha*) that develops insight (*vipashyana*), while contemplation (*cintamayi-prajna*) refers to sacred reading; in Christian traditions, meditation refers to sacred reading practices such as *lectio divina*, while contemplation refers to more formless practices of prayer and reflection.