

## Hosting a Friday Gathering

Updated March 2024

Offered with a bow of appreciation for your kind and diligent preparation of our time together. Please note that these guidelines pertain for the most part to Tuesday and Friday gatherings in the Friends Meetinghouse. Sunday and Wednesday gatherings do their own.

### Advance Preparation

- Review these guidelines and obtain contact information for your scheduler.
- Review/research topic; prepare and practice your dharma talk/presentation (feel free to discuss with scheduler, especially if the topic is new to you, or if you are new to facilitating).
- Please consider that each talk should include Buddhist teachings as well as one's own personal experience of them. Speaking one's own experience without relating it to the Dharma, or simply reciting teachings without personal grounding are generally not fitting for most weekly SnowFlower Sangha meetings. We seek to combine Understanding (the Dharma) with Love (speaking from the heart of personal experience).
- Be sure to leave enough time for discussion. Friday ends at 8:30. Suggested format: Facilitators end meditation period by 7:55 – 8:00; end talk by 8:10 – 8:15; allow 2-3 minutes for contemplating the talk before beginning the discussion period; end discussion period by 8:25.
- Email copies of or links to any handouts you wish to distribute relating to your dharma talk.
- Note: If you need assistance with opening up Zoom, ask the scheduler or another SnowFlower for assistance

### Email Invitation

- Send a reminder message to the listserv informing members of your topic a 2-3 days before you facilitate: [snowflower-sangha@googlegroups.com](mailto:snowflower-sangha@googlegroups.com).

### Sample Email for Friday Containing all the Information Participants Need

*Paragraph introducing your topic*

### *Join Zoom Meeting Online (via computer or smartphone)*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85653563736?pwd=UGpkU01WMmViYmVQN0ZGdndwTlBaUT09>

### Join Zoom Meeting on Your Telephone for Audio Only

312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 856 5356 3736

Passcode: 800196

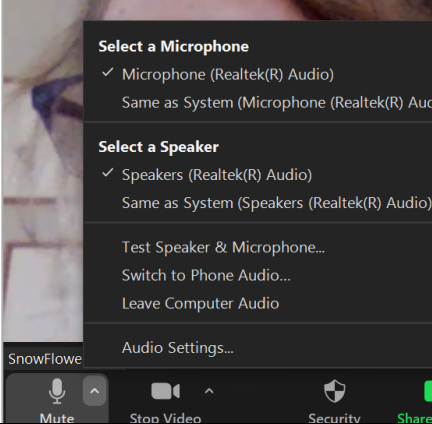
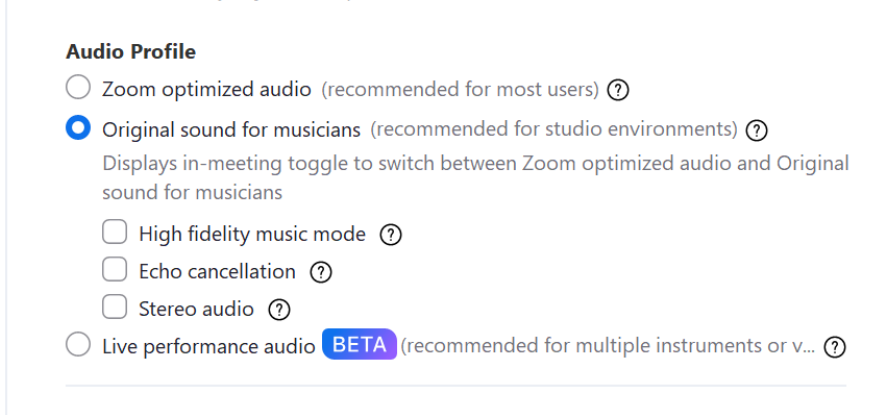
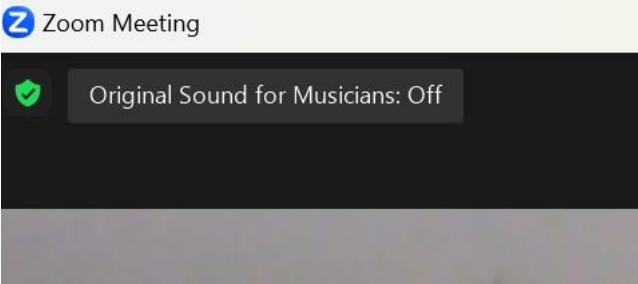
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## Zoom Sign-On Information

- Ask your scheduler for the Zoom Sign-on and password.
- If you are not familiar with hosting Zoom, please ask your scheduler or another SnowFlower either for training or to open the meeting for you.
- Be sure to turn on Original Sound – if you don't no one will be able to hear the bell.

## Turning On Original Sound

<p>Click on the up arrow by Mute and click on Audio Settings</p>	 A screenshot of the Zoom audio settings menu. It shows two sections: 'Select a Microphone' with options 'Microphone (Realtek(R) Audio)' (checked) and 'Same as System (Microphone (Realtek(R) Audio))'; and 'Select a Speaker' with options 'Speakers (Realtek(R) Audio)' (checked) and 'Same as System (Speakers (Realtek(R) Audio))'. Other options include 'Test Speaker & Microphone...', 'Switch to Phone Audio...', 'Leave Computer Audio', and 'Audio Settings...'. The background shows a Zoom meeting interface with a 'Mute' button and an up arrow.
<p>Click on Original sound for musicians, that should be the only thing on under Audio Profile. You only have to do this the first time.</p>	 A screenshot of the 'Audio Profile' settings in Zoom. The 'Original sound for musicians' option is selected with a blue radio button. Below it, there is a sub-section 'Displays in-meeting toggle to switch between Zoom optimized audio and Original sound for musicians'. Other options include 'Zoom optimized audio (recommended for most users)', 'High fidelity music mode', 'Echo cancellation', 'Stereo audio', and 'Live performance audio BETA (recommended for multiple instruments or v...)'. Each option has a help icon (question mark).
<p>You will see Original Sound for Musicians: Off on your screen. Click on it once to toggle it on.</p>	 A screenshot of a Zoom meeting notification. At the top, it says 'Zoom Meeting'. Below that, there is a dark grey box with a green checkmark icon and the text 'Original Sound for Musicians: Off'. The background shows a blurred Zoom meeting interface.

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### First Sit (approximately 20 – 25 minutes)

- Wake the bell and invite it three times, completing three breaths between each invitation.
- At the end of the sit, wake the bell, check to see that the Tech Host has unmuted Zoom, and invite it once. Bow.

### Walking Meditation

- [Explain Walking Meditation](#) basics if needed. Ideally, this is done before the first sit, so there can be a seamless transition into the walking meditation.
- Wake the small bell and then invite it for the first time. Bow.
- Second bell; begin walking.
- After 10 — 15 minutes, invite the bell for the third time. To return to your seats/screen
- Fourth bell; bow and get ready for the second sit.

### Second Sit (approximately 20 – 25 minutes)

- Wake the bell and invite it three times, completing three breaths between each invitation.
- At the end of the sit, wake the bell, check to see that the Tech Host has unmuted Zoom, and invite the bell once. Bow.

### Facilitator Sharing

- Share from the heart what you've prepared, being mindful to leave enough time for discussion (see details in Advance Preparation above).
- When you are finished, bow and introduce contemplation time and dharma sharing.

### Contemplation Time

- After your sharing, announce that we will take a few minutes to contemplate your talk.
- Invite the bell once to begin the contemplation time and once to end it.
- Invite people to answer a question, share their thoughts or ask questions.

### Dharma Sharing

- Explain that we:
  - Bow in and bow out when we are moved to speak
  - After bowing, say our name before speaking
  - Be sure to speak loudly into the microphone so those on Zoom can.
  - Speak only from our own experiences using “I” statements, & keep it personal not theoretical
  - We share with the whole circle
  - Simply enjoy the silence together if it arises – no need to fill it, just watch our thoughts
  - Offer our support by simply bringing our full attention to the speaker and practice deep listening

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- Avoid responding to someone else's sharing, thereby preserving a safe space for people to share without a concern for someone responding to them (they might not want responses)
- Avoid giving advice even if it's solicited
- Honor right speech and deep listening – this is not a Q&A, cross-talk or therapy session
- Open the floor for discussion with an invitation of the bell.
  - At about 8:25, announce that there are just a few minutes left.
  - Ask if there are any additional comments. A few minutes later, invite the bell once.

### Closing comments and circle

- [Sharing the Merit](#) is offered before announcements. One version is printed out and in the altar drawer, while others can be found in the *Plum Village Chanting and Recitation Book*, page 19, or in *Chanting from the Heart*, page 33.
- Ask if there are any announcements.
- Mention the listserv for newer people and note that if they wish to be added, follow the directions on home page of the website.
- Invite everyone to form a circle, place their hand on their heart or up in the air, and, if they wish, offer names of those who may need support. Stay in circle for a few minutes allowing for names to be spoken. Initiate the bowing.

### End of Meeting Tasks

- End meeting on Zoom.

### Sangha Cancellation Policy

It is sangha policy not to cancel a scheduled sangha meeting. In case of illness or inclement weather, however, scheduler and facilitator will discuss the options, decide together what to do, and notify the listserv no later than 3:00 p.m.

### Instructions for Offering a Guided Meditation

When facilitating a guided meditation, it is most important to remember that when people are meditating, they could be startled by sudden words. To avoid jolting anyone, the bell is gently used before words are spoken. Waking the bell, rather than inviting it with a full sound (by touching the rim of the bell firmly with the inviter and not moving the inviter away) does this. It muffles the sound. (For more information, consult Thây's book, *The Blooming of a Lotus*)