

# VIRTUAL RETREAT: AFTERNOON OFFLINE ACTIVITIES



In the spirit of engaging our heads, hands and hearts during this retreat, we invite you into a heart space by carving out time for silence and stillness. Sometimes in the whirl of activity and chatter of the weeks we lose connection with the deeper parts of ourselves and our highest intentions. Moments of silence and stillness can be real teachers. And the beauty of it is that by getting back in touch with ourselves we strengthen our capacity for touching the lives of others. Silence [positively impacts our mind and body](#) in a myriad of ways while also [nourishing our spirit](#). Explore the activities below to practice a form of silence and going within that resonates with you. Whatever the form, let the spirit of it be that of reconnecting with yourself.

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**Prayer Mandala:** Spend time in silence making a prayer mandala.



*Mandala* is a Sanskrit word meaning ‘circle,’ and it is symbolic of wholeness and harmony. A [global peace organisation](#), whose founding family are [dear friends](#) of the ServiceSpace community, introduced the practice of *handwritten mandalas*, which are concentric circles with meaningful words and phrases written on them. As we write, the energy of those words is poured into the mandala and the process heals and revitalises us. When the mandala is completed, it continuously radiates this healing energy to humanity and the natural world. Print an [A4 mandala template](#) or make your own and offer any prayer which feels alive in your own heart. [Share a photo](#) of your completed mandala with our Retreat Pod.

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**Mindful Walk:** Take a mindful walk in silence, preferably outdoors if you can.

Walking can energise and restore your sense of focus. Several studies have shown that taking a break to look at or be in nature can have a rejuvenating effect on the brain. Mindful walking involves shifting awareness away from your mind and bringing it into your body and surroundings. We become aware of the contact of our foot on the ground and our breathing. This guide on [walking meditation](#) or [short video](#) may be helpful. [Thich Naht Hahn says](#), “We arrive in the now with every step.”



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**Meditate:** Use this time to sit in stillness and silence to go within.



Many of us aren't used to really looking within: at our thoughts, our intentions, our true selves. And when things around us are going on full speed, it can be even more difficult to be aware of what's going on within us. So, one way to think of meditation is as an intentional simplification, a slowing down of sorts. Calm those [Waves in the Mind](#) with some [guided meditation](#). For those new to meditation, here are [some basics](#) to get you started.

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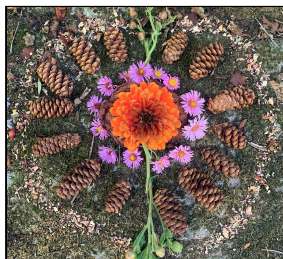
**Clean Mindfully:** Use this silent time to do some mindful cleaning today.

Cleaning is an essential part of our daily lives... yet, is often seen as a burden and chore. Attentive dusting, vacuuming, polishing etc can be meditative ... can declutter and freshen not just our physical spaces, but our minds too. Use this time to stay present in this outward action with inner stillness. This brilliant article on the [Art of Cleaning](#) may just inspire you to take out the duster or vacuum. :)



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**Silent Foraging:** It is time for a small adventure... You're invited to go foraging!



While keeping your silence, go for a walk in your neighbourhood, ideally in a local park or in the woods. Try to tune all your senses into your surroundings. What does the air smell like? Do you notice any remaining colours of autumn? Can you hear the sound of dried leaves on the ground? Give yourself a moment to absorb everything that comes your way. As you continue your walk, notice if anything draws your attention. Whether it's a fallen leaf, an acorn, a feather or a funny shaped stone - pick anything that you feel connected to... all these items are your small treasures! If you feel like it, try [creating a mandala](#) with everything that you found and offer it as a

'thank you' gesture to mother nature. Take a moment to appreciate the beauty of all the things you found and also notice how harmonious they are when put together. If you'd like, take a picture of what you have created and [share with the group](#). You can also keep your treasures as a memory of this moment - perhaps put a leaf inside a book? Or add the stone into the plant pot? Happy foraging!

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