



Zoom Tips & Etiquette

We are grateful to have the opportunity to connect with each other using Zoom during this period as we also seek to support the health of our community. Since many are new to Zoom, we thought it might be helpful to offer a brief overview of how FCM uses Zoom to support its programs and to share some “learnings” over the past few years about “Zoom Etiquette” in order to make the online experience most supportive for everyone.

What is Zoom?

Zoom is an application that allows us to connect online. You can use Zoom to join a virtual meeting (meditation, and more) using either your computer or cell phone. With Zoom, a host (like FCM) can offer either a “Meeting” or a “Webinar” using pre-assigned lines.

The most important difference between a “Meeting Line” (used on Sunday, and for groups like Wake Up, Death Café, classes and more) and the “Webinar Line” (used for Weekday Meditation, offered Monday through Friday at 7 am and 7:30 pm) is as follows: A *Meeting Line* permits everyone to participate using their video and audio. It’s nice to be able to see and hear from others during our more interactive events. We might sometimes ask you to turn your video off (or turn it off for you) and then ask you to turn it back on later when meditation is done and we move into a Dharma talk or Q&A. Participants are often automatically muted when entering the call, as well. We invite you to “chat” with the host if you have any technical problems.

A *Webinar Line*, on the other hand, allows for video and audio by the host/panelist only. Participants can use the “Chat” and “Ask a Question” features as needed, but there is no audio or video of participants. You will simply see the video shared by the host, which right now is our main Meditation Hall in Tampa. We do invite everyone to “bow in” when they enter the Webinar by using the chat feature to share their name and where they are from. This helps give us more of a sense of sangha. **IMPORTANT:** when you do this, please be sure to use the drop down arrow to select “All panelists and attendees” so that everyone (not just the AV “panelist” behind the scenes) sees your chat.

How Can I Most Skillfully Participate in Zoom for FCM Events?

- ♥ **Join early** – up to 5 minutes before the meeting start time. This helps to create a sense of all of us being “seated” for meditation, starting together at the designated time, just as if we were in the meditation hall.
- ♥ **Select the desire “View”** in the upper righthand corner of your Zoom screen on the computer (or scroll screens on your phone – experiment, as phones may vary). You have a choice of Gallery View, where you will see all participants as equally sized, or Presenter View, where the video of the Presenter who is speaking will dominate your screen. Please note that FCM will “spotlight” the FCM



hall to make it the one dominate view during most meditation sessions, so you may not see the bell master or other speakers.

- ♥ **Audio/Video Considerations for Meditation Sessions:** Where our primary focus is meditation, such as the weekday morning, we use the Webinar line so no one but the host/panelist will be projecting their own audio or video.

For the meditation portion of Sunday Sangha, we are on a Meeting line, and **video off** is requested. This helps us to support a sense of quiet sitting in our virtual hall. On a computer, move your cursor to the bottom left corner of your Zoom screen and click “Stop Video” (if you don’t remember to do this, don’t worry – we’ll click it off for you). You can restart it later if needed. On a phone, you may need to tap the bottom of your screen to see the options. Click “Stop Video.” Please note that when your video is off, either your name appears on a black box or – if you have attached a picture to your Zoom account – your picture will appear. Please ensure that any pictures are appropriate for “sitting” with others in our virtual meditation hall.

In meditation sessions, you will typically not be able to unmute but you can use the Chat feature if help is needed. Mute and unmute are next to Stop/Start Video on your phone.

- ♥ **Audio/Video Considerations for Interactive Sessions:** Being able to see each other can be very meaningful for our more interactive events, such as Intensive calls, Dharma talks, spiritual friends groups, and more. Please consider the lighting in your space (with the light or window in front of you and not behind your head) so that we can see you. Where possible, avoid interruptions and distracting backgrounds (like ceiling fans, or people moving in the background). Adjust your camera to be at eye level, if possible. As well, we like to “show up,” whether in-person or virtually, with an appearance that is respectful of the Dharma and our fellow sangha members.

Sit as if we were together in the meditation hall: with attention on the meeting and a noble posture. If you need to move during the session, simply click “Stop Video” in the lower left-hand corner of your Zoom screen, and start it back when you return. Remember that you are on camera, and check the video view of yourself so that you are not providing an unintended view of feet or legs, half a head, or so on. Please note that there is an option with the three dots on your square that says “Hide Self Image.” You do NOT want to click this box – it will hide your picture from yourself but not from anyone else, as one of I learned once when I thought I were eating my lunch unobserved during a small group meeting!

- ♥ Depending on the size of the group gathering, consider muting yourself when you are not speaking. Sometimes we are not aware of the background noise from our environment that is being picked up by our computer or phone microphone, which can be distracting for the other Zoom participants.
- ♥ The chat feature of Zoom is very helpful in large groups (like Sunday Meditation in Tampa) for sharing questions with the teacher and often for sharing sentiments of gratitude toward the end of the gathering. The call Host will also use Zoom to communicate important information to the group, so it is important to have access to this feature. During a talk or formal meditation, it’s supportive for the



Florida Community of Mindfulness

community if we comport ourselves as we would if we were sitting together in the meditation hall, where we don't talk (or 'chat') while a meditation or a talk is in process.

- ♥ A guideline that may be helpful would be to think of Zoom meetings as virtual replicas of actual meetings. For example, we don't eat or drink in our meditation sessions, or engage in other distracting movements such as those described above. We do bring our mindfulness, our care and support for our brothers and sisters to our gatherings. We are grateful that using technology such as Zoom enables us to bring these gifts to each other, and we are grateful for your participation in this important endeavor for the benefit of all. If you have any additional suggestions or comments, please let me know.

With gratitude for your participation in our community,

Angie