



ZHEN RETREAT PARTICIPANTS AGREEMENTS

Zhen Institute Retreat Preparation Guide

These agreements create the container/field for our practice together. By participating, we all agree to:

FOUNDATIONAL AGREEMENTS

We Agree to Honor Silence, Space and Natural Connection

Silence and space are gateways to our inner landscape. We commit to:

- Prioritizing our inner work over social networking
- Honoring that there is no obligation to be social—taking space for silence and solitude is encouraged and valued
- Paying attention to others' needs for space as much as our own
- Recognizing that true connection emerges when we let go of the need
- Understanding that authentic presence creates natural connection, not performed relatability
- Slowing down, pausing, reflecting, and journaling to support our integration
- Cherishing our realizations and allowing them to deepen through quiet contemplation

We Agree to Leave Our Stories at the Door

We enter as we are in this moment, not as our résumés, accomplishments, or identities. We commit to:

- Releasing identification with past stories, roles, achievements, and status
- Allowing our past to inform but not define our present experience
- Creating space for new realizations of self to emerge
- Meeting each other from essence, not from persona

We Agree to Participate Fully

Full participation means showing up with sincerity, not perfection. We commit to:

- Staying present with the process even when challenging or uncomfortable
- Voicing our needs clearly rather than silently suffering or disappearing



- Trusting the container while honoring our personal boundaries
- Taking responsibility for our own experience
- Using "I" perspective when sharing—speaking from direct experience
- Focusing on our own journey rather than analyzing or fixing it or others

The balance: There's a difference between resistance (which we breathe through) and genuine safety concern (which we voice immediately). When in doubt, communicate with facilitators.

PRACTICAL OPERATIONAL AGREEMENTS

We Agree to Honor Time

When one person is late, it affects everyone. When someone leaves early, it disrupts the field. We commit to:

- Arriving on time—be seated before session starts, not right when it begins
- Staying for the full duration of all practices and sessions
- Being mindful of taking up disproportionate space and time in sharing if that's your pattern
- Challenging yourself to speak more if you tend toward silence and observation
- Communicating in advance if you must miss a session or arrive late

We Agree to Minimize Device Use

Phones and devices fragment our attention and disrupt the collective field. We commit to:

- No phone use during retreat sessions, practices, and ceremonies
- Phones collected before ceremonies and overnight (returned upon request for emergencies)
- No photography or video recording during vulnerable shares, ceremonies, or practices unless with agreement
- No social media posting about others without their explicit verbal permission
- Devices used only when genuinely necessary (emergencies, childcare, medical monitoring)

If you must use your phone: Step outside the practice space, keep it brief, return to presence.

Photography: You may photograph nature, food, your own experience. Never photograph others without asking first. Never post others' images or stories without permission.



We Agree to Care for the Space

How we treat physical space reflects how we treat our internal space. We commit to:

- Cleaning up after ourselves immediately—washing our cups and dishes
- Keeping the ceremony space sacred and tidy—organizing our mats and blankets
- Returning cushions, blankets, and props to their designated places
- Leaving all spaces cleaner than we found them
- Being mindful of noise levels in shared spaces
- Treating all resources with care and gratitude

CONTAINER INTEGRITY AGREEMENTS

We Agree to Stay in the Container

Leaving the retreat property or engaging with the outside world disrupts your process and the collective field. We commit to:

- Start together, Finish together
- Not leaving the retreat property without informing facilitators first
- No business calls, work emails, or non-emergency communication with the outside world
- If we must leave early, completing a proper closing ceremony and checkout process
- Not ghosting or disappearing, even if things feel difficult

Why this matters: The deepest work often happens when we're most uncomfortable. If you're wanting to leave, that's usually when you're on the edge of a breakthrough. Please talk to facilitators before making any decision to depart.

Emergencies excepted: True family or work emergencies are understood. We support you in handling them while maintaining your connection to your process.

We Agree to Integration Commitment

The retreat is the beginning, not the destination. We commit to:

- Attending all scheduled post-retreat integration calls (typically 2-3 calls over 4-6 weeks)
- Establishing a daily practice within one week of returning home
- Reaching out to facilitators or community if struggling with integration
- Honoring that transformation requires ongoing practice, not just peak experiences
- Supporting other participants in their integration journey

Integration support includes:

- Group integration calls with facilitators
- Private community space for ongoing connection
- Resources and practices for continuing the work
- Access to facilitators via email for integration questions

If you're struggling: Please reach out. Integration can be challenging. Isolation makes it harder. Community makes it possible.

WISDOM FRAMEWORKS

We Agree to Hold Both/And

We practice holding paradox without collapsing into either extreme:

- Both truth AND kindness (not harsh honesty or pleasant lies)
- Both discipline AND compassion (not rigid rules or permissive chaos)
- Both individual sovereignty AND collective responsibility (not selfish isolation or codependent merging)
- Both challenge AND support (not forcing or coddling)
- Both structure AND flow (not rigid control or formless confusion)

The middle way: We find the dynamic center that holds all paradoxes.

We Agree to the Four Agreements

(Adapted from Don Miguel Ruiz)

1. Be Impeccable with Our Word

- Speak with integrity; say only what we mean
- Use the power of our word in the direction of truth and love
- Avoid gossip, complaining, and speaking harm about others

2. Don't Take Things Personally

- Others' actions and words come from their own reality, not ours
- When we're immune to others' opinions, we won't suffer needlessly
- What others say and do is a projection of their own reality



3. Don't Make Assumptions

- Find the courage to ask questions and express what we really want
- Communicate clearly to avoid misunderstandings
- Check in rather than filling in the blanks with your story

4. Always Do Our Best

- Our best changes moment to moment—honor what's true now
- Avoid self-judgment and regret by giving what we can in this moment
- Under any circumstance, simply do your best and avoid self-judgment

COMMUNICATION AGREEMENTS

We Agree to Use Hand Signals

To minimize disruption during practices and maintain the energetic field, we encourage use non-verbal signals:

- **To speak in circle:** Raise hand and wait to be called on
- **To show resonance/agreement:** Wiggle fingers in the air (silent snaps)
- **To come back to presence:** Bring five fingers together, touching at the tips (reminds us to center)
- **Emergency/urgent need:** Both hands raised

Why this matters: Speaking over each other or side-talking disrupts the field. Silent signals keep us present and respectful.

We Agree to Conflict Resolution and Feedback

When issues arise (and they will), we commit to:

- Speaking directly to the person involved first, not gossiping to others
- Using "I" statements: "When you did X, I felt Y" rather than "You are Z"
- Requesting facilitator mediation if direct communication feels unsafe
- Assuming positive intent and asking questions before making judgments
- Being willing to hear feedback about our own behavior
- Practicing repair when we've caused harm—apologizing sincerely without defensiveness

If someone gives you feedback:

- Breathe. Don't immediately defend.
- Listen for the kernel of truth even if the delivery is imperfect.
- Thank them for their courage in speaking.
- Take time to reflect before responding.
- Make amends if appropriate.

If you need to give feedback:

- Check your intention. Are you doing it for you or for the person? Are you trying to punish or to support ?
- Speak from your direct experience, not assumptions about their character.
- Be specific about behavior, not vague about "energy" or "vibe."
- Offer it with compassion, not righteousness.

SAFETY AND BOUNDARY AGREEMENTS

We Agree to Sacred Confidentiality

What is shared in the circle stays in the circle. This is non-negotiable. We commit to:

- Holding others' stories, experiences, and vulnerabilities as sacred
- Sharing our own experience when speaking about the retreat to others
- Not sharing names or identifying details of who attended without permission
- Refraining from all gossip, third-personing, or "reporting back"

The test: Would I say this if the person were standing right here? If not, it doesn't get said.

If I need to process: I bring my feelings to facilitators or directly to the person involved,

We Agree to Explicit Consent and Boundaries

Consent is required for all physical contact and personal sharing. We commit to:

- Asking before touching anyone
- Respecting "no" immediately, without requiring explanation
- Not offering unsolicited advice, feedback, or "fixing" energy
- Not hugging without asking first
- Honoring when someone declines to share or participate

Facilitation touch: Facilitators may offer supportive touch during ceremonies (hand on back, shoulder, head). You can always decline or ask for space, no explanation needed, no offense taken. A simple hand gesture indicating "no" is sufficient.

If someone's behavior makes you uncomfortable: Speak directly to them (with facilitator support if needed) or inform facilitators immediately. We don't silently suffer or gossip, we communicate clearly.

We Agree to Romantic and Sexual Boundaries

To maintain the integrity of the container and everyone's safety, we commit to:

- No romantic or sexual advances during the retreat
- No pairing off or exclusive coupling that excludes others from community
- No flirting, touching with romantic intent, or sexually suggestive behavior
- If attraction arises, noting it internally without acting on it
- After retreat concludes, if mutual interest exists, exchange contact information then

Why this matters: Romantic and sexual energy creates distraction, power dynamics, and disruption for everyone—not just the two people involved.

Violation of this boundary: May result in being asked to leave the retreat.

We Agree to Substance and Sobriety

A clear container requires clear consciousness. We commit to:

- No alcohol, cannabis, cocaine, or other recreational substances during retreat
- No microdosing without facilitator knowledge and explicit approval
- Following the dieta (no caffeine on ceremony days)
- Disclosing all prescription medications and supplements to facilitators before arrival

Sacred medicine vs. recreational use: We may work with medicines ceremonially under facilitation. This is fundamentally different from recreational consumption. The container depends on everyone maintaining clarity and following protocols.

Medical needs: If you're on prescription medication or have medical needs that conflict with the dieta, disclose this to facilitators as soon as possible.. We'll work with you to find appropriate accommodations.

We Agree to Medical and Safety Disclosure

For everyone's safety, including your own, we commit to:

- Completing the pre-retreat medical intake form honestly and thoroughly
- Disclosing all physical health conditions, mental health diagnoses, and medications
- Informing us any allergies, dietary restrictions, or accessibility needs
- Sharing any history of psychosis, mania, schizophrenia, or severe mental illness
- Understanding that withholding medical information puts everyone at risk

Confidentiality: All medical information is held in strict confidence by facilitators. It's used only to ensure your safety and provide appropriate support.

Why this matters: Certain health conditions require modified practices or additional support. Hidden health issues during ceremonies can become medical emergencies. We need complete information to hold you safely.

EMERGENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

We Agree to Emergency Protocols

In case of emergency (medical, psychological, or safety), we commit to:

- Following facilitator guidance immediately and completely
- Not interfering with emergency response (unless you're a trained medical professional and your help is requested)
- Knowing the location of emergency exits, first aid supplies, and emergency contact numbers
- Understanding facilitators are trained in crisis response and first aid
- If I witness someone in distress, immediately and discreetly informing a facilitator

Medical emergency: Facilitators will assess and respond. In serious situations, we will contact emergency medical services without hesitation.

We Agree to Consequences for Violations

To maintain the integrity and safety of the container, we acknowledge:

- Facilitators have final authority on container safety and participant behavior
- Severe violations (violence, substance use, sexual misconduct) result in immediate dismissal
- Repeated minor violations result in a conversation with facilitators and potential dismissal
- We can ask you to leave if our behavior significantly disrupts others' experience

These boundaries exist to keep everyone safe. When one person violates the container, it affects everyone.

CLOSING REFLECTION

These agreements create the container for transformation. They are not rules to make you compliant but conditions that support you and others.

When we fall short and we will, we practice beginning again, not with guilt or shame, but with awareness and renewed intention. We repair, we learn, we continue.

When we notice others fall short, we can gently and kindly share the impact on us rather than staying silent. Clear, compassionate communication strengthens the field.

The Practice:

Read these agreements multiple times, not just once. Notice where you're already living them and where growth is needed. Let them challenge you without overwhelming you.

The Invitation:

Come as you are. Practice with sincerity. Trust the process. Support others. Let truth emerge.

The Recognition:

This is not a contract for behavior control but a collective commitment to what serves healing, liberation, and awakening. We hold these agreements with the spirit of love, not the letter of law.

SIGNATURE & AGREEMENT

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read, understood, and commit to practicing these agreements to the best of my ability for the duration of this retreat.

I recognize that:

- Perfection is not expected, but sincere effort and honest repair when I fall short are essential
- These agreements serve both individual and collective transformation
- I am willing to be held accountable with compassion
- I have disclosed all relevant medical, mental health, and safety information
- I understand the consequences of violating these agreements

I commit to participating fully, honestly, and with integrity.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Emergency Contact Name & Phone: _____

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For questions or clarifications about these agreements, please speak with the retreat facilitators.





PARTICIPANTS AGREEMENT