

## Tales from Team Guatemala Mediation Marathon 2012

On December 8, which also happens to be the day of Rohatsu, the day that The Buddha attained enlightenment, we celebrated a 24-hour meditation marathon joined by Jeff Carreira, Director of Education for the EnlightenNext Organization. Jeff, Mick and I sat for the full 24 hours to raise funds for EnlightenNext and the Integral Heart Foundation. In this adventure, we invited some special guests to share this important time with us.



Jeff seen with Mick and Debora!

Throughout the entire day we had teams of our teenage ‘superstar’ philosophy students sitting with us. It was a very special day and an amazing experience. Jeff, Mick and I began our meditation at 6 a.m. on Saturday and our first team arrived at 9 a.m. Although it was supposed to be a day of complete silence with no eye contact, Jeff didn’t want to miss the opportunity of getting to know more about these kids and their experiences during meditation. It turned out that they all

loved it and that in some cases the 45 minute periods weren't long enough for them!

We heard things from the teens such as peace, joy, release, no mind, no problems, forgetting everything, and finally rest. A total of 16 teenagers had the same experience. The meditation was amazing and the energy created by all of us was incredible.



**In silence in our zendo. Guests in back, Sandra (R) and Rae from Antigua and Marisol (middle left). Boys are Esli, Miquel and Hugo (R).**

In another of after another post-meditation meeting with the kids, Jeff was asking Juan Carlos about his experience. He said that when he arrived at the house he was feeling really tired and anxious, yet was easily able to compare this to the blast of energy he was feeling at the time of speaking after the meditation. In that very same moment, as Juan Carlos was recounting his experience, Felipe, who was sitting right beside Juan Carlos, slammed Juan's arm with an air of great excitement and shared that he felt exactly the same way; he was exhausted when

he arrived, and now, all of a sudden, all of his tiredness had disappeared and he so happy to continue his day.



Isai, Felipe, Debora, Jeff, Mick, JC, Karina (FL), and Shirley after their sitting session.

Kevin, who is the very first teen we sponsored in 2010, also recounted an incredible experience. He arrived to sit with us at the zendo in our home after a long day of work at a fireworks store in Guatemala City where he works over the holidays to make extra money to support his 3 siblings (both of his parents abandoned them some years ago).

Kevin posted this on his Facebook wall after he left: "Saturday, one of the best night's of my life. Sharing a moment of meditation with great people, Debora, Mick and Jeff Carreira. Truly a wonderful experience. Thank you so much."

Kevin arrived exhausted and left in great peace and joy. A testament to the art of stillness.

But we weren't only joined by students...



**Jeff debriefing in the garage after a meditation session with 4 of our Critical Thinking Program teens, Dinora, Saul, Jessica (hidden) and Grecia.**

Some of our staff members, friends and other collaborators of the Integral Heart Foundation from Antigua wanted to also share this day with us. There were four in total. And, Marisol, a local Guatemalan and one of our team members who is 28 years old, meditated with us for the first time! At the end of the meditation she was complaining because she said that her period was shorter than she had thought all the other sessions were (she was playing traffic cop all day getting kids and adults from the waiting area, our garage, to the meditation room!).

Marisol's session was the same length as the others even though it seemed short and sweet to her! She said that she couldn't remember the last time in her life she felt such peace.

She was, of course, a little afraid at the beginning and felt some resistance. Then

she remembered the words that Jeff offered her before sitting: “Whatever appears is not important, just let it go.” She followed his instructions when resistance arose and all of a sudden a whole new world of joy unfolded for her. There were no problems, ex-husband, financial issues or worries, just being. When we met with her again the next morning, her first question was: “Can I do this on my own? Because I want to be able to have such an amazing experience again.”



Jeff seen here with Marisol.

Thank you for reading,

Debora Prieto

Co-Founder

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<http://www.integralheartfoundation.org/ways.of.giving.htm>