

Who are all those people driving by in those cars Charlie Brown. / Those people are going to work. / Work! / They used to wait for the school bus like we were doing. / Now they have to go to work, everyday for the rest of their lives. / Good grief, who's idea was that?

Shinzen used to say, "After a retreat you will have either, After Burn or After Glow."

1. One spiritual teacher says, "I often tell people to plant the seed for their life after retreat while they're in the retreat. Let the tools and the prayers get planted in you so the mindfulness can take over whether you're in a silent retreat or standing in line at Von's Supermarket. Once you have the means to be guided from the inside out, you can have presence and quiet anywhere."
2. You are not the same person you were at the beginning of the retreat, so don't try to be. Another spiritual teacher says, "I like to tell people, 'When you go on retreat, you don't ever come back!' I don't mean don't physically come back from the retreat. You physically come back, of course, but you may find something during retreat. Whether it was truth, peace, freedom, love... if you maintain the same focus in your everyday life, and keep it in the forefront of your consciousness, it will transform you completely."
3. Another mindfulness teacher said, "The reintegration process can be challenging and somewhat confusing. I try to make sure people are grounded in their senses before they drive off so they don't become dangerous on the road." / When you walk out of the meditation hall for the last time, pace yourself... Stop and look at the sky, smell the air, or touch

a tree as you walk by.

4. When you shift out of retreat and back into your life, you will likely default back into some habits and patterns that weren't relevant. Another teacher says, "Life on retreat is very simple, for the most part. So I understand after retreat, when life gets complicated, it's easier to fall back into conditioned patterns, but this is another opportunity to be awake and mindful." When you see places in your life where you may previously have been on autopilot, it's a chance to bring awareness to those moments. In this way you can use your transition to learn more about your patterns, bring kindness and compassion to yourself, and possibly make changes in areas of your life you'd like to change.

5. While this isn't always possible, it's ideal if you can give yourself some time to slowly re-integrate. "The world can seem very loud and fast after retreat. There are so many stimuli now, and the rapid pace of life can make you feel like you need to get onboard really quickly." "The first few days can be disorienting. When you go back to work, try to minimize the number of meetings and if you can, avoid scheduling a lot of social activities for a week or so."

Marcus Aurelius 121 A.D. – 180 A.D. / "Concentrate every minute like a Roman – like a man - on doing what's in front of you with precise and genuine seriousness, tenderly, willingly, with justice. And on freeing yourself from all other distractions. Yes, you can – if you do everything as if it were the last thing you were doing in your life, and stop being aimless, stop letting your emotions override what your mind tells you, stop being

hypocritical, self-centered, irritable. You will see how few things you have to do to live a satisfying and reverent life?"