

Instructions

TLDR;

Open Word. Pop these lines at the top of the document.

```
---  
layout: post  
title:  
date: 2015-mm-dd 19:30:00  
leader: Name  
---
```

Customise the post headers referring to Appendix 1 for guidance.

If you have a reading pop it below the header content (the dashes), and format. See Helen's kramdown cheatsheet for help or use html. Check the `_posts` folder for past examples.

Adding a post

The post is made up of two parts. The header, between the three dashes, and then the reading.

The header — post fields

The header is everything between the three dashes at the top of your post. This must sit at the very beginning of the page. This includes the fields used to format the post and some of the information is recycled on other pages. **Warning!** The three dashes at the beginning and end are needed to make the posts work. Make sure they are included and make sure they didn't turn into en dashes in Word!

All post fields — the value to the left of the colon — are in lowercase. **Warning!** If the text on the left of the colon is misspelled, even with an uppercase letter, the website won't use the information you provide on the right. Because of this, please double or triple check your post.

Basic fields

These are the basic fields you need for your post. You could copy these out as a starting point.

```
---  
layout: post  
title:  
date: 2015-mm-dd 19:30:00  
leader: Name  
---
```

There is a table in Appendix 1 with more fields you can add to customise your meeting and reading.

A word about readings — attribution

You do not need to add a reading but if you'd like to add a short reading of a few pages, this would make a nice resource on the website. Copy the reading text into the area below the three dashes.

Please check that we can include the reading online. Most Dhamma readings are free to distribute, but if in doubt please gain permission from the author before posting on our website.

Note the author and the website link where you found the reading.

Formatting the reading

The reading title is captured in the post header and so if you include it at the top of the reading as well, it will appear twice online.

Most of the formatting for the website is done behind the scenes. This helps to keep the formatting consistent across the website and prevent the site from looking like a dog's dinner.

If you reach for the bold button in Word — **beware!** Any formatting you add via Word will be stripped out.

You can dump your text into an online editor and [format as if it were Word](#).

Otherwise we need to use kramdown to format the reading for the website. It's not difficult and if you know HTML you can use that instead or as well. I've added a cheatsheet below and if you want to know kramdown inside and out, there is a not-so-quick "quick reference" [here](#).

A word about style:

- Put Pali words in italics.
- Try and incorporate links into text, rather than putting the website link into the text. In the [Kalama Sutta](#) the Buddha gives some wonderful...
- Include headers and images to break up the text a bit.
- One space at the end of each sentence.

Saving your post

Save your post as 2015-mm-dd-title-of-your-meeting.markdown.

All lowercase. Dashes instead of spaces. File type: markdown.

If you can't do this in Word, try copying your contents to NotePad or TextEdit and saving from there.

Helen's kramdown cheatsheet

Italics

Bookend the text with asterisks

Text in italics

Bold

Bookend the bold text with a pair of asterisks.

****Some text I want to appear in bold****

• Bullets

Use an asterisk

* My bulleted item

Second level headers

Bookend your header with ##

##Second-level header##

Third level headers

Bookend your header with ###

###Third-level header###

Links

Put square brackets around the text you want to link and put the link after it in parenthesis.

[Amaravati Buddhist Monastery](<http://www.amaravati.org/>)

Images

A bit like a link but it starts with an exclamation mark.

![A description of the image](file name)

![Ajahn Sumedho and Ajahn Chah](/assets/sumedho.jpg)

Footnotes

Put the number or letter in square brackets and a caret before the number.

Add the footnote at the bottom and put the square brackets caret number combination with a colon immediately after.

Anapanasati^[^1]

^[^1]:Anapanasati: literally, 'mindfulness' (sati) of the in and out breath.

Quotes

Put a right angle bracket before the quote.

>"Kalamas, 'Don't go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical conjecture, by inference, by analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought, 'This contemplative is our teacher.'

APPENDIX 1				
field	example	format	mandatory	comment
layout	layout: post		yes	
title	title: Finding the writing question	Capitalise the first letter		Ideally no more than 60 characters. You can check the length here.
date	date: 2012-04-07 19:30:00	yyyy-mm-dd 19:30:00	yes	
leader	leader: Martin	First name only. Capitalise the first letter	yes	If you are leading for the first time, submit your bio and any contact details to Martin.
categories				Not in use, but you can add these if you like. We might use them soon/in the future.
meeting_blurb	On my last retreat I offered interviews with the retreatants – what I found that rather than ask questions about practice, most people wanted to discuss their problem. What can a teacher offer? Certainly not the solution. Only a way of understanding how we create problems, and how we can solve them creatively.			This is a space to write anything you'd like before the meeting.
keep_blurb_after_meeting	keep_blurb_after_meeting: yes			Decide whether you'd like to keep the blurb after the meeting has passed.
allow_comments	allow_comments: yes			Decide whether you'd like to give people the option to comment on the meeting or reading. We are using Disqus at the moment.
keep_blurb_after_meeting	keep_blurb_after_meeting: yes			
reading_webpage	reading_webpage: http://www.forest.com/a-very-long-reading.html	http://www.forest.com/a-very-long-reading.html		Must include http://

APPENDIX 1

field	example	format	mandatory	comment
reading_author	reading_author: Martin Evans	Capitalise the first letter of each name.		Use if you're including a reading below the three dashes. Check you have permission to use the article.
reading_snippet	reading_snippet: Does your happiness depend on having problems?			A sentence or two. Currently used for posting articles to Twitter. More uses planned.

A sample post

layout: post

title: The Buddha's smile

date: 2014-10-07 15:50:47

leader: Martin

keep_blurb_after_meeting: no

reading_author: Martin Evans

allow_comments: yes

reading_snippet: I want you to look at the Buddha's face. Can you see his smile? It is very subtle.

Why is he smiling? Is he experiencing a blissful meditative state? Or is it the smile of someone who is experiencing nothing?

When I was at school was told off for smiling. I was given a detention. And when I was in detention I was given another. I was still smiling. I was told to 'wipe that smirk off my face'. I didn't know it was wrong to smile until then. Most people love to see a smile. There is nothing more warming to the heart than to be met with a smile.

I want you to look at the Buddha's face. Can you see his smile? It is very subtle. Why is he smiling? Is he experiencing a blissful meditative state? Or is it the smile of someone who is experiencing nothing?

We can think that the Buddha's enlightenment is an escape from the world, an escape through meditation into a sublime state of existence. If we think that then we try to create this blissful state, through practicing some meditation technique, to develop concentration. But the Buddha rejected the path of concentration as leading to the ultimate goal in itself. He tried it and found it didn't lead to the end of suffering. He didn't deny the benefits of the concentrated mind, but he didn't find it led him to the experience of the truth of the way things are.

Again, we can think that it is a complete escape into nothingness or some sort of non-existence. Well, the Buddha was very clear that his enlightenment wasn't of this world nor another. It wasn't an escape of any sort. It was a release, a freedom, but not a rejection.

So what is this smile? I think it is the experience of now. The end of seeking for anything other than the way it is right now. In our worldly thinking we could say 'contentment with nothing', because the currency of our experience is the past and the future. There is no experience of now in the grasping mind.

I think this word now is a better word than mindful or aware. How is it right now? This question brings us into the immediacy of awareness or mindfulness, whereas to think of being aware indicates something we are going to be in the future. In the future we will never be aware, if we are not aware in the now.

It is the experience of laying down a burden. Doesn't that bring on a smile? Ah, yes, I know how that feels. When I walked from Lands End to John O'Groats I learnt all about how it felt to lay down my burden at the end of the day. The funny thing is, all we seek is contentment and that laying down of the burden is all it takes, that letting go into the way things are.

And it is the smile of compassion. Isn't that a mystery, where this compassion comes from when there is no one trying to be compassionate. We think that we need to become compassionate. We don't have the trust that compassion is the expression of our true nature. When this sense of me and mine dissolves, this delusion of self, then there is nothing hindering the expression of

compassion. And, although compassion is feeling the suffering of others, nevertheless, here it is in the form of a smile. But it is a slightly sad smile isn't it. A smile that embraces both happiness and suffering. Not an escape from the world, but a complete openness to the world.

##Isn't it wonderful, that the Buddha's smile is already within us, just waiting to get out.##

When we meditate we should cultivate this smile, we need to gladden the heart. I don't mean to become happy clappy people - Theravada Buddhism tends to appeal to people who like to take things seriously – but the right attitude to practice is a light heartedness. We shouldn't make it into a struggle. This is how people so often approach it, through their conditioning. They are looking for something to make a struggle out of. When you tell them it is their nature to see, they don't listen. They don't trust in their own ability to see the truth because it can't be like that, life has to be an endless struggle. So it is. It goes on and on.

If you follow a meditation technique, it can be something to create a problem out of, rather than a stick to support you in your practice. It really doesn't much matter what technique you use provided you have the right attitude to your practice. Certainly some techniques are more suited to certain temperaments. But the trouble is, what would be most helpful is generally the one we least want to do. This is certainly true of loving kindness (*metta*). It is most beneficial to people of an angry temperament, but the people who really like doing it are those of a lustful temperament. (We all have these temperaments but one tends to predominate. Our challenge is to bring them into balance). That's why it's a good idea to think of giving yourself up to the practice, rather than cling to what you like. After you have tried it, then you can see for yourself whether it was beneficial or not. This willingness to be open to whatever is in the moment creates a pliant mind, which of wonderful benefit, far greater than whatever benefit you could get out of any meditation technique.

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Another sample post

layout: post
title: Meditative enquiry
date: 2015-02-04 19:30:00
leader: Nick
keep_blurb_after_meeting: no
allow_comments: no

And another sample post

layout: post
title: Four Noble Truths
date: 2015-02-04 19:30:00
leader: Simon
meeting_blurb: Ajahn Sumedho's book *Four Noble Truths* is available to read online.
keep_blurb_after_meeting: yes
allow_comments: no
reading_snippet: I encourage you to try to understand *dukkha* — to really look at stand under and accept your suffering.
reading_author: Ajahn Sumedho
reading_webpage: <http://forestsanghapublications.org/viewBook.php?id=32&ref=deb>
