



Nalanda Institute
for CONTEMPLATIVE SCIENCE

COMMUNAL LEARNING AGREEMENTS

(This is a living document)

What is a contemplative learning community? We believe all people today need a kind of learning that goes beyond knowledge and skills to liberate and transform us as individuals and community members, so that we can authentically help liberate and transform others and the world we share. To that end, we weave the transformational approach to learning refined at Nalanda University in ancient India together with those of contemporary psychotherapy, therapeutic group process, and social justice work. We offer these guidelines to help students and faculty co-create the equitable, nurturing and empowering space we need to grow.

- **Learning to unlearn:** step back from what you think and know, stay open to make space for fresh context or alternative views that expose your biases and expand your awareness
- **Come with care:** check your moment-to-moment motivation for learning, and remember to acknowledge reactive emotions to try to engage from your wisest, most caring intent
- **Try to avoid blaming and yes/buts:** try to share your experience with sensitive care in ways that honor differences (both/and) and invite deeper dialogue
- **Speak from the heart:** allow your authentic self to emerge—speak from your immediate heartfelt experience, try to avoid sharing mere information, abstractions or speaking for others
- **Move in/move out:** to support the group, take space when you have something to share and step back to listen when its time to hold space for others
- **Learn from your impact:** when your words trigger someone of different background or experience, instead of clarifying your intention, listen and learn how you're heard
- **Keep confidentiality:** keep any private details you hear confidential, and bring only the lessons you've learned from it into your life and work
- **Engage respectfully:** get consent before you directly engage others to ask questions, share your thoughts, offer advice or physically touch
- **Name the elephants:** be brave in naming anything you sense or see happening (or not happening) that feels like it assumes or reinforces oppressive structures of privilege and power
- **Come mindfully:** bring your contemplative practice into every aspect of our time together so it can fully transform you, our community, and the world we share