

Finished Example: Rebecca's Mama Bodhi Retreat

I vow to turn the challenges of motherhood into fuel for my spiritual growth.
I vow to transcend the sufferings rooted in my ignorance. I will not pass their unconscious seeds to my baby.
I vow to ignite the awakened mind under all circumstances.

Retreat Period: 6 months – August 12, 2019, to February 12, 2020.

Daily Meditation: 20 minutes

Retreat Activities:

- a. Sitting meditation when available.
- b. Standing meditation while putting the baby to sleep.
- c. Walking meditation when taking baby on a stroll.
- d. Loving-kindness meditation while nursing.
- e. Body scan meditation while falling asleep (don't tally).
- f. Use a chant to put the baby to sleep.

Bonus Preparations:

Imperfections: I have “messed up” hundreds of times on the meditation cushion.

Circumstance: I had too much pain in late pregnancy to sit cross-legged like the “perfect meditators.” I couldn't even sit in a chair.

Solution: I sat on an exercise ball.

Circumstance: I was too sleep-deprived to meditate sometimes.

Solution: I slept and renewed the aspiration after some rest.

Circumstance: Emotional melt-down.

Solution: Embrace whatever comes and try to be mindful of the hormonal rush.

Changes and Adaptations: Impermanence is everywhere.

I used to chant a mantra when nursing, but then the baby got too distracted to feed when there is any sound. I switched to silently practice loving-kindness meditation during nursing.

Our Village: It's okay to let someone else, like daddy, other family members, friends, or paid nannies take care of the baby while you take care of yourself. Remember, it takes a village to raise a child.

- We built a family routine: I went into the woods to meditate and let my partner bond with the baby for half a day or so.
- I am a member of an online Dharma forum. Even when I don't have the energy to participate, reading other people's posting about related issues once in a while helps me feel connected.