

## Shamballa a point of light retreat

*specializing  
in  
Silent Retreats*

by Lynda Duffy

Shamballa, A Point of Light Retreat, was founded upon principles gained after spending several days in Silence. So often, we instinctively know we need to take time for ourselves to relax, rest and gather back those parts of ourselves that are lost to distractions – but somehow, we never seem to get around to it. How many times do we find ourselves lost in the mire of life and to situations that keep presenting themselves for us to resolve? More often than not, we choose what everyone else needs to be happy, forgetting what we need in order to feel loved or fulfilled.

Is this what life is all about? I often contemplated that question, and I found myself in serious need of answers shortly following the unexpected death of my father. I had always wanted to attend a silent retreat, but somehow, I could never allow myself to go there. However, my husband and daughter decided this was the perfect time, so they sent me to a silent monastery for 10 days of seclusion.

I remember how I felt that day as we headed toward solitude. My husband carried my bags to my room and I will never forget his words to me: “Well, there are certainly no distractions here!” “What does that mean,” I thought to myself. Well, it didn’t take long for me to find the answer to that question. What in the world was I going to do here for 10 days? There was nothing to keep me occupied, and nobody there needed me for anything.

So I started running from myself. I walked the grounds, spent time in the gift shop and generally did everything I could to escape the reason I was there in the first place. For three days, I found myself distracted by my thoughts, my feelings and my fear of seeing the truth. On the evening of the third day, I finally forced myself to settle down, and I began to pray and meditate. As I was mediating, all of the sudden I was there, in front of a door. I knew I was being given a choice, a chance to go into myself and look at what was being held within that kept me from being one with God. It was like choosing to jump off a cliff, but I did it and

when I did, my world began to open up. As I moved through my fears, I began to see what I kept so well hidden inside, buried so deeply that I had even lost the memory of what was there.

So much began to come forward during this time that I started to journal what I was feeling, allowing everything I had held so tightly to come freely forward. The light within began to awaken me to the awareness of where God truly dwells. I was so humbled by the presence of the God within that I felt my life changing, unraveling and releasing, allowing me to forgive myself and all I had held accountable for my life’s challenges.

Each day brought a greater opportunity to go deeper into the stillness, and deeper I went. I felt joy and peace, and I connected to God in a way I had never known before. I knew me and I knew the God of whom I was a part. Finally, I had made room for God to dwell within His own temple. Gratitude filled me to the point of overflowing, and I knew that I was changed forever.

After leaving my experience and knowing how Silence had changed my life and my relationship with God, I decided that if I was ever going to open a center for spiritual growth, it had to be founded on Silence and inner work. For years I had wanted to open a center,



*“Loving Moments” - Luxury Avion Camper*

*no Silence, no Peace; know Silence, know Peace.*



*Deep Step Falls*

but just couldn't find the right thing to offer. Silence was my answer, and I knew that providing a safe space for people of all beliefs to come and find themselves through silence was my calling.

*Shamballa, A Point of Light Retreat* was born, and with its birth came the fulfillment of a dream. Nestled in the heart of the North Alabama Mountains, *Shamballa* offers quiet spaces for meditation and contemplation with 55 acres of beautiful hiking trails, rocks, meadows

**Silence helps us slip gently into our hearts,  
reconnects us to our souls, and stands us in the  
inner direction of truth.**

and canyons. The sound of a rushing, cascading waterfall just outside your door and comfortable hammocks positioned along side the stream all add to the opportunity to relax, let go, be with your inner thoughts and rest in your God.

With all this, I knew we were on the right track, but I wanted to offer something more – something to help guests move more easily into those inner parts that are so tightly held. Having done energy-based healing work for more than 20 years and knowing its benefits, I knew without question that this work could benefit those who want to move deeper into those trapped emotions they are ready to surrender. Then I thought about yoga and how certain postures not only release the body, but also the energy that has become lodged in the muscles and tissues. Being a lover of a great body massage, I knew that had to be next on my list. The power of being touched and nurtured, then feeling the wonderful release as the body succumbs to relaxation, is a

beautiful marriage for those coming to do Silence. Lastly, as an avid meditator, I knew learning how to meditate would be a perfect way for guests to continue their journey inward, even after they left our facility. Meditation training emphasizes the importance of setting aside time each day for self and God to come together as one.

Many decisions affecting the Center were made for a specific purpose. For example, we began by using vintage Airstream and Avion campers for accommodations. We did this so that basic needs could be met comfortably, yet simply and without distraction. The campers were beautiful and comfortable but not overstated. With a fully equipped kitchen, bathroom, bedroom and living room, each provided all the comforts of home.

After a time however, it became obvious that the campers were not suitable for everyone. Many people had a preconceived notion about "camping" that all the photos in the world could not overcome, and the campers were

not handicapped accessible. Also, some people just wanted a romantic getaway with a loved one, and the idea of Silence didn't appeal to them.

To satisfy our expanding needs, this year we eliminated two of the Airstreams and added Angel's Rest Cottage. This is a 1700 square foot, two-bedroom, two-bath luxury cottage nestled on the side of a deep picturesque canyon. Angel's Rest is not your ordinary country cabin. It offers an added amenity not found anywhere else on the mountain—your own personal spa experience without leaving the property. Slip on your plush white robe, unwind and relax. Have a massage or better yet, have two; couples massages are now available. Take a yoga class. Learn how to be still and meditate, or experience an energy session. For a special treat, we also offer "dinner-in" baskets or a fully catered meal. Now you can have all this available where you stay. Indulge your senses; pamper

yourself and nurture your soul with some much needed down time.

With this unique combination of accommodations, nature and services, *Shamballa* provides the perfect place for anyone who wants to experience this kind of personal journey. Whether you choose to journey into Silence or just need to experience some inner *Peace*, *come give us a try. Call Lynda at 256-845-9126 or visit our website at www.APointOfLight.com.*



*Angel's Rest Cottage*