

passionate possibility

Q&A about women's retreats

Whether you're a first time retreat participant, a wanna-be or a veteran of many retreats, you'll likely find something of interest here. Some of the information is general, applicable to many different kinds of retreats. Some of it pertains only to Linda's retreats and is so noted. If you have questions that aren't answered here, just email or call!

1. What exactly is a retreat?

A retreat is time that you take for yourself, away from the concerns and routine of daily life. It can be a vacation, a renewal and reinvigoration of your spirit, a place to challenge yourself, a place to be alone or a place to be surrounded by like-minded people. Or it can be a combination of all of these.

Linda's retreats are a combination of transformational-spiritual and vacation-spa retreats. The spiritual component is a universal approach to Spirit, not a religious one. The spa aspect emerges in full body massages and fresh flowers – you are pampered! And there are a lot of group processes that open the way to self-discovery. You'll have free time, too.

2. Why go on a retreat anyway?

So many of us find ourselves taking care of everyone else – that caregiver role – that we neglect the urgent call to connect with ourselves. People and Situations insistently cry: "Feed Me!" And we oblige. It's easy to lose yourself.

But taking time for you isn't a luxury. It's a necessity. Recharging our own batteries allows us to go back to the People and Situations in our lives with renewed energy. Or sometimes to decide that those particular People and Situations aren't really in our own best interest. Perhaps it's time for a change. Big. Or small.

3. What can a retreat do for me?

It carves out some time to simply BE instead of DO-DO-DO.

It encourages you to take a walk with no particular destination.

It gives you have a chance to breathe deeply and let your shoulders sag, releasing the tension you hold there.

It allows you the rare opportunity to find yourself again.

And at Linda's retreats, it gives you a week off from housework—no cooking, dishes or cleaning!

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4. But I can do all that at home. Why spend money on a retreat?

How wonderful that you have a sanctuary at home where you can revitalize regularly!

A retreat is a little different. It is continued renewal. That's why Linda's retreats are residential (to get you out of your day-to-day environment) and span at least five or six nights (for real transformation).

"My experience of retreats for myself and for the women who come to Passionate Possibility retreats is that it takes a day or two to really get comfortable in this new space, the retreat center, your bedroom, the other women," says Linda. "Then it takes a couple of days to come back to yourself, allow yourself to realize that there's nowhere to go, no phone calls to make, no alarm clocks for work. The last few days of a retreat are when the real transformation happens. Those are the magical days!"

5. What do you DO all day long? Is it weird stuff?

Not unless you consider hugs and acknowledgment and deep connection "really weird." But no, we don't walk over coals or jump into icy water or use mirrors in revealing ways (one retreat participant asked about that one!). It's mostly being together in a circle, spending time alone and with the group and gaining a strong new support system.

Each retreat has its own unique flow, but generally, the first couple of days we participate in some exercises and processes that allow everyone to settle in and get acquainted. As the week goes on, the retreat gets more personal. Women share their stories, write, paint, dance, sing, plant, laugh, cry.

6. But I'm not a writer or a dancer. I'll embarrass myself.

No worries. Retreat dancing is simple and even the most non-rhythmic among us can stomp along. And you needn't share any of your writing or artwork or even your thoughts unless you choose to. Linda's retreats are all about acknowledging you, not about shaming you. You cannot do it wrong! You can only do it right!

7. What if I don't want to participate in some activities?

Your fullest retreat experience will be realized if you participate in the entire program. The retreat builds on activities from one day to the next. If you sit out an activity, you may miss exactly what you came to know/see/do.

That said, retreats are YOUR renewal time. What you do during the retreat should fit what you need most. *(continued on next page)*

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If what you desperately need is time alone, consider a personal retreat instead of a guided retreat. There are retreat centers that sometimes accept individual retreatants.

8. I am just getting through divorce/moving/losing my job/death in the family. I may cry. A lot.

Tears (a lot of them). Laughter (a lot of it). Silence. Raucous noise. Tenderness. Anger. Sadness. Delight. Joy. It's all a part of the retreat experience. And you won't offend a soul. "...who can tell when the well is really dry? Months? Years? Trustworthy women show up over and over, without a trace of resentment, ready to hug, bear witness, sit quietly, as we reweave, tear out and reweave again." from GirlTalk, copyright 2003 by Linda Roggli.

9. I'm really shy. I'm afraid I won't fit in.

You may feel shy at first, but the warmth and welcome of the group will put you at ease almost immediately. And there is plenty of time for solitude, so you have time to be quiet and calm.

The focus of all Linda's retreats is 100% positive acknowledgment; you'll be celebrated for exactly who you are—shy or extroverted. And Linda makes sure that everyone is heard, if they choose to be. There is no domination of the conversation or process by one person or group. The Standards of Presence, which are the foundation of Linda's retreats, simply don't allow for negative energy in the room.

10. I won't know anyone else, which makes me a little unsettled.

Completely understandable. We are all a bit nervous at the prospect of meeting a roomful of new people, especially far from home, having spent good money to attend. "Did I make the right choice?" we ask ourselves. Psychologists call that post cognitive dissonance – second-guessing ourselves.

But frankly, your retreat experience will be even richer if you don't know anyone else. When you bring along a friend (which is just fine, by the way), you risk trying to maintain your image in her eyes.

When you come to Linda's retreats, come with the expectation that that you'll have NO expectations – no need to hang onto your old way to thinking or being, no need to maintain the facades. And for heavens sake, don't bring along a friend who doesn't know and love the real you – that would be silly (not to mention self defeating!). Know that Linda's processes break the ice quickly and allow you to feel comfortable in a short time.

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11. A friend of mine went to a retreat and loved it, but how can I be sure I'll have the same good experience?

That depends entirely on you. You create your own experience, you know. If you come in with a feeling of “prove this works” you'll probably leave disappointed – only because you haven't allowed yourself to open up full to the possibilities available to you. You've spent precious energy fighting the inevitable.

As a matter of fact, let's set the record straight right now: you get from Linda's retreats exactly what you give to them. Arrive full of excitement and intention to change your life and that is precisely what will happen!

12. My husband thinks the whole thing is silly. He thinks I should just stay at home and talk to him instead of a bunch of other women!

Which is why we won't be inviting husbands to our women's retreats! Or perhaps we should invite them for exactly the same reason! Seriously, many husbands or partners don't understand the necessity of spending time with other women who are supportive and acknowledging.

Family members and even friends can fall into a rut in the way they think about and talk to you. The point of a retreat is to decide whether the old patterns are still working for you. If you bring along the person who created the pattern with you, it's not so easy to look at the patterns. Ditto for talking to husbands or mothers or friends or even therapists (nothing wrong with therapists, mind you).

13. What will the rest of my family do without me?

To paraphrase an old disco song: “They Will Survive!” Unquestionably, they will be fine without you for a week. Yes, it's a challenge to find a child care provider or fill the freezer with casseroles. But it's doable. And your family may be a lot more resourceful than you believe. There are husbands, partners and children who rustle up dinner, take dirty shirts to the cleaners, wash their underwear and actually appreciate you MORE when you return.

It's a lot like taking a vacation from work – you work ahead a little bit before you leave and then you catch up after you return.

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14. Will I be really isolated? Will I be able to stay in touch with my family?

A retreat is separated from the world a bit, but it's not isolation. To the degree that you choose to be in touch, you can be. However, Linda strongly recommends that you check in only once a day at the most. If you can stand it, wait two or three days before talking to the people you left at home. And do NOT call the office! You're on retreat!

15. "Passionate Possibility" sounds physical, or worse, intimate – what does it mean?

We have been mistaken for a dating service occasionally, but if you've perused the website this far, you know that Passionate Possibility is about living life with passion and purpose, not about titillating physical possibilities! 'Nuf said about that!

16. Is it a cult? Will I get sucked in to something I don't want?

Absolutely not. The lesson here is that you are at choice 100% of the time. So getting sucked in isn't on the radar screen. And we're not a cult. We're women who want to keep growing, keep expanding and live life to its tippy-toe fullest and most magnificent!

17. I'm a Christian (or Jewish or Muslim, etc.) but these retreats seem like New Age to me. Will I be comfortable?

Whether you'll be comfortable is entirely up to you.

Linda will be happy to explain her take on the "New Age" moniker; the short version is that Linda embraces all religious and spiritual paths, while preaching none except plain old Pollyanna Positivity. That positive tone permeates the entire retreat, much to the surprise of the women who show up.

And yes, Linda's retreats are spiritual – God is mentioned, as is Spirit and the Universe and Allah, et al. But this is not hit-em-over-the-head religion. It's soft, accepting spirituality. Some people would think that Linda's retreats are secular. But EVERYTHING is spiritual.

Whether we mention it or not.

18. I really don't think I can afford it right now.

Spending \$1000+ on a retreat can seem daunting (or not, when you consider it includes food and your room AND the retreat) but the real question is: can you afford NOT to be at the retreat that is calling your name?

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What price tag would you put on becoming the woman you know you were meant to be? What's the price of freedom? And more importantly: WHEN will you be able to afford it?

Women who come to Linda's retreats have concocted creative solutions to finding the money. One woman took out a loan for her airline ticket and rental car. And the interest she now reaps from her rich experience is absolutely priceless.

19. I just can't get away for a week. Aren't there shorter retreats available?

Yes, Linda offers a couple of weekend retreats and even a day workshop. But if you are really looking for a retreat, consider the advantages of spending many consecutive days taking care of YOU. It's probably the nicest gift you can give yourself!

And next year, consider planning your vacation as a retreat—well worth the time and effort it takes to arrange something for YOU.

20. What if I want to leave early? Will I get a refund?

You may choose to leave early, although Linda strongly discourages it. The very thing you're looking for might be in the very next process or the next session or the next day. But you are a grown woman. You make your own choices. And no, there is no refund for leaving early.

21. I don't want to drive from the airport. Is local transportation or a carpool provided?

The price of Linda's retreats does not include transportation. However, retreat participants may check the website to work out companion travel arrangements.

22. I have special nutrition and dietary needs. Can you provide food just for me?

Linda is quite comfortable working with the kitchen of the retreat center to make sure that all the women are well fed. That includes dealing with allergies and food sensitivities. Never fear – you won't go hungry!

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23. I have mobility problems. I can't walk far and need a wheelchair. Can I still attend?

Some of the Linda's retreats are wheelchair accessible. For instance, Pelican House is completely handicapped and wheelchair accessible. Some retreat centers are not as accommodating. Kolealea Retreat Center on Maui has stairs and narrow bridges. It's charming but not perfect for wheelchairs.

Linda works hard to make your retreat experience rich and full, including adapting exercises and activities to meet your needs. If you have concerns about a specific retreat, just talk with her.

24. I don't know quite how to ask this without sounding...well, strange. But here goes: it's an all-women's retreat. Does that mean it's for lesbians?

It's about time you asked that question! Let's clear the air (again). Any woman - ANY WOMAN is welcome to attend Linda's retreats. And yes, lesbian women have been at the retreats - Linda advertises the retreats as "lesbian friendly." But it's not a lesbian retreat.

For Pete's sake - self development and personal growth are for EVERYONE. The focus here is not on age (age range is from late 20s to 80s), nor sexual orientation (gay, straight or bi is fine) nor geographic location (women from Seattle to Toronto to Sydney have come to Passionate Possibility retreats).

So, if you are gay, you're welcome. If you're not gay, you're welcome. But if you have strong feelings against one of those two, better find another retreat.

25. What are the right reasons to go on a retreat?

To find yourself. To love yourself more. To replant your dreams. To connect with other women. To tie a knot in the end of your rope so you can hang on a little longer. To expand your view of yourself and the world. To rest, renew, reinvigorate your life To (you fill in this blank with your own reasons). All of them are "right."

26. Bonus question: What are the right reasons for going on a retreat for YOU?

Call Linda to discuss YOUR retreat - 919-309-9300

Plant your dreams; miracles will grow!