



RECOVERY DHARMA

Third Foundation of Mindfulness Meditation: Mindfulness of Mind

Sit in a comfortable but attentive posture, allowing your back to be straight but not rigid or stiff. Feel your head balanced on your shoulders, allow your face and jaw to relax, with arms and hands resting in a comfortable position.

Be attentive to what's happening within your own awareness, right here and right now, without judgment.

As you sit, begin to notice the sensations of breath. Pay attention for a moment to how your abdomen moves on each in-breath and out-breath, the movement of air through your nostrils, the slight movement of your chest and shoulders.

Find the spot in your body where the sensation of breathing is most vivid, whether it be your abdomen, your chest or your shoulders, or the movement of air through your nostrils. Try to keep your attention at that spot.

As you breathe in, be aware of the in-breath; as you breathe out, be aware of the out-breath. Simply observe the breath going in and the breath going out.

You will notice your attention shifting away from the breath from time to time. It's perfectly normal for thoughts to wander into fantasies, memories, worries, or things you need to do. When you notice your mind has wandered, try to meet it with a spirit of friendliness. You don't need to do anything about it. There is nothing to fix. Rather than forcing it, just try to allow yourself to become curious about what it's like to be breathing right now, and you'll find that the attention is naturally drawn back to the physical sensations of breath as it moves through your body.

[Three minutes of silence]

After building a foundation of calm attention to the breath, you may wish to expand your awareness to include the experience of the senses.

Are there sounds?

Are there sights—even from behind closed eyes?

Are there smells?

Are there tastes?

Are there physical or emotional sensations?

Allow the sensations to arise as naturally as possible. Stay with them gently; let them go as they pass. There is no need to chase or pursue them. Pay attention to how they change.

If, at any point, you find yourself being carried away by a particular experience, or you find yourself lost in thought, try to take your attention back to the breath, and then gently return to focusing on the flow of sensation.

[Pause]

As you pay attention to these changing sensations, try to be aware of the feeling tone of each experience. Are the sensations and experiences pleasant, unpleasant or neutral?

[Three minutes of silence]

It is important to our practice to become aware of the underlying moment-to-moment energy and attitude of the mind. We are used to running with our thoughts, being led by thinking, being dominated by our ideas and views. In this practice, we try to attain a more fundamental experience of mind, to become aware, without judgment, of the attitudes and tendencies that generate and condition these thoughts. We perhaps begin to sense that many of our thoughts are not so personal, that they are just happening without our involvement.

[Pause]

What is happening in the mind right now?

[Pause]

Is desire present? Are wanting, hoping, or longing present? How does the mind feel when it has this attitude?

[One minute of silence]

Is anger present? Is there irritation, fear or impatience? How does the mind feel when it has this attitude?

[One minute of silence]

Is there distraction, confusion? How does this feel in the mind?

[One minute of silence]

Does the mind feel spacious or contracted?

[One minute of silence]

Allowing your mind to be as open and relaxed as possible, notice how particular thoughts arise in the mind. Allow the thoughts to occur naturally, without judgment.

A memory may arise; or a judgment; or a plan. Simply become aware of each thought as it arises—and then let it go. Try not to engage with the content of the thoughts. Try not to be drawn into trains of memories, reasons, or explanations. Simply observe.

[Three minutes of silence]

Notice how much of the process takes place without your involvement. Notice how the mind has its own momentum, its own process of association, how thoughts themselves generate new and changing thoughts. Watch thinking happening.

[Two minutes of silence]

As this meditation comes to an end, recognize that you spent this time intentionally aware of your moment-to-moment experience, building the capacity for opening the senses to the

vividness, to the change, to the vitality of the present moment, expanding your skill to be curious about, and open to, whatever presents itself, without judgment.

Then, whenever you're ready, allow your eyes to open and gently bring your attention back to the space you're in.