



RECOVERY DHARMA

First Foundation of Mindfulness Meditation: Breath and Body

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 may 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?

[Three minutes of silence]

Allow these sensations to naturally arise and naturally fall away. Stay with these sensations gently and allow them to go as they pass. There is no need to try and control or focus on them.

[Pause]

You may notice that the mind attempts to interpret every sensation, to give it a label or name, to create a story about it. A sound in the room may remind you of some music, or you may notice a smell and start thinking or wondering whether it comes from a nearby kitchen. You may notice how the stories your mind creates can quickly hide the sensations that sparked them, how easy it is to be separated from the reality of present-time experience.

[Pause]

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 focus back to the breath, and then gently return your attention to the flow of sensation.

Rather than being drawn into the mind's stories and thoughts, try to remain attentively focused on the changing sensations themselves. Let the pure sensations fill your awareness.

[Three minutes of silence]

Let sound just be sound and taste just be taste. Pay attention to pure vision.

Allow yourself to be curious about the specific experience. What is the texture of this physical sensation? What does an emotional sensation feel like physically in the body?

Try to investigate the direct experiences of each sensation without resorting to interpretations and labels. There is no need to describe: simply observe and feel.

[Three minutes of silence]

Notice that the sensations appear and disappear, or simply change. Notice how the flow of sensations is constantly changing. Nothing stays quite the same; nothing is quite certain.

From moment to moment, everything in experience is changing. The senses are impermanent; what is sensed is likewise impermanent.

[Three minutes of silence]

As this meditation comes to an end, recognize that you spent this time being 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.