

MINDFULNESS OF THE FEELING TONE

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Find a comfortable way to sit. Adjust your posture so that your spine is erect without being rigid or stiff. Allow the rest of your body to be relaxed around the upright spine. Rest your hands in your lap or on your legs. Allow your eyes to gently close. Bring full attention to the physical sensations of sitting still.

Pause

Allow your breathing to be natural. Bringing attention to your head, release any tension in the face, soften the eyes, and relax the jaw. Scanning the body slowly downward, relax the neck and shoulders. Feeling the rise and fall of the chest and abdomen with the breath, soften the belly with each exhalation.

Pause

Bringing the attention all the way down through the body to the places of contact with the chair or cushion, allow your body to be supported by the seat you're on. Feel the pressure and density of the relaxed upright body sitting.

Pause

Bringing your full attention to the present-time experience, acknowledge the full range of phenomena that are happening in the moment. Thinking is happening; hearing is happening; seeing (even with the eyes closed), tasting, smelling, and physical and emotional sensations are all present.

Pause

Allowing all the experiences to be as they are, redirect your attention to the sensations of the breath. Let the other sense experiences fall to the background as you bring the awareness of breathing to the foreground.

Pause

Take a few moments to investigate where you feel the breath most easily (usually either at the base of the nostrils or in the rising and falling of the

abdomen). Find the place where you feel the breath coming and going, and use that as the point of focus. (It's best to choose one place and stick with it; don't jump back and forth between nose and belly. It is not necessary to follow the breath in and out.)

Three minutes of silence

Having established some ability to sustain attention, you can now begin to investigate the "feeling tone" of each experience. Whether you are paying attention to the breath or sensations in the body, each experience has a feeling tone of pleasantness, unpleasantness, or neutrality.

Pause

By focusing the attention a little bit more and opening your awareness to the subtle levels of pleasant and unpleasant tones of experience, you bring mindfulness to your craving for pleasure and aversion to pain. Feeling tone is the place where one gets attached or aversive.

Pause

While sitting with awareness focused on the body, refine the attention to the feeling tone of your experience. Investigate and inquire into the nature of the experience you are paying attention to. Is this a pleasant feeling?

Pause

Does it feel good?

Pause

Or is it an uncomfortable experience?

Pause

Are you resisting the present feeling?

Pause

Bring mindfulness to the feeling itself; see for yourself how you relate to pleasure and pain.

What does your mind do when the present-time experience is neutral?

Pause

Are you able to hang out with experiences that have no pleasure or pain associated with them? Or does the mind get bored and seek a pleasurable or painful memory or plan?

Pause

Continue training the mind in this way. Each time the attention wanders, gently return to the present moment and continue investigating your inner relationship to the pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral tone of each moment.

Three minutes of silence

When you become aware of attachment to a pleasurable experience, attempt to let go. Release the mind/body's grip by softening and relaxing into each moment.

Pause

Allow yourself to fully experience and enjoy the pleasure as it comes and goes.

Pause

When you become aware of aversion to an unpleasant experience, attempt to meet it with mercy and friendliness.

Pause

Allow the pain or discomfort to be present, and meet it with the understanding that it will pass if you just allow it to come through the mind/body without trying to resist it, suppress it, or control it.

Pause

When you are meditating on neutral phenomena, attempt to relax into the absence of suffering. Tolerate the mind's craving for pleasure and continue to enjoy the experience of just being.

Pause

Learning to enjoy the absence of pleasure and pain is key on the meditative path.

Two minutes of silence

(Ring Bell)