

Meditation in Everyday Life

Meditation is an opportunity to rest in what we already are—basic goodness, natural peace and clarity. We can learn to develop friendship with our mind, skill in how to work with speed and difficulty, and a sense of humor. The journey begins by acknowledging the agitation of the discursive, wild mind. The journey continues by slowly allowing that mind to relax within itself; we let go of struggling with ourselves. The way to become familiar with such relaxation is the simple, regular practice of sitting meditation. We learn to be kind towards ourselves. We train in being awake, feeling the breath in the present moment. Of course, this may prove difficult at times. We will sometimes resist practice altogether. This is part of the path. Be gentle and patient with yourself. When we find that we have wandered, we can always come back. Right now is always the perfect moment.

“Our life is an endless journey; it is like a broad highway that extends infinitely into the distance. The practice of meditation provides a vehicle to travel on that road. Our journey consists of constant ups and downs, hope and fear, but it is a good journey. The practice of meditation allows us to experience all the textures of the roadway, which is what the journey is all about. Through the practice of meditation, we begin to find that within ourselves, there is no fundamental complaint about anything or anyone at all.”

—Chögyam Trungpa, *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*

Meditation Instructions

First, take your meditation seat with an uplifted and relaxed posture.

Rest in the present by feeling the body breathing in the present and feeling your emotions and perceptions in the present.

Feel whatever arises. When the mind wanders into the past or future, we simply and gently notice this. Do not judge yourself for thinking. Then we let go and return to the breathing in the present.

Posture

1. The spine is upright, with a natural curve.
2. The hands are resting on the thighs.
3. The arms and shoulders are relaxed.
4. The chin is slightly tucked.
5. The eyelids are half-closed, with a soft gaze.
6. The face and jaw are natural and relaxed.
7. If you're sitting on a cushion, the legs are loosely crossed. If you are sitting on a chair, keep both feet firmly on the floor.

The Logic of Placing the Mind on the Breath

- The mind is always meditating and placing itself on something
- Usually we take “me” (habitual, discursive mind) as the object
- In meditation we rest mind in the present by feeling the breathing
- We notice thoughts, let them go, and continually return to the breathing
- It does not matter if thoughts are “good” or “bad”
- We switch allegiance from the bewildered mind to the stable, clear, and strong mind
- We learn to rest in peace, we become familiar with basic goodness

Advice

Create a decent time and space for practice that will work in your life. Decide how long you are going to practice and stick to that period of time. Be realistic and honest, and know that there will be periods of time that are more or less busy in your life. Don't lose heart. The key to a successful practice is consistency. The way to be consistent is to enjoy the practice.

Key Points

Mindfulness: We are naturally mindful, and we can strengthen this capacity.

1. Familiarity—We know what the breath is.
2. Remember—We remember the breath, just like we remember our own face. Remember the fullness of the breath, the simplicity of the present.
3. Non-distraction—Even though thoughts arise, we stay with the breathing in a gentle and fluid way.

Awareness: We are naturally aware and awake.

Here, awareness means “presently knowing.” We know what is happening in our present experience. We know when we wander, and we know when we are present. Awareness simply notices and reminds us to apply mindfulness. Eventually, this present-knowing develops into insight and wisdom.

Obstacles and Antidotes

1. Laziness:

- a. Ordinary laziness
- b. Speedy busy-ness and procrastination
- c. Disheartenment

Antidotes: Trust—Aspiration—Effort—Suppleness

2. Forgetting the Instructions

Antidote: Remember the instructions!

3. Laxity: Mind is sunken in. Elation: Mind is agitated and moving out.

Antidote: Not too tight, not too loose. Apply awareness.

Enjoy Your Life!

