

PART 4: FOUR ELEMENTS

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Find a comfortable way to sit, close your eyes, and relax your body. Bringing attention to the sensations of breath, continue redirecting the attention to the breath each time it wanders. Try to be as friendly and kind as possible to your mind's tendency to wander.

Three minutes of silence

If you are new to meditation, continue focusing the attention on the breath.

Pause

If you feel ready, begin to expand the attention to the whole body. Bring attention to your posture. Feel the pressure of your body on the cushion or chair. Feel the contact points of your hands touching your legs or resting in your lap. Direct the attention to sensations of sitting.

Pause

As we direct mindfulness to the body, we begin to understand that all that is being experienced here, in the body, are the four elements. With each breath, we experience the air element.

Pause

Warmth or coolness in the body directs us to the experience of the fire element.

Pause

Saliva in the mouth, blinking of the eyes, and beating of the heart are the water element.

Pause

And the contact with the chair, cushion, or footstep draws our attention to the earth element.

Pause

This body, when investigated, shows us that the skeleton is earth, and the skeleton is surrounded by water-based muscles and organs. The muscles and organs are warm; we have a natural fire inside. And the body is a porous, breathing organism. Not only is air entering and exiting through the nose and mouth. The skin itself is constantly breathing.

Pause

Sit in meditation and observe closely all aspects of this body. Name what element you are being mindful of in each moment. See if you can find any part of the body that is not of the four elements.

Three minutes of silence

Perhaps you will speculate about the experience of thought or emotion being nonmaterial. And although from one perspective this is true, it is through the four elements that we have a brain and heart to give rise to thoughts and emotions, so technically, they are part of the four elements too.

Pause

This is what it is like when all four elements come together in the form of a living human body.

Pause

The body experiences emotions, the mind experiences thoughts, and they both experience pleasure and pain.

Two minutes of silence

(Ring Bell)