

Mindfulness of the Mind

Part 1: Process

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.)

Pause

While you are training the mind in present-time awareness of the breath, with the mind's almost constant wandering and returning, it is important to bring a quality of kindness and understanding to the practice.

Pause

Try to be friendly toward your experience. Of course the attention wanders. Try not to take it personally; it's not your fault. That's just what the untrained mind does. It will take some time and perseverance to train the attention to stay with the chosen object of awareness.

Three minutes of silence

From the foundation of present-time investigative awareness that is infused with the intention of kindness and understanding, you can turn your attention on the mind itself.

Pause

After having established awareness of the breath/body and the feeling tone of the present moment, expand the attention to the process of the thinking mind. Observe the arising and passing of thoughts.

Pause

Allow the awareness to be expansive: try not to get caught in the content of the thoughts; let go of the need to solve any problems or make any plans. Just relax into the present-time awareness of thoughts coming and going.

Pause

Break the addiction to the contents of and identification with your mind. Meditate on the mind as a process. Each thought is like a bubble floating through the spaciousness of awareness. One may contain a plan, another a memory, and yet another a judgment or emotion.

Pause

Allow each thought to pass without getting into the bubble or floating off with it.

Three minutes of silence

Until the meditation practice has matured, you will get seduced by the thinking mind over and over, floating off into a plan or memory that feels too important to let pass. Or all of a sudden you will have what seems like the most important revelation or inspiration.

Pause

This is the natural process of training the mind and transforming your relationship to the contents of your mind.

Pause

As with the breath, simply let go and return to the present over and over, bursting the bubble and redirecting the attention to the process again and again.

Pause

If there is a foundation of attention that is concentrated and stable, you may be able to experience the completely impersonal phenomenon of the proliferation of thoughts.

Pause

You may see that one thought that arises leads to the next and the next

and the next, until all of a sudden the mind is off in some fantasy, each bubble giving birth to the next.

Two minutes of silence

(Ring Bell)

Part 2: Content

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 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 establishing 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, unpleasant, or neutral feeling?

Pause

Having establishing awareness of the breath/body and feeling tones of the present moment, after expanding the attention to the process of the thinking mind and observing the arising and passing of thoughts, bring attention to the contents of each mind moment.

Pause

Know directly the truth of each thought. Be aware of each memory as a memory, and when a plan arises in the mind, know it as a plan—perhaps

noting “past” and “future.”

Three minutes of silence

Be aware of the arising of all emotion. If fear, anger, sadness, love, caring, envy, empathy, or any other feeling arises, experience it directly; know that it originated in the mind and has manifested in the body as well.

Pause

You may see that fear is an underlying motivator for much of the contents of the mind. See for yourself what is true about your mind.

Pause

Know each experience as it is. Observe the tendency to avoid, suppress, ignore, or resist the unpleasant thoughts, and recognize that as aversion.

Pause

Observe the tendency to cling, crave, and feed the thoughts that are pleasant or that you feel will lead to more safety or happiness, and know that experience as attachment.

Pause

Watch the thoughts. Know the thoughts. But don't get involved.

Three minutes of silence

(Ring Bell)