

## Three meditations- 3 Minute Breathing; Eating and Walking.

### **3 MINUTE BREATHING MEDITATION**

Settle into your chair. Sitting forward away from the back of the chair so that your spine is gently but firmly holding the weight of your upper body.

Let your shoulders fall into a natural position and place your hands where they feel most comfortable.

You are upright but sitting loosely, not tight or rigid. Loose and alert.

Notice how your tongue is sitting in the mouth- let it rest lightly against the roof of your mouth- or wherever it feels comfortable.

Notice how your body feels on the chair; weight; touch of it; the sway or stillness of it; the sensation in or on your skin. Just take a moment to notice.

Now draw your focus gently to the breath. Notice the flow and ebb of your breath as it moves into to your body and out of your body. Don't force the breath, just let it flow naturally.

Notice any tension in the body and breathe gently into any area of tension; and in releasing your breath release the tension; let it go.

Notice where the in breath ends and the out breath starts- the turning point of the breath

Is your mind wandering? Notice, without judgment, where it has gone, return to focus on the breath, bring it back to the breath- just remember that it is natural for the mind to wander.

Try and notice where your breath is in your body- chest, throat, nostrils, or abdomen.

And feel the sensation of your breath one moment at a time as it rises and falls. Releasing any tension as it goes. Imagine the breath as a warm healing flow radiating outward from your centre. Feel the flow as you breathe in. Follow it as it enters, flows into the lungs and is released back out of your nostrils or out of your mouth.

As we approach the end of this exercise offer appreciation to yourself for this practice; notice any ease it has brought with it or any difficulty. Appreciate the time you have given to just be curious about yourself.

### **MINDFUL EATING MEDITATION**

Eating meditation is among the simplest, and most profound, of mindfulness practices.

Begin by selecting a piece of food. A bit of fruit or vegetable is good. Take a moment to focus on the object before putting it in your mouth.

We will use four levels of focus for our attention.

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1. First, on the level of the body, you might feel the food with your fingers, or just gaze at it with focused attention. What does it feel like, or look like? Allow yourself the pleasure of being entranced by this object -- most food is quite beautiful, look for what is delightful -- feast with your eyes. Now turn to smell, and consume the aroma. Notice what effects doing so has on your body.

2. "Check in" next with the heart. What desires do you have? Are you hungry? Nauseated? Thankful? Or, repelled? Whatever the "feeling-tone" of this experience is, just note it attentively, without judgment; stay with it for a couple of breaths, and see if it shifts, or intensifies, or ebbs.

3. On the level of the mind, consider for a moment all of the people involved in bringing this food to you. Farmers, truck drivers, factory workers, storekeepers -- there are hundreds, if not thousands, of people whose labour created the simple occasion of this food arriving in this moment. Take a moment to consider them; imagine what they look like, how hard they are working to support themselves and their families, the economic system that creates the conditions for their labour. Does this reflection colour or effect the way you see this piece of food? Does it conjure up any fresh sensations or associations?

4. And, on the level of the soul, consider all the conditions necessary to have created this food. The four elements of fire (sun), water, Earth, and air; the genetic information in the plants (or animals), you are holding a small storehouse of the sun's energy, and water from a cloud. Allow the poetry of this simple piece of food to be felt, in your body. Try to do this with sincerity, but if you feel disconnected then notice that too.

5. Then -- finally! -- place the food in your mouth. Before chewing and swallowing, experience the tactile sensations of the food on your tongue, the tastes, the feeling of the mouth-watering. What happens to your whole body when you put the food in? Calibrate your sensitivity as finely and exquisitely as possible. See if the food tastes different in different parts of the mouth. Really give yourself a juicy, rich experience of this bit of food. You might keep your eyes closed for the duration of this practice, simply to focus your attention on what's going on in your mouth, rather than on other things.

6. Then, bite into the food and chew, trying to omit any automatic movements. When chewing, know you are chewing. You probably know the joke about "walking and chewing gum at the same time" -- this is the opposite. Do only one thing at a time. That way, the mind slows down, focuses, experiences.

7. Swallow after the food has been thoroughly chewed, probably twenty or thirty times (don't bother counting; it's not a quiz). See if the flavour changes -- some food really only comes alive after ten or more chews; some disappears. Finally, when you do swallow, see how far down your oesophagus you can still feel the food. Just relax in the physical sensations of eating.

8. As your tongue cleans your mouth after this mindful bite of food, try to maintain the attentiveness that you've cultivated; don't let it be automatic.

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I invite you to make eating meditation a regular part of your day, for forty days. See what five minutes a day, or one bite a meal, does for you, even if only for the duration of those five minutes. The results can be far out of proportion to the effort. People report deep relaxation, delight, insights into their personalities and needs, and immense gratitude.

Adapted From a Meditation by - Jay Michaelson

### WALKING MEDITATIONS

How to meditate while walking

Walking meditation can be just as profound as sitting meditation, and has the advantage of bringing the meditative experience into our activity. There are a number of different walking meditations. Our variation is informal and easy. It allows you to be more present in your body and in the present moment. The simple experience of alternating steps with the left and right foot naturally helps create a meditative state.

There is a tremendous richness of experience to become aware of as you walk. The body loves movement, and will reward you with pleasure if you pay attention to how it feels! So much of the time we are caught up in our mental worlds -- thinking of the past or future, planning, imagining... Paying attention to the body as you walk will help you to enjoy simply being alive. (Although there are sitting meditations in which you pay attention to the body, it is easier to do so when the body is in motion. This is another advantage of walking meditation.)

#### 1 Where and when

This meditation is best done outdoors. We recommend setting aside at least 20 minutes for your walking meditation, and not trying to combine it with anything else like going on errands or walking briskly for exercise. Let this be a walk just for meditation so that you can sink into the experience with your undivided attention!

#### 2 How to start

Before starting to walk, spend a little time while still standing still. Allow your awareness to be with your body. Take some deep breaths, inhaling deep into the belly. Put your full attention on the sensation of breathing. Then allow the breath to return to normal and notice it going on its own for a little while. Now bring your awareness to your body, noticing

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how your body feels as you are standing, and becoming aware of all the sensations going on in your body.

#### 3 Now begin walking

Walk at a relaxed, fairly slow but normal pace. Pay attention to the sensations in your body as you walk. It is natural to find your attention drawn to the sights around you as you walk, but keep bringing your attention to what is going on internally.

The idea is to have your attention on the physical experience of walking. If the mind starts getting caught up in thoughts, easily bring your attention back to the experience of walking. Notice how the body feels in great detail as you walk. The entire body is involved in the act of walking -- from alternation of the left and right foot to the swinging of your arms and hips.

#### 4 Notice how the soles of your feet feel

The contact they make with your socks or shoes, the textures of the fabrics touching them, the way they feel as they bear the weight of your body and the sensations in them as your walk along. Feel the entire foot, being aware of how it moves as the heel is placed on the ground, and then the movement rolls to the ball of the foot and toes. Notice how it feels as the foot lifts and moves forward. Allow your awareness to move up through every part of the body, noticing the sensations as you walk. Gradually scan all parts of your body as you bring your attention to the ankles, skins, calves, knees, thighs, hips, pelvis, back, chest, shoulders, arms, neck, and head.

When you become aware of tension anywhere in the body, let it go. Allow that part of your body to relax. Allow your ankles, belly, shoulders, arms, and neck -- all of your body -- to relax. Let your hips swing loose. As you do this, the walking will become more enjoyable.

You can scan your body randomly, moving your awareness from place to place in your body, or you can systematically scan your whole body going from the soles of your feet to the top of your head noticing the sensations of walking. The most important thing is to keep your awareness on the sensations in your body, easily bringing it back when your mind has wandered.

#### 5 Variation

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Keep your attention on the rhythm of the walking -- the alternation of left and right foot. Simply notice the experience of left-right-left-right motion. Keep bringing your awareness back to this experience when the mind wanders in thoughts or distractions of the environment.

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