

November Introduction to Meditation Class 3 Homework
Sunday November 17, 2013

- a. *Dr. Hanson writes that when we get our needs met our brains are usually in the “Green Zone” of peace, contentment and love. Conversely when those needs are frustrated our brains enter the “Red Zone” of reactivity. In terms of our needs for avoiding, approaching and attaching - the mind is colored by fear, frustration and heartache. Reflect on your experience of getting your basic needs for safety - security, satisfaction - contentment and connection - love. If you are fortunate enough to be living in the Green Zone most of the time, you can spend some time really taking in the goodness of this blessing. On the other hand, if you have regular experiences in the Red Zone - you could consider what might be the antidote - to fear, frustration, greed or heartache. You can adapt your practice and life choices to give yourself this good “medicine.” The antidote to fear is a feeling of peace or safety, the antidote to frustration or greed is contentment. And the antidote to heartache is feeling loved and loving. What quality would be healing for you at this time in your life?*
- b. *Continue to practice 5 minutes of relaxed “body breathing” either sitting or lying down. Body breathing is simply rotating your awareness through your body as you are aware of breathing. You can start with your feet and scan up or start with your head and scan down.*
- c. *Once your body is relaxed and your mind is calm, practice 10-15 minutes of formal sitting meditation. In formal sitting spend 10 minutes to review the 6 points of posture and following your breath. When your mind wanders simply notice mind wandering and come back to attending to your breath. Use concentration enhancement tools as needed - if you choose one try to stay with it as opposed to going from technique to technique. You can try framing your experience in terms of the four foundations of mindfulness.*
 - i. *Awareness of the body (including the breath & posture)*

- ii. *Awareness of feelings: pleasant, neutral or unpleasant*
- iii. *Awareness of thoughts/emotions*
- iv. *Awareness of mental objects (could be desire, worry, fatigue, energy, tranquility, equanimity)*
- d. *Try adding 5 minutes to your formal sitting practice to include time for cultivating the inner state that could serve as a helpful antidote to a life situation or simply to cultivate a wholesome brain state.*
- e. *Continue exploring informal mindfulness practices like the “mindfulness bell.” Can you find a signal associated with something you do everyday that will remind you to pause and take 3 conscious breaths with mindfulness. Some people use washing their hands, or when they first place their hands on the wheel of a car.*
- f. *Try checking in and journaling - make this fun! Infuse your practice with inspiration and loving kindness. Reflect on what supports your practice and/or what obstructs your intention to meditate. For inspiration check out the suggestions below - find the resources that you resonate with in a heartfelt way and then continue to draw upon them.*
- g. *Suggested reading, listening & viewing*
 - i. *Listen or read the transcript of Sounds True interview with Dr. Rick Hanson “Self Directed Brain Change Part 2” at: <http://www.soundstrue.com/weeklywisdom/?source=podcast&p=8547&category=IATE&version=full&loc=weeklywisdom>*
 - ii. *Read the Tricycle Magazine interview with author Daniel Goleman about his new book “Focus: The Power of Paying Attention” at: <http://www.tricycle.com/feature/focus-power-paying-attention?page=0,0>*
 - iii. *Listen to author & meditation instructor, Michael Stone’s Guided Meditation: Grounding in the Body, Opening to Sound*

& Feeling Breath at: <http://www.centreofgravity.org/podcast/2012/2/19/guided-meditation-20-minutes.html>

iv. For more guided meditations and talks you can peruse the audio library at Dharma Seed <http://www.dharmaseed.org>

h. Recommended Books:

i. Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Every Day Life by Jon Kabat Zinn (available at King County Library)

ii. The Miracle of Mindfulness: An Introduction to the Practice of Mindfulness by Thich Nhat Hanh (available at KCL)

iii. Why Meditate? by Matthieu Ricard