

## Introduction to Meditation Class 33 Homework

### Homework

- a. Consider this inspiration from Alan Wallace: *The Platform for Mindfulness*

*The Buddhist teachings strongly emphasized settling the mind in state of equipoise before applying it to inquiry into nature of reality. Shamatha [mental state of equipoise] requires balance of 3 factors: relaxation, stability, vividness of attention. Relaxation is the primary quality to be cultivated & it must never be sacrificed for stability or vividness.*

*Mindfulness of breath is a shamatha method established prior to teaching the Vipashyana [insight] practices of mindfulness. . . . The first and primary factor in shamatha is profound relaxation of body and mind. Supine position is excellent for this particular practice.*

- b. Consider these encouragements from Insight Meditation Instructor & Cofounder of the New York City Insight Meditation Center, Gina Sharpe:

*Reflect on the nature of thoughts and emotions that you became aware of in practice. “ Don’t ever dismiss or override or ignore feelings that arise in the body. These will be your constant helpful companions in teaching what is possible, what is true . . . don’t bypass emotions, feelings and thoughts they are your helpers and friends . . . There is nothing in your experience that is not legitimate or capable of being known, embraced or understood.”*

- c. Give yourself a daily allowance of 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.
- d. Once your body is relaxed and your mind is calm, take some time to think about the most important benefits you’d like to realize from practice - your heart felt aspirations. Then let go of your questioning & begin stilling your mind.

- e. *Practice 10-15 minutes of formal sitting meditation. Be guided by the three essential qualities: Relaxation, Stillness & Vigilance. 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. Intentionally settle your body, mind & speech.*
- f. *As you conclude your practice bring to mind your most meaningful aspirations & envision their actualization with the yearning: May these wishes be filled by the value of this practice, with great benefit for all.*
- g. *Continue exploring & incorporated informal moments of mindfulness throughout your day. Be particularly attentive to body signals. Use them as an opportunity to pause, breathe, feel and allow.*
- h. *Try checking in and journaling - make this fun! Consider how your practice is benefiting you and your relationship to others.*
- i. *Suggested reading, listening & viewing*
  - i. *Read the incredibly touching and instructive article on walking meditation by Thich Nhat Hanh, "Walk Like a Buddha" at: <http://www.tricycle.com/practice/walk-buddha>*
  - ii. *Listen to the rich inventory of talks & guided meditations presented by B. Alan Wallace. You can start with the fundamentals & learn mindfulness skills by following the thread of his teaching at: <http://podcasts.sbinstitute.com/fall2012/page/10/>*
  - iii. *For more guided meditations and talks you can peruse the audio library at Dharma Seed <http://www.dharmaseed.org>*