

Introduction to Meditation Class 37 Homework

Homework

- a. *Consider this inspiration from Alan Wallace: Mindfulness of the Breath*

In balanced practice, we draw on wisdom to give meaning to our logical assessments. The skillful analysis reinforces our holistic vision of the world, invoking compassion. The union of wisdom & compassion is symbolized by the mudra of meditation in which the left hand cradles the right with the thumbs touching. Ram Dass's guru, Neem Karoli Baba, describes these two aspects by saying when we look at the world with the eye of wisdom, we see that we are nothing, when we look at the world with the eye of compassion, we see that we are everything. There is no reason to look with only one eye - so open both eyes.

- b. *Give yourself some time to contemplate and reflect on the questions in our loving kindness meditation:*

- 1. How do you envision your happiness & the fulfillment of your dreams? What kind of satisfaction, joy & meaning do you most deeply desire?*
- 2. How would you like to transform & evolve in order to realize the well-being that is your innermost desire? From what qualities of mind & behavior would you love to be freed? What qualities would you love to be endowed?*
- 3. What talents, abilities and aspirations would you most like to give those around you? What would ensure that your life is meaningful & fulfilled, giving you the deepest sense of satisfaction & no regrets?*

- 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*

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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 themes we used in class: Intentionally settle your body, speech and mind while focusing on the tactile sensation throughout the body. Once you've established this foundation of calm, narrow your attention to the sensations of breathing in your belly. Attend to the entire length of the in-breath, the entire length of the out-breath. Arouse your attention with the inhalation. Release thoughts with the exhalation. When your mind wanders simply notice, relax, come back to sensations in the belly and attend to the each in breath; each out breath.*
- f. *Incorporate of period of imagining with the practice of loving kindness.*
- g. *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.*
- 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. *Peruse the amazing library of posts & guided meditations on cultivating loving kindness offered by meditation teacher and author, Bodhipaksa, at: <http://www.wildmind.org/metta>*
 - 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>*