

Introduction to Meditation Class 39 Homework

Homework

a. *Consider this reflection from Alan Wallace: Mindfulness of Feelings*

Neurologist Antonio Damasio studies emotion, which is a broader category in modern psychology that includes feelings. His somatic marker hypothesis states when we experience mental state with an affective quality such as pleasure, pain, happiness, sadness, anger, fear or disgust we'll feel a correlated sensation in the body. We may be able to pinpoint these somatic sensations in the gut, heart, throat or head. He claims experience of an emotion is always accompanied by somatic, tactile perception. But the sensation and emotion are not the same and detecting the difference between the two requires some finesse.

b. *Give yourself some practice time exploring the "somatic markers" of your mental states. How are mental states manifesting as sensation, tactile perception in the different areas of the body?*

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 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*

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back to sensations in the belly and attend to the each in breath; each out breath.

- f. *Incorporate of period of attending to sensation and co-arising feeling. Try to refrain from embellishing your experience with story.*
- 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. *Read OnBeing radio producer Krista Tippett's observations about the "mind-body" relationship, "The More Alert We Are in Our Bodies, The More Compassionate and Connected We Become to the World Around Us at:*<http://www.onbeing.org/blog/more-alert-we-are-our-bodies-more-compassionate-and-connected-we-become-world-around-us/4636>
 - ii. *Explore this extremely helpful archive of guidelines & guided video instructions on walking meditation offered by meditation teacher and author, Bodhipaksa, at:* <http://www.wildmind.org/walking>
 - iii. *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/>
 - iv. *For more guided meditations and talks you can peruse the audio library at Dharma Seed* <http://www.dharmaseed.org> *and or D.I.Y. Dharma* <http://www.diydharma.org/about-us>