

## Introduction to Meditation Class 40 Homework

### Homework

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

*The goal of this practice is to differentiate the tactile sensations of the four elements - earth, water, fire and air from positive, negative, neutral feelings. A tactile sensation of solidity might arise due to bear hug from your loving grandfather or to a pickpocket's lunge. The resulting pleasant or unpleasant feeling is not in the sensation of the earth element itself. The intensity of sensation does not correlate with intensity of feeling. You might relish a soak in a hot bath and be disappointed with water is lukewarm, only to happily jump into much cooler water in a swimming pool. There is no direct relationship between the sensation of the fire element and feelings. or between sensations of fluidity and motion occurring in the body and our feelings. Pleasure and displeasure are not directly correlated with raw tactile sensations of the elements. Is this merely a conceptual distinction or can you observe it in your own experience?*

b. *Give yourself some practice time noticing how sensation and feeling arise. Notice, in particular, how you may be adding to the experience with your preferences. Notice how your likes and dislikes may give rise to clinging to or avoiding experience. They may even fuel the "stories" we tell about ourselves in kind of a "self making" or reinforcing activity. Experiment with letting those tendencies go and just stay with "raw" experience, nothing added.*

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.*

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- 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 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. *Listen or read the transcript of OnBeing radio producer Krista Tippett's interview with Thich Nhat Hanh "Mindfulness, Suffering & Engaged Buddhism" at:<http://www.onbeing.org/program/thich-nhat-hanh---mindfulness-suffering-and-engaged-buddhism/74>*
  - ii. *Read the "Seven Ways of Bringing Loving Kindness into Daily Life" by Bodhipaksa, at:<http://us6.campaign-archive1.com/?u=a40a67b0fc4912efde42b0140&id=f7392b01b8>*
  - 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*

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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>