

Introduction to Meditation Class 45 Homework

Homework

a. Consider this reflection from Alan Wallace: *On Creativity*

. . . Both shamatha & vipashyana can be useful in enhancing creativity, ingenuity, everyday problem solving . . . a rigid fixated mind is unlikely to discover a creative solution. By dropping the problem, we don't forget that a solution is needed. When the mind melts into fluidity . . . this is a deep spacious mode of awareness in which connections are formed more easily. A solution often comes to mind in a spark of insight.

The shamatha practice of settling the mind in its natural state is a marvelous technique for doing exactly this . . . Moving out of a relatively rigid mode, the mind releases fixed ideas, grasping, clinging & anxiety. The psyche settles down toward the substrate consciousness. . . . The substrate consciousness manifests as the psyche, providing a basis from which all subjective mental processes arise . . .

We approach a superfluid state of awareness saturated by deep knowledge that is implicit rather than explicit. Moments of inspiration give rise to flows of intuition & creativity.

As you go through your daily living observe your habitual response to difficulties - problems that don't seem to have an easily accessible "solution." Can you experiment with dropping your usual approach and relax around the issue? How can you allow it some space and time? Perhaps inspiration or intuition can arise in a posture of openness and "allowing."

b. 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.

c. 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.

- d. *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.*
- e. *Incorporate a period of settling the mind in its natural state. Intentionally shift the focus of your attention away from physical sensations and observe whatever is arising in your mind. As in class, when you find yourself caught up in a thought or memory, simply notice and relax. Return to the mental field and noticing whatever arises there, moment to moment.*
- 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. *Try checking in and journaling - make this fun! Consider how your practice is benefiting you and your relationship to others.*
- h. *Suggested reading, listening & viewing*
 - i. *Read this discussion with Anne Cushman (author & yoga instructor) on "The Yoga of Creativity" at: <http://www.tricycle.com/community/yoga-creativity>*
 - ii. *Listen to William Yensen's Guided Meditation "Creativity Activation & Chakra Healing" at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MCwX_zjgcdw*

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iii. 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>