

Introduction to Meditation Class 47 Homework

Homework

a. Consider this reflection from Alan Wallace:

The sequence of the 4 close applications progresses from coarse to subtle. Tactile sensations in the body are subtle but not difficult to observe. Bodily feelings of pleasure, pain & indifference are more subtle than tactile sensations but still relatively tangible. Mental feelings are more challenging to observe . . . continuing to sustain unwavering mindfulness of mental events, previously hidden layers of nuance are revealed. Sharpening the attention increases qualitative vividness, the detection of rarefied events & it enhances temporal acuity, the detection of very brief events. Phenomena of increasingly subtle intensity & fleeting duration become manifest.

Can you give yourself periodic moments of mindfulness in which you explore your experience as it manifests from “gross to subtle?” For example - spend 5 minutes sitting in your car before driving. Start by bringing your awareness to physical sensations, the more subtle feeling tone - pleasant, unpleasant, neutral - the more subtle mental events - emotions, thoughts, memories, imaginings - the even more subtle realm of the space from which all experience arises - the space your perceiving arises from. You can do this “mini” practice at any time or place - even multiple times a day.

- 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 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*

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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 exploring the tactile, feeling, mental and phenomenological fields of awareness as described above.*
- 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. *Suggested reading, listening & viewing*
 - i. *Listen to Alan Wallace discuss and guide the meditative practice of “settling the mind in its natural state.” This practice lies right at the cusp between shamatha (the cultivation of highly focused attention) and vipashyana (the cultivation of contemplative insight). It consists essentially of focusing single-pointedly on the space of the mind and on whatever thoughts, images, and other mental events arise within that field of experience. The quality of mindfulness cultivated in this practice is focused, spacious, discerning, and non-reactive. Through such practice, the activities of the mind gradually subside so that the mind comes to settle in its “natural state,” which manifests three core qualities: bliss, luminosity, and nonconceptuality. At: <https://www.upaya.org/2014/05/b-alan-wallace-05-02-2014-settling-mind-natural-state-part-1/>*
 - ii. *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>*