

Introduction to Meditation Class 49 Homework

Homework

- a. *Can you give yourself periodic moments of mindfulness that are entirely spontaneous. This can be a great experience of stopping - and often the resistance to stopping. If you can get over the resistance notice the rewards and the forms they take. Are you doing something that is nourishing? Compassionate?*
- b. *You can explore your experience as it manifests from “gross to subtle.” 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.*
- 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 back to sensations in the belly and attend to the each in breath; each*

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out breath. Incorporate of 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 the unedited interview with Esther Sternberg, “The Science of Healing Places.” Esther Sternberg is an immunologist and researcher who has been working with architects and other scientists to imbue the spaces we move through — the sights, sounds, and smells of them — with active healing properties. And Esther Sternberg says all of us can create surroundings and even portable sensations to manage stress and tap our brain's own internal pharmacies. At: <http://www.onbeing.org/program/the-science-of-healing-places/4856>*
 - ii. *Watch neuroscientist, Antonio Damasio's TED Talk. His research in neuroscience has shown that emotions play a central role in social cognition and decision-making. His work has had a major influence on current understanding of the neural systems, which underlie memory, language, consciousness. The Quest to Understand Consciousness At: http://www.ted.com/talks/antonio_damasio_the_quest_to_understand_consciousness*
 - 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>*