

Introduction to Meditation Class 50 Homework

Homework

- a. *Look for opportunities to plant stop signs in your life. When you stop - use this as an opportunity to be grateful. What are you grateful for in the moment? What is life offering to you in the present moment? What does it mean to truly accept this offering? How does it affect your life? Your family's life? Follow the seeds of this gratitude as they grow in your life - leaves of contentment, branches of joy, roots of peace.*
- 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*

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back to sensations in the belly and attend to the each in breath; each 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 Loving Kindness or “Metta” Meditation guided by Dr. Sylvia Boorstein. Dr. Boorstein is a founding teacher of Spirit Rock Meditation Center in Woodacre, California. Her books include That’s Funny, You Don’t Look Buddhist and Happiness is an Inside Job: Practicing for a Joyful Life. You can listen to her heartwarming interview about nurturing and being part of a family. At: <http://www.onbeing.org/program/listening-generously/124>*
 - ii. *Watch Brother David Steindl-Rast’s TED Talk. The one thing all humans have in common is that each of us wants to be happy, says Brother David Steindl-Rast, a monk and interfaith scholar. And happiness, he suggests, is born from gratitude. An inspiring lesson in slowing down, looking where you’re going, and above all, being grateful. Want to Be Happy? Be Grateful At: http://www.ted.com/talks/david_steindl_rast_want_to_be_happy_be_grateful*
 - 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>*