

Introduction to Meditation Class 53 Homework

Homework

- a. Consider *On Being's* founder radio journalist Krista Tippett's description of the virtues of play:

I am surprised, and eventually convinced, by the amazing list of virtues Stuart Brown associates with play across the span of our lives, drawing on a rich universe of play study in humans and intelligent social animals. . . . It is established, Stuart Brown insists, that an actively playful life establishes the earliest sense of self; sustains trust; provides increased enthusiasm for effectiveness in learning; prevents violence; invigorates the body; lessens the consequences of stress; contributes directly to the capacity to approach and solve complex life problems; and rewards and directs the living of life in accord with innate talents.

Do you play? If so, how? If not, why not?

- b. *Look for spontaneous ways to incorporate brief periods of mindfulness through out your day. You can try using practices that are centered on breathing, movement, affirmations, nature. Whatever you choose - only be mindful of the single activity which you've chosen. Notice any agitation, impatience or judgment - try to stay with those feelings and just create some space around them - free of judgment.*
- c. *When doing a formal sitting meditation, 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 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.*

Introduction to Meditation Class 53 Homework

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. Incorporate of period of exploring the tactile, feeling, mental and phenomenological fields of awareness as described above.

- e. *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.*
- f. *Suggested reading, listening & viewing*
 - i. *Read “Life Ed: Making Meditation Part of Daily Life,” NBC news correspondent Maria Shriver’s interview with Dr. Richard Davidson a professor of psychology and psychiatry at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the founder of its Center for Investigating Healthy Minds. At: <http://www.nbcnews.com/feature/maria-shriver/life-ed-making-meditation-part-daily-life-n150701>*
 - ii. *Listen to “Play, Spirit & Character,” the amazing interview with Dr. Stuart Brown. Dr. Brown is founder and president of the National Institute for Play near Monterey, California. He is co-author of Play: How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul. At: <http://www.onbeing.org/program/play-spirit-and-character/143>*
 - iii. *Check out the resource section of the Center for Investigating Healthy Minds. Parents will be interested in the sections on Mindfulness in Education & Mindfulness with Children and Adolescents At: <http://www.investigatinghealthyminds.org/cihmWebLinks.html>*
 - iv. *See a summary of the Center’s current studies underway involving children, veterans, anxiety, depression & autism At: <http://www.mindful.org/mindful-magazine/tracking-the-skill-of-well-being>*

Introduction to Meditation Class 53 Homework

- v. *Check out the series of guided meditation exercises you can do with kids At: <http://www.themindfulword.org/2013/mindfulness-meditations-children/>*
- vi. *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>*