

Introduction to Meditation Class 55 Homework

Homework

a. *Waking Up Sensation with Movement Practice from Anne Cushman's Moving Into Meditation. You can do this practice lying down, sitting or standing. Begin anywhere in your body that you have some mobility - your left big toe, your right index finger, the tip of your tailbone - wherever is calling you. Let's start with your shoulder: Begin with arriving in your body. Spend 3-5 minutes exploring sensation within. Move your attention flow into your right shoulder. Inhabit your shoulder joint with your attention, fully taking up residence. Then begin to move your shoulder in a free-form nontechnical way. Roll your shoulder forward & back, up & down, in big & little circles & spirals. Sense the intricate dance of shoulder blades, upper arm bone, collarbone. don't worry if your mind isn't clear on the names or shapes of the anatomical structures. Create your own inner map based purely on sensation.*

Now let your shoulder relax, & invite your awareness to travel down into your elbow. Flex & extend the arm, waking up sensation in that joint. The range of motion of the elbow joint is less than that of the shoulder - does that mean the sensations are less vibrant as well?

Traverse your arm down into your wrist, Flex, extend, roll & sense from the inside what your wrist can do. Then continue to travel out through the hand, furling & unfurling the fingers like flower petals. Can you enliven every joint of every finger?

Now let the whole arm wriggle & writhe like a snake. Sense the arm extending from root deep in your heart, or even your belly, all the way out to the very tips of your fingers. Let the free-form movements heighten your ability to feel your arm. When you have finished, let the arm relax by your side. Sense the difference between that arm & the other.

From your right arm, move on to the left arm. Then continue to your legs: Is it easier for you to start your movement explorations with the hip? Or are your toes more accessible at first? Then instigate your

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spine, beginning at the tip of your tailbone or at your atlas vertebra, deep in your skull. What kinds of undulations & oscillations help you live inside your spine?

Continue this exploration until you have “woken up” your entire body with gentle, non demanding movement.

From here you are ready to flow into the rest of your day.

- 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. 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*

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these wishes be filled by the value of this practice, with great benefit for all.

- f. *Suggested reading, listening & viewing*
 - i. *Listen to “Yoga, Meditation in Action,” the On Being interview with Seane Corn. Sean is the National Yoga Ambassador for YourthAids & cofounder of “Off the Mat, Into the World,” At: <http://www.onbeing.org/program/yoga-meditation-action/248>*
 - ii. *Read Dale Wright’s article on generosity, “The Bodhisattva’s Gift” At: <http://www.tricycle.com/feature/bodhisattvas-gift>*