

GUIDED MEDITATIONS

FROM

AMARAVATI BUDDHIST MONASTERY
FAMILY EVENTS



Guided Meditations

The following meditations come from the Family events, that are held at Amaravati Buddhist monastery. They are contemplative in style, they are asking you to reflect on what you are doing. Each year there is a theme for the family events so most of these meditations have been developed with a theme in mind. The use of capital letters in the guided meditations below are aid, so that if you start to improvise as you read the main point is there. If people start giggling, embrace that in the meditation guidance:-

"If you start giggling: can you feel where the giggling is happening in your body?
What is happening in the belly? Can you sense movement there?"

Also its important to let people know with guided visualization that some people do not see the image, as they would with their eyes open. They get a tone, or a feeling for it, that is good enough.

All the guided meditation included here are just a template for what you might want to offer, please feel free to adapt, as you are with your group. If you are doing for yourself, perhaps record them first and then listen to them. We try to make it an enjoyable journey of discovery ...

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(Now let us chant the reflections on universal well-being.)

[May I abide in well-being], in freedom from affliction, in freedom from hostility, in freedom from ill-will, in freedom from anxiety, and may I maintain well-being in myself.

May everyone abide in well-being, in freedom from hostility, in freedom from ill-will, in freedom from anxiety, and may they maintain well-being in themselves.

May all beings be released from all suffering.
And may they not be parted from the good fortune they have attained.

When they act upon intention, all beings are the owners of their action and inherit its results. Their future is born from such action, companion to such action, and its results will be their home. All actions with intention, be they skilful or harmful, of such acts they will be the heirs.

FIVE SUBJECTS FOR FREQUENT RECOLLECTION

I am of the nature to age, I have not gone beyond ageing.

I am of the nature to sicken, I have not gone beyond sickness.

I am of the nature to die, I have not gone beyond dying.

All that is mine, beloved and pleasing, will become otherwise, will become separated from me.

I am the owner of my kamma, heir to my kamma, born of my kamma, related to my kamma, abide supported by my kamma. Whatever kamma I shall do, for good or for ill, of that I will be the heir.

Thus we should frequently recollect.

Arriving

This is a guided meditation on ARRIVING and also a kind of introduction to meditation.

Please sit down in a position which you can feel comfortable in for about 5 minutes, back upright and relaxed.

Try to sit on your own, unless you have a small child, and feel it might be good for her to stay in physical contact with one parent.

We will meditate with closed eyes and in silence.

In order to be ready to close your eyes, you need to feel safe: you want to be sure that nobody will hurt you or play tricks on you. It's about trust and being trustworthy. So can everybody please be trustworthy?

The effect of that being trust and safety. Cause and effect ...

So, please close your eyes now, and really try not to open them during meditation.

In the end I will ring the bell to indicate that you can open your eyes again.

Take a deep in breath - and let your out breath flow out long - and allow yourself to relax.

Repeat that a few times on your own.

And now just breathe naturally, keeping the attention on the sensations of breathing.

Where in your body can you feel that you are breathing?

Can you feel something in your nose? ... your throat? ... your chest? ... your belly?

Just settle into these gentle breathing sensations, allowing yourself to feel comfortable in yourself.

Feel your body sitting here, gently expanding and contracting with the breathing.

Can you feel the weight of your body, the gravity?

Where is the body touching the ground:

Are your feet touching the ground? Which part of your feet?

Are your legs touching the ground?

Your buttocks?

Allow the weight of the body sink into the ground.

With each out breath you can give away some heaviness: Let it just sink down and flow off.

And with the in breath, take in the fresh air, the new moment.

Arriving in yourself, in the present moment.

Welcome.

Bell

Slowly open your eyes, stretch a bit, and look around ...

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Guided Meditation on Taste

We are going to meditate with a piece of sugar.
So please come forward to get a sugar cube each and a little piece of paper as well
and do not eat the sugar yet!

Please go back to your seat and place the sugar cube on top of the paper on the ground in
front of you.

Just sit there and watch it!

(Wait until everybody is sitting again with their sugar in front of them)

When you watch the sugar cube now, what happens in your body?

Are you aware of your body sitting and breathing?
Or are you completely hypnotized by the sugar cube?

Remember meditation is for developing awareness around our senses.
We are slowing down our actions that are usually done very quickly, without much
awareness of what is going on inside of us.

So here we have the opportunity to do something slowly, step by step, so that we are able
to detect what is really happening inside. What our 6 senses are doing. I hope you can
enjoy that.

I will give you the step by step instructions. Before doing anything, please listen to what I
say, and then when you hear the sound of the bell you can do it!

With awareness, move your arm forward, but don't touch the sugar cube yet. Stop at one
inch distance and - bell - watch

What do you see? How do you feel? Do you still breathe?

With awareness, take it up and bring it near to your eyes, so that you can watch it in detail.
- bell -

Have you ever seen a sugar cube that close? What can you see?

With awareness, bring the sugar cube close to your nostrils and close your eyes - bell -
Can you smell anything? What?

With awareness, bring it close to your lips, so that the lips can touch it. - bell -
What do the lips feel? Is something happening in your mind: Any expectations?

With awareness, let your tongue come out a bit and let the tip of the tongue touch the
sugar.

Try to register precisely how long does it take until you can actually taste something- bell -

With awareness, place the sugar on the middle of the tongue, and close your mouth. Please
try not to move anything in your mouth, the tongue stays still, no sucking etc - bell -

how does that feel? Sense what is happening there and what you can taste.
Its important not to start moving your tongue or playing around with your saliva let the
sugar dissolve by its-self.

I will look on my watch. How long will it take for the sugar cube to dissolve completely?
Guess how many minutes? If you can feel that the last speck of sugar is gone you can clap
your hands once
no cheating

Meanwhile register what are you experiencing, any surprises, any impatience, any
thoughts, questions feelings.
later we can share our experiences.

(Somebody claps hands not cheating register the time so everybody can help the sugar
cube dissolving)

Now in your usual way of eating but do it with awareness.- bell -

OTHERWISE WAIT FOR MAX. 10 MIN. OR WHEN IT GETS RESTLESS.
Nobody has clapped their hands yet? any surprises? I don't want to torture you for too long
so we don't wait until the sugar cube has dissolved completely on its own. We will help it
a bit so you can help it a bit in your usual way of eating; but do it mindfully register what
is happening in your mouth and in your mind. - bell -

When the sugar cube is gone is there anything left? Can you still taste something?
Wait and find out how long you can taste it meanwhile.....

Count your breath 1 on the in-breath; 2 on the out-breath; 3 on the next in-breath, and so
on

How far can you count like this until the taste of sugar has disappeared completely start
counting now
-bell -
-

When you can't taste anything anymore, shout out your number of breaths
Ring the bell when enough people have shouted out their number of breaths

Sharing do you want to share anything what was surprising for you/
Do you think that you miss something when you eat?
Do you still remember the taste of sugar

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Abide Supported by my Kamma Trust, Resting in ...

How would I usually guide you into meditation?

How would I start?

Do you remember?

Can you do it yourself, without me?

Try.

(Watch, and only mention something, if somebody is obviously lost and getting uneasy.)

That's interesting: It seems as if most of you can do it on your own and don't need me any longer.

I like that, because, in a way, I like to trust you, and I like to be free.

Now simply stay with focusing your awareness around breathing in and out, even while I'm speaking.

Allow the breath to support you in receiving and understanding of what you hear.

So, as you can do this now on your own, this is the result of your kamma – you have practised it so often, that you know by heart how to bring the breath back into awareness.

Is that a good result or what?

Why do we practice mindfulness of breathing?

- What is the result when you do it? –

In which way could it support you in your life? – Just think of a few reasons or good effects it has on you.

Can you be aware of your breath while you are thinking now?

If that is difficult, try to be aware of your breath during the GAPS between thinking.

Do you remember situations, when what you saw or heard overwhelmed you, so that you started to lose your clarity?

Like when somebody is shouting at you or threatening you?

Usually we would react and defend ourselves, and for many of us, that means we are going to attack back, shout or even hit... - Will that make the situation any better?

What could help you to stay cool and clear?

--- You could GO AWAY. That is very good, if the situation is too overwhelming for you.

What else could you do?

Guess what?

Would you think, MEDITATION could help?

In my experience, if, for example, somebody is shouting at me, and if I manage to direct my attention to my breath before shouting back, I am safe. I can stay with my breathing in and out sensations, and even enjoy that I am not so much affected by what the other person is doing. And usually that is helping the other person too. Because if I don't react, they are more likely to realize what they are doing, and that it might not be helpful to continue in this way. So they tend to calm down a bit. And after that, it might be possible to find out with them why they are in pain, or what they need.

And if I can trust in my ability to stay with my breath, to rest in awareness, then I don't feel threatened or defensive, and I am more willing to listen and even to help them. So I am sharing this with you, because I like to encourage you to try it out for yourself.

Where is your breath now?

- bell -

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Awareness for Movement of the Body **Based on the teachings of Luang Por Teean (A Thai meditation teacher)**

[click here for more details](#)

Now we do a meditation with movement.

Please sit down on your cushion or chair, and listen.
For now you can please keep your eyes open.

Developing mindfulness of the body is not just something for the meditation cushion. You need to have awareness of the body all day long, otherwise you may have an accident.

Also, when you remember the [six creatures story](#): mindfulness of the body is like the post which gives you enough inner stability to not get pulled immediately to where your senses go.

This meditation is to establish awareness of the body in a very simple and effective way.

Children can do it and it is just as good for adults. There are monks who also use this method.

You sit cross legged, or on your heels and it is also possible on a chair.

You simply move your hands and forearms. It is a sequence of movements. It is very easy. First we do it with open eyes, so that you can watch me, then, once you know it by heart, you can do it with your eyes closed. Then on your own, enjoying the sense of space which comes with it.

Demonstrate and explain.

Rest your hands palms down on your thighs.

Do each movement with the in breath and stop while you are breathing out do it slowly. Move with awareness which means you really feel what you are doing the movement and the space.

1. With awareness, breathing in turn the right hand onto its edge, then stop and breathe out.
2. With awareness, breathing in, raise the hand, then stop and breathe out.
3. With awareness, breathing in, lower the hand to the abdomen, then stop and breathe out.
4. With awareness, breathing in, raise the hand, then stop and breathe out.
5. With awareness, breathing in, lower the hand, to rest on the abdomen onto of your right hand and then stop and breathe out.
6. With awareness, breathing in, move the right hand onto the chest, then stop and breathe out.
7. With awareness, breathing in, move the hand out, then stop and breathe out.
8. With awareness, breathing in, lower the hand to the thigh, then stop and breathe out.

9. With awareness, breathing in, turn the hand down, then stop and breath out.
10. With awareness, breathing in, move the left hand to rest on the chest, then stop and breathe out.
11. With awareness, breathing in, over the hand out, then stop and breathe out.
12. With awareness, breathing in, lower the hand to the thigh, then stop and breath out.
13. With awareness, breathing in, turn the hand down ,and then stop and breath out.

Repeat this cycle of movements a few times with open eyes and then once you feel sure you can do it on your own, close your eyes and do it for a while until you hear the sound of the bell

any comments?

-bell-

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Born Of my Kamma

Sit down in an comfortable position , on your own, back upright and relaxed.

And please stop talking now and close your eyes, so that you can focus your attention inward, feeling your body sitting here

Feeling the parts of your body that are touching the ground --- feeling the breath, going in --- and out.

I would like to ask you to reflect on WHY ARE YOU HERE?
Just think of a few reasons or causes for your being here, where you are now?

For example, one reason is:
“I am here because I WAS BORN.” - True?

Next question: Why were you born? What was the cause for that? How did that happen to you?

--- Do you remember? --- Or did you have to ask your parents? ---

Did you choose to be born? --- Did you choose your parents? --- What a pity, that you don't remember!

Did your parents tell you about how it happened? ---
Anyway, you must have been born, because you are here now, although you don't remember the details. ---

Another reason why you are here now? ---

Let's say : The intention 'I want to come to the Summer Camp.' - That's probably true for all of you.

Let's go back to the details here, because this is something that you CAN remember: So it starts with an idea of what you would like to do, right? --- The idea of coming to the Summer Camp ...

So if we have an idea, that will have an effect on us: we start thinking about it, imagining how it would be ...

we start speaking about it ...
finding reasons, why it may be a good idea ...
- it's becoming an INTENTION ...
something that we really WANT to do.

So we start making plans, preparing ...
and finally, if there are no strong objections, we'll do it ...

There is an action or KAMMA, coming from this intention, and a result from that action.
So, after driving to Amaravati, here you are, born into the Family Camp 2005.

So this is an example of 'BORN OF MY KAMMA', something we have done. Can you understand now, how we are effected by our own actions, how we have created the reality we are in now?

Why bother thinking about such details?

Did you ever find yourself in a mess, wondering how you got there? ---
Is your tendency to complain or to blame other people for what is happening to you?---
Or do you believe, that things happen to you accidentally, independently of what you are doing?
--- Are you feeling ready to take responsibility? ---

I want to tell you a STORY.

Imagine, somebody is walking home at night. Suddenly, oops, he finds himself falling ... and hitting the ground. It hurts, and he sits dazzled for a moment, wondering what happened?

Slowly, he realizes that he has fallen into a hole, and is sitting at the bottom. He manages to get on his feet again, and investigates how to get out. With aching limbs he climbs out and walks home.

Next day, again, he walks home at night. Suddenly, oops, he finds himself falling ... and hitting the ground. It hurts, he gets up and finds himself in the same hole again. --" dam!"
He climbs out and limps home.

The following day, he walks home at night. Suddenly, oops, he finds himself falling ... and hitting the ground. He sits there, asking himself: "How could that happen again?" He climbs out and walks home.

Next day, he is on his way home. Suddenly, on the same road, he remembers: 'There is a hole here somewhere. I don't want to fall down again!'

So he watches out and manages to see it, and he walks around it. - Hey, that was clever! -
So he arrives home safely.

The following day, he is on his way home again. As he is just turning towards the same road, he remembers the hole. He chooses another road.

So how long does it take YOU to learn that you have a choice? ---

If there is AWARENESS of what you are doing, and awareness of the effects of what you are doing

The awareness of cause and effect can influence your life.
You may want to choose an action that is not harmful to yourself or others, an action that is rather beneficial. Right?

So finally, can you understand that you are BORN OF YOUR KAMMA, that it is you

yourself, who is creating the reality you find yourself in? ---

You can influence your life, moment by moment, by being aware of the choices you are making. -

And it starts with awareness.

Awareness is the cause of knowing.

Can you choose to be aware of your breathing in and out now? ---

Can you choose to be aware of your breathing sensations in the belly? -----

Can you choose to be aware of ---

- bell -

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Guided meditation on breathing and inner space

Please sit in a comfortable position, relaxed but still upright

And please CLOSE YOUR EYES some of you may feel a bit uncomfortable when we sit together like this, with eyes closed. Usually we want to check with our eyes what's happening around us and if we can feel safe.

So it does take a bit of courage and trusting to stay with eyes closed and it needs a clear inner determination, so please do take responsibility for yourself in this and support others as well. (stay with eyes closed).

Why do we sit with eyes closed in meditation?

If I close my eyes, its much easier to direct my attention inwards and to stay there. It's easier to sense into the body; and it is very peaceful, not to have to look around outside, just to be aware of what is happening inside, in this moment....

So right now, can you feel you body breathing?

Take a deep in breath silently - and then let the breath flow quietly and fully, without forcing anything.

Just allow breathing to happen naturally, and allow your body to relax with it.

What a relief to allow everything to let go....

As you do this, your awareness of the inner space begins to wake up:

just notice how the inner space is filling when you breathe in ...

And notice when it starts to breathe out... releasing the air...

feel how your inner space gently gets filled and emptied, is expanding and contracting...

Establishing your awareness around that area of your body where you

can feel expanding and contracting. Stay there for a few breaths....

Your awareness is like space: Everything you can be aware of, is happening within this spacious awareness like now, you sensations of breathing in, breathing out, body expanding and contracting.

Sense impressions arise in this space. Like clouds in the sky they come and go. And your awareness is like the blue sky, in which everything floats.

The sky is much bigger than the clouds. The clouds are changing.

The blue sky is always the same, vast space. That is awareness

It is always there, even when the clouds are so thick that you may not notice the blue sky. But everything is just happening in this vast sky, in this vast spacious awareness, which is your awareness.

Imagine (inside , in your mind) how we are sitting all in the marquee (room) now.

Where does this imagination happen?

Does it happen inside your awareness or outside it?

And: can you feel your buttocks, touching the ground?

Where does that sensation arise inside or outside of your awareness space?

Can you imagine that the whole world of you sensations, feeling, even thoughts, is arising out of this vast spacious awareness? - your awareness is embracing it all!

Like the blue sky, in which clouds are appearing and changing and disappearing again

That is the non-sense, the awareness which embraces all senses, the spacious awareness in which you sense experience, your experience of the world, arises and ceases.

That is the knowing

Bell

You can open your eyes -

so the sound of the bell, does it arise within your awareness or outside of it.

Where do you actually hear it?

Would you be able to hear the sound, if the sound would not be inside your space of awareness?

Bell

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Exploring the six-senses

To explore the six senses we will use our imagination and use the mind sense to explore the other five. This may help you to see how the mind sense works.

We will do this like a guided meditation, we will look at the senses through the types of feeling: pleasant, unpleasant, and neither pleasant or unpleasant

(like: pleasant- I want this)

SMELL: of a chip shop

TASTE: your favourite ice cream

TOUCH: holding a friends hand – your first kiss.

LOOK: a table full of your favourite food

LISTEN: your favourite music

MIND: visualise your favourite food again, smell it, taste it, touch it, listen to yourself as you munch on it, where is all this happening.

Sit for 5 minutes

(Dislike: unpleasant – I don't want this)

SMELL: of rotten piece of cheese

TASTE: eating some earth

TOUCH: putting your hand on a very hot heater

LOOK: cut there thumb and they are bleeding

LISTEN : some body calling you names.

MIND: where is all this happening, and these are unpleasant, who says they are unpleasant

Sit for 5 minutes

(Calm: Neutral)

SMELL: imagine your breathe

TASTE: taste you tongue

TOUCH: touch of your clothes on your body

LOOK: water

LISTEN: to the wind

MIND: where is all this happening, if these are plain/unexciting feelings then who says this?

Sit for 5 minutes.

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Guided Meditation on Celebrating our own Goodness

Lets do a guided meditation on the celebration of our own goodness at the end of this event.

Please sit down in a comfortable position and close our eyes
Take a deep in breath and let a long- ahhh - out on the out breath
Lets do that three times.

Direct your attention to the body breathing in, breathing out, sensations, belly expanding and belly contracting.

We all had a day with a lot of activities and excitement.

Meditation is a good means for stopping and settling, for taking a breath and coming back to our inner space of awareness and peace - can you feel that?

Stay a while with this spacious awareness around your breathing center.

Let us reflect for a moment on our own goodness.

We are so used to being self-critical, focusing on our own faults, moments where we are or others were not good enough, were not living up to our expectations.

We hardly celebrate our own goodness.

We actually weaken our own goodness if we don't see and confirm it in ourselves.

So now I encourage you to bring to your mind a situation where you were able to make your own life more wonderful, or where you could contribute to making somebody else's life more wonderful -

Can you remember such a situation during the camp?

Can you celebrate you own goodness for a moment silently?

Just breathe into the space of this memory and feel appreciation for your own goodness
This can create more energy and sense of wellbeing.

Now bring to your mind a situation, where somebody else was contributing to making your life or the life of another person more wonderful.

Can you celebrate this persons goodness silently for a moment?

Breathe into the space of this memory and feel how the appreciation for this person's goodness fills your own heart with warm energy and loving kindness.

Can you make a resolution to share your appreciation for what this person did later with him or her?

Just go to this person and tell him what you saw or heard him/her doing, and what they did to you.

You will have time for this after meditation.

We are not always living up to our good intentions.
Sometimes we do something we regret afterwards. Then we need some healing.
Forgiveness is such a means for healing.

Can you remember a situation where you did something to yourself or somebody else that
was painful?

Can you, without blaming yourself, feel your own disappointment about this and send a
deep breath into the space of that memory?

And tell yourself that you regret it, and send some compassion and forgiveness into your
heart-area, with the next breathe.

Maybe if you remember a situation where you hurt somebody else, you want to go to this
person and tell him/her that you feel sorry about what happened? Then do that after the
meditation.

Now bring a memory to your mind where somebody else did or said something that was
painful for yourself or somebody else. Instead of being resentful, can you generate some
compassion and forgiveness for that person and with the next breath send this healing
energy into the space of this memory?

bell

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Watching the clouds

Meet in front of stupa in the mown area – let them form circles of 10-12 people. Direct circles around me and near enough to me, so that they can hear my voice. Ask them to stand in a very close circle, facing each other, and then from there to sit down, and - without moving the feet from where they are - to stretch out on their backs backward, so that the bodies are lying like rays of a sun. The feet in the middle, heads outside, and enough space in between, so that they don't disturb each other ...

And let them start with WATCHING THE CLOUDS in the sky:
Just lie there, watching the sky, and remembering that your mind is like the sky, with thought and fantasy moving through like clouds. ---
Awareness is like space in which everything happens ...

Wait until everybody has found a place.

I would ask you to be very quiet now, so that you can listen to the sky. ---
And please close your eyes for a while.
Breathe IN from the vast space above, and breathe OUT all thoughts which cross your mind. ---

Breathe IN the earth, and breathe OUT the heaviness you feel in the body. ---

Feel the parts of your body where you touch the earth.
Allow yourself to connect with the earth, drawing in nurturing earth energy with every in-breath, and sending love and care deep into the earth with every out-breath. ---

Feel how the earth is holding you. ---
Allow yourself to melt into the earth. No need to create boundaries. ---
Only breathing in space. ---

If you like, you can start with a deep humming sound, or you can just listen to the humming in space. ---

Humming connects all of us. ---
Space is connecting all of us. ---
Awareness is connecting all of us. ---

You can open your eyes now and watch the sky. ---

You can continue lying here in silence as long as you like.
And if you like to go get up and walk away, do so very quietly.

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Meditation on Generosity

This is a meditation on generosity and also a kind of introduction to meditation for all of you – to get a taste for it again. So, as usual, I'd like to ask you to stop speaking and to sit down in a comfortable position, everybody on their own with enough space between each other, so that you can be undisturbed and focus on yourself.

Only with small children I would suggest that one parent can have them on their lap or next to them, helping them not to get lost and restless. (wait)

So now try to find a position in which you can sit comfortably for about 5 minutes, back fairly straight but still relaxed and flexible.

And I would recommend to close your eyes, because that helps with staying undistracted from outside, although I know that some people will find it difficult to stay with eyes closed for 5 Minutes.

Please make an effort and close your eyes now – and then, when you hear the bell ringing, you can open your eyes again.

What can you be aware of now, when you have your eyes closed: Any sounds? --- Any smells? ---Any sensations in the body? ---Any feelings?--- Any thoughts? -----

How do you feel right now? --- Excited and curious about what will be happening?

Where in the body can you feel that? ---

Or do you feel tired after a day's preparation with packing and travelling, arriving and meeting many new people? Where in your body can you feel tiredness? --- Or what else do you feel right now? ---

Just say silently 'hello' to these feelings, like somebody who says 'hello' to their visitors. Allow them to settle down inside of you.

Now direct your attention to the body: Can you feel your body, sitting here --- the ground which supports the body, receiving your weight? ---

Can you allow the weight of the body to sink into the ground, and give your spine more lightness and possibility to move a bit and find a comfortable balance in itself?

Can you feel your breath moving in and out? --- Take a few deep in-breaths and let the out-breath flow out long.

In this meditation we want to reflect on GRATITUDE. The first idea was to reflect on gratitude for the monastery which makes it possible that all of you can come here for the Camp --- gratitude for the Retreat Centre which is set up so nicely for you with the effort of many people ---gratitude for your mum and dad, who gave life to you and brought you here ---

But when I wanted to prepare the meditation in this way, I felt slightly resistant to this approach.

Instead I would ask you to reflect on it in a different way:

What does the word 'gratitude' bring up in your mind? Being asked to reflect on

“GRATITUDE”?

Is this perhaps one of the terms which press your buttons – may be after your mother has told you so often not to complain about what she was cooking for you and to be grateful that you have a healthy meal while other children are starving!?

This example is actually true for me

Just one of the situations I remember, where I was told to be grateful, to say ‘thank you’, because that was what you were supposed to do. ---

To be told to be grateful seems to spoil my readiness to feel any sense of gratitude. Instead I use to feel resistance or anger, because I’d rather express myself freely. --- How about you? ---

Take some time now to remember situations where you were expected to say ‘thank you’?

Have you then been able to say ‘thank you’ from the bottom of your heart?

Or what was happening in your mind instead? ---

Or is there anything coming to your mind now, in this situation, which you can really appreciate and feel grateful for, just from your own heart? ----

Is there anybody with whom you would like to share your sense of joy or gratitude, may be later, with whom you want to celebrate what makes you feel happy and grateful, in you

So that the other person can know, what is alive in you --- There is no SHOULD.

Only if it would mean something for yourself. ---

Now just feel your breath going in and out gently. ----- Is that a calming or an upsetting sensation? -----

Is that anything you would ever feel grateful for? -----

Some of you might feel grateful when they hear this:

bell

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Meditation on Gratitude for our Senses

Now imagine you couldn't see.

Which sight would you miss most?

Now turn inwardly toward your eyes as if you could speak to them. Let them know, how grateful you are for all the beautiful things you can see through them, especially the one sight which you appreciate most.

Now imagine you couldn't hear.

Which sound would you miss most?

And then turn inwardly towards your ears and let them know how grateful you are for their

service.

For all the voices, music, sounds you can hear through them.
And especially for the one thing which you appreciate most.

Imagine you couldn't taste.
Which taste would you miss most?

Turn inwardly towards your tongue and let it know how grateful you are for its service to
you....

Imagine you couldn't smell.
Which scent would you miss most?

Imagine you couldn't have sensations in your fingers and body. Which touch would you
miss most?

Imagine you couldn't think.
Which thought or mental activity would you miss most?

Imagine you wouldn't have pure awareness, no Buddha-mind.
Without that you would be lost in the flood of sense information.

So now speak to this Buddha-mind or non-sense mind inside of you, and let it know how
much you appreciate its space and clarity which allows you to keep perspective on how
things are

Now open your eyes and look into the eyes of your neighbour -
Can you see the same Buddha-mind in her eyes?

Bow slightly to him or her in joy and gratitude,

If you value a companion who reminds you of the awareness and knowing, let them know.
And look around, there are more of them.....

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Guided Meditation for the 5 precepts

So just sit comfortably and close your eyes gently

So lets visualise a beautiful house

lets do that know

It has lovely gardens, its in the countryside.

We can start by walking up to the house. The door is brilliant white and it has door knocker which has three gems on it, red, green and blue, in colour.

The red gem represents the Buddha - awareness, mindfulness

the green represents the Dhamma- the teachings of the Buddha,

blue represents the Sangha the people that explore the Buddhas teaching.

You open the door and walk in to a house that is painted brilliant white.

As you walk in there is a door on the left and it has glass door which you can look through and as you look inside you can see many different animals happily talking to one another and many people looking after one another.

This door is to remind us that we can act for the welfare and happiness of all beings

You carry on into the house and a beautiful person approaches you with a gift you take delight in this.

This remind us, we can be honest and generous and take delight in giving and sharing

You look at this person and see the goodness in that person.

Perhaps you want to say something to this person, you can think about what you might say that is friendly, honest and kind.

This remind us, we can try to speak the truth, promote concord and friendship, speak kindly, gently and beneficially

If you want to say something you can.

This remind us, we can be honest and sincere in relationship with others, nurturing true love and compassion.

Its time to leave the house now, just as you walk out another person comes up to you, the person looks quite funny. This person has a fat belly and a very small mouth and long neck. The person ask you to follow him, he wants to offer you something that will harm you mind and body. You smile at this person, he suddenly disappears.

This reminds us, we can strive to keep our minds clear, alert, mindful, and unconfused as much of the time as possible.

You walk out the door, touching the door knocker and looking at the beauty of the three gems. You walk down the path and back into this room.

You can feel the body sitting on the mat, you can open your eyes when ready, have a look around the room and see the other people.

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Guide Meditation For Meeting Your Sage

The best way to do this is to record this on to a tape or get somebody to read this to you. Please take extra care with this meditation.

Just become aware of your breath, take a few deep breaths and then gently close your eyes and prepare yourself to go on a journey. Make yourself comfortable, you can lie down if you like.

You can choose a starting place, perhaps its near the sea , or snow or mountains, the jungle or forest, in the countryside, in the middle of London, wherever you feel safe. If you look around at this place you'll see you have a friend (it might even be a friendly animal) next to you, if you can't see him or her then just feel the presence of somebody very caring.

So just allow yourself wander around this place, exploring and investigating what's going on, notice the colour of the sky, and the landscape around you, what does it feel like. Let your journey unfold in front of you like a movie.

If you notice something frightening remember you friend is there, and remember its a fantasy so you can always use your star trek teleporter to escape to a safer place.

Let see what's happens Suddenly a big bird called Garuda comes down and offers you lift, its a friendly bird - very strong and big, and very kind. You get on and it takes you on a journey, perhaps over the mountains, over towns. The sky is blue with no cloud, the sun is bright. You arrive in a new land, look around to see where you are, is it a town, or in the countryside, floating on the ocean. You look in the distance, is there a place where you can see your sage waiting for you.

Now go towards that place. The Garuda puts you down....you approach this place, look at it, what is it, perhaps it is a Bedouin tent, a city, forest grove, or street corner. Then approach this place where you find your wise person. The person seems to have a certain glow, and feels so lovely to be around such a person. You go up to this person

Perhaps you want to ask some questions....perhaps you just want to sit there.

The person looks at you with friendliness. Perhaps your questions are answered - perhaps not ... So its time to leave this place now... you call up on your star trek phone, it transport you back to where you started off.

Have a look around the place, how does it feel. You friend says goodbye and you feel yourself coming back into the room. You bodies on the ground and you can become aware of your breath. When you feel it is right open your eyes.

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Heir to my kamma

(EFFECT --- 2nd PRECEPT)

This is a guided meditation on what it means to be HEIR OF MY KAMMA.

As always, when we do sitting meditation together, please find a place on your own (only parents with small children keep them near to themselves).

Find a position in which you can sit comfortably for about 5 minutes, back upright, but relaxed.

Please stop talking, and slowly close your eyes, directing your attention inward. ---

You may want to take a couple of DEEP in-breaths, making space inside ---

remembering the peace and freedom we have in our hearts. ---

Feel your body, which you have inherited from birth. ---

And feel your breath, going in -- and out. -----

The sensations of breathing helping you to remember your NOSE -- , your THROAT --- , your CHEST --- , your BELLY. ----- You can feel your body breathing. -----

Focusing our attention on the body breathing has an EFFECT on our hearts and minds

We tend to calm down naturally, and we are less focused on things from past or future. ---

Right?

Although small children find it difficult sometimes, because --- often they are restless and want attention or want to be entertained. So when we meditate together like this, I need to make it interesting for them too.

So I will tell you a STORY now, a TRUE story. ---

It's a story about how we are HEIR TO OUR KAMMA: how we have to live with the results of our actions.

And it's a story about the 2nd precept too.

A while ago, a man came to the monastery. He came to pay back quite an amount of money he had stolen from the donation box here 15 years ago! At that time, he had got away with it – nobody had seen him. There was nobody who could tell him to pay it back. – Really nobody? ---

He came on his own accord now, 15 years later, saying that he couldn't live any longer with this burden of wrong-doing and shame in himself. After all these years of unease in himself, he had finally made an effort to earn enough money, save it up to the full amount he had stolen 15 years ago, and then he had come to pay it back. ---

After that, he felt relieved and even a bit proud of himself. He felt he could trust himself again.– Finally he had responded to the deepest wish of his heart, he had taken responsibility. He could pay it back, and was a free man again. ---
Isn't that beautiful?

Can you relate to this story? --- Do you remember something from your own life, where you had taken something that didn't belong to you, and may be, after a short while of triumph, that you had been clever enough to get away with it, started to feel uneasy and miserable: somehow it didn't feel right any longer, and you started wishing, you wouldn't have done it? – This is how we learn to know that we NEVER get away with it, because we can't betray our own heart.

We are the owner of our actions, and heir to the results of our actions. The results of what we are doing are with us, even if we try to not notice. And even if others didn't notice. ---

So, in case that you have any unfinished business, anything that you regret to have taken, even if it is long ago --- : Can you pay attention to how your heart is feeling about that now? --- And can you think of a way how to 'pay it back', so to speak, how to relieve your heart from that burden, how to feel trustworthy again? ----- May be, you can make a resolution now, for later: how to do that? ---

So if you do something good, it may be that you want to impress somebody else and get praised. – But in the first place, the effect will be that YOU feel good in yourself. ---

And if you do something bad ... - notice, what happens. ---

Can you come back to your breath again? – Breathing in – and out. ---

bell

Please, slowly open your eyes again.

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Who puts the food on the plate

This is a guided meditation on FOOD and its causes: "Who puts the food on my plate?"

I would like to have 2 volunteers - who would enjoy to have a special task for this meditation? Hands up ...

The first volunteer: could you please count the people mentioned as a cause for one special food item, and let us know the number in the end?

The second volunteer: could you please count the items and animals mentioned as a cause for one special food item, and tell us the number later?

Thank you.

Now sit down in an upright and comfortable position and close your eyes, please. Can you direct your attention to the breath, starting with some deep breaths --- and then allow the breath to flow naturally, feeling how the air is flowing into your body and out again. ---

What did you have for breakfast today?

Can you let all the items you were eating and drinking this morning come up in front of your inner eye?

So what were the causes for all this food to appear in front of you this morning? Somebody must have had the idea to put out breakfast, and some people must have picked up that idea and prepared the breakfast, right?

Let's take an example and look into it in a deeper way: You might have had some MILK today for drinking or on your corn-flakes. So let MILK be our example.

The two volunteers - now comes your special task: please try to count all the people and items involved with making the milk appear on the table.

And now for all - please contemplate:

Did somebody pour the milk into your cup /on your cereals? - So one person involved.

Then somebody else must have put it out on the servery. - Where did they get it from?

From the fridge? - Ok, somebody must have put it into the fridge. Where did they get it from?

It was delivered. - By whom? - Driver involved, food company, store, some more people there...

How did the milk get to the store? - From a factory, ok, dairy factory. People involved there with filtering milk, heating it, filling it into cartons, bottles. Again some people working for your milk.

Now, where did the dairy factory get the milk from? - From a farm?

What are people on a farm doing to get milk? - Ok, they must have these things with four legs and an udder, some people looking after them. milking them, looking after the machines ...

So, now the cows, where do they get the milk from? (They bought it in the store? - Sorry.) They make it. Magic - they eat grass, digest : out comes milk, very nice.

Now we come down to the grass-roots: Where does the grass come from? - Earth.

Grass needs earth, sun and rain to grow.
And earth, where does earth come from?

- It's there? Yes, thank you. That's obvious. But how does earth come into existence? -
Things deteriorating, like?

- Remember leaves in autumn? So: leaves, wood, shit (sorry), dead bodies, everything.
Earth made by living things falling apart. Does that include humans?

- Think of grave yards, ashes ... Yes, human beings as well, I'm afraid so.

So where do human corpses come from? - Human beings, like you and me, born as babies,
then growing up, getting old ...

So, human beings, what keeps them alive? - Parents, friends looking after them, food, milk
... - HA!

See? - Milk comes from milk, the cycle is closing.

(The volunteers, please keep the number you have got by now in mind, your counting task
is finished. - I will ask you later for the result.)

Now for all again: you can look at it the other way round. - You are drinking milk, you are
living, at some point, your body will die, deteriorate, become soil, then grass, then cow,
milk, and appear in front of somebody else in the future. Nice, isn't it? ---

Bell.

Please open your eyes now. ---

I would like to ask the volunteers:

How many people have you counted approximately, who were involved with bringing the
milk on your plate? -

And how many animals and items were involved? -

Thank you.

So far for milk: a whole chain of causes just for milk to appear on the table: about ...
people and ... items, including animals and plants.

May be including even a great-great-grandfather of yours?

Can we greet them all with a warm smile and 'thank you' for helping us stay alive and
healthy? ---

So, the next time when you see food appearing in front of you, you may want to pick
another item and let the whole chain of causes and effects - people, animals and things -
come up in your imagination, and you may have this funny feeling of wonder:

How you are connected to everything and everybody, to the whole universe!

(End)

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Intention

Please sit down in a comfortable position back upright and relaxed. Again, try to sit not too close to each other, small children close to one parent. --- Can you please stop talking and close your eyes?

One question: Although I have asked you to close your eyes - what is YOUR intention when you are closing your eyes?

Think about it for a moment: What are your reasons to close your eyes? ---

Do you close your eyes because you want to meditate and be able to focus inward, without being distracted by visual impressions from outside? ---

Do you just do it because I said so? – Then, what is your intention behind that? ---

Do you follow my suggestion because you trust me, and believe that it will have a good result for you? -

So is your intention then to have some kind of good result, some new experience? --

Or is your intention to be here with the others and do what they do? ---

Or do you just want to use the opportunity to sleep or day-dream a bit? ---

So there could be different intentions for doing the same thing! ---

What do you think – will you feel more alive and be more successful with what you are doing if you really WANT it, or if you just go along with what other people say or do? ---

Ok, let's do the next step: Meditation often starts with mindfulness of breathing. So, please focus your attention on the breath, on the sensations of breathing in and out. ---

What is your intention for practicing this mindfulness of breathing now? ---

Do you want to feel the breath because it is a nice and peaceful feeling? ---

Is your intention to calm the mind and not get distracted too much by thoughts and sounds? ---

Is your intention to train yourself in mindfulness and concentration? ---

Or, do you do it because you want to be a good girl, a good boy and do what I suggest? ---

Or is your intention going into a completely different direction? ---

Just notice what your intention is, and how you feel about it. ---

I assume that, if you come to the Summer Camp, you will at least have SOME interest or intention, to learn how to meditate, to learn to know what it is all about. – Right? ---

Can you give your mind a clear intention, like: I want to know what mindfulness of breathing is! ---

So, if it is true that from intention follows action, then you will DO it and find out about it, right? -

This is your chance – mindfulness of breathing:

Please stay focused on the breathing sensations at the tip of your NOSE for a while. ---
And as soon as you notice that you get distracted, can you bring your attention back to the nostrils? ----

Notice your intention. – Are you really INTERESTED to know how the breath feels like?

–

I suggest that, if you have an interest, you will probably be more successful and feel better with what you are doing.

Now, does the breath feel cool at the nostrils or rather warm? ---

Is it cooler when you breathe IN or when you breathe OUT? ---

Notice: when you start to be alert and interested, there is something to discover.

Let's go to the THROAT. - Can you feel the breath in your throat? – Are the sensations of breathing IN there different from the sensations of breathing OUT? --- What about the temperature? ---

And each time your mind wanders off the breathing sensations at the throat, as soon as you notice it, remember your intention: I want to know how the breath at the throat feels like!
And bring the attention back to the throat. ---

Try it with a new intention - you can choose: Do you want to focus on the breathing sensations around the CHEST or around the BELLY? – Do you want to take some interest in what is happening there, how breathing IN feels different from breathing OUT? ----

You can have the intention to explore it more in detail:

In which areas does the body seem to expand with the in-breath? ---

Can you feel it in the front? ---Can you feel it at the sides? --- Can you feel it in the back?

In which areas does the body seem to contract with the out-breath? ---

Can you influence the muscles for breathing out? ---

What FEELINGS or emotions arise with the in-breath? --- Are the feelings, emotions that are arising with the out-breath different? ---

Did you discover something for yourself? –

How does the change happen between breathing in and out? – Do you have to decide whether you breathe in or out, or does it simply happen by itself? ---

Is there a TURNING POINT, a gap, or is it one flowing movement from in-breath to out-breath? -

Can you influence that intentionally? ---

The more you are interested in the sensations of breathing, the more there is to discover. But it only works, if you are clear in your intention, and if intention is followed by action, if you DO it: if you are willing to bring the attention to the breathing space, again and again. Then your awareness of breathing will become stronger and more and more refined.

The Buddha said: Mindfulness of breathing is one way of realizing enlightenment.

How do you feel now? – Just notice. ---

Knowing how you feel can also be a step towards enlightenment, waking up.

- bell -

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Meditation on Letting go of Stress and Negativity.

Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. You may feel a bit uncomfortable when you sit with eyes closed because usually we check with our eyes whether we can feel safe.

So it takes a bit of courage and trusting each other.

With eyes close you can now more easily sense into your body: Feel the weight of your body, the gravity that pulls you towards the ground.

Keep sitting upright, although you might want to let the body to relax from within, let it slightly slack for one inch or so, to release the holding. Allow the breath to breathe out deeply and breathe in lightly.

Feel those parts of the body which touch the ground: Your buttocks, parts of your legs and feet. The weight of the body pressing down on these parts a bit.

Imagine that the ground, the earth is receiving your weight willingly and openly. So you can let your weight sink into the ground, give all holding away. You can trust that the earth is holding you.

Feel your body breathing. In and out. With each in breath, sense how the belly expands, so that there is a lot of space around your heart. With each out breath you let go of the breath and relax...

Now imagine that, while breathing out, you let the weight of your body wash down, as if you can use the out breath as an energy which washes through your body down into the earth. And the earth is receiving willingly all that burdens you. Let it all go - all the hurry of packing, all the feelings of uncertainty about coming to a new place, all excitement about meeting friends. - Allow the out breath to wash it all down through the body, into the ground.

And with each in breath draw in the lightness of fresh air, and let your body be filled with that lightness...

Can you enjoy it?

If there is still any tension left in the body, any hardness, any pain - direct the out breath especially to those parts, releasing all tension and giving it away to the ground. Let the holding melt away....

Feel how your body becomes more relaxed, resting on the ground and filled with lightness, aliveness, fresh energy, joy. Feel the peace of letting go...

Now slowly open your eyes and keep sensing into your body while looking at the ground before you. Keep sensing your breathing in the body. With this awareness of body and breath it will be easier to stay connected with your own feelings.

Notes

if the kids start giggling -embrace that in the meditation guidance

If you start giggling: can you feel where the giggling is happening in your body?
What is happening in the belly? Can you sense movement there?

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Light Meditation

This is a good meditation for bringing people together.

(Need the same number of tea lights as people)

Instructions

To be done in the quietest way possible -

By offering a candle on the shrine we can burn away anything we came with so we can start again - start fresh for the camp.

So lets make this offering – to letting be – to generating harmony and allowing ourselves to listen to ourselves to find out what we really need – to make this camp enjoyable and relaxing.

Once everybody has done this

So by lighting our own light we generate even more light – we look after our own light and then collectively the lights give even more light. So with this camp- if we each switch on our own light, collectively we glow- like a lighthouse – and this helps everybody.

Short guided meditation – staring at light and relaxing the body

Please sit in a comfortable position, eyes open, watching the flickering light of the candles....

Breathe in this sea of light, take a long in breath, and breath out slowly - feel how your body is relaxing with the out breath...

Take 3 deep and silent - in and out breaths, and while doing so, let all heaviness of your body sink into the ground.

Now direct the attention to your eyes: they are like OPEN DOORS through which you can see what is in front of you, outside. The eyes are connecting your inner space with the outer space - can you feel that?.....

Now direct your attention back to your breath - feel how the in breath is drawing the air from outside your face through your nostrils inside and is then filling your inner space, deep down into your lungs.

And then, breathing out, you open your inner space to the space in front of you and let the breath flow out.

The breath too is connecting your inner space with the space around you which we all

share - can you feel it?...

If we are aware like this, breathing and seeing will connect us with each other: We are all breathing in a shared space, are we all are watching the same candles on the shrine. Right now, the candle light, this sea of light , is coming through 100 pairs of eyes and each of us is filled with this same vision of a sea of light - give yourself a moment to really understand that and enjoy it.

This is what is connecting all of us, in this moment.

Bell

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Guided meditation on looking into somebody's face

When I give the instructions, please listen carefully without doing it, until I tell you when to start:

Please find a partner and sit opposite to each other
One person will be looking, the other person will sit with eyes closed.

The question for both is: How do I see you? Who are you?

The person with eyes closed will ask herself this question by reflecting on her memories about this partner.

And the looking person will find out by looking into the others face.

Please find out who will be the onlooker, and who will stay with eyes closed - is that clear?

Now, please, start both with eyes closed.

First direct your attention to your breathing in and out. Do this for a few breaths.

Now the person who has agreed to be the onlooker, can open their eyes, while the other person stays with eyes closed, stay with eyes closed, just remembering - what you know about the other, and how you feel about him/her.

There are some questions for the person with open eyes:

Make a journey over the face in front of you.

Watch all the details but also your feelings and reactions to it.

Start at the forehead

how does the hair frame the forehead?

What is the colour of the skin? Does the light reflect in some places?

Can you see pores, wrinkles, moles? - Scars?

What is the form of the eyebrows, and how much space is between them?

Do both eyes look similar or is there a difference?

How does the back of the nose meet the forehead?

Can you see the nostrils? Are they moving with the breath?

What is the form of the line between the lips?

What signs in the face you look at tell you something about her age?

What do you find most typical about this face? Is the face the person? Or only surface?

Can you see what s/he is feeling right now

Can you be aware of the space between this face and your face?

Now the person with the eyes closed is opening her eyes.

Please look into each others eyes.

Does that feel different

For a moment share you experience with your partner

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Guided lying down meditation

Items need - some mats

If a large group - form groups of 15-20 people.

If possible to this outside on a lawn.

Lie down on your back, and form a sun with your group, each body is like a sun ray.
Feet in the middle, not too close, heads outside

The person reading the guided meditation is in the center of the groups.

Stretch out and make yourself comfortable. Touch the lawn with your palms and feel how
it is to to be here.

Then close your eyes, please.

Take a deep breathe and feel your chest rising when you breath in, falling when you breath
out.

What is with you belly? - is that rising and falling too?

Draw in the air from above, and with each out breath, allow yourself to let all weight of
the body sink into the ground. Let go of any tension or heaviness

Can you feel your back touching the ground? Your legs, arms, head - Let the earth hold
you

Allow yourself to be held and to let go of any holding. With each out breath, imagine that
you let yourself sink...

Sense into the earth. Can you fell the space below?

Imagine that, with each out breath, you are sending roots into the earth, deeper and
deeper....

If you have a good sense of groundedness, open your body-awareness to the space above.
Breathe in fully from the space above and through your back, send the air down into the
earth with each out breath - a few times.

Feel the openness above and the groundedness below

Can you feel that simultaneously?

Your breath and your body awareness connects you with the space above and below.
Open to all of it.

That is the realm we are living in, as human beings.

(this is alternative if you have to do indoors

Now stretch your arms to the side as if you want to embrace the whole universe.

Imagine the sky above you, as you are lying there.

Blue sky with cloud formations)

Now stretch your arms to the side as if you want to embrace the whole universe.

Open your eyes
Just watch the sky, as you are lying there.

Remember?
Your awareness is as spacious as the sky
Your thoughts, feelings, sense impressions float through like clouds, arising changing,
ceasing.

The awareness does not change and is not touched by it.
You may get lost in watching cloud-formations, suffer by creating dramas, but eventually
all disperses.

What stays untouched by it all is the awareness - embracing it all.

Stay with this for a while - being open awareness.

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Me and You - You and Me Exercise

Please get into pairs.

Sit down crosslegged opposite each other, so near that your knees are touching the other's knees.

Now look straight into the eyes of your partner, keep your eyes there for the whole exercise.

Take your index finger, point it to your heart, saying “me”. Then point it to the chest of your partner opposite and say “you”.

Both do this simultaneously/together.
(demonstration)

Repeat that for a while and be aware of what is arising in your senses.
Stop when you hear the sound of the bell

Now we do it a bit differently, a bit of non-sense:

When you point to your own heart, you say “you”, and when you point to your partner's heart,

you say “me”. Again, both do it simultaneously/together.

Repeat that for a while and pay attention to what is arising in your awareness.
Stop when you hear the bell

Now we do it again like in the beginning, both simultaneously , you point to your own heart, saying “me” and point to your partner's heart, saying “you”.

Be aware what the difference is compared to the first time

Does somebody want to share their experience?

Note

With an exercise like this we start to challenge our perception of what is me and what is you. That is a useful reflection and understanding that which is bigger than me. It also brings us back to responsibility for our own actions and speech.

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MEETING-A-TREE – Meditation

First, I will explain this silent meditation, which you will do on your own.

So you go into the woods and find your own tree, and for 5 minutes, you will explore this tree on your own. You can stand or sit in front of the tree, and you will MEET this tree, like you would meet a stranger, who might become your friend.

You may start with investigating the bark with your eyes, the shades of colour, the texture, the little creatures which are living there, the story the bark can tell you. You may want to look up into the crown, its branches spreading out into the sky, leaves moving with the wind ..., or you may want to look closer at the roots, how they grow into the earth ... ? You may want to explore the touch of the bark, or smell the bark – use ALL of your senses. Or you may want to lean against the tree or touch it in a way like you make contact with your dog, and speak with it? ---

Take your time and enjoy yourself with your tree, until you hear the bell. And then please, say good bye to your tree, and come again up here to the stone circle. Ok, you can go now, on your own, and choose a tree, where there is nobody else yet.

(Ring the bell after 5 minutes or so.)

When they are back all together, ask how it was for the, and if they would like to go to their tree again later? – Encourage them to go when they have time, on their own or with a friend. If they want, they can share their experience with each other later. (short feed-back)

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Guided Meditation

Mind/judgements

Sit in a comfortable position, upright and relaxed. Breathe normally. Please close your eyes, so that you can use the power of your imagination.

Can you feel your body sitting there? Where does it touch the ground?
Can you breathe out into the ground and in from the ground, drawing energy up to your heart area?

Let the out breath help you to let go of anything irritating or burdensome.
Use this method of breathing for relaxation and grounding.
Do it for a while

Now Remember: Subject and Object.

You are the subject, and everything which comes into your awareness is the object.

Imagine two cups: one has a crack, one is perfect. Which one would you prefer?

Imagine a plate with bananas - some look perfectly fresh, yellow, some are brownish.
Which one would you take?

Imagine the sound of a mosquito near your head. What is your reaction?

With these examples - can you see that you make choices according to what you like?

Getting what you like and getting away from what you don't like? We all do it.
Think of a few things you like
Now think of stuff you don't like

Imagine you are sitting at the seaside, watching a beautiful sunset with a friend.
Everything is perfect you feel happy.

Now add one ingredient to the situation, which would make it all very unpleasant.

Are things perfect for ever? Can we prevent change? Are you sure about your mind-judgements?

How much of the day are you busy with trying to get what you want or trying to get rid of what you don't want?

Just think of this day. Did you get what you wanted?
What happened when you didn't, what was hard to bear?

Now, direct your attention to your breathing again.
Take a few deep breaths, gently, and see how that feels?
Do you find this kind of breathing pleasant or unpleasant? Nothing special happening?
Is it boring?

This is why we usually don't notice that we are breathing.
The mind is so busy with getting things we like or getting rid of what we don't like.
Neutral sensations, like breath or non-headache, we hardly notice.

In meditation we use neutral sensations.

Like breath, because we don't get the impulse to want more of it or to get rid of it. We can just watch how it feels and stay with the sensations of breathing in, breathing out. We can stop running, stop trying. It is quite peaceful. A kind of Holiday

What is Freedom:

Freedom from suffering?

First take a breath and sit for a while, directing your attention to the inner space of breathing.

You don't even have to think.

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Guided Meditation Mind imagining the other senses

Today's theme is the mind. The power of the mind.

You will see that you are a perfect magician, able to create everything you want - in an instant.

What do you need for that?

First of all, you need to close your eyes. Otherwise it won't work. Please sit in a comfortable position, relaxed, upright, alert.

Now you need to engage your mind, your imagination, which is part of your mind. Imagine a vast empty sky.

Now I encourage you to build a castle in the air, the most perfect castle you have ever seen; with thick walls, towers, windows, big gates, climbing roses everything. And in full colour
Your mind can do it.

We all do it constantly, with different things: imagining what comes to our minds. the vision of a dog as soon as you hear me say the word - the image of it comes to your mind

Next your favourite car there it is, visible only to you
sun sparkling in a dew drop snow falling the face of your mother

All of these images come to us as soon as we think of it or hear of it.

We are so used to it that we don't even wonder how it is possible.

Where do these images come from? How do they get stored in our minds:
How can we call them simply by the power of thought?

A birch tree in the storm - rainbow a beautiful sunset -the face of your favourite actor
a finger pointing to the moon - you face before you were born?

Your inner ear? - Would your mind be able to silently create sound - a dog barking - the sound of your favourite car starting - leaves rustling in the wind s somebody knocking at the door - the sound of silence..

So it seems that your mind can create sound.
Can you hear sound in your dreams?

Has your mind the power to create taste, flavours?

Try - chocolate - marmite - snow - burnt toast - a tear running down your cheek into your mouth.

How can the mind do that? Does it come from memory:?

Try to create in your mind the flavour of something you have never tasted before? Does it work?

Bark of a tree or raw crocodile meat?

Now smell, aroma. Can your inner nose smell?
Fresh butter cake - fried fish - old leather - lemon peel - your favourite smell - a wet dog
can you actually re-create that aroma inside or is it more a kind of vague memory
somehow you know?

And when you hear the word - fresh strawberries what come first the image of the smell or
do both come together.

Which of the senses is left? Ok, we have not done touch yet, tactile sensations.
Do you remember how it feels when you touch: - an ice cube - the hot kettle- chewing
gum - soft wool - the bark of a tree - baby skin - flowing water
rain running down your face - coming into a empty room

So the mind can create the memory of touch, even very subtle tactile sensations.

And now lets see whether your mind can create the whole orchestra of sense impressions -
all six senses together.

Remember how you were coming into the kitchen this morning
try to re-create in your mind something you have seen there.
- some sounds you have heard there?
- what could you smell?
- what did you eat - do you remember the flavours?
- do you remember your fingers touching something - what ?
-can you remember what you were thinking at the table?
- was there a moment of silence?

-bell-

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Guided Meditations on Neutral Sensations

Usually our mind is busy with exciting things. We hardly notice something neutral. So in order to feel neutral feelings we need a willingness to let go of the exciting stuff. And focus our attention on something that is not so easy to feel. Let's try.

Sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes. I'll ask some questions, and you can silently explore, what is true for you.

How do you know you have a body when your eyes are closed? Of course you remember that you have a body. But can you sense that the body is with you right now? Can you feel what is sitting there? ...

Can you feel where the body is touching the ground? Where?

Can you feel the crown of your head? How does that feel?

Where is the feeling stronger - where you touch the ground or at the top of your head?

Can you feel your left ear? Your right ear? Can you feel that part of your nose, where the breath goes in and out? What is easier to be aware of - ear or nose?

Can you feel the belly moving in and out with the breath? Can you feel the opposite side where the back is? Which one is easier for you to be aware of?

Is it easier to stay with the attention where something is moving inside or when nothing is happening? Try it out.

Is it easier to stay with the attention where you feel pressure or pain, or where you hardly feel anything? Experiment.

Is it right that the attention goes where the action is?

So how come you usually rather see outwards with your eyes but hardly feel your eyes from within?

Why do you feel your stomach only usually when it hurts or when you have eaten too much, but hardly when it is well and relaxed?

What brings more peace

----- something that is painful?

----- something exciting?

----- something neutral?

Can you feel where your head is? Now shake your head - Can you still feel it? Then you can open your eyes.

(If the group is very quiet and attentive)

Direct your attention to the breathing - can you feel your belly expanding and contracting?

Can you stay with the attention around the breathing, noticing the beginning of the breathing in?

Notice when the in breath is at its peak and stops

Notice the beginning and ending of the in breath, and beginning and ending of the out
breath

Do that for a while, while breathing naturally

Can you sense into the turning point between the in and out breath, and between out and in
breath ...

Congratulations! You have managed to focus on something neutral, something rather
subtle.

Now open your eyes - while still keeping the attention on your breathing - can you look
around and feel your body breathing?

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Guided meditation on choice.

Please sit down in a comfortable position, back upright and relaxed. And please, close your eyes.

In doing so, you have already made a number of choices. I would ask you to reflect on those choices:

Why did you choose to wear the socks you are wearing? --

Why did you choose to sit where you are sitting now? --

Why would you choose to be quiet, when you want to listen to somebody? --

What are your reasons to listen to me now? --

Why would you choose to meditate? --

To some of these questions you may have answered to yourself: I did it because somebody told me, I didn't really choose it myself. - Or: It just happened, I didn't choose it consciously. - That may be true.

What do you think: How would it effect the quality of your listening, when you do it just because you were told to do so? ---

How would it effect the quality of your listening, when you are interested and make a conscious choice to listen? ---

You see, in order to make conscious choices, we want to be attentive to the causes and the effects of those choices. Animals can't do that, but you can.

Let's experiment with this:

If you haven't closed your eyes, please close them now. - What is your reason for doing so? ---

Yes, you do it because I have suggested it.

And another condition for closing your eyes is, that you need to have eyes and you need to know how to close them, right?

And, as I mentioned yesterday, you wouldn't close your eyes if you don't feel safe.

What is the result of keeping your eyes closed? - You can't look around in the shrine room, you can't see people's faces any longer. So what can you see instead? - The inside of your eyelids?

What colour do you see? What else? Any points or patterns? ---

Do you feel excited about what you can see, or rather bored? -

Let's look at boredom: What is your reaction to boredom? - Do you want to change the situation and do something different? --- Or can you take an interest in boredom and investigate how it feels, and what reactions it is bringing up in you? ---

Boredom can bring up a curiosity for experimenting: for example, turning your head more towards the light or away from it in order to find out whether that makes a difference to the colour you can see with closed eyes? ---

Can you find other ways to change the colour of what you can see with closed eyes? --- Could you experiment on your own without being interested? - So interest or intention

seems to be important for doing something, doesn't it?

So, one result of meditation can be, that you become more aware of your individual reactions. And once you know your reactions, they are no longer unconscious, and you can deliberately choose what you do, choose what has a good result.

So then, your intention for doing meditation could be to learn more about yourself. In meditation we close our eyes to look inside, to see ourselves, understand ourselves. ---

Bell

You can open your eyes, and see what effect that has on you ... - Any questions?

(I would suggest to make conscious choices. Why? - I believe that it is beneficial to be attentive to the causes and effects of our choices. First of all, coming from my own experience, it is more fun and gives better results when I do something with conscious intention and interest, when I really want to do it.

And secondly: Would you consciously choose something from which you know that it has a bad effect on you? ---

Whether you choose something consciously or not: you are the one who has to deal with the result of what you have chosen to do: you are the owner of your kamma.

As we were chanting this morning:

“I AM THE OWNER OF MY KAMMA, HEIR TO MY KAMMA, BORN OF MY KAMMA, RELATED TO MY KAMMA, ABIDE, SUPPORTED BY MY KAMMA, WHATEVER KAMMA I SHALL DO, FOR GOOD OR FOR ILL, OF THAT I WILL BE THE HEIR.

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Meditation on Sense of Self

I would like to do a meditation and reflection with you about "the most important thing in the world."

Please sit down in a comfortable position, on your own, upright and relaxed.

Look around, and make sure that everything is ok.

--- Please close your eyes now, and try to remain silent for the next 5 minutes. ---

Bring your attention to the sensations of breathing in and out. ---

You can feel your breath going out at your nostrils --- and then coming in again, flowing down into your body with the in- breath ---, then there is a kind of turning point, and with that, the out-breath is starting, the breath leaving your body again through the nostrils. Just feel that for a while. -----

So it seems, as if you have a sense of INSIDE and OUTSIDE , isn't it? --'Inside' of yourself seems to be where your body is, and 'outside' of yourself seems to be all the space around your body, including other people and things. – Right?

You know that from situations, where you have hurt yourself, like knocking with your elbow against a table – ouch – and after that you know that you have to be more careful with moving, watching where your body ends and other things start, because you don't want to hurt yourself! So, coming to know that this body, we inhabit, is a sensitive form, we learn, what is good for ourselves and what is not, right? And from this sense of self we develop our insight that we are responsible for our actions, that we don't want to do anything which might cause us pain and suffering, isn't it?

So, since you were a little child, you have developed this SENSE OF SELF, and a sense of OTHER THAN SELF.

--- When you are sitting with eyes closed now, really investigate, where your sense of self is located, how far it extends, and where exactly it seems to end. ---

Can you feel the area, where your body touches the ground?

--- Can you feel the boundary right there, where your body ends and the mat begins? ---

Take some time and try to sense this boundary between 'yourself' and 'other' in different areas of your body. – Where is it easy to feel this boundary, and where is it not so clear?

Try moving a bit helps to feel the boundary between inside and outside more clearly? -----

Now listen first to what I say, before you do it: Take your hands to your ears and try to close your ears with a finger. – And then try to feel out, if the sense of touch is coming from inside or from outside of your body. – Do it for 5 seconds, and then take your fingers

off again. Start now. ---

And what about sound, when you close your ears like this? – What would you hear? ---
Does this sound come from inside or outside? – Try it out for 5 seconds, now. ---

And can you listen to sound from inside of your head now, without closing the ears? -----
How do you know, what sound is inside and what sound comes from outside? -----

- Bell -

Now I would like to read a short Story of the Buddha to you, a Sutta.

It is called “ Is there anyone more dear to you than yourself ? ” (Mallika)

Once at Savatti in the Palace. King Pasenadi of Kosala had gone together with Queen Mallika to the upper terrace. Then King Pasenadi of Kosala addressed Queen Mallika: “Is there, Queen Mallika, anyone more dear to you than yourself?”
“There is no one, great King, more dear to me than myself. But is there anyone, great king, more dear to you than yourself?”
“For me as well, Mallika, there is no one more dear than myself.”

Then King Pasenadi of Kosala left the palace and went to the Blessed One, the Buddha. He sat down to one side, and told the Blessed One about his conversation with Queen Mallika. Then the Blessed One, having understood the meaning of this, responded with this verse:

“Having traversed all quarters (the whole world) with the mind,
One finds none anywhere dearer than oneself.
Likewise, each person holds himself most dear;
Hence one who loves himself should not harm others.”

(Samyutta Nikaya 3,8 (8) Mallika - Simplified version of Bhikkhu Bodhi’s translation of the Connected Discourses of the Buddha, Wisdom Publications 2000)

Question to the group:

If it is true, that everybody who loves himself, should not harm others, why are there some people, who harm others deliberately or who don’t care for others??? –

This is a discussion point - we did not use this in the meditation

Our perception is structured as if there is A SELF AT OUR CENTER. Every intention to do something or try not to do something goes back to this sense of self.

Although in his higher teachings the Buddha speaks of ANATTA (not-self), in this Sutta the Buddha respects and protects this way of perceiving this sense of self and taking care of oneself. – Why? –

If we have loving kindness and respect for ourselves and for our feelings and needs, we can learn to take care of ourselves. If we do that as teachers, parents or peers, we can be a good example for our kids and friends, so that this attitude can become natural for them as well, and we can feel confident and at ease, safe.

Then, we can also feel more relaxed with others, so that we are open to their feelings and needs and can have empathy with each other. That is a natural opening of the heart, which is recommended by the Buddha in this Sutta, starting with the love for oneself.

With an upbringing like this, everybody knows for oneself that he/she is worth of love and respect, knows how painful it is to be hurt, and so doesn't have a need to harm others. Instead, there will be a need to be kind to others and to treat them with respect – as we do it for ourselves.

But imagine somebody who has never learned as a child or teenager that she/he is fully worthy of love and care, who perhaps has been neglected by their parents or even beaten up and abused – they will know how painful it is to be hurt, but they will believe that it must be their own fault, that they deserve it or that it is their own fault, and it is the person in power to show them what needs to be done – by means of punishment and revenge. And quite naturally, that person will do that to others as well, or at least, try, if they don't see anyone around who might have the power to punish them for it.

That is a deep, painful conditioning. It is self-harming as well as dangerous for others.

In order to heal such a self-harming or abusive conditioning, it needs a person who has enough love and respect for themselves and others and also clear boundaries, and who is able to give these emotionally confused children or adults so much empathy that they finally start to feel safe enough to become aware of and respect their own feelings of loneliness, despair, anger, grief about not being loved ... - often that person needs to be a therapist.

Recommended reading: The latest book of Alice Miller: The Drama of the Gifted Child – Revised Edition 2004/5

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ABIDE SUPPORTED BY MY KAMMA - to be PATIENT and ENDURE

Please settle in a comfortable position and do all the beginning steps of meditation on your own. –
(give them time)

How do you know with eyes closed, where you are now? ---
Can you be aware of your breathing, and listen at the same time? ---
Can you include the sound of your own breathing? ---
Is that enjoyable for you to do, or rather disturbing? – Just notice. ---

Can you BE AWARE OF UNPLEASANT EMOTIONS, like feeling disturbed or bored or restless,
without reacting to them?
--- Are you able to just notice and welcome them in silence?
---To bear with them, and watch how they are coming and going? ---

This is not easy to do for SMALL CHILDREN, because they tend to react immediately if things are becoming unpleasant or boring. If they don't want it, they'll let you hear that. ---

They don't have much ability yet to observe themselves, to be patient. ---
So they need help when they are getting restless.

And what about YOU? --- Are you getting restless and impatient during meditation? ---
Even although you may know that it is useful to train oneself in mindfulness, and to be patient with oneself?

Do you find it frustrating when you become aware that you are lost in thinking and fantasy again and again? ---
Can you imagine that this is still happening to me? ---

Usually the remedy for this is called: 'PATIENCE and ENDURANCE'. ---
What is your reaction to these 2 words? --- Just notice ...

Patience and endurance in our mindfulness of breathing meditation means that you notice the moments, when the mind wanders off, that you notice the feelings which arise, and that you come back to the breathing, again and again. Like this you train yourself for 10 minutes or so, you stick with the mindfulness of breathing and notice what happens around that. When you see that you can do that, you may want to extend the meditation. Here in the monastery we usually do it for an hour. –

But patience and endurance are not only useful for sitting meditation. Mindfulness of breathing and of movement is just a very good tool to learn how to stay mindful in ALL situations. -

Patience and endurance are actually much more important for dealing with every-day life. – Because you don't always have a guardian sitting next to you. You have to learn to be your own guardian. – Right? ---
By the way, where is your breath now? ---

Are you willing to learn from your actions? --- Can you see what kamma you have made this week? ---

Good or bad? --- Just reflect a bit. ---

Can you be patient with results which were not as good as you were expecting? ---

For example, did somebody snap at you without apologizing afterwards? ---

Did somebody seem to ignore you, with whom you would have liked to connect? ---

Were you disappointed with what you did yourself at some point? ---

Can you be patient with yourself and others? ---

Being mindful and patient instead of reacting is different from a “WHY BOTHER ?”-attitude. – It can lead to wisdom. --- To understanding yourself and others. ---

It’s not easy, but highly recommended. ---

How do you feel now, after listening to all this? --- Just notice. ---

bell –

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Meditation on Choice and Awareness

– ‘Related to my kamma’

When we do a guided meditation here in the marquee, I would ask you all to draw nearer to the shrine so that you can understand easily what I say, and also to build up a shared energy field, through which we can support each other in our awareness. So please, make a clear choice and come nearer. Sit down in a comfortable position, small children next to one parent, the rest of us sit on our own, back upright and relaxed. (wait)

Now stop talking, please, and close your eyes. ---

What are you aware of when you sit here with closed eyes? ---

The body? --- The breath? ---

Can you listen to the sounds around you, opening up to the shared space here in the marquee? ---

Can you choose to focus on just LISTENING, listening into space? ---

What are your reactions to the sounds you can hear? ---

Do you LIKE to listen to these sounds, or do you find them disturbing? – Just notice. ---

Are there thoughts coming up in your mind, commenting on this, like:

Why do we have to sit here and listen to these boring sounds?– What’s the use of it? ---

Or comments like: Oh, that’s interesting, it’s like an orchestra with different percussion instruments (wind, flapping, rustling, coughing ...) ---

This is an awareness- exercise in listening – and, according to the conditions we are experiencing, each of us will have a REACTION. The reaction being something around LIKING or DISLIKING, or someway in the middle, rather NEUTRAL. And usually the mind is starting some comments or judgements around it. ---

Are you aware of any of such commenting thoughts now? --- Just notice ...

Remember, there is AWARENESS and the OBJECT of awareness. – When we were just listening to sound, the object of awareness was SOUND, different sounds. And when you start noticing your reactions to it, the object of awareness may be a feeling, like pleasant or unpleasant, or some thoughts, WHY we like it, or what we rather would do instead ...

Now, please focus your awareness on the breathing sensations, breathing IN and OUT. ---

Where in your body do you feel the movement of your breathing most clearly? ---

Please choose to stay with the awareness focused there.

Let that be your object of awareness now, for a few moments. -----

In meditation, we choose to focus our awareness on the breath for a while. Why? --- Most of us will experience, that that has a calming effect on the mind: We stop thinking, and even if thought slips in again, we learn to be aware of that too, and we learn that we have a choice, that we can bring the breath into awareness again. – So, after listening to this, just bring your awareness back to the breath for a moment. ---

As soon as you are aware of that you have a choice, you can choose your object of awareness consciously, for example, you can choose to be aware of the sensations of

breathing in the belly or in the chest, or you can choose to be aware of the thoughts which come up in your mind. It's like learning to steer a car. – Would you like to sit in a car which just goes wild, off the road, into the bushes? ---

It's in your own interest, I suppose, to be able to choose the object of awareness consciously, because it will influence your life. – Remember, part of our chanting goes: “I AM ... RELATED TO MY KAMMA” – that means that I have to live with the results of my choices. The results of my actions are with me for a while. ---

An example? - Just think of something which happened to you this morning on the walk – was there something pleasant happening which was a result of what you were doing before? ---

Like, somebody was sharing their sweets with you, and suddenly, you remember that earlier you were sharing something with that person? –
That's quite pleasant to relate to, isn't it?

Or do you remember something rather unpleasant happening to you on the walk? – Does that seem to have been happening accidentally, or do you recognize a connection to what you have done before? ---

Like somebody got stung by nettles, and afterward realized that it wouldn't have happened if he would have watched out? Now he has to bear with this nettle-rash, that's with him as a result for a while. Quite unpleasant. ---

Or somebody had an argument with another person, may be about not turning up for their chore? - So she is carrying that memory for a while. It always comes up, when he sees that person again. Not very pleasant. ---

We can't really get away from the results of our actions, you see? - They are following us.

Understanding this, you may want to choose actions which have a good result, which are pleasant to bear with. ---

At least, in this moment, you can bring awareness to breathing in and out, take a deep breath, and let the out-breath flow out with a sigh. ---
That's already a relief. ---

- bell -

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Guided Meditation on Responsibility

Please come and sit near to the shrine for the meditation, still everybody on their own, only small children near to one parent. - It is much easier to communicate when we sit more close to each other, but still in a respectful distance. – Then there is a sense of ‘being held’ in shared awareness. (wait)

Please make yourself at ease here, and find a way to sit upright and relaxed.

And please stop talking and, slowly, close your eyes.

Bring your awareness gently back to the SENSE OF SELF inside, sensing your breath going in and out , aware of your feelings around the heart area. ---

Do you have a clear sense with closed eyes of what is inside of your body, and what is outside? ---

Now, take a deep in-breath, hold the in-breath for a moment, and then breathe out again as long as you can. ---

Try it again, even longer. --- And now again, really, as long as possible! ---

Ok, now breathe normally, and find yourself at ease with your breathing. ---

With an exercise like this, making the breath as long as possible, you have to be cautious – because you can really make yourself dizzy and feel bad, when you overdo it. Especially when you like competition and excitement, you can easily strain yourself. ---

So knowing what is good for yourself and what is not – that is very important. You know by listening inwards: “What makes me feel at ease, clear, balanced? And What is causing me pain or confusion ?” –

Why is it important to know what is good for yourself? – Because only YOU can know. Because YOU ARE THE OWNER OF YOUR KAMMA, you have to live with how it feels when you do something!

And because of that, only YOU can take responsibility for that what you are doing.

So I would like to reflect with you on “RESPONSIBILITY”. Some of you may not like this word. – Why? Take your feelings seriously! --- Does it remind you of things you SHOULD do, of DUTY, of things you DON’T LIKE to do? --- Isn’t that interesting?

But what does ‘responsibility’ really mean? – How is it to RESPOND to something or to somebody? --- To be responsive, to be in connection, to be in touch with. TO BE ABLE TO BE RESPONSIVE = RESPONSI-BILITY --- to me that is something completely different than to perform a duty.

It is like being a flower opening to the sunlight ..., like a leaf dancing in the wind ..., like a baby smiling when recognizing her mother’s face..., or like a man closing the window when the rain starts falling ... -

When I am in touch with myself, I can feel my heart resonating, responding to what

happens around me. And ideally, my actions flow from that, naturally. Responsibility is our inner sense of WHAT FEELS RIGHT which makes us feel responsible, able to respond, alive.

And when our hearts are open, and we don't cut ourselves off from others, our hearts would even respond to their needs, with a natural wish to support them. – Is that right? That is true for the Summer Camp too: I have seen a child being stung by a wasp, and immediately some other children coming to help and comfort her. That, for me, is responsibility, responding to somebody's pain; and I find it beautiful.

But why is it that sometimes it doesn't work like that? – Like, you know you have a ROTA for washing up, you know it's your turn now, and you decide not to turn up and keep on playing instead. Where does your heart respond to, in this situation? – Does it seem as if you had two hearts: One feels that you want to stay with your friends, right? You don't want to miss the game. That's true. And yet, you may have noticed that there is a nagging sense of something that doesn't feel right. That's the 'other' heart, which connects more to the whole community. So there is conflict in your heart. – Do you know that?

--- So, what could you do in a situation like this, when you want to be responsive from your whole heart? --- Can you speak with your friends about this: Say, that you feel torn? --- Tell them that you would like to continue with the play, you don't want to miss it? Can you ask them if they could wait for you, so that you can do the dishes? --- How would that feel? --- So, you could go washing the dishes, and feel good about that. And then you could go to your friends and play again, and feel double good? --- And, on top of that, congratulate yourself that you have not abandoned your heart, that you have won full responsi-ability? ---

Do you really want to understand that you are the owner of your kamma, that it is up to you whether you are living with an open heart, responsive to your full truth? Or whether you close your heart and lose touch with yourself? --- If you decide to stay responsive, you will more and more be able to notice the feelings and voices in your heart, and take them seriously. Then you don't need anybody to tell you what you should have done. Because you know better. And if the voices of your heart, seem to be in conflict - if you learn to trust these voices, you will always find new solutions, because you are in touch with the wisdom of your heart, the INNER SAGE.

And you may notice: When you abandon half of your inner wisdom, this half will pop up from the outside – sometimes as regret you can feel for yourself later, or it turns up as people who want to tell you what you SHOULD have done, what you did WRONG!

--- May be you can investigate for yourself, which conflicts with the outside world you could avoid in the future if you would stay responsive to your inner conflict and find new ways to solve it. --- No reason to feel guilty or blame ourselves for what happened in the past. - Sometimes we simply have to learn it this way, learning from outer conflicts, from missed opportunities, where we missed to respond to our hearts. ---

What is your heart's reaction to all this now? --- Just listen for a while in silence, and don't forget to breathe. -----

- Bell -

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Guided meditation on Sila

Please sit down on your own, only small children nearer to one parent. ---
And could you please stop speaking now, and close your eyes. --- Try to straighten your
back a bit, and shift your weight slightly to the left, and then to the right, forward and
backward ... - so that you can find your inner balance. --- And if you have found a
balanced way to sit, your inner pole, stay like this for a while. ---

And take a DEEP breath, feeling out and relaxing into the inner space. ---

Let go of all the breath in a long out-breath, so that you can fully take in fresh air. ---
Find your own rhythm of breathing in and out for a while. -----

Can you feel how the overall body is getting flexible with the small movements of
breathing in and out? –

Now allow your awareness to reach out into the space around you, listening to all sounds
in an open and accepting way. ---

These are the sounds of life, the sounds of your Dhamma family here in Amaravati.
A family which comes together to enjoy and support each other, trying to live in truth and
harmony.

There is a Buddhist word for this – it is called SILA, and usually this means moral
conduct, and for families and all of you here, it means keeping the 5 PRECEPTS.

Precepts are GUIDELINES – it's not a law or something which you are told to do. In
Amaravati, you have to ask for it. And they only work, if you remember them and decide
to keep them. –

Why would you choose to follow guidelines, and not just do what you feel like doing?
Like: “Give me your biscuit! I want it. And if you don't give it to me, I'll TAKE it!” ---

Over the last days, you have heard something about KAMMA, the actions we do, and
which have certain results, good or bad, whether we like it or not.

I will read out a story of the Buddha now. Do you remember the story of Queen Mallika
and King Pasenadi, where they asked each other: “Is there anyone more dear to you than
yourself?” –

This now is a story in which the Buddha is giving reflections to village people in India,
who asked him how to live in peace and happiness, and what they can do to enjoy life
without regret.

If you like, you can listen with eyes closed, or eyes open.

And for those of you who want to do a LISTENING MEDITATION: Can you be aware of
your breathing while listening? - Can you breathe IN from the space of sound, and breathe

OUT into the space of sound?

(Read out the shortened version of “THE PEOPLE OF BAMBOO GATE”

- bell -

(If there is time for discussion about “THE PEOPLE OF BAMBOO GATE”?)

Did you recognize the PRECEPTS in this story? --- Which precepts did you recognize? –

What about the 5th precept? - Did the Buddha mention something about ALCOHOL or DRUGS? -
What happens when a person has taken alcohol or drugs? Do you think that somebody who is drunk or
drugged could keep the first 4 precepts? ---

People who have drunk alcohol or taken drugs are not very much aware of what they are doing for a
while (although THEY may think they are) – especially for that reason, the Buddha is usually adding the
5th precept. The people of Bamboo Gate may have known and kept it already. So he didn't have to
mention it to them. ---

Does anybody remember how the 5th precept goes? ---

“ I take the precept to refrain from taking drinks and drugs which lead to CARELESSNESS.”

Do you remember: What did the Buddha mention in regards to the 4th precept, RIGHT SPEECH? – If
someone were to damage my welfare with false speech ...

- ... divide me from my friends by divisive speech ...
- ... address me with harsh speech ...
- ... address me with frivolous speech and idle chatter ...

Do you remember such situations where this was happening to you? --- Just take a while to remember
how that felt like, what the result of that Kamma (action) was. ---

So if you can remember that this was not pleasing and agreeable to you – would you want to do that to
another? ---

And what about REVENGE ? ---

What about BAD HABITS ? – If you are a lot together with people who are used to lie, or who are used
to drink – how would that influence you? ---

What can you do to get away from those bad habits? ---

Do you remember the STORY about the man who fell into the hole on his way home? ---

What did he do so that it couldn't happen to him again? ---

Would that be applicable to the situation with your friends? ---

What did the Buddha recommend in this Sutta to the people of Bamboo Gate, regarding false speech? ---

Who remembers? ---

“Having reflected thus,

- he abstains from false speech, ...

exhorts others to abstain from false speech, ...

and speaks in praise from abstinence from false speech. “ ...

Is that something you would be willing to do? – Would that be easy for you or not? --- Why wouldn't it
be so easy sometimes? ---

For those of you who are interested to read the whole Sutta:
Sayutta Nikaya 55 / 7 / - THE PEOPLE OF BAMBOO GATE
Connected Discourses of the Buddha
Bhikku Bodhi's translation – Wisdom Publikations 2000

At the end of this Sutta, the Buddha states, that keeping these precepts not only leads a person to a
happier life, but that, because it is leading him to a happier life, this person will also gain confirmed
confidence in the Buddha and his teachings. And from that he would wish to honour or take refuge in the
Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha and develop his practice and virtues. - And by practicing in this

way he will reach the first stage of enlightenment, STREAM ENTERER.

Again in this Sutta, the Buddha, asked by the people to show them a way to happiness in THIS lifetime, is answering the question. But he is also leading them to think a step further, BEYOND this lifetime:

If you have attained the first stage of enlightenment, stream entry, after REBIRTH you will be reborn at least into the human realm or even into higher realms, but you can't fall back into the animal realm, the domain of ghosts, the animal realm – that is: you are finished with the plane of misery. And you are bound to get fully enlightened at least within 7 lifetimes ...

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Smiling into your body

Please sit in a comfortable position and close your eyes.

Take a few deep breaths, and with each out breath let go of all the stuff you were concerned with today.

Let it flow out with the breathe and enjoy the inner stillness that follows:-

Direct your attention to the inner space where you can feel your body expanding and contracting. Allow the body to relax into that space of awareness.

Do you know which organs are in that area?

Can you feel your lungs expanding and contracting.

Allowing the fresh air in, taking in oxygen to the blood vessels and then emptying the old air out again.

We do this the whole day, day after day, without even noticing it much.

With the next in breath can you send a warm thank you smile into your lungs?

Try to feel, where your heart is. Even if you don't know much about anatomy you will know where the center of your chest is?

where does it feel like the center?

Is there any pulsing? Is it warm or cold there?

Does it feel open or rather tense?

Just reflect for a moment what your heart is doing for you now as the center of your life force.

With your in breath send a smile into your heart and when you breath out let the breath radiate from your heart into all directions sending smiles to everybody around you.

We can connect with our hearts especially in silence.

Now try to connect with your stomach. Can you feel your stomach? It is where your breakfast is right now. Does it feel comfortable there or rather heavy or empty if you did not have breakfast?

With the next inbreath send a big smile to your stomach a kind of appreciation because it helps with digesting the good we eat.

What else is in that area where you can feel the body expanding and contacting, ribs, liver, spine?

Try to make a feeling a connection with these other parts of the body which are all doing their best to support your life.

Take a deep breath into those organs and make space there and don't forget to send a smile of thank you to them to let them know how much you value their support and how much you care about them.

just do it for yourself in silence take your time and if you have finished stay with the attention focused on your breathing body and space.

And at last open your attention out to the whole space of awareness.

That is the space of the Buddha- mind.

The space behind thought.

The space from where all sense impressions arise.

The space into which they cease.
With the next in breath let a big thank you smile expand into this silence.

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Six creature game

After reading [The six creature story -Samyutta Nikaya XXXV.206 Chappana Sutta](#)

What happens, when you have mindfulness immersed in the body and your eyes would see a pleasing form?

What movements would you be able to notice?

-if my body-mindfulness is established I would feel immediately when the eyes are attracted by a pleasing form

(the eyes would turn towards the direction, get hooked there, and next perhaps I could feel how something in the body wants to move closer to it, grab it....)

I could stop the movement and just WATCH THE IMPULSES without moving REGISTERING

"Oh, that's what's going on, eyes attracted...!"

Optional

I could reflect whether it is actually skilful to go there and take it or whether it is better to leave it -

Maybe it's against the precepts: I shouldn't take it because it belongs to someone else?

And if I find out that it is actually not harmful to take it, then I could allow it to happen and move towards it, take it, share it, enjoy it.

What happens when your body-mindfulness is not established and you see a pleasant form?

if my body-mindfulness is not established and I see a pleasing form, I could easily go and take it.

(maybe I wouldn't even notice that my eyes got hooked there and that my body has already turned towards it -maybe I would just realize that I have already grabbed it, and then it's much more difficult to put it down...)

and I may miss the moment when I can reflect if it is skilful or unskilful to take it - and I could be in trouble doing something which I may regret afterwards

Six Creatures Game

Each Creature in the story is representing a sense : We have:

A snake - seeing

A crocodile - hearing

A bird - smelling

A Dog - tasting

A hyena - touching

A monkey- thinking

Please now get into groups of 7 - before you go to your places, please stay close, so that I can explain the game.

You have to decide in your group, who is which sense and who is the post.

The post needs to be the STRONGEST person in the group.

So now each of the sense has to find something that is pleasing and toward which you want to pull

or

Something which is repellent and from what you want to get away from.

On the first attempt of this game - the post is just A BYSTANDER

So now each group can now find some space - link your arm together (each hand on the other person wrist).

Now just start pulling into your direction and see what happens.

Post in Middle

The post is going into the middle and you link your arms around him in the same way as before.

Now again start pulling into your directions. And see if the post is strong enough to hold you back

GO!

So you see, in the story, the strong post means MINDFULNESS of the body

So if mindfulness of the body is established, the sense have no power of that person.

But if the mindfulness of the body is weak, the sense pull that person all over the place...

Heres another version of the same game

Remember to point out that each creature is a sense. Which creature is what?

Make sure each person in the circle is one of the senses.

Get into groups of six –each groups need one strong adult to act as the the circus director.

Then link arms together in group- circus director in middle – not linked,

Let each person pull in one way or all pull in different ways, pretend you are that sense, if you like the smell of the incense move towards it, if you like the buddha rupa move towards it (if done in a temple). If you don't like person hands your are holding move pull

away from it.

The role of the Circus director can be like a facilitator

Ask question to the senses?

Ask the eye: Do you see something which makes you want to get closer something, or move away from it.

Ask the ear, nose, tongue, body (touch) the same questions.

The mind: do you have an idea what makes you want to go somewhere?

So is there something we like to do TOGETHER without pulling into different directions?

Negotiate with six sense and see if you can agree to do something together

(So now we are moving towards the five precepts)

So now the circus director he can act as the pole.

All link to him.

Now explore the six sense from this position- this is like using the 5 precepts.

So maybe its easier if you all work together.

May the circus director can just stand in the middle of a circle formed by the six people around him holding hands and just move around the circus director in away which supports harmony and peace.

Now see what happens if the circus director moves and you see if you can move with him.

The pole in the beginning is like the precepts it holds you and then when you understand and develop wisdom then its awareness the still point in the turning wheel – the pole is that.

So we are here to learn and understand about awareness. To use our sense of wonder – which is being like a detective about the way things are.

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Guided Meditation On Smell

two bottles of essential oils
two teenagers in the front both with one bottle each of essential oil

We will do a guided meditation on smell/scent. First listen please.....

The two fairies here in front want to bless you with essential oil
They will put one drop on you temples so please come forward to receive their blessing.
Is anybody allergic to essential oils?
then please do not come forward just stay where you are and you will smell something else
instead.

Please come silently one after another to receive your blessing and then go straight back to
your cushion in silence.

Sit down there and just watch until everybody else in back on their seat and please stay
silent so that your attention is on the scent which will fill the air in the shrine room soon.

Sit in a comfortable position and please close your eyes.
first of all direct your attention to the body and your breath.
Drawing in air from the nostrils down into your throat, your lungs and all the way back out
again
belly expanding..... belly contacting....
do that for a few breaths.
try to get a good sense of your breathing.

Direct your attention to the scent.
In which part of your body do you actually sense it most clearly
is it in the nose itself or more in the background between the nose and the mouth?

Can you locate the place of smelling at all?
Is the sense of smelling pervading the whole space of where you think your head is?
Open up to this space and allow your awareness to expand to its natural spaciousness?
Can you feel your body breathing in this space?
Let the sensations of scent happen in this space as well as sound feelings whatever arise?
Smelling can be a doorway for spacious awareness.

What feeling tone comes with the scent?
Is it pleasant unpleasant or neutral?
Does the scent bring up memories images, thoughts, stay with this for a while?
bring your attention back to the scent?
can you still smell it?
or has it faded?
where does the scent fade into?

-bell -

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Guided meditation on Sound

Please sit in a comfortable position. Today we are going to explore meditation and sound.

Note:

In order for this meditation to work you need to get some children in the group to make disturbing noises - they will love it!

Remember Mindfulness of the body is the pole that helps us not to get carried away by our sense impressions. If we manage to tie our mindfulness to the body, sense impressions don't have the power to pull or attention outward. ([click here for more details](#))

We can bring mindfulness to the body by closing our eyes and by directing our attention to the breathing. Breathe naturally. Where is your body? do you feel the breath? Where is the air cooler - when it comes in through the nostrils or when it flows out?

Do you feel your lungs expanding, filling with air? Where do you feel your body contracting during breathing out? Stay with these sensations of breathing for a while, until you get a good sense of your breathing.

Now when you have your mindfulness established around the sensations of breathing can you feel at ease with it and alert?

Then, slowly, open your awareness to the space of sound. Please try to stay in touch with the sensations of breathing - they are the pole - the center - of your awareness and sound vibrations come from the space around what sounds do you hear?

Do these sound-impressions pull you away from the awareness of your breathing, or are you able to stay centered and just open up to the sound?

If you get pulled out for a moment, gently bring your attention back to the breathing can you do that?

You can choose. You are the subject choosing the object of your attention your mind is free not to focus on sound - let sound just flow off without guessing meaning or judgement make a clear intention that you want to establish your mindfulness around the body breathing. You can't avoid hearing sound vibrations but you can stay centered and aware of the pole of your body.

Sound happens
(keyword for kids to make a disturbances)

Notice your reactions

Can you bring your attention back to the sensations of breathing? Back to your pole? When your mind is getting involved with what is happening outside gently bring it back to the sensations of breathing in and breathing out. Like this you can train your muscles for the mindfulness of the body.

Do you get agitated by the sounds you are hearing? Angry? Amused? Just notice your

reaction and come back to the sensations of your breathing

Do you get resentful? Do you start to form views and opinion? Like they should be silent. Parents should take care of their children. Why are small children allowed in the shrine room. I need silence otherwise I can't meditate. Something like that?

Can you feel the peacefulness, when you are able to allow sound just to flow?

Again and again let the sound just happen in this wide open space of awareness which has a warm breathing center.

-Bell-

By the way many thanks to the dhamma doodle group they have made up all these disturbing scenes among themselves and I had asked them to come up with something disturbing in order to challenge your mindfulness and to strengthen your meditation skills.

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Standing meditation

under big beech tree

Please stand in a big circle, and give each other some space, small people in front.

Could you please close your eyes and just be in touch with the ground. Feel the earth
under your feet, even through the soles of your shoes. ---

And allow yourself to arrive here, everybody on their own, just being grounded like a tree.

Imagine that you ARE a tree, a big, wonderful tree, with strong roots going down into the
earth ... spreading out deeper ... and deeper. ---

You are standing firm as a tree, nothing can shake you too much. – Allow your body to
shift slightly sideward - to the left, to the right ... , and back and forth ... , enjoying these
soft movements.---

And now lift your arms just a little bit and allow your fingers to move, to dance like
leaves, so that your whole body becomes responsive with small movements, and you can
connect your heart to what is around you. ---

Just stay for a while transparent like this to the environment. -----

And now, still with eyes closed and no speaking, open yourself to the world of SOUND.

And now, slowly open your eyes, and just quietly WATCH the leaves of the trees, light
and shadow, shades of colours, movements – just open yourself with all senses to what is
alive in the woods. -----

- bell -

Thank you.

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Standing Meditation

Who is aware of standing

Please get up. Make sure that you have enough space around you and that you are standing balanced, feet in line with your shoulders.

Please close your eyes, and if you can keep them shut until the bells goes.

Breathe in deeply and while the breath is filling your body, allow your whole body to stretch a bit upright. And breathing out, let your body relax, still upright but settled and comfortable in yourself. the arms, loosely at your sides.

Breathing in, direct your attention to the area where your body is expanding. Breathing out to where it is contracting. Do it a few times until you get a good sense for your inner space, expanding and contracting with your breathing. Let it happen naturally...

Now expand that spacious awareness down to your feet.

Can you feel your feet touching the ground?

Can you feel the pressure on your toes and soles, the whole weight of your body pressing against the ground?

Now try to imagine that you are breathing in through the soles of your left foot, drawing the breath from there up to your chest area, and then, while breathing out, you send your breath down to your right foot, down into the earth. Just imagine that you have nostrils at the soles of your feet, so that you could draw in the breath from the ground under your left foot, filling your chest area, and then breathe out down into the earth underneath your right foot.

Do the whole cycle a few times, feeling the energy moving through your body as you direct the breath with your awareness in this cycle.

And then reverse this cycle: now drawing the breath in from under the sole of your right foot; imagine you have nostrils there; letting it flow up into your chest, and then with the out breath down through your left foot into the earth. Be aware of the whole cycle. Do it a few times.

So with this exercise; what is now subject and what is now object? Who is aware of what?... What does your awareness include? - The body standing? - You breathing in and out? - The breath energy flowing in a cycle? - The sound of my voice? - Your own thinking? - The space in which all this happens? All that which you are aware of can that be the object of your awareness? Everything which is arising in the space of your awareness right now would be the object. - Right?

What the is the subject? - Is it you? The person you are? Or is it awareness itself? Think about it. And remember: every thought arising in awareness would be an object? Wouldn't it? So what is the subject? Don't forget to breathe. Just stand for a while, eyes still closed and let the answers to this question arise in awareness...

If you are the subject are you able to choose the object? Can you decide what object you want to choose? Like now: Can you decide to stay with the breath as the object of your

awareness?

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Guided Meditation on the Way Things Are

First let us explore what we mean when we say:
“The way things are.”

The way things are in the present moment.

Most of our likes and dislikes come from the experience of the past.

For example: You know that you better not touch a candle flame - because you remember that once when you touched it, it was OUCH very, very hot and painful. Is that true? You don't want this to happen again. So you better keep at a safe distance. Very useful memory!

But, wouldn't it be sad, if you had run your life only by these memories of the past? That's like being dead to new experience. You would miss the wonder of the present moment. You wouldn't be able to see the candle flame with fresh eyes. Right?

Now look at one of the candle flames. And while doing so, direct your awareness into your body.

Can you feel the body breathing? Can you feel the space around your heart? Can you watch with this openness?

Now watch the candle flame with this kind of open awareness. Just watch and notice the light that is alive...

Now still staying in open awareness, allow thought to come in. What happens?... - Is there any judgement?...

positive judgement like "How beautiful!" or "Interesting, I like it" ...

negative judgment, like: “How boring!” or “Thats rubbish!”...

Is there associative memory like: “Oh at the bonfire last night...”

That's the reality of thought. Thinking belongs, is part of the way things are. Nothing wrong with it. Importance is not to get lost in thought.

Can you notice the difference between being lost in thinking and knowing thinking?

Being lost in thinking would be: you just think, think, think. One thought is leading to the next: “And when she said so and so, I was really hurt. Why does she have to be so mean to me? Tomorrow I will go to her and get even, I will say...” and so on and on. Right?

Knowing thinking would be: You stay centered in spacious awareness, feel the space around your breathing. Thought comes in: “She said...” Can you just allow these two words to appear in open space inside? And stop? “She” ... pause...”Said” ...pause. It is like the words lose power over you.

They are just words in space. Can you feel that?

This is how you thought the way thought is.

Like this can get stronger in your awareness, in your knowing, in your centre.

Now close your eyes. Direct your awareness towards the fingers of your left hand. Do your fingers touch something? How does that feel? Can you stay for a moment with this sensation? You may want to intensify the feeling by slightly moving your fingers over the ground. How is that?...

Now listen to what your mind says - invite thought in, to comment on your feeling:

Like it, don't like it, nothing special... or analysis like, that's my trousers, that's warm/ cold/ soft and so on... Just stay with these thoughts popping up in your mind. Watch them...

And do the same for another minute - just explore some surfaces of your own body with your fingers, eyes closed. And don't forget to stop in-between to know the way things are in the moment.

Now cover your eyes with the fingers of both hands. How does that feel? Open your eyes a bit and peep through your fingers. Now the seeing sense becomes more important. What do you see?

OK that's it.

Bring up the image of your favourite ice-cream in your awareness. Imagine the colours, the taste, the coolness, the melting, the wanting. Can you experience the whole memory of ice cream happening in the space of open awareness? That is the memory of ice cream when you know it is the way it is. All these sensations happen in awareness. You are aware of it.

Bring your attention inwards to the sensations of breathing. Breathing happens in spacious awareness.

Now silently count "one" into the in breath, "two" into the out breath. Can you be aware of the number and the breathing sensations?

Remember that your awareness is space in which sensations and thinking appear. Explore that with counting up to 10. - 1 on breathing in, 2 on breathing out and so forth.... stay spacious.

After 10 you can start again with 1. Can you maintain a sense of wonder while doing so? Do it for 10 minutes on your own. If you get lost in thought for a while, start again with 1 as soon as you catch yourself.

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