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MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

Coming to this period of sitting meditation practice with the firm intention to bring mindfulness and discernment to each moment. Sitting in a posture which for you in this moment embodies feelings of dignity, self reliance, stillness and stability.

Step 1 Mindfulness of the Body

Become aware of the touching points of your body with the supports. First become aware of the soles of your feet touching your footwear or on the carpet/ground. Become aware of the back of your thighs and your buttocks seated, settled sunken into the cushion of the seat. Become aware of parts of your back resting on the back of the seat, being supported, being held. Become aware of all these touching points, support points and take a few moments to be with yourself this way, here, now, present, in your body.

Step 2 Mindfulness of Breath

And now, bring your attention to settle on the breath as you feel it flowing in and out of the body, being in touch with the breathing wherever you find it most vivid. Focusing on the sensations of the air flowing past your nostrils.

And just keeping attention on the breath for the full duration of each in breath and the full duration of each out breath, riding the waves of the breathing as a raft would ride up and down on the waves of the seashore. Fully in touch with the sensations at the nostrils, breath by breath, moment by moment, allowing the breath to remind you over and over again to be fully present, to be right here, right now.

If at any time you find your attention has waned or has wandered off the breath entirely, noting where your mind has gone and what it is preoccupied with once you come to notice it, and then gently just letting go and bringing your attention back to the breath. There is no need to reprimand yourself when your mind wanders off. There is no need to cling, reject or suppress the contents of these distracting thoughts or feelings. Just let it go and come back to your breath. And do this over and over again each time the mind loses its focus momentarily, and moves away from the breath. Staying fully in touch, just this breathing coming in, just this breath going out. Using the breath as an anchor to keep attention right here in the present moment.

Step 3 Mindfulness of Body and the Mind

When you feel comfortable with it, at a certain point expanding the field of your awareness and around the breath until it includes a sense of the body as a whole, sitting here, breathing, opening to the full spectrum of experiences associated with your body as you sit here, awareness filling the body. Allowing whatever sensations arise to be held in awareness moment by moment, watching them come and go, without reacting to them, as best you can just observing the play of any and all perceptions, sensations, thoughts and feelings, along with your breath, as you sit here, fully in touch with this moment.

And here too, continually bringing your focus back to the body as a whole, sitting and breathing, each time it fades or is carried off by the stream of thoughts and feelings of sensations that run through the mind.

You are simply allowing yourself to be where you already are, and to feel whatever is here to be felt in this moment. Observing and accepting whatever is here, simply because it is already here, a part of your experience in this moment, regardless of whether it feels pleasant, unpleasant or neutral.

Giving full care and attention to each moment. A continual stream of letting be, noticing and letting go.

And in the last few moments of the sitting, recommitting yourself to being fully awake and focused. Fully in your body, sitting with the majesty, the beauty, the stability of a mountain. And also committing yourself to bring mindfulness to the various situations and activities you will encounter today. So you can respond consciously rather than automatically to the various events and occurrences in your life, and find a way to live all your moments with greater harmony and effectiveness, especially those in which you are faced with obstacles, and challenges. And as this exercise comes to an end, you might also want to compliment yourself for the effort and the discipline it takes to practice in the way. And for your commitment to devote some time each day to nourishing your own being.

- *adapted from many sources, many teachers, many lifetimes.....*