
Meditation Instruction (a few notes shared by Catherine to accompany her video)

Intro: When we practice meditation we are taking time to get to know our mind and in a very open and generous way we are learning to become friends with ourselves.

The type of meditation we are practicing here is called Shamatha which in Sanskrit means "Calm Abiding".

All human beings can feel a sense of being open, fresh and simple. We can abide in a friendly calm way. We call this "basic goodness".

Chogyam Trungpa says it like this in his book Sacred Path of the Warrior:

"If we take an unbiased look, we will find that, in spite of all our problems and confusion, all our emotional and psychological ups and downs, there is something basically good about our existence as human beings ... Every human being has a basic nature of goodness, which is undiluted and unconfused. That goodness contains tremendous gentleness and appreciation."

No one is asking you to accept all this on faith. Through the practice of meditation we can uncover the truth for ourselves.

Sit well balanced and centered on your chair or cushion. With hands resting comfortably on the thighs there is a further grounding effect. Your back should be strong with good head and shoulders and your front can be soft to allow good circulation and a feeling of open heartedness. Tuck in the chin slightly and relax your jaw. Legs can be crossed in front with your knees below your waist to help avoid back strain. If you are in a chair keep your spine straight without touching the back of the chair. Let the natural structure of your skeleton hold your body so you can relax.

This posture can help you feel a sense of dignity like a King or Queen on a throne.

As you sit feel your body, your legs, even your clothes, your hands on your thighs. You can feel the movement of your breath, when you swallow how does that feel? Your eyes blink, maybe your stomach rumbles. It's good to feel all these things.

In this type of meditation we keep our eyes open. Our gaze is soft so we are not staring at any one thing but taking in our environment gently. Your eyes can be trained downward about 6 feet or two meters in front of you.

Feel your breath going out and coming in.

To help us stay in the present moment we can use our breathing as the object of meditation. Feel the breath. We can appreciate the feeling of our lungs filling with air and the air flowing out again through our windpipe and nostrils or mouth and into the room as it mixes with the atmosphere. We are breathing, we are alive and we are basically good.

If you have pain or discomfort you can move slightly to adjust your posture to alleviate pressure points. Use your posture to help your body and mind to stay in the present moment, gently with kindness towards yourself.

Whatever thoughts come up simply notice them and go back to the sensation of your breath and whatever you are feeling. Don't worry if there are a lot of thoughts; they are part of meditation, touch them with a feather light touch and go back to the breath. Any feelings or emotions you have, whatever you are feeling, locate it in your body and allow yourself to notice the feeling.

Then feel your breath going out and coming back in; with appreciation, simply feel. When thoughts come up simply acknowledge them as thoughts and go back to your breath. This way we can be in touch with ourselves, as we are, in this present moment.

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