

5 Minute Meditation

I'm going to lead you in a 5-minute mindfulness exercise. Mindfulness is the process of observing what's happening in our bodies and minds, moment by moment, in each present moment, with an attitude of compassion and friendliness. We will use the breath as a focus point to bring us back to not get lost in the chatter of the continuing thoughts and body distractions that occur to all of us. So let's start with three nice deep breaths.

Be aware of what's happening as you sit and breathe, and notice if your body is calling out to you to pay attention to different body parts, to different sensations, to different areas of tightness or tingling, or even pain. We can notice what's happening in our body as we focus on each inhalation and each exhalation. For all of us, as we practice self-observation, inevitably we will have thoughts that are turning through our mind – chatter, self-talk, distractions, to-do lists. Our job is to simply observe the thoughts and body sensations that are rising, and with every inhalation and exhalation, let them pass.

Let's focus our attention primarily on the breath right now, noticing how the stomach and chest rise and fall with each breath. Or if you'd like, you can also notice the sensation of air entering and leaving through your nostrils, noticing each replenishing life-giving breath. It is true for all of us that thoughts and sensations continue to surface, continue to arise. Our job is to observe these thoughts and feelings and note them as a passing phenomenon, as an impermanent phenomenon, just like clouds passing in the sky. In the process of mindfulness, we can say that we have our minds being just like the sky. Sometimes there are blue, wonderful skies, sometimes billowing white clouds, and sometimes very intense storm fronts and weather patterns come through. Same is true with consciousness. Different thoughts can trigger different feelings, can trigger different upsets for us, and we can watch them go by. Meditation is not about trying to silence the mind. Meditation is noticing, paying attention, and being at peace with every breath. Noticing each inhalation and each exhalation. We know that every exhalation is a signal to the parasympathetic nervous system, the cooldown, calm down part of your nervous system, which helps you to have the experience of ease, of comfort, and relaxation. Relaxation is actually a side effect of this process. Ideally, you can use this process at any time during the day to bring yourself to a state of replenishment of ease, of resting in the moment. It also can be used to assist you with relaxing the mind and body so that you can fall asleep. Focusing on the breath, letting thoughts go by, just like a bird going by. And now, let's listen to the pleasant vibration of the tone.

(Three bell chimes)