

TCME Community meditation June 2021

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Theme: Letting go



The Center for
MINDFUL EATING

Part I: Sitting Meditation On Breath, Sensation, Thought, And Emotion

Find a sitting position in a chair or in a cushion . Ensure that the posture feels relaxed, centered, and dignified. Allow your eyes to close if that's comfortable for you, Feeling the weight of your body where your feet or legs contact the ground. The points of contact your body makes with itself, maybe your hands with your knees.

Now allow your attention to rest naturally on your breath. The inbreath, the slight pause, the outbreath. Aware of the sensations in your abdomen as the breath moves in and out of your body. Noticing that your body knows exactly what to do. Just observing as your body breathes, the slight stretching as your abdomen rises with each inbreath, and the gentle falling with each outbreath. As best you can, stay with each breath as it enters and leaves the body. Each time you notice that your mind has wandered off the breath, gently letting go and beginning again, allowing your attention to return to the breath.

When you feel ready, allowing the breath to fade into the background of your experience and shifting your attention to the sensations in the body. Noticing all the different sensations that may be present in this moment: sensations of touch, pressure, tingling, pulsing, itching, or whatever it may be. Spending a few moments exploring these sensations with the curiosity of the beginner's mind.

If there are sensations that are particularly intense or uncomfortable, bring your awareness to these areas and see if you can stay with them, breathing into these areas and exploring with kindness and curiosity the detailed pattern of sensations: What do these sensations really feel like? Do they change or do they stay the same? Is there a way

to experience this discomfort without resisting or fighting it? Noticing any reactions that arise, and meeting whatever is here with kindness. If there is tension, softening those areas as best you can. Seeing now if you can just allow whatever is here to just be.

Now allowing the focus of your attention to shift from sensations to awareness of thoughts. Seeing if you can notice the very next thought that arises in the mind. Then just watching each thought as it appears and passes by. If you notice yourself getting engaged or lost in a thought, just observing that as well and gently bringing yourself back to the awareness of thinking. Letting go, beginning again each time you become involved in a thought. If you notice your mind repeatedly getting lost in thoughts you can always reconnect with the here and now by bringing your awareness back to the movements of the breath. Continuing to practice observing thoughts as they arise and pass for a few more moments. What is the nature of your thoughts right now? Are they memories,

fantasies, expectations, assumptions, judgements? Acknowledge them and label them as “thoughts” not facts and let them go as leaves flowing in the water of the river...

Gently shifting your attention now from thoughts to an awareness of any emotions or feelings that might be present. Maybe sadness, frustration, restlessness, ease, calmness etc... Whatever you notice. What is this emotion or feeling? seeing if you can allow yourself to soften and open to this feeling with curiosity. What does this emotion feel like? Where is it in the body? Maybe there are specific sensations that go with this emotion. Maybe there is tingling or tension somewhere. Maybe heaviness in the chest or perhaps the heartbeat speeds up. Maybe there is warmth or pressure somewhere. Or maybe it's just a general sense that permeates the whole body.

Just see what you can notice. Acknowledging what's there and letting it be, embracing it with kindness.

In these last few moments, seeing if you can hold the whole body in awareness: the breath falling in and out, the other sensations throughout the body, any thoughts that arise.

Let's try to stay with each moment, sensing it, tasting it with our senses, free from expectations and judgment, just here , just now...and gently let it go...

Now we are gently moving in the second part of this meditation focused on the LETTING GO”.

Part II: Letting Go Meditation

if you you let go a little – you will have a little happiness.”

“If you let go a lot – you will have a lot of happiness.”

“If you let go completely – you will be free.” Ajahn

SETTING IN:

Let yourself sit comfortably and quietly.

Bring kind attention to your body and breath.

If you notice any tensions in the jaw, shoulders, chest, abdomen....the intention is to soften them and let yourself be settled in the groundedness of the present moment.

RECOGNIZING:

Now bring into awareness the story, the situation, the feelings, the reactions that it is time to let go of.

ACCEPTING:

Continue to breathe in softly.

Name the feeling gently (betrayal, sadness, anxiety, etc.) and allow them the space to be, to float without resistance, held in a heart of compassion.

UNDERSTANDING:

Ask yourself if it is indeed wise to release this past experience.

Feel the benefit, the ease that will come from this letting go.

Say to yourself, “Let go”, “Let go”, gently over and over.

Soften the body and heart and let any feelings that arise drain out of you into the earth.

Sense how the feelings can be released like water draining out of a tub.
Feel the space that comes as you let go, how the heart softens and the body opens.
Now direct the mind to envision the future where this situation has been released.
Sense the freedom, the innocence, the ease that this letting go can bring.
Say to yourself, *“Let go”*, several more times.
Sit quietly and notice if the feelings return.
Each time they return, breathe softly as if to bow to them, and say kindly, *“I’ve let you go.”*

Note:

With letting go meditation, the images and feelings may come back many times, yet as you continue to practice, they will eventually fade. Gradually the mind will come to trust the space of letting go. Gradually the heart will be easy and you will be free.

One of the essential tasks for living a wise life is letting go. Letting go meditation is the path to freedom. It is only by letting go of the hopes, the fears, the pain, the past, the stories that have a hold on us that we can quiet our mind and open our hearts.

We do not need to fear letting go. We can trust the courage and vulnerability of our hearts to meet life as it is; we can rest kindly where we are. As we let go, the tender ground of honesty, healing, and love will carry us through the ever-changing world.

Remember, letting go does not mean losing the knowledge we have gained from the past.

The knowledge of the past stays with us. To let go is to release the images and emotions, the grudges and fears, the clingings and disappointments of the past that bind our spirit. Like emptying a cup, letting go leaves us free to receive, refreshed, sensitive, and awake.

Letting go is not the same as aversion, struggling to get rid of something. We cannot genuinely let go of what we resist. What we resist and fear secretly follows us even as we push it away. To let go of fear or trauma, we need to acknowledge just how it is. We need to feel it fully and accept that it is so. It is as it is. Letting go begins with letting be.

When we learn to let things be, they gradually lose their power; they cease to disturb us. As we allow what is true, space comes into the body and mind; we breathe and soften and come to rest. In accepting it, we become free. Then we can ask:

“Is it time to let this go?”

“Do I have to continue to replay this story?”

“Do I have to hold on to these losses, these feelings?”

The heart will know.

There is an organic cycle to letting go. We will feel it as a pearl of wisdom that knows it is time to move on, to release the past, and tenderly return to the present.
When we let go, we return to an honest and simple openness.

Source- Jack Kornfield