

Kernel OF Wisdom

YOUR MEDITATION GUIDE

You know what makes meditation really hard? When you spend the whole class worrying about remembering all the meditations! I want you to be fully present during our sessions, which is why I provide you with this package of guidelines and meditations. This way you can always reference the tips from class or one of the meditations afterward; whether it be later in the week or even months down the road.

COPYRIGHT

Our (my meditation teachers and I) understanding of copyright is to honor the myriad sources from which wisdom and compassion continue to flow. We wish to acknowledge all our teachers, colleagues and friends, patients and students, known and sometimes not known, who have engaged our hearts and minds, enabling us to heal their wounds and then our own. We ask all of you who participate in my classes and have received our text, to similarly honor the traditions and sources from which this has arisen. This includes yourself, fellow students and all members of our community.

IN HONOUR

To honour those who have gone before us, to honour all our teachers, who trace their traditions to a genesis, 2600 years ago, to the radical breakthrough of Buddha, to honour the lineage holders, the masters of clinical thought and practice, east and west, north and south, who continue to contribute to the on-going dialogue with all of us who teach, treat, serve and search, for the healing truths, that we continue to engage collectively in our work - we do honour.

WHAT THE HECK IS MINDFULNESS?

According to the internet's #1 know-it-all (Wikipedia), Mindfulness is "the intentional, accepting and non-judgmental focus of one's attention on the emotions, thoughts and sensations occurring in the present moment, and which can be trained by meditational practices." But what's REALLY impressive is that Mindfulness makes a physical difference - it actually changes us. Mindfulness helps you re-wire your brain so the good thoughts form deeper pathways and flow more freely while negative thoughts slowly fade away. Plus, Mindfulness is proven to help manage stress, maintain good emotional health, build resistance to disease and be more focused. Sound like a miracle cure? It kind of is, except it takes a lot of hard work.



THE 7 ATTITUDINAL FOUNDATIONS OF MINDFULNESS

Discernment and Description Rather Than Judgment and Analysis (Attention Theory):

Consists of taking the position of an impartial witness to your own experience. It asks that you become aware of what is by taking a witnessing stance with compassion. Rather than judging, evaluating, analysing, one tries to describe what is. To hold and step into suffering rather than have aversion to it. Preferably try to respond rather than react. Connect rather than correct. Tip: Observe over 10 minutes how much you are preoccupied with liking and disliking what you are experiencing.

Patience

Demonstrates that we understand and accept that sometimes things unfold in their own time. Practicing mindfulness gives us the opportunity to give time and space to our own practice of centering and unfolding. Why rush to the next “better” moment when, after all, being in the present means you live each moment of your life fully (each one is your life in that moment.)

Beginner's Mind

Practicing mindfulness means to take the chance to see everything as if it were for the first time and not overly allow how we have been trained to think and know to prevent us from being present to our experiences. Tip: Next time you meet someone you know well, try and see something new in this person.

Trust

Developing a basic trust in yourself and your feelings is an integral part of meditation practice.

Non-Striving

Almost everything we do is for a purpose. Meditation is not! Actually, this attitude can be a real obstacle in meditation. Although meditation takes a lot of work and energy, ultimately it is about non-doing. It has no goal other than for you to be yourself. The irony is that you already are! You are using mindfulness meditation to become more awake and be clear.

Acceptance

Being with yourself and acknowledging, accepting and embracing what arises.

Letting Go

When we pay attention to our inner experience, we discover that there are certain thoughts, feelings and situations that the mind seems to want to hold on to. If pleasant, we try and prolong our experience; if unpleasant, we try and get rid of them. In meditation, we try to intentionally put aside the tendency to elevate some aspects of our experience and reject others.

*Adapted from Jon Kabat-Zinn in 'Full Catastrophe Living'.



POSTURE

MOST IMPORTANTLY - don't stress too much about posture. Just **pick your most spiritual stance**, and make sure you're comfortable enough to sit for an extended period of time.

Otherwise, if you'd like to practice with a formal meditation posture, the traditional posture is a 7-point posture, because you will want to check-in on the following 6 points of your body:

1. **BUM & LEGS** - sit so your bottom is comfortable and your legs crossed (if you're on meditation cushions) or feet flat on the floor (if seated in a chair)
2. **BACK**- The position of your back should be straight but not tense or tight. Imagine a string pulling you upward from the crown of your head.
3. **SHOULDERS** - your shoulders should be back a little. Raise your shoulders up to your ears and then roll them back so that your shoulder blades move downwards. This motion assists in guiding the upper body into position.
4. **HANDS** - here you have two options:
 - Rest your hands are in your lap, slightly in front of you and with the right hand in the left hand, palms up and thumbs touching.
 - Keep your hands palms down and rest one hand on each upper thigh, towards your knees.
5. **HEAD & NECK** - hold your neck tall while lightly tilting the skull down a few millimeters (by gently bringing in your chin). The head is maintained straight ahead and forward
6. **EYES** - again, you have a few options here:
 - Keep your eyes looking down and maintain a soft gaze 4-6 feet in front of you.
 - The eyes softly look straight ahead, but slightly lower than level or lower below the horizon.
 - Keep your eyes gently closed.
7. **MOUTH** - your mouth can either be closed or just slightly open so air can escape (as if you were saying softly the letter AH). The tip of the tongue should lightly touch the roof of the mouth just behind the area where the gums meet the upper front teeth.

THE 5 STEPS OF PRACTICE

1. Whenever possible, just do one thing at a time.
2. Pay full attention to what it is you are doing.
3. When the mind wanders from this, gently bring it back.
4. Repeat step number 3... several times.
5. Investigate your distractions.

TIMING YOUR MEDITATION

If you want to be mindful during your meditations, the last thing you need to be worrying about is the time. So set a timer! You can use a regular alarm clock, or there are several meditation timer apps out there which can also chime you in and gently ease you out. I recommend "insight timer" if you're looking for one.



MEDITATION JOURNAL

Journaling is an excellent way to further integrate the benefits of meditation and better draw upon its insights. When you have finished a seated meditation, you can reflect upon the experience using the following questions as a template:

- DATE & TIME:
- HOW LONG WAS YOUR SEATED MEDITATION TODAY?
- WHICH MEDITATION(S) DID YOU DO?
- WHAT DO YOU NOW KNOW?
- WHAT, IF ANYTHING, MAY HAVE SURPRISED YOU?
- WHAT DO YOU NOW BRING FORWARD INTO YOUR LIFE FROM THIS EXPERIENCE?
- WHAT DO YOU LEAVE BEHIND AS A RESULT OF THIS EXPERIENCE?
- WHAT IS YOUR INTENTION FOR TODAY?
- I DEDICATE THE MERIT OF THIS WORK TO....

You may wish to keep either a hand-written journal OR a digital journal. If you are looking for an online journal option I recommend penzu.com.

DAILY GRATITUDE

Taking even a minute each day to remind yourself what you are grateful of can be a wonderful way of embodying the practice and more completely reaping its benefits. It's easy - every day simply think about 1-10 things you are grateful for. Even on bad days, try to think of something - even just having a roof over your head, or your health, or a warm cup of tea. You can either write them all down when you wake up or before going to sleep, or you can talk them through at the dinner table, make one/two your Facebook status each day or say them to yourself in the mirror if you like. Whatever is going to keep you doing it and grateful!



BASIC BREATH-FOCUS TRAINING

1. Assume your most spiritual meditative stance.
2. Focus on your breath, take a few deep breaths and really pay attention to where your breath stops, the feeling of the air passing your nostrils and the feeling of your throat, or chest, or belly rising and falling.
3. Try to keep your mind focused on your breath, using it as an anchor to come back to any time your thoughts may wander.
4. When your thoughts do wander, gently come back to the breath and try to immerse yourself in it again.
5. Eventually, with practice, you will notice your focus improving and you will find great strength in having your breath as an anchor in any meditation.
6. Upon completing each round of breath-focus training, conclude by asking yourself the question, "What do I now know?"

EXTERNAL AWARENESS MEDITATION

1. Assume your most spiritual meditative stance.
2. Focus on your breath, taking a few deep breaths and really paying attention to where your breath stops, the feeling of the air passing your nostrils and the feeling of your throat, chest, or belly rising and falling.
3. Then, take a moment to notice where you feel the day in your body, where is your "centre" of feel?
4. Next, we prepare for this meditation. This exercise will involve noting & labeling four main areas:
 - **TOUCH** - physical sensations in or on the body (i.e. the feeling of clothes on your skin, your stomach rumbling, cool air on your arm, your feet on the floor, the texture of food, etc.). *Note: these are not emotional feelings in the body, only physical sensations.*
 - **SOUND** - any sounds you hear outside of the body, not internal dialogue (i.e. the sound of sirens in the distance, a TV on in another room, birds outside, the air-conditioning coming on, etc.).
 - **SIGHT** - anything you see directly in front of you, not imagined imagery (i.e. the carpet before you, a flickering candle on the table, the light flickering on the floor, etc.) *Note: this aspect requires you to have your eyes open for meditation. If too overwhelming or distracting at first, practice this meditation with your eyes closed to start and open your eyes for short periods of time - gradually keeping them open longer and longer (i.e. during a 15min meditation you may open your eyes for 2min, then 5min, then 7min, then 10min and eventually the full 15min).*
 - **ALL REST** - when you aren't sensing any of the above.
5. With every inhalation (3-6 seconds), notice what you notice in the external environment - where your attention goes. Label it touch/sound/sight/all rest silently in your mind. Focus on that until your next inhalation.
6. If you start to notice internal sensations (i.e. thoughts, or images in your mind or feelings in your body), try to put them aside and gently bring your attention back to the external environment.
7. When your mind wanders, gently bring it back..., several times.
8. Conclude by asking yourself the question, "What do I now know?"



INTERNAL AWARENESS MEDITATION

1. Assume your most spiritual meditative stance
2. Focus on your breath, take a few deep breaths and really pay attention to where your breath stops, the feeling of the air passing your nostrils and the feeling of your throat, or chest, or belly rising and falling
3. Then, take a moment to notice where you feel the day in your body, where is your “centre” of feel?
4. Next, we prepare for this meditation. This exercise will involve noting & labeling four main areas:
 - **FEEL**- emotional sensations within the body (i.e. your chest tightening with a bit of anxiety, uneasiness in your stomach feeling like worry, chest tingling with joy, the corners of your mouth wanting to curl into a smile due to contentment).
 - **TALK** - any internal dialogue/words within your mind (i.e. thinking, “I really need to remember to get that before work tomorrow”, “I am doing really well at this!”, “I wonder how much time is left”, etc.).
 - **IMAGE** - any thoughts you see as images in your mind (i.e. the carpet before you, a flickering candle on the table, the light flickering on the floor, etc.).
 - **ALL REST** - when you aren’t sensing any of the above.
5. With every inhalation (3-6 seconds), notice what you notice internally - where your attention goes. Label it feel/talk/image/all rest silently in your mind. Focus on that until your next inhalation.
6. If you start to notice aspects of the external environment (i.e. sirens, birds, the feeling of your clothes, a cool breeze, the flicker of light), try to put them aside and gently bring your attention back to the internal.
7. When your mind wanders, gently bring it back to noting and labeling..., several times.
8. Conclude by asking yourself the question, “What do I now know?”



PROGRESSIVE BODY SCAN

This meditation can be done lying down or sitting. There are a number of variations of this meditation, the order of what you pay attention to is not critical. The purpose of this practice is simply to be aware of sensations in your body. It is not necessarily about relaxing your body, however this may well occur. Usually, our response to bodily pain or discomfort is to distract ourselves or try to numb the pain. In this practice, you will accept and notice with gentle non-judgmental curiosity your body in its comfort and discomfort. Sit or lie down in a comfortable position, making sure that you do not have any constrictions. Loosen any tight clothing.

1. Assume your most spiritual meditative stance.
2. Focus on your breath, take a few deep breaths and really pay attention to where your breath stops, the feeling of the air passing your nostrils and the feeling of your throat, or chest, or belly rising and falling.
3. Then, take a moment to notice where you feel the day in your body, where is your “centre” of feel?
4. While maintaining some awareness of the breath, direct your attention to the toes of your left foot, feeling them without moving them. You might imagine the breath flowing to the area where you’re directing your attention. Take a moment to sense/feel each area.
5. At a gradual pace, systematically move your focus to the sole of the left foot, then the top of the foot, continuing in this way to the ankle, calf, knee, thigh and hip.
6. Move on to your right toes, continuing in the same way to the foot, ankle, calf, knee, thigh and hip.
7. Become aware of the pelvis and buttocks, continue to the lower back, mid back, upper back, notice the ribs around the spine.
8. Shift your attention to the stomach, continuing to the solar plexus, the chest.
9. Focus on the fingers of both hands, palms, back of hands, wrists, forearms, elbow, upper arms, and shoulders.
10. Focus your attention onto the neck, throat, face, jaw, eyes, forehead and the entire face. Focus on the back of the skull, to the top of the skull, the entire skull.
11. Focus on the top of the head, an area the size of a quarter, breathing in and out of that spot.
12. Become aware of your entire body breathing. Sit with the feeling of your body for some time.
13. Conclude by asking yourself the question, “What do I now know?”

PROGRESSIVE BODY SCAN WITH GRATITUDE

As you practice the body scan you can bring gratitude to every area that you sense/feel. For example, when you place awareness on your feet, consider the work they do every day in holding up the entire body, consider how they work for us, although we rarely pay any attention to them. Simply extend gratitude to your feet, perhaps internally saying thank you. Mindfully move your loving attention from one area of your body to the next, saturating each area with tenderness, gratitude, and respect.



GROUNDING MEDITATION

1. Assume your most spiritual meditative stance.
2. Focus on your breath, take a few deep breaths and really pay attention to where your breath stops, the feeling of the air passing your nostrils and the feeling of your throat, or chest, or belly rising and falling.
3. Then, take a moment to notice where you feel the day in your body, where is your “centre” of feel?
4. Shift your attention to the feeling of your feet on the floor. Notice what they feel like supported by the ground beneath them, the feeling of your soles against the surface of the floor.
5. To begin the meditation, imagine what’s beneath you. Picture each stage supporting you, being part of the solid, solid foundations that are holding you in the chair in which you sit.
 - Start with the floor itself
 - Then the concrete of the floor or foundation beneath it
 - Then the earth that the foundation is sitting in
 - The rock below that earth
 - The depth and layers of rock upon rock to the earth’s core
6. Now, picture roots sprouting from the soles of your feet.
 - First they break through the floor beneath them
 - Then, they crack and move their way through the concrete, and steel and rebar that support the foundations of the building
 - Breaking through the foundation, they begin to push into the earth below, moving through cracks and spaces in the rock and dirt - reaching deep into the earth, rooting you deeply, supporting you with certainty and strength
7. Picture your body as the trunk of a tree, your head as the flower of the tree. Feel the steadiness at your roots, stabilizing the tree. No matter what comes your way, no matter how strong the storm or forceful the wind, you are steady and deeply rooted within the earth.
8. Now, picture drawing water in through the roots. Pure, cool water moving up and into your body through the roots deep in the ground. Also picture yourself releasing any toxins, negativity and stress back through the roots where it is then transformed and purified before being released from your body, from the roots and back into the earth.
9. Not only do roots grow deeply, but also laterally. Picture those roots stretching horizontally within the earth, meeting others’ roots, wrapping themselves around each other, intertwining, moving with each other, supporting one another.
10. If you prefer, you can also imagine yourself as mountain, solid at the base and standing tall and strong. You may picture yourself as a single mountain in a range of other mountains, all connected and standing along side one another. No matter what the weather, the mountain does not shift. The mountain remains solid and steady and connected to the very core of the earth.
11. In either case, take a few minutes to notice how secure and grounded you feel in this moment.
12. When your mind wanders, gently bring it back..., several times
13. Conclude by asking yourself the question, “What do I now know?”

Note: This meditation has been adapted from Dr. Shari Gellar’s “Cultivating Presence: Mindfulness Practices for Opening to the Moment”. For her guided, audio version of this meditation (which I highly recommend) please download it by searching “Shari Gellar” on iTunes.



5-MINUTE BREATH SCAPE & DIGGING DEEPER

1. Assume your most spiritual meditative stance.
2. Focus on your breath, take a few deep breaths and really pay attention to where your breath stops, the feeling of the air passing your nostrils and the feeling of your throat, or chest, or belly rising and falling.
3. Then, take a moment to notice where you feel the day in your body, where is your “centre” of feel?
4. Shift your attention to the feeling of your feet on the floor. Notice what they feel like supported by the ground beneath them, the feeling of your soles against the surface of the floor.
5. To begin the meditation, check in with all the points of your 7-point posture: your seat in the chair, your back up straight in the chair, your shoulders back, your hands in your lap in whatever posture you prefer, check in on your head and neck that they are relaxed and comfortable, and that your eyes are closed or resting with a soft gaze and, finally, that your tongue is resting comfortably in the bottom of your mouth.
6. Take 3 deep, cleansing breaths. Take your time with them. See how deeply you can get them to move into your stomach and belly as you slowly exhale focus on letting go in your body. Take your time here and, if you need a few more breaths, take them.
7. Once you feel relaxed, ask yourself a question from deep within, whatever problem you are looking to fix or even a basic insight you would like to understand more deeply such as, “Why am I unhappy?”, “What am I stressing about?”, “Why do I feel so good about this?”, or, “What is it I love about them?”
8. Ponder the answer for a few minutes, and then put it aside and ask yourself the question again - “Why am I REALLY unhappy?”, “What am I REALLY stressing about?”, “Why do I REALLY feel so good about this?”, or, “What is it that I REALLY love about them?”
9. Ponder that answer, which may be the same or different now and then but it aside. Ask yourself one more time - “REALLY, REALLY why am I unhappy?”, “REALLY, REALLY what am I stressing about?”, “REALLY, REALLY why do I feel so good about this?”, or, “REALLY, REALLY what is it that I love about them?”
10. Finish with a few short lines of metta toward yourself and someone you feel could use it now, “May you be happy, may you be healthy, may you be safe and may you be at peace.”
11. Finally, ask yourself the question, “What do I now know?”



IMMERSION MEDITATION

1. Assume your most spiritual meditative stance.
2. Focus on your breath, take a few deep breaths and really pay attention to where your breath stops, the feeling of the air passing your nostrils and the feeling of your throat, or chest, or belly rising and falling.
3. Then, take a moment to notice where you feel the day in your body, where is your “centre” of feel?
4. Now, become aware of your breath and the sensations of the breath.
5. Pay attention to the sensations of the breath in your body, the chest or belly rising and falling,
6. Invite yourself to be curious about what’s going on in your body; explore and pour attention into it.
7. Try to notice the brief pause in between inhale and exhale, getting in touch with your natural rhythm.
8. When your mind wanders, name it one word and gently bring it back..., several times.
9. Now try to immerse yourself in ONE thing around you. Perhaps have music play and notice the sounds, how they resonate in your body, the sensations or thoughts that come up, the curiosity about what makes different sounds. Or, perhaps you look around the room and notice your eyes resting on an object, something catches your attention. Pay attention to it, the sensations you draw from it, the qualities of it and in yourself, what it brings up in you. Feel free to explore other senses such as touch, taste or smell.
10. Conclude by asking yourself the question, “What do I now know?”

Note: This meditation has been adapted from Dr. Shari Gellar’s “Cultivating Presence: Mindfulness Practices for Opening to the Moment”. For her guided, audio version of this meditation (which I highly recommend) please download it by searching “Shari Gellar” on iTunes.

IMMERSION & MINDFUL EATING

1. First, take a few moments to connect with your breath. Take a few deep breaths and notice where your breath stops, the feeling of the air passing your nostrils and the feeling of your throat, chest, or belly rising and falling.
2. Take a small portion of food, and bring it toward your mouth.
3. As you bring food to your mouth, slow down and become aware of your movements.
4. Once the food is in your mouth, clear your hands. Put the silverware or remaining food down.
5. Chew this bite with your mind focused on the process. Concentrate on the taste of the food and the act of eating. Don’t do anything else while you’re chewing. Simply chew and pay attention.
6. Keep chewing until the food is uniformly smooth. Use this consistency of the food as a signal to swallow.
7. After you swallow, but before you bring more food to your mouth, rest for a few seconds, thereby inserting a pause into your eating. You can approach mindful eating in four ways:
 - Consider the food - realize that we are in the presence of food, and that we have careful work ahead. Before each meal or snack, we take a moment and simply notice the food and consider it.
 - Awakening to the Food - notice every aspect of the food itself before, during and after eating it.
 - Tuning In to the Body - we pay attention to our own bodies as we eat. We notice the movement of muscles, limbs, fingers, lips, teeth and tongue. We tune in to our level of hunger. We’re in touch with our need for food and we know when to stop eating.
 - Service with Food - we extend our mindfulness to any function in the service of food. This includes such activities as setting the table, clearing the table, washing dishes, putting away dishes, shopping for food and preparing the food. All are done with attention and mindfulness.



EXPANSION MEDITATION

1. Assume your most spiritual meditative stance.
2. Then, take a moment to notice where you feel the day in your body, where is your “centre” of feel?
3. Then, focus on your breath, take a few deep breaths and really pay attention to where your breath stops, the feeling of the air passing your nostrils and the feeling of your throat, or chest, or belly rising and falling. If your mind wanders, bring your awareness back to the whole of your breath – feeling it fill up your body.
4. Now, begin to include in your awareness the sense of space around your body.
5. Become aware of the edges of your body and where it meets the space around you.
6. Now, gently open your eyes and include in your awareness the room or space you are in, Noticing any people around you or objects or images and what do you notice or you can see in that room. Allow yourself to sense what is around you in this moment.
7. Continue to expand your awareness beyond the room that you’re in and become aware of what may be happening outside your immediate space:
 - Start by expanding your awareness to your neighborhood, to the other homes and the streets around where you are. What is this moment like there?
 - Then expand it to the whole town or city you are in. What does the moment look like there?
 - Then expand further to the expanding towns and cities and all that may be happening there
 - Then perhaps expand to the province or state you are in.
 - Then expand to the whole of the country you are in – the people, animals, sentient beings and all that is occurring in the whole of the country.
 - Then include the entire continent; what could be happening in this moment across the content.
 - Then keep expanding to other continents, including the people, animals, bodies of water, oceans, islands, valleys, fields and the whole of the earth.
 - Include in your expanded awareness all of life on the earth.
 - Now expand even further to the solar system and include the stars, planets, moon, sun, the whole solar system.
 - This is just one solar system but there are many others. Allow your awareness to expand further to include other solar systems.
 - Then include yourself in that expanded awareness, one breath in one body in just one place which is just one planet in the whole of the solar system which is one within the whole universe.
8. Let the expansion of all that’s around you encompass you, feel it as not only larger than you but as holding you, in a way. When you have pain or suffering or difficulty, become aware of yourself and your breathing as part of this larger whole.
9. Conclude by asking yourself the question, “What do I now know?”

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MINDFUL LISTENING & SPEAKING MEDITATION

1. When about to enter into conversation with another person, check in with yourself and set an intention to listen to them mindfully and speak to them mindfully.
2. Start by noticing your breath and coming “home” in your body, noting your own “centre” of feel.
3. When they are speaking, work on focusing on what they are saying and do not start planning what you are going to say in response. The key to mindful listening is to put all your focus into the task of listening; do not fidget or do anything else, just look at them and listen and trust that when they are done whatever you might say in response will come up in you naturally. You may notice that the person more fully speaks, and actually gets to their point more quickly when they feel fully listened to.
4. Once it is clear that they are finished speaking, check in with yourself and allow any questions or thoughts to come up through you as you speak. Mindful speaking should feel like you are listening to yourself as you speak. Make an effort to choose every word with intention. You may need to speak more slowly than you usually do at first.
5. Go back and forth in this way and, in addition, periodically check in to how you feel when you listen to the other person speak. How is it affecting you emotionally? Are there any physical sensations or feelings that come up? Are you sensing anything that is not being said? What is their body language like? How are they with eye contact? Take in all that you can from them in the moment when listening.
6. When you walk away from the conversation, take three or more deep breaths to leave behind any residual feelings from the conversation - positive or negative - and end by asking yourself, “What do I now know?”

ATTUNING TO ANOTHER MEDITATION

1. Sit directly across from the other person and assume your most spiritual meditative stance. Choose one person to be person ‘a’ and one person to be person ‘b’.
2. First, keep your eyes closed and focus on your breath, take a few deep breaths and really pay attention to where your breath stops, the feeling of the air passing your nostrils and the feeling of your throat, or chest, or belly rising and falling.
3. Then, take a moment to notice where you feel the day in your body, where is your “centre” of feel?
4. While person ‘b’ keeps their eyes closed and continues an internal awareness meditation, person ‘a’ should open their eyes and watch person ‘b’'s belly. Meditate on how it feels to focus on what is typically a more personal part of the other person’s body. After meditating on the experience of observing their belly for some time, begin to experiment with sending positive feelings and good will to person ‘b’.
5. Throughout, person ‘b’ should be meditating on how it feels to be observed and on receiving the intentions of person ‘a’. After continuing this for some time, person ‘a’ can close their eyes again and both should take a moment to come “home” to themselves and ground themselves in their own person again.
6. Then, switch roles and person ‘b’ should open their eyes and observe person ‘a’'s belly while person ‘a’ meditates on the experience.
7. Once both people have completed the exercise, come out of meditation and take a few minutes to mindfully discuss how it felt.
8. Next, repeat the exercise but this time, both people open their eyes and look into each others eyes, meditating on how it feels and then taking turns sending and receiving good will, silently.
9. Once you have done this for some time, close your eyes and come home to yourself once more.
10. Conclude by noticing how you feel and asking yourself the question, “What do I now know?”



GRATITUDE MEDITATION

1. Assume your most spiritual meditative stance.
2. Focus on your breath, take a few deep breaths and really pay attention to where your breath stops, the feeling of the air passing your nostrils and the feeling of your throat, or chest, or belly rising and falling.
3. Then, take a moment to notice where you feel the day in your body, where is your “centre” of feel?
4. Start by being grateful for all the good things that you experience in your life. Begin with physical things such as your home or possessions or surroundings. Recall that many people don’t have these things, and that you may not always have them. Rejoice in your good fortune.
5. Take the time to appreciate some less tangible things, such as your relationships, health, freedom and knowledge. Experience a sense of thankfulness and appreciation for each of the good things in your life.
6. Turn your mind to the many people who have been kind to you in the past. Recall the relatives and friends who were supportive or kind to you when you were young. Remember the teachers who showed you how to read and write, or who inspired you to learn. Focus on as many specific incidents as you can.
7. Spend some time imagining the kindness received from your parents. Begin in the womb, where your mother held you and fed you in her body. Think of how someone nursed you as a baby, how they got up in the middle of the night to feed and comfort you. How someone wiped you clean and made sure you were clothed. Silently express your gratitude to that person.
8. Recall how as a small child, you were completely dependent on the kindness of an adult. You were fed, washed and put to bed. You were taught to walk and taken to school. To whatever extent you can, expand these feelings of gratitude and affection.
9. See how all the love and kindness you have received in your life depends on similar love and kindness in previous generations. Imagine this kindness reaching back over millennia. Can you develop a wish to repay and pass on this vast kindness?
10. Conclude by asking yourself the question, “What do I now know?”

Note: This meditation has been adapted from Alison Murdoch and Dekyi-Lee Oldershaw’s 16 Guidelines for Life.



SELF-COMPASSION MEDITATION

1. Assume your most spiritual meditative stance.
2. Focus on your breath, take a few deep breaths and really pay attention to where your breath stops, the feeling of the air passing your nostrils and the feeling of your throat, or chest, or belly rising and falling.
3. Then, take a moment to notice where you feel the day in your body, where is your “centre” of feel?
4. Now, think of a problem you may have. One that has caused you suffering in the past, that you continue to struggle with, or perhaps it is something more recent and relatively small. Any problem will do.
5. Focus on that problem for some time. This may feel very difficult, so be very gentle with yourself and do what you can in the moment. Be aware of what is coming up for you and stop the meditation if you need. As far as is comfortable, remember all you can of the problem and/or situation. Picture the event or circumstances, the people involved, the thoughts that you may have had or continue to have around the problem.
6. Notice yourself feeling the suffering of the problem and try to locate where you feel the problem in your body. If you feel it in a few places, focus on just one.
7. Place one of your hands on that place in your body. Know that this hand is a compassionate hand. This hand is there to listen to you and how you are feeling about the problem. Ask your hand to send love and kindness to that particular place in your body.
8. Now, ask your hand to listen to that place in your body. Through your hand, ask your body what it wants to tell you about the problem. Listen to the answer mindfully. If your mind wanders come back to your breath and then focus on your hand and that point in your body again.
9. Next, through your hand, ask your body to tell you something new about the problem - to share a perspective that perhaps you haven't thought of before. Listen to whatever comes up, being open to whatever the response may be.
10. Finally, through your hand, ask your body if there is anything more it wants to tell you about the problem. Listen openly and mindfully.
11. Keeping your hand on that place in your body, think of compassion and begin to send it through your hand. If you need to, think of a time someone else showed you compassion and how it felt to receive even a small gesture of compassion and continue to cultivate that feeling.
12. Picture that warm compassion and kindness moving through your hand and into that space in your body and notice how it feels. Picture the feelings of love and kindness filling you. Then, repeat the following to yourself at least 3-5 times or until you can sense that place in your body beginning to soften even slightly:
 - May I be happy
 - May I be healthy and safe
 - May I love and accept myself, just the way I am
 - May I be free from suffering
 - May I be an example of peace
13. Now, thank your hand for the compassion it showed you and return to your regular meditative stance.
14. Take three to seven very slow and deep cleansing breaths, or whatever it takes to let go of some of the feelings associated with that problem. Take a few moments to notice how you feel and settle into yourself again.
15. Conclude by asking yourself the question, “What do I now know?”



SELF-ATTUNEMENT MEDITATION

1. Sit directly across from a mirror in which you can clearly see yourself. Assume your most spiritual meditative stance.
2. First, keep your eyes closed and focus on your breath, take a few deep breaths and really pay attention to where your breath stops, the feeling of the air passing your nostrils and the feeling of your throat, or chest, or belly rising and falling.
3. Then, take a moment to notice where you feel the day in your body, where is your “centre” of feel?
4. Now, open your eyes and watch your own belly in the mirror. Without judgment, notice all you can about your belly as it rises and falls with your breath. Meditate on how this experience feels. After meditating on the experience of observing your belly for some time, begin to experiment with sending positive feelings and good will to yourself while watching yourself in the mirror.
5. After continuing this for some time, close your eyes again and take a moment to come “home” to yourself and notice how you now feel.
6. Next, repeat the exercise but this time, look directly into your eyes in the mirror. Without judgment, look deeply into your own eyes and notice what you notice.
7. Once you have done this for some time, close your eyes and come home to yourself once more.
8. Conclude by asking yourself the question, “What do I now know?”

RESPECT MEDITATION

1. Assume your most spiritual meditative stance.
2. Focus on your breath, take a few deep breaths and really pay attention to where your breath stops.
3. Then, take a moment to notice where you feel the day in your body, where is your “centre” of feel?
4. Think of someone you might call a role-model or hero, someone who inspires you. Reflect on what it is that draws you to them. Think about the very specific qualities that you respect in that person.
5. Consider which qualities of this person you would most like to develop. Are they qualities that you already possess? Remember a time when, even on a smaller scale, you demonstrated some of these qualities in the way you thought, spoke or behaved. What do you already have in common with this person?
6. Now, imagine this person whom you look up to, as a baby and then as a small child. Reflect on how they had to learn to speak, walk, read and write, just as you did. Reflect on the moments in the middle of the night when they might have felt uncertain or afraid. What mistakes do you think they made? How did they cope with their mistakes?
7. Try to accept the vulnerability and humanity of this person you respect. They are a human being, just like you. Spend some time focusing on their vulnerability. Does it make any difference to the qualities you respect in them?
8. In there any reason that you cannot develop the same qualities that you admire in others? Can you transcend your own limitations, including – perhaps - your own limited view of yourself?
9. Allow yourself to think big for a few minutes, just as they may have done. Who could you be? What might you be capable of? If you had all the courage and opportunity in the world, what would you do? Who would you be?
10. Conclude by asking yourself the question, “What do I now know?”

Note: This meditation has been adapted from Alison Murdoch and Dekyi-Lee Oldershaw's 16 Guidelines for Life.



FORGIVENESS MEDITATION

1. Assume your most spiritual meditative stance.
2. Focus on your breath, take a few deep breaths and really pay attention to where your breath stops, the feeling of the air passing your nostrils and the feeling of your throat, or chest, or belly rising and falling.
3. Then, take a moment to notice where you feel the day in your body, where is your “centre” of feel?
4. Next, as you inhale, imagine you are breathing in blissful light. It is white, the colour of purity. The light represents all the positive qualities that exist in the universe. It represents all the qualities of the people you admire, and which you would like to develop in yourself.
5. As you breath in the light, imagine it flowing through the whole of your body. All the way to your toes and finger tips. Filling every tiny space in your body, down to the cells, the atoms and the subatomic particles.
6. Spend some time breathing in the light, letting it fill your whole body. Imagine that the light can heal whatever anxieties, problems, pain and sicknesses you are carrying in your body and mind.
7. Now, begin to imagine dark smoke or pollution coming out of your body when you exhale. This smoke represents all the times that you have been angry with yourself. When you have said something that you regret or that didn't feel right.
8. Every time you breath out, let this anger and pain leave your body in the form of the dark smoke. Watch it disappear into space. It doesn't pollute or disturb anything, it just disappears.
9. Continue for as long as you can, imagining the white light coming in and the dark smoke going out. Forgive yourself. Enjoy the sensation of the body and mind becoming blissful and clean, clear and free of all problems and negatives.
10. Conclude by asking yourself the question, “What do I now know?”

TONG LEN – FOR LETTING GO

1. Assume your most spiritual meditative stance.
2. Focus on your breath, take a few deep breaths and really pay attention to where your breath stops, the feeling of the air passing your nostrils and the feeling of your throat, or chest, or belly rising and falling.
3. Then, take a moment to notice where you feel the day in your body, where is your “centre” of feel?
4. Now, breathe in a feeling of hot, dark and heavy - a sense of claustrophobia, and you breathe out a feeling of cool, bright and light - a sense of freshness. You breathe in completely through all the pores of your body and you breathe out, radiate out, completely through all the pores of your body. You do this until it feels synchronized with the rhythm of your breathing.
5. Next, work with your personal situation - any painful situation which is real to you. Picture the situation/ negative feeling and imagine breathing it in as thick, black heavy smoke. Then hold the smoke, and imagine it being transformed and purified within you. As you exhale picture breathing out the feeling, but now as white, cool, bright light. With the white light, also send out a wish for a new, positive feeling to replace the negative one.
6. You may also want to consider everyone who has a similar negative feeling and do the same thing for them. For example, if you are feeling inadequate - you breathe that in for yourself and all the others in the same boat - and you send out confidence or relief to all of them in return.
7. Conclude by asking yourself the question, “What do I now know?”



MEDITATION ON IMPERMINANCE

1. Assume your most spiritual meditative stance.
2. Focus on your breath, take a few deep breaths and really pay attention to where your breath stops, the feeling of the air passing your nostrils and the feeling of your throat, or chest, or belly rising and falling.
3. Then, take a moment to notice where you feel the day in your body, where is your “centre” of feel?
4. Now, think about what your body is made of - the different parts like skin, blood, bones, organs.
5. Think about how each of these parts of the body is in turn made up of yet smaller parts, like cells. Those cells and atoms may be invisible but we know they are moving, changing, reproducing, dying.
6. Consider that, even though we are sitting still, not moving, every minute, every second, every millisecond, there is constant change, constant movement - movement taking place through every part of our body, down to the tiniest, most subtle level.
7. Now take that awareness outside of yourself and even open your eyes to look at the room around you. Let your eyes wander around the physical objects in the room.
8. Consider that all these things around us are also made up of tiny particles. Those particles are also changing every second, every millisecond, not staying the same, from one tiny second to the next.
9. Then take that same awareness further outside of this room and think about other things. There are people whose bodies are also at a very subtle level constantly moving, changing, not staying the same, from one millisecond to the next.
10. Now consider the earth and trees, mountains, buildings, houses, cars and roads. And the heavenly bodies in the sky - the sun, moon, stars, the clouds. They are not static and frozen but constantly moving and changing, every second, every millisecond.
11. Think about how, as these things are changing, they are also gradually, slowly, becoming older, worn out and eventually at some point in time things will go out of existence, and feed into something new that changes and comes into being.
12. Sit for a moment with the idea that nothing goes on forever.
13. Now consider things or a situation that you may be attached to - that you are disappointed with how it turned out or are determined to have the outcome be a certain way. They could be people, or other things like possessions that you have, or food or your car or your house, things for which you have attachment.
14. Then imagine how these objects will appear ten years from now. And now imagine how these objects will appear fifty years from now. Now imagine how these objects will appear a hundred years from now.
15. Now, consider for a moment none of these things changing. As if hitting a “stop” button on a remote, with everything hung in space exactly as it is now. How does it feel if none of these things changed? If everything was suspended in time just this way for eternity. How does it feel when change isn't possible?
16. What are some positive ways that you can use this experience and this understanding? What does change allow us to do? What does time allow us to heal? Can freedom exist without change?
17. Conclude by asking yourself the question, “What do I now know?”

Note: This meditation has been made available with gratitude from the FPMT, How to Meditate module of their Discovering Buddhism Home Study Program. Visit www.fpmt.org.



METTA - LOVE & KINDNESS MEDITATION

1. Assume your most spiritual meditative stance.
2. Focus on your breath, take a few deep breaths and really pay attention to where your breath stops, the feeling of the air passing your nostrils and the feeling of your throat, or chest, or belly rising and falling.
3. Then, take a moment to notice where you feel the day in your body, where is your "centre" of feel?
4. Begin by placing a hand on your heart. Focus on love and kindness coming from the palm of your hand, and into your heart. Picture the feelings of love and kindness filling you. Repeat the following to yourself at least 3-5 times:
 - May I be happy
 - May I be healthy and safe
 - May I love and accept myself, just the way I am
 - May I be free from suffering
 - May I be an example of peace
5. Now, think of someone close to you. Someone you love dearly. Picture them in your mind, and continue to hold that image of them as you direct love and kindness toward them. You can even think of this person as a child or at a time when they are vulnerable if it helps you to send even more love and kindness their way. As you picture the person, again, repeat the following toward them at least 3-5times:
 - May you be happy
 - May you be healthy and safe
 - May you love and accept yourself, just the way you are
 - May you be free from suffering
 - May you be an example of peace
6. Now, think of someone who is neutral to you. Someone you don't have particularly strong feelings about one way or the other. It could be the barista at the coffee shop that day, the woman who was in the elevator with you this morning, or someone's spouse whom you've heard of but never met for example.
7. Again, hold the image of them and repeat the phrases above toward them 3-5 times.
8. Next, think of someone you have negative feelings toward. You can start with someone you have some distaste for and, as your practice strengthens, continue to practice with someone you may even consider an enemy or have strong difficulty with. Hold them in your mind. Again, if it is helpful, you can also try picturing them as a child or in a state of "goodness", otherwise, just try your best to hold an image of them. Again, repeat the phrases above toward them 3-5 times, or even more as focusing on sending them this love and kindness even longer can only help to soften your experience with them.
9. Next, think of a group of people who are suffering. Perhaps you have heard about a group who are suffering on the news, or know of one that continues to struggle through history. Hold that whole group in your mind and repeat the phrases above toward them 3-5 times.
10. Finally, try to hold the thought of all beings in your mind. Hold an image of "all beings" or a feeling of them within your heart. Holding on to them, repeat the phrases above toward them 3-5 times.
11. Come home, back to your centre and notice how you feel. Has anything shifted? Anything grown? Anything softened?
12. Conclude by asking yourself the question, "What do I now know?"

NOTE: The phrases used here can be adapted if you feel there are alternate lines that can be added/changed in order to direct even more love and kindness or if different phrases feel more relevant for you.



TONG LEN – COMPASSION MEDITATION

1. Assume your most spiritual meditative stance.
2. Focus on your breath, take a few deep breaths and really pay attention to where your breath stops, the feeling of the air passing your nostrils and the feeling of your throat, or chest, or belly rising and falling.
3. Then, take a moment to notice where you feel the day in your body, where is your “centre” of feel?
4. Now imagine all other people or living beings in the world. Sense them in front of you. Contemplate that there is no difference between these others and yourself because none of us wants suffering or problems, we only really want happiness. Notice how, in these ways, all of us are equal, regardless of different countries, race, lifestyles, age, and species.
5. Now reflect on yourself without judgment, understanding that the suffering in your life has resulted from cherishing yourself - self-centered thinking. Think to yourself, “All worldly sufferings that have occurred have stemmed from wanting happiness for myself, being obsessed with food, money, fashion or reputation, quarrelling for what I think will make me happy, hurting others in the hope of gaining happiness or possessions for myself. How have these only resulted in my own hurt or suffering?” Reflect on those times in your life when you have experienced this and how you felt inside. Notice how those who strive only for their own benefit, deep inside create only suffering for themselves.
6. Now let your mind wander to times in your life when you have benefited others with no consideration of what you would receive in return. How did that feel? How did that make others feel?... Contemplate that all happiness comes from wishing others happiness or working and acting for the benefit of others.
7. Recall a specific problem or unpleasant situation which you are experiencing in your life, which causes you suffering... Now imagine in front of you, one other person or living being in the world who is presently experiencing a similar situation and feelings. Imagine becoming that person or being. Recognize the same feeling in them which you are experiencing and how it feels for them. Feel their fear and pain...their desire for happiness. Stepping out, remember how, in the past, you were too preoccupied with your own suffering to put yourself into this other's situation...What do you now know about them?
8. Now imagine your own hurt, suffering, confusion or sorrow as a dark substance of self-cherishing, as a black ball or stone at your heart. And still imagining this person in front of you. Think, “I would like to remove all this person's suffering.” Imagine their hurts, pain, confusion and sorrow taking the form of gray smoke. When you breathe in, breathe in the gray smoke of that other's hurt, letting it dissolve or destroy the dark ball or stone at your heart.
9. Now, as you breathe out, imagine the light, love and caring which you have in your heart flow out to this other person as rays of light. Think 'I am giving my happiness and good qualities to this person' then let that light turn into whatever that person needs for temporary and permanent happiness. Your light could turn into a hug, or a friend, whatever you sense that they need right now. Breathe in smoke, let it dissolve the dark self-centredness at your heart. Breathe out love and compassion. Keep doing this until your heart is clear and there is no smoke left. Keep sending love until this other person is complete.
10. Now allow a great joy to arise in your mind because of this other's newfound happiness and maintain this feeling of joy for the rest of this meditation. Take the time to familiarize yourself with this feeling. (Remain in silence for 5 to 15 minutes).
11. The essence of the gray smoke we inhale is the suffering of all beings and the rays of light we exhale are, in essence, all our present and future happiness. Be open to the idea that, as a result of this exercise, all living beings have actually received pure happiness.
12. Conclude by asking yourself the question, “What do I now know?”

