

Meditation Instruction Cultivating Stillness

Stage One - Developing Concentration

- 1) Sit comfortably with the spine lengthened. Relax.
- 2) Gather your attention on the sensations of breathing.
- 3) Focus on sensations at the tip of the nostrils or the movement of the belly or chest.
- 4) Release control of the breath. Maintain an effortless breath.
- 5) When you notice the mind's attention wandering away from the breath, with compassionate self-awareness return your attention to the sensations of breath again and again.

Stage Two - Practice being and observing without reactivity

- 1) Let the mind simply observe whatever occurs in your awareness without pushing away, holding on to anything, or changing anything.
- 2) Breathe - calm, smooth, effortless breath.
- 3) Relax - any muscles that do not need to be working.
- 4) Feel - the changing field of sensation in the body.
- 5) Watch - as experience and awareness unfold moment-to-moment.
- 6) Allow - what you are aware of without judging or changing your experience.

Stage Three - Absorption

- 1) Allow any sense of separation between yourself and what you observe to dissolve.
- 2) Allow yourself to merge into non-dual awareness.
- 3) Being the deeper awareness where the seer becomes the seen.

Watching is meditation. What you watch is not the point, the object you are watching is not the point. The quality of observation, the quality of being aware and alert - that's what meditation is. Whatsoever you do with awareness is meditation. Real meditation knows nothing of distraction. That's its grace, its beauty, its grandeur - nothing can disturb it. If your meditation can be disturbed that simply means that you are concentrating and have not yet tasted meditation. Meditation is so vast it can contain everything, absorb everything, and yet remain empty.

Meditation is not a matter of trying to achieve ecstasy, spiritual bliss, or tranquility, nor is it attempting to be a better person. It is simply the creation of a space in which we are able to expose and undo our neurotic games, our self-deceptions, our hidden fears and hopes.

Meditation is a simple and direct practice - the examination of the mind-body process through calm and focused awareness. Learning to observe experience from a place of stillness enables one to relate to life without fear or clinging. One begins to accept pleasure and pain, fear and joy, and all aspects of life with increasing equanimity and balance. Life is seen as a constant changing process. Insight is the deepening of the awareness process, and leads to wisdom and compassion.