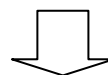


BREATHING MEDITATION AND THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

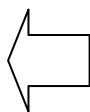
CONCENTRATION

1. Focus on the breath – watch as it goes in (inhaling) and goes out (exhaling). Keep doing it.
 - Return to the breath after each time you have been distracted by feelings or thoughts.
2. One way to focus on the breath is to (1) count exhalations in cycles of 10; then (2) count inhalations in cycles of 10; followed by (3) focusing on the breath without counting; and finally (4) focusing only on the spot where the breath enters and leaves the nostrils.
3. Realize this will require, and develop, the following *inner strengths of mind*:
 - Effort (ardency)
 - Mindfulness (keeping the task in mind)
 - Alertness (keeping watch over what you are doing; staying focused)
4. Evaluate the effects on your body and mind:
 - Continue to direct your attention to the breath.
 - Evaluate the effect of the breath and change your breathing if needed (e.g. longer breaths, shorter breaths, etc.) to make it more comfortable.
5. Notice and observe (be aware of):
 - Refreshment, ease, calmness, and tranquility of body and mind
 - The rising and passing of feelings and emotions
 - The rising and passing of thoughts



VIRTUE

1. Understand that without a solid foundation of virtue, concentration will be difficult and limited.
 - It is very hard to meditate when you are aware of unresolved issues through unskillful actions.
2. Determine to live in harmony with right speech, right actions, and right livelihood.
3. Set your mind to live by the five basic precepts: refraining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and using intoxicants.
4. Have the ten perfections as your goal: generosity, virtue, renunciation, discernment, persistence, endurance, truth, determination, good will, and equanimity.
5. Develop the *brahma-viharas*, or "sublime attitudes":
 - *metta* – goodwill; the wish for true happiness, directed to yourself and to others
 - *karuna* – compassion; the desire for suffering to stop
 - *mudita* – empathetic joy; the desire for happiness to continue
 - *upekkha* – equanimity; the discernment to see where one can truly be of help; not cold-heartedness or indifference



DISCERNMENT

1. From patiently focusing on and observing the breath you will discern three characteristics of existence:
 - *anicca* – the impermanence of all conditioned things
 - *dukkha* – the unsatisfactory nature of all conditioned phenomena, suffering, dis-ease, anguish, pain, and misery
 - *anattā* – egolessness, not-self, no enduring self.
2. With the right view, and right resolve, set your intention to perform skillful actions in body, speech, and mind – and experience happiness.
3. Avoid slipping into wrong views, with wrong resolves, and then performing unskillful actions in body, speech, and mind – and experiencing suffering.
4. View life and experiences from the perspective of the Four Noble Truths:
 - Understand *dukkha* (suffering, unsatisfactoriness, discontent, stress).
 - Abandon the cause of *dukkha* (craving – *tanha* – for sensuality, for states of becoming, and states of no becoming.
 - Realize the cessation of *dukkha* (relinquishing craving)
 - Develop the path of practice leading to the cessation of *dukkha*: the Noble Eightfold Path of right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.
5. Be mindful of these mind-objects: 4 Noble Truths, 5 hindrances to avoid, 5 aggregates to see arise and pass, 6 senses and any fetters generated, and 7 factors of Awakening to be developed.