

## Turning Towards Meditation

### 1. **Body scan on chair**

Sitting in an upright position with your back straight and yet relaxed, dignified....embodying confidence...feeling the floor or chair or cushion beneath you, supporting you. Feeling gravity holding you, the earth receiving you. Finding a point of balance where gravity is holding you comfortably upright, without strain. Allowing the body to become still.

### 2. **Scan and see if there is an area of strong sensation and guide to go into it**

Bringing your attention now to the sense of the body breathing, the breath entering and leaving the body. Bringing curiosity and freshness to this moment...

And now, when you are ready expanding your attention beyond the breath to include the entire body, sitting...becoming aware of sensation in the body...perhaps noticing sensation of contact with the chair or cushion...perhaps the touch of clothes on your body,

Coming to a sense of the entire body, present in sensory experience

just being present with any sensations as they arise

As much as possible, letting sensation and your natural breathing guide you into simple presence..maintaining gentle, nonjudgmental awareness moment to moment...

Exploring sensations with a gentle curiosity...noticing nuances of sensation...

Noticing if there is a particular sensation that you feel the strongest

Without trying or thinking, just letting your awareness settle on the area of strongest sensation

Making a decision to turn toward this sensation with an open, gentle and friendly awareness

There is nothing that needs to change, nothing you need to do...

### 3. **Explore what the strong sensation is**

Just exploring this sensation with a gentle curiosity...noticing nuances of this sensation.  
Being in the experience of it

does the intensity go up or down?

Exploring texture, does it feel rough or smooth?

how wide and deep is it?

Staying in touch with sensations in the body as you sit...if the attention wanders, noticing and making a choice to bring it back with care and kindness to the awareness of the body and the sensation

Moving in closer now, really exploring the sensation

Is it static or does it move?

Does it shift or change in size or shape?

Perhaps suggestion sensations, i.e. tight, constricted, pressure, heaviness, aching, sharp, dull

Now tying your observations to the breath by

noticing the in breath, are there any changes in quality or intensity of sensation during the inbreath?

Are there changes during the outbreath?

Now noticing changes from the Beginning to the end of inbreath

Bringing presence to the sensation. Nothing needs to change

Just noticing pure sensation.

Are there sensations of temperature... warmth, coolness

Attending to duration...

noticing how sensations change over time and since you began bringing attention to the area of particular sensation

Noticing if there is any resistance or bracing any “ ‘no’ I don’t want this” ...as much as possible opening space in awareness, stepping forward to notice details...if there is resistance letting it also be included in spacious awareness

Breathing in and out of this area of the body now

#### **4. Scan through the body a second time**

And now, when you are ready expanding your attention once again to include the entire body, sitting...becoming aware of sensation in the body...

Noticing the breath entering and leaving the body. Bringing curiosity and freshness to this moment...

Having a sense of the entire body, being present in sensory experience

just being present with any sensations now as they arise

As much as possible, letting sensation and your natural breathing guide you into simple presence..maintaining gentle, nonjudgmental awareness moment to moment...

Exploring sensations with a gentle curiosity...noticing nuances of sensation...

Noticing any changes from when you started this meditation.

Noticing any changes in the area of strongest sensation that was noted earlier...

There is nothing that needs to change, no expectation of change...just being with what is in this moment

## 5. **Brief body scan 4-5 minutes through whole body briefly – LARGE BODY PARTS ONLY**

Now moving to awareness of particular parts of the body in this moment of time.

Bringing attention to your head... Noticing sensations in your head and neck.

Continuing to scan down,

Sensing into the arms and shoulders...  
Noticing how your hands feel in this moment.

Coming down to your chest.

Noticing the quality of sensations

Feeling your abdomen move outwards as your diaphragm contracts and draws air into your lungs.

Noticing sensations in this area.

Feeling it r-i-s-i-n-g as you breathe in. Sinking as you exhale. Just being aware of sensations. Noticing how far throughout the body this motion of your breath has an effect

Attending to the sensations of the back and the lower back in this moment...  
Bringing attention to the pelvic region.

As you breathe in through your nostrils, scanning slowly, down through your thighs. Slowly scan your legs from thigh to knee.

On your next out breath, scanning your lower legs. Accepting any tension or discomfort while scanning through your calf to your feet, just tracing your legs down to your feet.

Bringing attention to the legs, bringing them into full presence.

Moving awareness into your feet.

While breathing slowly, direct attention to your feet. Feel your feet. Curl your toes once to fix your awareness to it.

Feeling the sensations in your feet. Simply becoming aware of them.

If thoughts appear, that's fine. Gently coming back to your breath.

Simply accepting all sensations and feeling what happens.

## 6. **Noticing all body parts.**

Taking a breathe... Feeling how everything is connected. letting any sensation come to you. Accepting it as a part of you. Returning to your breathing. Noticing any changes in sensations since the beginning of this meditation. Noticing any changes in the area that had the strongest sensation.

Just breathing for a minute and sensing your body.

As this meditation session comes to a close, realizing that by practicing mindfulness you are intentionally deepening your ability to be fully present in your daily life

If it feels right, perhaps congratulating yourself for having taken this time and energy to nourish and care for yourself...remembering that practicing in this way helps create access to a wider, deeper, more open way of being in your life, in which you can see more clearly and make more conscious choices for health, well-being and freedom...

When challenging or unwanted thoughts, emotions or behaviors arise most of us want to avoid or distract ourselves. We may use food, drugs, work or exercise to temporarily soothe, comfort or numb the difficult internal experience. Unfortunately, repeatedly coping in this way creates a habituated pattern that carries with it more shame and fear, and the hope of change slips further away into a seemingly endless out-of-control cycle.

There is of course, a reason why in mindfulness-based work we turn towards what we believe to be so difficult that if we don't run, we won't survive. And that is because when we come to know the taste, texture, temperature, shape, sound and movement of the unwanted thought, emotion or sensation, it is no longer a lurking shadow threatening to overwhelm us. It is felt and known for what it is: just a sensation. Observed and held in awareness without judgment, it takes its right-sized place in the scope of who we are. Turning toward the difficult offers the possibility of freeing ourselves from the very patterns we fear the most.

Perhaps you're thinking that this "staying with thing" is not the way you want to spend your day off. It's not a comfortable thing to do. It just doesn't have the same feeling that you get when you're angry, depressed or anxious and think: "A day at the beach is what I need." or "A hot fudge sundae would do the trick right about now." But one getaway is never enough, is it? And then, of course, returning is too much. This jumping back and forth we do is wearisome. That's why the practice of mindfully staying with what is here right now, is so important. Ultimately it conserves energy, time, wear and tear on body and soul, and so much drama is avoided.

I'm aware that I ask participants to do a very challenging thing: be present to what is arising in the moment and to allow it to be known. It isn't easy to not turn away from, to not disassociate, to not to run. Bolting is the norm. If it doesn't feel good, leave. Leave the person, place or thing. I'm not suggesting that you stay if you're being abused. I'm talking about the everyday moments when we think, "If only \_\_\_\_\_, I'd be happy."