

Awareness Meditation: a foundation for peacefulness and actualization

Benefits:

1. Increased peacefulness
2. Increased awareness and creativity
3. Enhanced productivity and energy

Awareness meditation is a powerful method for developing peacefulness and enhancing any area of one's life. The practice helps people build their awareness, energy and ability to relax in all phases of life.

To be most successful in this practice, it is important to approach meditation with "right effort". Right effort means effort that is patient and kind. This is a gift we are giving ourselves. It is not something that should be approached as a chore or something we need to do perfectly right away. Like nature, each person's progression is unique but with a kind approach, the final results are the same for all.

How to do awareness meditation:

Overview: In awareness meditation, one focuses on the sensation of the breath as it moves in and out of the nostrils. This requires a good deal of awareness because the breath can be subtle. But as one practices, their ability to be aware increases so that they can feel the breath even when it is its most subtle.

While one is building their awareness, they are also building their patience and compassion because time and time again, one's mind will wander from the breath and we will need to bring it back. Being compassionate during this time is important because it smoothes the mind and help us practice being calm with the way things simply are in the moment. With time though, our minds do become stiller and we experience a unique quietness.

This is the foundation of awareness meditation:

1. Bring your awareness to the sensation of your breath as it moves in and out of nostril(s).
2. Bring awareness to anything that the mind has wandered to. Simply note what it is.
3. With compassionate, bring your awareness back to the breath.

Meditating: Take thirty seconds to a minute to allow yourself to relax. Then take two easy breaths and begin being aware of the sensation of the breath as you breathe naturally. Put all of your awareness on the sensation you feel inside your nostril and at the rim of your nostril as the breath moves in and out.

Once you start meditating, you might notice that your mind wanders/moves to one of six sensations: thoughts, feelings, sounds, smells, body sensations and light through your eyelids. Your awareness may go to things such as thoughts about whether are you doing it right, what you need to do later, friends, work and the sort. You might also hear

sounds or feel things in your body. Simply be aware of what has captured your mind's awareness and then bring your awareness back to the breath.

Stay relaxed and use all of your awareness to stay with the sensation of the breath. Continue to increase the strength of your focus to stay with the breath longer and longer each time. Remember to always use effort that is patient and kind.

Clearing one's mind: This is one of the biggest misbeliefs about meditation. One does not need to clear their mind to begin meditating. The mind will naturally become clear when one practices awareness and compassion.

If thoughts do come to mind, simply be aware of what they are and bring your awareness back to the breath. It takes patience to change the mind's activity but it does come around quite quickly with practice.

The awareness we use to be aware of the breath is the same awareness we use to be aware of our mind. As we practice, our mind will continue to get quieter and we gain a beautiful glimpse at a new level of calmness and peace.

Getting ready: Find a room or space where you will not be interrupted. Set an alarm clock or watch for the amount of time you will be meditating so that you do not need to keep track of time while you are meditating. Sit comfortably with a straight back in a chair, couch or cross-legged on cushions on the floor. Once you are comfortable, close your eyes.

Boosting energy: Once the time has elapsed for a meditation session, take thirty seconds to relax and feel the sensations of all of your body. Then take two or three deep breaths and shake your body lightly.

Important tips for meditation

- It is important to take the two easy breaths before beginning the meditation.
- Keep compassion high in your meditation.
- Use an alarm clock or watch to measure your time otherwise you will continue to open your eyes to check the time and break the continuity of the meditation.
- As long as you are continually bringing your awareness to the breath, you are doing everything perfectly. Being with the breath and bring ones awareness back to the breath with patience is the practice.
- Do not be discouraged if one day's meditation seems better than another. This is natural. There are always ebbs and flows to everything. The most important element is how you are approaching meditation. If we approach it with kindness, then we will not mind. If we are attached to certain outcomes, then it may seem difficult at times.
- Follow your natural breath all of the time unless your breath becomes so shallow that you cannot sense it. If this happens, deepen your breath voluntarily until you can feel it for ten seconds and then let your breath be natural again.
- Do not use verbal or mental sayings such as "in" and "out" as you are being aware of the breath. If you do, your awareness will switch to this instead of the natural breath.
- When you aware being aware of the breath, you may be aware of the breath in one nostril or the other or both. This changes, as does the depth of the breaths.

Foundations of Meditation

From my experience with different techniques, I view awareness meditation as a foundation for other meditations. If someone is inclined, after learning awareness meditation, a person can then proceed onto doing conscious mediation or love/energy meditation, or other variations. Awareness meditation provides the foundation so that a person is able to know how to create a peaceful environment in their mind and practice different methods that have their own unique benefits.

The Magic of our Mind

I am not sure how this happens, but it seems that ideas and thoughts are like children or babies, in that, if you give them authentic attention, they will become calmer and quieter. You will notice that as you become aware of what your mind has wondered to that the ideas or thoughts will diminish in intensity and that after some time, that the landscape of your mind becomes clearer and quieter.

As this happens, a sense of peace generally grows and one is sitting in an environment that feels natural and rejuvenating at the same time. This “clear mind” I believe is our natural state and the one that we are most comfortable acting from. Meditation is a foundation that works to make all of our states of consciousness clear and calm.

For questions: email – robert_hartt@hotmail.com