

## **PSC PARTNERS JUNE 24,2016 MINDFULNESS SESSION AGENDA**

### **1. INTRODUCTIONS (WELL MEDITATION) (15)**

FOR ONCE, THEN, SOMETHING

### **2. INTRODUCTION TO SITTING PRACTICE (15)**

TAKING YOUR SEAT

BREATH, SOUND, BODY

THE WANDERING MIND, COMING BACK, BEGINNING AGAIN

### **3. INQUIRY (10)**

a. WHAT WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE?

b. WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

INSIDE THIS RIVER

### **4. ON THE SPOT STRATEGIES FOR STOPPING, CALMING, OPENING TO WHAT IS HERE NOW (5)**

a. PAUSE BRACELET

b. SLAPPING EXERCISE

c. TENSING/LETTING GO

d. 3-MINUTE BREATHING SPACE

WHAT WE NEED IS HERE

### **5. HANDOUTS**

a. MINDFULNESS OF THE BREATH

b. THE 3-MINUTE BREATHING SPACE

c. EVERYDAY PRACTICES

d. COPIES OF POETRY

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## **For Once, Then, Something**

ROBERT FROST

Others taunt me with having knelt at well-curbs  
Always wrong to the light, so never seeing  
Deeper down in the well than where the water  
Gives me back in a shining surface picture  
Me myself in the summer heaven godlike  
Looking out of a wreath of fern and cloud puffs.

Once, when trying with chin against a well-curb,  
I discerned, as I thought, beyond the picture,  
Through the picture, a something white, uncertain,  
Something more of the depths-and then I lost it.

Water came to rebuke the too clear water.  
One drop fell from a fern, and lo, a ripple  
Shook whatever it was lay there at bottom,  
Blurred it, blotted it out. What was that whiteness?  
Truth? A pebble of quartz? For once, then, something.

It's easy to be hypnotized by our own reflection. When we look into a mirror or into the smooth surface of a well of clear water, we think we know that person looking back at us. We think we're done with that, we know that, we know ourselves. When we think back to what has past -- or forward to what is "not yet," we "know" who we are. We know what to expect. We know how we would feel in any situation.

But what if we look with beginner's mind. What can we see if we drop the old story? What is in the depths? Look deeply, closely at that "whiteness." The reality of something visible and present. What is that? For once, then, there is something.

Keep looking ....

## **Inside This River**

RUMI

Inside this river there is a moon  
Which is not a reflection.

From the river bottom the moon speaks.  
I travel in continuous conversation  
With the river as it goes.

Whatever is above  
And seemingly outside this river  
Is actually in it.

Merge with it, in here or out there,  
As you please.

This is the river of rivers  
And the beautiful silence of endless talking.

## **What We Need Is Here**

WENDELL BARRY

Geese appear high over us,  
Pass and the sky closes.  
Abandon, as in love or sleep,  
Holds then to their way,  
Clear in the ancient faith:  
What we need is here.  
And we pray, not for new earth,  
Or heaven,  
But to be quiet in heart,  
And in eye, clear.  
What we need is here.

## MINDFULNESS OF THE BREATH

1. Settle into a comfortable sitting position, either on a straight-backed chair or on a soft surface on the floor, with your buttocks supported by cushions or a low stool. If you use a chair, it is very helpful to sit away from the back of the chair, so that your spine is self-supporting. If you sit on the floor, it is helpful if your knees actually touch the floor; experiment with the height of the cushions or stool until you feel comfortably and firmly supported.
2. Allow your back to adopt an erect, dignified, and comfortable posture. If sitting on a chair, place your feet flat on the floor, with your legs crossed. Gently close your eyes.
3. Bring your awareness to the level of physical sensations by focusing your attention on the sensations of touch and pressure in your body where it makes contact with the floor and whatever you are sitting on. Spend a minute or two exploring these sensations, just as in the body scan.
4. Now bring your awareness to the changing patterns of physical sensations in the lower abdomen. Having "tuned in" to the physical sensations in this area in this way, you can remove your hand and continue to focus on the sensations in the abdominal wall.
5. Focus your awareness on the sensations of slight stretching as the abdominal wall rises with each in breath, and of gentle deflation as it falls with each out breath. As best you can, follow with your awareness the changing physical sensations in the lower abdomen all the way through as the breath enters your body on the in breath and all the way through as the breath leaves your body on the out breath, perhaps noticing the slight pauses between one in breath and the following out breath, and between one out breath and the following in breath.
6. There is no need to try to control the breathing in any way—simply let the breath breathe itself. As best you can, also bring this attitude of allowing to the rest of your experience. There is nothing to be fixed, no particular state to be achieved. As best you can, simply allow your experience to be your experience, without needing it to be other than it is.

(Cont.)

7. Sooner or later (usually sooner), your mind will wander away from the focus on the breath in the lower abdomen to thoughts, planning, daydreams, drifting along—whatever. This is perfectly OK—it's simply what minds do. It is not a mistake or failure. When you notice that your awareness is no longer on the breath, gently congratulate yourself—you have come back and are once more aware of your experience! You may want to acknowledge briefly where the mind has been ("Ah, there's thinking"). Then, gently escort the awareness back to a focus on the changing pattern of physical sensations to the lower abdomen, renewing the intention to pay attention to the ongoing in breath or out breath, whichever you find.
8. However often you notice that the mind has wandered (and this will quite likely happen over and over and over again), as best you can, congratulate yourself each time on reconnecting with your experience in the moment, gently escorting the attention back to the breath, and simply resume following in awareness the changing pattern of physical sensations that come with each in breath and out breath.
9. As best you can, bring a quality of kindness to your awareness, perhaps seeing the repeated wanderings of the mind as opportunities to bring patience and gentle curiosity to your experience.

Continue with the practice for 15 minutes, or longer if you wish, perhaps reminding yourself from time to time that the intention is simply to be aware of your experience in each moment, as best you can, using the breath as an anchor to gently reconnect with the here and now each time you notice that your mind has wandered and is no longer down in the abdomen, following the breath.

# THE THREE-MINUTE BREATHING SPACE

## 1. AWARENESS

Bring yourself into the present moment by deliberately adopting an erect and dignified posture. If possible, close your eyes. Then ask:

"What is my experience right now...in thoughts...in feelings...and in bodily sensations?"

Acknowledge and register your experience, even if it is unwanted.

## 2. GATHERING

Then, gently redirect full attention to the breathing, to each in breath and to each out breath as they follow, one after the other.

Your breath can function as an anchor to bring you into the present and help you tune into a state of awareness and stillness.

## 3. EXPANDING

Expand the field of your awareness around your breathing, so that it includes a sense of the body as a whole, your posture, and facial expression.

*The breathing space provides a way to step out of automatic pilot and reconnect with the present moment.*

The key skill in using MBCT is to maintain awareness in the moment. Nothing else.

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## MINDFUL PRACTICES IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Everyday life provides endless opportunities for us to stop, calm ourselves and look at what is happening now...to be fully awake and present! Pick a few ordinary activities from your day that you can turn into “bells” of awareness...reminders to be mindful.

1. **Brushing your teeth:** where is your mind when you brush your teeth? Pay attention to all the sensations: toothbrush touching the gums; flavor of the toothpaste; moisture in the mouth; the movements required to spit, etc.
2. **Showering:** are you really present there in the shower? Tune into the sensation of water on the body, the temperature, the movement of the body. If you decide to think about something in the shower, do it with intention.
3. **Preparing food:** try being fully aware of the lettuce as you break it apart for the salad.
4. **Eating:** try chewing each mouthful thoroughly and being fully aware of swallowing before you bring the next bite to your lips. Notice the color, the shapes, how the food came to you, the sensations of eating, the smells, the flavors, the way the mouth waters, etc.
5. **Doing dishes:** can you really be with the dishes instead of rushing through to get to the next thing? How does it feel to be washing or rinsing this dish? Feel the flow of the water, the temperature, etc.
6. **Driving:** as you get into the car decide to spend some of the time actually focusing on driving. Pay attention to the feel of your hands on the wheel, your posture, the sensation of the foot on the pedal. Actually notice the scenes you are passing, especially on routes you travel everyday.
7. **Walking:** pay attention to the actual sensations of walking in your feet and legs; deliberately choose your pace. Be aware of your breathing while walking.
8. **Standing in line:** become aware of your posture and your breathing; notice everyone around you; make eye contact; be aware of fully standing there.
9. **Traffic lights:** try sitting peacefully aware of your breath and the sensations in your body.
10. **Listening:** while you are listening, notice when your mind wanders away or when you're thinking of what you will respond and bring yourself back to just listening.



## **Meditation Resources for Practice and Understanding**

1. Consider finding an instructor-led Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) group in your area.
2. In the absence of an available instructor-led group, consider online resources:
  - a. [www.soundstrue.com](http://www.soundstrue.com)
    - i. MBSR taught by senior instructors at UMASS/CFM
    - ii. 8 weeks \$197.00
  - b. [www.mindfullivingprogram.com](http://www.mindfullivingprogram.com)
    - i. Steve Flowers
    - ii. 8 weeks \$275.00
    - iii. Register at [www.emindful.com](http://www.emindful.com)
  - c. [www.palousemindfulness.com](http://www.palousemindfulness.com)
    - i. Certified MBSR instructor
    - ii. 8 weeks FREE
  - d. [www.guilford.com/MBCT audio](http://www.guilford.com/MBCT_audio) (FREE)
    - i. MBCT helpful in depression.
    - ii. Instructor-led 8-week course may be covered by insurance
  - e. [www.dharma.org](http://www.dharma.org)
    - i. Sharon Salzberg and Joseph Goldstein.
    - ii. Introduction to Insight Meditation. (A twelve-month course) Sounds True, PO Box 8010, Department V6, Boulder, CO 80306-8010.
3. Consider making a retreat: (e.g. Insight Meditation Society, Barre MA; Omega Institute, Rhinebeck, NY; Spirit Rock, Woodacre CA, etc.)

4. Consider reading about mindfulness and/or insight meditation

Chodron, Pema. (1994). *Start Where You Are: A Guide to Compassionate Living*. Boston: Shambala.

Chodron, Pema. (2001). *The Places That Scare You: a Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times*. Boston: Shambala.

Goldstein, Joseph. (1993). *Insight Meditation: The Practice of Freedom*. Boston: Shambala.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (1990). *Full Catastrophe Living: the Program of the Stress reduction Clinic at UMASS Medical Center*. New York: Dell.

Kabat-Zinn. (1994). *Wherever You Go There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life*. New York: Hyperion.

Nhat Hanh, Thich. (1996). *Breathe! You Are Alive*. Berkeley: Parallax Press.

Nhat Hanh, Thich. (1976). *The Miracle of Mindfulness*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Rosenberg, Larry. (1998). *Breath by Breath: the Liberating Practice of Insight Meditation*. Boston: Shambala.

Segal, Z., Williams, J.M.G. and Teasdale, J. (2002). *Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression*. New York: Guilford Press

Salzberg, Sharon. (2002). *Faith: Trusting Your Own Deepest Experience*. New York: Riverhead Books.

I have arrived  
I am home  
In the here  
And in the now

I am solid  
I am free

In the Ultimate  
I dwell.

Thich Nhat Hanh