

Meditation Skill 01: Grounding Your Attention

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Summary

During this Meditation Skill you will learn how to ground your awareness within different sensations to create a reference point from which to develop tranquillity and insight.

The word sensations refer to the simple experience of your body as you sit in meditation such as warmth, coolness, heaviness, pressure etc. Since sensations within your body are always here and now, they create a trusted reference point from which you can train attention and observe when it habitually wanders.

The Buddha called this Kaya Gata Sati:

- Kaya is body or bodily sensations.
- Gata is immersion.
- Sati is Mindfulness.

Through systematically softening/relaxing into the general sensate quality of your body, awareness naturally immerses within it. This creates a reference point from which you will develop the skill of observing habitual shifts of your attention away from your body towards thoughts, sounds etc.

Detailed Instructions

What You Are Learning this Lesson

Grounding Awareness Within Bodily Sensations.

1. Create Your Meditation Posture

Begin your meditation by sitting comfortably on a chair or the floor. Palms resting one on the other in your lap, thumbs lightly touching in the middle as a grounding point for attention. Then bring to mind the purpose for this meditation: to train your ability to be aware of your body and notice whenever your attention wanders away from it.

2. Tune Into the Experience of Just Being Here

Begin your meditation by tuning into the experience of the room around you. This is the simple experience of just sitting in the room meditating. You can feel the touch of air on your skin, hear the flow of distant sounds, and the general feeling of how nice it is to just be here.

It is important to tune into how nice it is to be here meditating; its sense of ease, nothing to do, nowhere to go. The pleasure of its simplicity. Use softening breaths as learnt earlier to soften/relax into this simple experience of just being here.

3. Allow Your Attention to Wander

Once you have created a grounding point for your awareness within the experience of sitting in the room, relax your effort to be aware and allow your mind to habitually wander. At first you may only notice that your attention has wandered after you have already been lost within thinking.

This is perfectly ok.

You are learning about the true nature of your mind. Just bring your awareness back and see if you can notice whenever your mind wanders again. This is how you strengthen mindfulness and develop flexible attention.

4. Gently Relax Into Sensation Within Your Body

Begin to relax awareness into your body, becoming aware of any sensations that you can feel in your body such as warmth and coolness. As your body truly relaxes a feeling of heaviness will arise throughout it. Tune into the subtle pleasure of this feeling of complete relaxation.

Nowhere to be. nothing to do, easy. Adjust your bodies alignment with the pull of gravity if needed and then soften further into your body until awareness and the presence of your body become one.

It is important to note that this is done in a general, relaxed way, and is not about precisely identifying sensations but rather about grounding awareness within them through a process of softening and letting go.

It needs to be an enjoyable experience for awareness to completely immerse and rest within bodily sensations. Accessing the subtle pleasure of abandoning is the key.

5. Allow Your Attention to habitually Wander

Once you have created a grounding point for your awareness within the sensations with your body, relax your effort to be aware and allow your mind to habitually wander. See if you can notice when it does to cultivate mindfulness and develop flexible attention.

6. Become Aware of the Touch of Your Thumbs

Bring awareness to your hands resting in your lap: warmth, coolness, pressure. Slowly narrowing it to your thumbs touching each other. Feel the sensations within that point of touch such as warmth, coolness or pressure.

7. Allow Your Attention to Habitually Wander

Repeat.

8. Become Aware of all Three Experiences

Open your awareness and become aware of all three of these experiences. The sensations within your body, your thumbs touching and the experience of just being in the room.

9. Allow Your Attention to Habitually Wander

Repeat.