

MIDL Online Buddhist Insight Meditation Course

Stephen Procter

Meditation Skill 04: Habitual Forgetting → Content & Happy.

<https://midlmeditation.com/meditation-skill-04>

Detailed instructions Skill 04.

- [YouTube Instructions](#)

Your meditation is the same as Meditation Skill, 03 except you now focus on growing the feeling of enjoyment and contentment with the Mindful Presence of your body. Learning to find enjoyment in the simple act of relaxing and letting go of the world, and finding contentment in the present moment will uplift your mind with the experience of contentment and happiness.

Step 1: Meditation Skills 01-03.

Your meditation remains the same, except you now add steps 2-3 as new additions to your meditation.

Your Meditation So Far:

- Sit in meditation.
- Reflect gratefully.
- Listen to sounds.
- Clothing touching your body.
- Marker 01: Body Relaxation.
- Marker 02: Mind Relaxation.
- Marker 03: Mindful Presence.

Additions for feeling content & happy in Skill 04:

Step 2: Enjoy Contentment.

- Enjoy the subtle pleasantness, comfort, and ease of your body's presence as you sit mindfully in meditation.
- Develop contentment with this experience by softening your mind's tendency to look forward to a future result or to look back at what happened. You aim to develop intimacy with the feeling of contentment with your body's Mindful Presence.

Step 3: Smile with Your Eyes.

- To connect your mind to the feeling of contentment with your body's presence, relax the muscles around your eyes and gently smile with caring and kindness to arouse a feeling of happiness. This is the type of smile you would give toward someone you care about when you want them to know that you care. The trick is to relax the muscles at the base of your eyes and gently lean your awareness into the smile, allowing it to come from your heart.
- Once you feel the happiness of a smile, bring it to the experience of your body's presence, enjoy it, develop contentment with it, and allow the feeling to grow.
- **Tip:** What you are doing here is creating a positive feedback loop in your mind on the pleasantness of enjoyment and contentment. Experiencing the pleasant feeling of happiness and contentment allows your mind to absorb this feeling of pleasantness into itself. Enjoying it, your mind will produce more pleasantness, creating a feedback loop in which spiritual pleasantness, happiness and contentment grow.
- *Troubleshooting:* Refer to the section on 'Difficulty Finding Pleasure' below.

Step 4: GOSS Formula.

- Now that you have developed a feeling of contentment and happiness with your Mindful Presence, you can use it as a foundation for insight into the anatta (autonomous) nature of your mind's habitual patterns. This is simply done by developing a Mindful Presence in your body and enjoying it. This very act will immerse awareness within your body and create a reference point from which you can observe your attention habitually wandering during meditation and in daily life.
- MIDL has a simple formula that makes the development of insight from this foundation easy. It is called GOSS: Ground > Observe > Soften > Smile > Repeat if needed. It is this formula that you have been learning in Meditation Skills 01-04, and this offers you the ability to meditate in daily life and weaken habitual patterns that bind you. By using this simple GOSS Formula any time you observe that you have been distracted, you will weaken habits your mind may have during meditation, like forgetting or wandering to thoughts, memories or fantasies.

GOSS Formula: How to Let Go.

1. Ground.
2. Observe.
3. Soften.
4. Smile.
5. Repeat if needed.

Ground = Be mindful of the touch of your thumbs.

Observe = Be happy when you notice you have been lost in mind stories.

Soften = Return awareness to your body by softening/relaxing your body and mind.

Smile = Smile with your eyes into the subtle pleasantness of letting go to reward your mind.

Difficulty Finding Pleasure.

At this stage of meditation, it may not be easy for you to find enjoyment and pleasant feelings in your meditation. The inability to experience enjoyment and pleasant feelings in meditation is a sign of one or a combination of these three things:

1. Discontentment.
2. Too much effort, not enough enjoyment of relaxation.
3. Anxiety or trauma is hindering your mind from finding enjoyment in simple things.

1) Discontentment arises in our meditation when we are looking for something to happen other than what is already present to us. Usually, this is an inclination in our mind toward some future result. Enjoyment and happiness arise in our meditation when we are curious about the process of what we are experiencing in the present moment. This may mean being curious about cultivating relaxation within our body and mind and how pleasant it feels—being curious about the experience of meditation or being curious about the experience of contentment and discontentment themselves.

2) Too much effort also arises in our meditation when we are looking for something to happen other than what is already present to us. Enjoyment in meditation arises only through relaxation and letting go, not through acquiring, gaining, or achieving. How can the enjoyment of relaxing and letting go be available to you if you are striving and trying to be somewhere other than where you are?

In your meditation, start to observe how your mind finds fault with what is happening now and how it desires to get a future result. The trick is to notice how much effort it takes to desire something and how much restlessness and dissatisfaction it creates in your mind and body. Gently soften and relax your interest in it when you notice it and come back to finding enjoyment in just resting here in your body.

3) Stress, anxiety and trauma are signs that your stress response is turned on and make the pleasure and enjoyment of letting go inaccessible. It is important, therefore, to learn to calm your stress response, creating enjoyable gaps within your stress cycle, before moving into meditative pleasure in Skill 04. I recommend spending more time learning to find enjoyment in relaxation in your body, breathing and mind in Meditation Skill 00 first.

Smiling with Your Eyes:

Smiling with the eyes can be seen in the way people naturally smile toward a newborn baby, their child, intimate partner or friend. It is a heartfelt smile that comes from the heart, not from the mouth. We can observe ourselves or others smile in this way; their eyelids relax, and a feeling of care and happiness comes from the inside, sent out through their eyes. As they do this, they look the other person in the eyes, conveying to them that they care and want to connect.

While this heartfelt smile is a natural ability shared by humans and animals, it does not come naturally to all of us. Particularly if we were raised in an environment where this type of intimate connection wasn't shared, or if we are experiencing anxiety or have experienced trauma. In this case, you need to intentionally train your mind to feel happiness and contentment through practices such as Forgiveness, Gratitude and Loving Kindness.

Meditations for developing Spiritual Pleasant Feeling.

- Meditation Instructions: [Forgiveness & Gratitude](#)
- Meditation Instructions: [Metta: Loving Kindness](#)

MIDL Insight Meditation System: Donation-based Course.

<https://midlmeditation.com/midl-meditation-system>

MIDL is a donation-based Buddhist Insight Meditation Course designed to be integrated into daily life by Stephen Procter. MIDL employs a gentle approach to insight meditation, where meditators begin by learning to relax through slow, gentle breathing. This approach to meditation is known as softening. It allows meditators to experience benefits such as greater relaxation in their body, lower stress and the experience of anxiety with a few weeks of practice. MIDL is practised by following instructions in an in-depth insight meditation course designed for family and work life. MIDL also integrates into a free-flowing retreat practice based on developing calm for insight.

The attitude behind MIDL is: "Everything can improve a little bit, and success comes from celebrating these accumulating little successes."