

Collaborating for Change

Preparation for Presence

It is often useful to begin the day, an important meeting, a period of reflection, etc. with a simple awareness and relaxation exercise to bring yourself fully present. You may shorten or adapt to best fits your group.

Posture

Begin by getting yourself comfortable. Move around a little on the seat/stool/cushion and find the position that is best for you. Posture is important in gathering ourselves into present moment awareness. Allow your back/spine to be straight. If sitting, your feet are both on the ground (legs uncrossed) and your hands are resting on your legs or lap, palms up or down as you like. Relax your shoulders, and let your head be balanced and adjusted to float effortlessly on top of your spine. Scanning your body, notice any muscles that you might be holding tightly and, if possible, release any unnecessary tension. If you feel comfortable doing so, gently close your eyes, relaxing your face and jaw muscles.

Breath

Now slowly become aware of your breath. Don't change the flow of breathing, just let it enter your awareness. Observe yourself breathing in and observe yourself breathing out. Your breath is a key to inner stillness and presence. It is also what we share with all living beings. Thoughts and emotions of all sorts will come and go. For now, rather than engaging any of them, just gently release whatever comes into awareness and bring yourself back to your breath. If helpful, you can use a simple phrase as you breathe in and out:

'Breathing in I am aware that I am breathing in...'

'Breathing out I am aware that I am breathing out....'

In

Out

(Leave a moment of silence here)

Body

While staying aware of your breathing, allow yourself to become aware of your body - your whole body. Simply let it into your awareness without engaging with any particular sensation.

'Breathing in I become aware of my whole body.'

'Breathing out I become aware of my whole body.'

'Breathing in I become aware of my body relaxing.'

'Breathing out I become aware of my body relaxing.'

(Leave a moment of silence here)

Emotions

While staying aware of your breathing, allow yourself to become aware of your emotions - your feelings. Simply let them into your awareness without engaging or identifying with any particular one.

'Breathing in I become aware of the emotions flowing through me.'

'Breathing out I become aware of the emotions flowing through me.'

'Breathing in I breathe peacefulness into my whole being.'

'Breathing out I breathe out all that is not peaceful.'

(Leave a moment of silence here)

Thoughts

While staying aware of your breathing, allow yourself to become aware of your thoughts – like a radio or CD player or Ipod that is constantly playing in your head. Again, simply let these thoughts into your awareness without engaging or identifying with any particular one.

'Breathing in I become aware of the thoughts passing through me.'

'Breathing out I become aware of the thoughts passing through me.'

'Breathing in I understand I am more than my thoughts.'

'Breathing out I let go of my thoughts for now.'

(Leave a moment of silence here)

And now...

When ready, bring your awareness and presence to the person/prayer/activity/interaction you want to engage. Remember that you can return to the breath at any time to re-establish presence and inner stillness in the moment.

[To remain in presence and inner stillness requires time, energy and love. Conscious intention and practice are essential. If we are faithful and patient, we will be able to access deeper and deeper realms of presence and deeper levels of communion with ourselves, others and with our surroundings.]

Adapted by Mercy Associate Catherine Regan