

MEDITATION

“Meditation – see bhavana, jhana, samadhi” Nyanatiloka ‘Buddhist Dictionary’

“Even though the mind wants happiness, it still manages to weigh itself down with mental pain. In fact, pain comes from the mind’s misguided efforts to find happiness. Meditation helps to uncover the reasons for why the mind does this and, in uncovering them, helps you to cure them. In curing them, it opens you to the possibility of genuine happiness, a happiness you can rely on, a happiness that will never change or let you down. -----

This technique is part of a comprehensive path of mind training that involves not only meditation but also the development of generosity and virtue. The basic approach in each part of this training is the same; to understand all your actions as part of a chain of causes and effects, so that you can direct the causes in a more positive direction. With every action in thought, word, or deed, you reflect on what you’re doing while you’re doing it. You look for the motivation leading to your actions, and the results your actions give rise to. As you reflect, you learn to question your actions in specific ways:

- *Do they lead to stress and suffering or to the end of stress and suffering?*
- *If they lead to stress, are they necessary?*
- *If not, why do them again?*
- *If they lead to the end of stress, how can you master them as skills?”*

From ‘With Each and Every Breath’ Thanissaro Bhikkhu

Progression

Know the mind, train the mind, free the mind.

Contentment - “This Dhamma is for one who is content, not for one who is discontent.” *The Buddha AN 8:30*

“In meditation, contentment is a vital ingredient. The less content the mind, the less it will be able to meditate, for to be discontent is to be in a state of agitation. It is useless to meditate unless we first arouse contentment. Anything we practise we become better at, so if we practise discontent, we become highly proficient at being discontented.” *Ayya Khema*

“Whatever a monk keeps pursuing with his thinking and pondering, that becomes the inclination of his mind.” *The Buddha MN19*

“Kammathana: lit: ‘working ground’ i.e. for meditation, is the term in the commentaries for the subjects of meditation” Nyanatiloka ‘Buddhist Dictionary’

Noble Eightfold Path:

- Virtue: Right speech, action, livelihood.
- Concentration: Right effort, mindfulness, concentration.
- Wisdom: Right view, intention.

Right Concentration

"And what is right effort? There is the case where a monk generates desire, endeavours, arouses persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskilful qualities that have not yet arisen... for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskilful qualities that have arisen... for the sake of the arising of skilful qualities that have not yet arisen... (and) for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development, & culmination of skilful qualities that have arisen: This is called right effort.

"And what is right mindfulness? There is the case where a monk remains focused on **the body** in & of itself — ardent, alert, & mindful — putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings in & of themselves... **the mind** in & of itself... **mental qualities** in & of themselves — ardent, alert, & mindful — putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world. This is called right mindfulness.

"And what is right concentration? There is the case where a monk — quite withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn from unskilful (mental) qualities — enters & remains in the first jhana: rapture & pleasure born from withdrawal, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhana: rapture & pleasure born of composure, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation — internal assurance. With the fading of rapture, he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third jhana, of which the Noble Ones declare, 'Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.' With the abandoning of pleasure & pain — as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress — he enters & remains in the fourth jhana: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. This is called right concentration. DN22

Consciousness level	Characterised by	
Ordinary consciousness	Desire for sense experience. Ill-will. Sloth & torpor. Restlessness & anxiety. Doubt & indecision.	Mental factors in conflict. Energy blocked. Emotional clinging to hindrances.
Access concentration	No gross hindrances present.	Enjoyment. Co-operation of mental factors. Concentration easier. More energy available. No strong emotional pull towards hindrances.

1 st Jhana	2 nd Jhana	3 rd Jhana	4 th Jhana
One pointedness. Initial thought. Applied thought. Rapture. Bliss	One pointedness. Rapture. Bliss	One pointedness. Bliss	One pointedness. Equanimity.

The Forty Meditation Themes

Ten recollections; ten foul objects; ten kasinas; four divine abidings; four formless absorptions; one resolution into elements; and one perception of the filthiness of food.

Ten recollections:

1. Buddhanussati: recollection of the virtues of the Buddha.
2. Dhammanussati: recollection of the virtues of the Dhamma.
3. Sanghanussati: recollection of the virtues of the Sangha.
4. Silanussati: recollection of one's own moral virtue.
5. Caganussati: recollection of one's generosity.
6. Devatanussati: recollection of the qualities that lead to rebirth as a heavenly being.
7. Kayagatasati: mindfulness immersed in the body.
8. Maranassati: mindfulness of death.
9. Anapanassati: mindfulness of breathing.
10. Upasamanussati: recollection of the virtues of nibbana -- ultimate pleasure; unexcelled ease, free from birth, aging, illness and death.

Note: 1 – 6 to induce a sense of joy and confidence; 7 & 9 to develop tranquillity and insight; 8 to induce a sense of urgency; 10 to incline the mind to the peace of Nibbana, experienced through dispassion, cessation and Unbinding).

Ten foul objects: ten stages of decomposition of a corpse.

Ten kasinas: staring at earth, water, fire, wind, white, yellow, red, blue/green, space/hole/opening, bright light (consciousness in MN77).

Four divine abidings: goodwill, compassion, sympathetic joy, equanimity.

Four formless absorptions: infinite space, infinite consciousness, sphere of nothingness, sphere of neither perception nor non-perception.

One resolution into elements: i.e., regarding each part of the body simply in terms of physical properties or elements.

One perception of the filthiness of food: i.e., viewing food as something repugnant and unclean -- with regard to where it comes from, how it's prepared, how it's mixed together when it's chewed, and where it stays in the stomach and intestines.

Mindfulness of breathing

Mindfulness of breathing, when developed, brings the four frames of reference to their culmination. The four frames of reference, when developed, bring the seven factors of awakening to their culmination. The seven factors of awakening, when developed, bring clear knowing and release to their culmination.

Mindfulness of breathing was the meditation that the Buddha taught in most detail. He practised this meditation both before and after his enlightenment.

Satipatthana		Anapanasati
Breathing	BODY	<i>Discerns:</i> whether breathing in & out long or short breaths
Postures		<i>Trains:</i> Breathing sensitive to entire body
Activities		Breathing calming bodily fabrication
Anatomical parts		
Elements		
Corpse in decay		
Pleasant	FEELINGS	Sensitive to piti & sukha
Unpleasant		Sensitive to mental fabrications
Neutral		Calming mental fabrications
With/without: Passion	MIND	
Aversion		
Delusion		Sensitive to the mind
Restricted / scattered		Satisfying the mind
Enlarged / not enlarged		Steadying the mind
Surpassed / unsurpassed		Releasing the mind
Concentrated / not		
Released / not released		
	DHAMMAS	
5 Hindrances		<i>Focusing on:</i>
5 Aggregates		Inconstancy
6 Sense spheres		Dispassion
7 Factors of awakening		Cessation
4 Noble truths		Relinquishment

Heart Breathing

You can learn to consciously move to coherence (where heart rate variability is maximized and the electrical rhythms of the heart, lungs, and brain have become synchronized) by intentionally cultivating positive emotions. Research has also shown that, by focusing your attention on the area of your heart whilst cultivating positive emotions, you will facilitate the achievement of coherence. This is sometimes referred to as 'heart breathing'. For most people, coherence occurs when the breathing rate is between three and a half and six breaths per minute.

Dealing with intrusive thoughts

The 6 Rs: Recognize, Release, Relax, Re-smile, Return, Repeat. *Vimalaramsi*

The Hindrances - Sense Desire, Ill-will, Restlessness and worry, Sloth and Torpor, Doubt and indecision.

Antidotes – Cultivate the opposite; Consider the consequences; Pay no attention; Examine the causes; Suppress.

Investigate - the 'Allure, Drawbacks, and Escape' of the things that you habitually use to create stress in your life.