
Day 4: Breathing Exercise

<http://www.mindfulnessstrading.com/15day/d5456mbreathe/>

The First Meditation

Being able to meditate is not our ultimate end. Meditation is a means to an end. But it is an essential element of learning mindfulness.

To help in learning, it is useful to use some props. However, we wish to reduce the stimuli in our immediate environment, not increase them.

So find a comfortable place to sit (or lie if you wish), with low to moderate light and no loud noises. Get comfortable. Do not undertake any tasks such as driving or eating.

You may partially close your eyes if you wish, but not as you might do if you were preparing to sleep. This will all reduce the inputs from your senses.

The prop we use is a short audio – so the only sense we are stimulating is hearing. And you will find that the stimulus is very mild.

That is the purpose of the soft sound, often silence, on a meditation audio. It is not to put you to sleep. It should help you to relax, but that is not the primary purpose.

It is a prop – it will help you by guiding you through the meditation without distracting you unnecessarily. That is the balance.

Today's Task

When you are comfortable and ready, click on the link below to play a short audio. Listen to the words and follow the instructions.

But remember, there's no magic in the words – although you will hopefully find them soothing – and they are not directed at, and do not invoke, anyone but you.

The audio is not the meditation, although it is often wrongly referred to as such - by myself as much as others. The audio exists whether anyone plays it or not and whether anyone is meditating as it is played. The meditation is what you do.

So, go ahead and hit the play button. The audio is about 4 minutes in length. When it has finished, come back to this page.

All done? How are you feeling? Did any unexpected thoughts cross your mind?

Note your feelings before and after this meditation in your journal. Note any other thoughts also, but don't strive for detail.

And don't assess how well you did. You are only starting.

Because this is such a useful short exercise you should repeat it a few times every day during this course. It only takes a few minutes each time.

You should find it relaxing and it provides a way for you to learn to meditate and be mindful of the present moment.

Soon you will be able to do the exercise without listening to the audio.