

Mindfulness Worksheet: Noticing Movement through Breath

Energy is always in motion. It never completely stands still. The nature of energy is to flow. Our pain and suffering arises when we try to stop or block this energy. We do this in one of two ways.

We try to hold on to the energy we enjoy. We want our relationships to stay the same forever. We want our new car to always be new. We want our bodies to never age. When we're met with the inevitable, we're surprised and upset.

We try to hold back energy we don't like. We suppress painful emotions. We're rude to those we don't care for. We avoid even necessary situations or encounters that cause nervousness or fear. All of this returns to harm us.

Even in meditation, trying to hold back energy causes us frustration. We believe in the common misconception that in meditation, we can stop our thoughts.

We'll finally feel free when we stop resisting the true nature of energy. We'll feel free when we accept that energy is always in motion.

One very good way to remember this, is by watching the continual movement of the breath. The breath is always with us, and always in flux.

The following meditation explores awareness of movement through awareness of the breath.

Meditation on Breath & Movement:

- Find a comfortable seat that allows for an upright spine and an open chest
- Close your eyes or gaze low and soft to help turn your attention inward
- Breathe slowly and quietly in and out through your nose
- Notice the breath not through the thinking mind, but through the body
- Feel the slight upward lift of each inhale, feel the release of each exhale
- Recognize the ever-present movement of the breath and the body
- The mind too, is always moving
- Each time you notice that movement of the mind has drawn your attention away from the breath, return your awareness to the breath
- Allow for movement of the mind, without trying to stop it
- You do not have to follow or chase the movement of the mind
- Each time you notice attention is with a thought, return your attention to the breath

What Did You Notice?

- Describe your general experience with the meditation
- Where in the body did you notice the movement of the breath most clearly?
- What's the difference between thinking about the breath and feeling the breath?
- Did you find it challenging to stay present with breath awareness?
- Do you think it's possible to recognize that your mind is active, yet choose not to follow this activity?
- Do you think that over time, you could learn to return to the breath more quickly once attention has wandered?
- In meditation, we become relatively still, but never completely still. Why is that?
- In what ways were you trying to 'stop movement' because something felt good?
- In what ways were you trying to 'stop movement' because of something you didn't like?
- What would it look like to be still and quiet, despite an active mind?
- Do you think this exercise might change your relationship to your own mind and your own thoughts over time? If so, how?
- How might you benefit from a greater acceptance of movement and change?

Review

Even that which seems stable and solid is always in motion. If we were to zero in on the furniture in our homes, we would see movement on a molecular level. The oldest trees in our yard are still growing and changing. Our cars and computers and devices are all in a process of getting older and breaking down.

We suffer when we forget that this movement of energy is irrefutable. We suffer when we expect things to remain one way forever and they don't.

The breath gifts us of the constant reminder of movement. It's always with us, reminding us that everything is in flux, everything is in a process of change.

By embracing this continual movement, we become more accepting of the change we see all around us. Ultimately becoming more peaceful and at ease.