



Welcome back to Week Two of our meditation training. Have you been practicing this past week? You'll notice a difference as we go into Week Two if you've been practicing. If you have not, then you need to go back and do the first week, our first week of practice, because you have to gradually build. It's not accomplished all at once, but it's through a gradual training that the body understands what you want.

It's like learning how to drive a car and in the beginning you're clutching the steering wheel and you look up at the mirror and you're adjusting the mirror; and then next you look at the outer mirror and you're adjusting that mirror, and you're working with the seat, back and forth; and then you have to pull out into traffic; and there's so much anxiety over all of these actions: Did I remember? Did I get it in order? And so that destroys—or keeps a certain amount of serenity from occurring. But the more we do it, the more we do it, the more we become relaxed, and before you know it, you're starting up the car, tuning the radio, fixing the two windows, pulling out with one hand and talking to your friend sitting beside you.

So the body is magnificent in that it helps us at what we're trying to do once it gets the signal that this is what we want to do and that comes through repletion, through habitual tendency. A lot of the ways that we are—that we're trying to uproot came about simply through habitual tendency. I share these things with you so that you can have some understanding. When the mind understands what is required of it, then it becomes our helpmate. When it doesn't understand it runs around like a loose cannon. So we're working at how to train and condition the mind to be a support for us, to help us at what we're trying to accomplish. It's to have the clarity in the moment, to have serenity no matter what's going on around us.

We can train the mind to be steady, to be at ease, to be alert in every situation. Okay, so let's review last week and then I'm going to add a little bit and we're going to go back into our meditation. So last week we talked about body posture, making sure the body is erect and this is so that you won't get tired, you won't get sleepy, the body won't get fatigued. So we sit up, but not like a soldier, but in a more relaxed—not too loose, not too tight.

So find that posture for yourself right now. You might have to move around a little bit to kind of get it and then you get it. You'll know. You can just ease right into it. The next thing you want to do is just make sure that the head is up, because when the chin is down, it brings fatigue on the neck and on the head and it moves towards sleepiness.



The third thing is that we're setting an intention that we're going to focus in. This is our total job right now. It's to pay attention to our object of meditation, which is the breath, until we actually merge with it so that there's no subject and there is no one observing. We just become harmonized. Buddha calls it “unification” of mind. We become unified and there's just this being, this experiencing and that's what we're moving towards.

The fourth is we'll begin to develop a little bit of confidence in our steadiness. Our steadiness brings us confidence so us that we handle things. I can handle this present moment no matter what's going on. And so we get in mind this notion of some steadiness, some confidence.

Finally, we turn our attention to the breath and we're going to learn to let go of so much thinking, so much thinking, so much thinking—simply by thinking about one thing. And after a while we won't be just thinking about it, we'll be noticing things about it. So with the breath we're noticing the quality of the breath, whether it's a short breath compared to the previous one, or whether this is a long breath, whether it's smooth, or whether it's jagged, whether it feels warm, that air coming into the nostrils, or whether it feels cool, whether it feels cool or whether it feels warm on the exhalation. We're just noticing things like that. Whether there's a pause between the inhale and the exhale, we're just noticing everything about that process of breathing.

We're noticing that it tranquilizes the body; the body starts to feel at ease. We notice that it tranquilizes the mind; the mind is not inclined towards so much thinking about what's out here; something we've thought about before, something that we're hearing. We find that we can easily let our eyes close and it's almost like just staring into or peering into the vastness of the emptiness behind the closed eyelids and we find that we can stay with this because this is our total job right now.

And so we're learning how to draw in and just let the world be what it is. And we can accept what it is when we're rooted, when we're stable, and when we are grounded. And then it's more like being a thermostat that we can set the temperature in a room rather than being like a barometer that measures. And so that's our objective with this. There is an objective.

It's not just letting go for a while, but we are letting go of the things that we grasp and clutch and angst about so that we can achieve something that is far, far more actually, it's approachable. That's the first thing to know, that this kind of ease is possible for me. This kind of ease—it is natural for me. And to recognize I'm in an unnatural state when I have anxiety, when I have fears, or when I have confusion. But clarity is always available to me when I learn to just settle and allow that clarity to arise.



Okay, so I'd like to add a new instruction this week and that is just like a sawyer saws the log and, although he goes backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards, his eye never leaves the point where the blade meets the wood. In this way we will examine and investigate the breath this week. So that means we're setting our attention and intention on one spot. It can be at the top of the lip; it can be at the tip of the nose; it could be at the bridge of nose—wherever you can feel the external air becoming internal and where the internal air is moving towards the external, where you can feel it.

Let that be your spot and that's the only place you focus. So that whole body of breath rolls across that one spot and as you inhale and exhale, just note, being aware of what you're experiencing from that one spot. And now we're narrowing down. Can you see that? We're bringing the focus in. We are paying attention to the whole body of breath but just at one spot. Remember your inwards smile. It sets the tone. It sets the mood. It sets the mental state and so let's begin now. Breathing in and out, just normally.

Turning our attention inward to this one activity, into this one object, allowing our eyes to gently close, keeping the head erect as if we're peering into the vastness of the emptiness behind the closed eyelids.

Last week we began applying thought to observation of the breath and this week we're working on sustaining thought. Not having to apply it again and again, because the mind has run off, but being able to just sit with it, experiencing the ease, knowing the steadiness. The steadiness of mind that comes by folding inward. That was a short breath. That was a long breath. That was a smooth breath. That was a smooth breath. That was a rugged breath, course breath. Quickly scanning the body, making sure that muscles are still at ease. If we find that we need to adjust our posture, we just quickly do it without any thought, like that, and continue.

In time a sense of contentment will begin to arise. It will feel as if the breath has quieted down so much that it feels as if it has stopped. But this feeling of contentment becomes stronger and stronger and then we allow ourselves to just experience that contentment; now no need to keep focusing on the breath, just experiencing the contentment that is arising. The peacefulness.

Starts to get good, doesn't it? And you feel that sense of accomplishment as the peace starts to wash over you at times seems shorter and shorter. Remember to do this in the morning when you wake up, before you start your day, before the mind runs to the things that you need to accomplish. Do it as the last thing when you're going to sleep, after you've watched television, you've talked with your partner, whatever. Just before you're ready to hunker down under the

Venerable Pannavati  
“Guided Meditation—Week 2”  
March 9, 2015  
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covers, give yourself these few minutes. Before you know it the time will begin to extend longer and longer and where you thought it was five minutes, it's fifteen minutes; and where you thought it was fifteen minutes, it's a half an hour. Remember it's like running to meet your lover; it becomes your closest friend, this kind of meditation.

And I'll see you next week and we're going to build on this.