



Tools for Change

bringing history, heart, spirit, values and vision into the center of public life

Maintain Balance Amidst Change

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Reflection and meditation are powerful ways for sustaining individuals and groups seeking to transform the world. When we take a few moments, stop and listen in, we can hear the quiet whispers of *knowing* that are always present. When we do this as a group we move into a greater coherence and unleash both collective wisdom and creativity.

Applied Meditation weaves together the imagination, intuition and mindfulness to help breathe space into daily life and to bring one's best to the work. With a little practice you'll be able to ground yourself quickly and easily access deep insight. In the midst of challenging circumstances, you can always return to your center by simply paying attention to your breath. Doing so brings the calm needed to be present and to discover the best way to move forward.

The following meditation can be used to center either yourself or a group. Using it alone, read the instructions and close your eyes in a rhythm that works for you. In groups, read slowly with a soft voice, breathe with your belly and leave long silences (two or three breaths). You can simply read the opening and closing paragraphs which will serve as a 3 to 5 minute centering. If you would like to deepen the meditation and bring deep awareness to concerns at hand insert any of the paragraphs on the reverse side of sheet.

RELAXING INTO THE PRESENT

Move your awareness into your body... Be aware of the position of your body... Focus on your breath... Feel the sensations of breath rolling in and out... Rest your attention on your breath... You can always return to your breath... breath centers you. Breathe... As you breathe out imagine releasing distractions and tension... Feel them drop away... Imagine sending the breath to places of tension. With each breath feel yourself quietly settle. As you breathe in, bring to awareness what matters about what you are about to embark on... Feel yourself becoming fully present to the task at hand with each breath.

REFLECTION ON A TOPIC Use any of the paragraphs on the reverse side to augment your meditation. →

RETURNING TO OUTER FOCUS Leave a few minutes of silence, then read any of the following:

Take time to review on what has come up ... Remember: you can always stop and focus on breath to center. If you like, you can create a symbol or gesture that represents what you have become attuned with... Know that when you bring this symbol to awareness you'll access this experience and find yourself acting in alignment with it... Tell yourself you will remember to use it whenever the need arises... Imagine using this same symbol whenever you need to....

Finish what you are doing... Become aware of the room around you... Open your eyes when you are ready; feeling centered and alert... bringing with you the insights and energy you tapped...

You can snap your fingers or ring a bell to mark the end of the meditation.

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Focus ~ Imagine releasing distraction and tension into the ground... Imagine drawing up strength and energy from the earth, as though you had roots like a tree... Remember that the earth has witnessed all of history... Remember those who have gone before... As you inhale draw strength in... As you exhale give thanks...

Creativity ~ Imagine drawing down the vast energies of the skies... The air, the rains, the winds, the radiance of the sun, the magnetism of the moon... all the energies of the skies, breathe them in... Feel yourself expansive, open, creative... Sky energies moving through you as easily as breath... Open, spacious... As you inhale appreciate the great possibilities... As you exhale reconfirm your commitment to contributing to a positive future...

Common Purpose ~ Extend your awareness to include everyone in the room, everyone breathing... Imagine as though we literally begin to breathe together... Imagine that we move into accord with one another, however you imagine this... Remember what our common purpose is... Envision us putting our hearts and minds together... Sense cohesiveness building... Feel the atmosphere in the room... Sense ourselves being supported in an atmosphere of shared intention... Trust it... Relax into it...

Qualities (Fill in the blanks with *one* quality. For instance you can cultivate: gratitude, creativity, compassion, patience... You can also say: "your experience of 'the sacred' or 'community' etc.)

Bring to awareness _____. Remember times when _____ has been present... Feel the energy all over again... Invite the presence of _____ now... Feel _____. Breathe in _____-- however you imagine it. Send this energy wherever it is needed, each exhalation carries it... As you breathe out, send it _____ (into the room, a project or person who needs of healing...)

Learning from the Edge ~ Notice where there is an edge for you... Breathe space into it... Witness it... Breathe compassion into it... Look at it from different angles of perspective... Where is energy stuck?... Where does it want to move?... What is the message here?...

Being Whole: Reclaim Power ~ Review what has been happening lately and notice under what circumstances you shrink from the fullness of your own experience... When do you leave part of your experience behind? When do you find yourself with one experience inside and another that you express?... Notice how come you do that. What's at stake?... What do you need to express your fullness? Imagine being able to be your regular self expressing yourself and being valued...

History Empowers ~ Look back over time and notice what took place to lead up to this juncture in time. Remember the history... What happened before?... Bring to awareness the problems faced...the effort made, the work done...the obstacles that were overcome... and the ones that still have to be contended with... Look back over the past and notice where the power stood or moved to... Paint a picture of the history... Appreciate those who have gone before and all the work they did...

Discerning the Options ~ Be present with what is happening now... Bring to mind the options... Reflect on them one at a time. Choose one. Imagine it playing out in detail... Notice what happens... What it takes to do it... Witness the consequences... Who does it affect?... When ready bring another option to mind to explore that one...

Vision Guides ~ Take the long view into a possible positive future. Envision a time when the seeds of all good efforts have grown into full being. Don't worry exactly how or when it happens; just envision what it would be like... Imagine it specifically... What would people be doing?... Breathe this vision into present time...

Hope ~ Take a moment, and scan through your experience. Notice what has given you hope... What has inspired you or touched your heart?... It could be small things—the fresh breeze, a child learning, an offering kindness, birds singing... It could be acts of courage... Let the scene touch your heart all over again and make your heart sing... Send this energy into your life now...