

Mindfulness: Meditation 5 - Sounds and Thoughts

Meditation 5: sounds and thoughts

[bell chimes].

As you sit here, bringing the focus of your attention now to hearing. Opening to sounds as they arise, from near or far. Sounds from in front, to the sides, behind, above, or below.

[silence].

Noticing any tendency to label sounds as they come. Or to judge whether you like them or not. Noticing how easily distractions can come. How easily sounds can create a story. And if you notice this, coming back to the sounds themselves, and allowing them to be just as they are. As if you were hearing for the very first time, so that each sound heard was new to you. Cultivating a sense of wonder for this ability to hear so much that we so often take for granted.

[silence].

Seeing if it's possible to really hear the raw sensations of sounds. A pitch. Or loudness. Or rhythm. And the sounds within sounds.

[silence].

Some sounds are easily hidden by other more prominent sounds. See if we can be alive to these too. *[pause].* And noticing as well if there is a quieter space between sounds.

[silence].

Being aware of the space out of which the sounds arise.

[silence].

Now letting the sounds fade into the background and bringing your awareness to your thoughts. Maybe thoughts about what you're doing now, or what you're going to be doing. Thoughts about the past. Worries or anxieties. Sad, happy, or neutral thoughts. See if it's possible to observe them all. As they come, stay awhile, and then go.

[silence].

There's no need to try to control your thoughts in any way. Letting them come and go on their own, just as you did with sounds. *[pause].* So, when thoughts arise in the mind, seeing them coming and going like clouds passing across the sky. Your mind like the sky. Your thoughts like the clouds. Sometimes large, sometimes small, sometimes dark, sometimes light. But the sky remains.

[silence].

Whatever thoughts there are, seeing if it's possible to see them as events that are arising in the mind, staying around awhile, and then dispersing.

[silence].

Being aware of any emotions that come up as well. Seeing if it's possible to be open to it all, no matter what it is. *[pause]*. From time to time you may find that your mind gets caught up in your thinking. No longer observing your thoughts and feelings, but lost inside them. When this happens, congratulating yourself for waking up, taking a moment to acknowledge what your mind got caught in. Then, beginning again. Renewing your intention to observe these mental events as they arise, stay awhile, and dissolve.

[silence].

If at any time your mind gets repeatedly drawn into the story created by your thinking, remembering that it is always possible to come back to the breath, and the sense of the body as a whole, sitting and breathing, as an anchor, to stabilize your awareness back in the present moment. Before returning again, if you choose, to focus on the coming and going of thoughts and feelings.

[silence].

And for the last few moments of the sitting, coming back to focus on your breathing.

[silence].

And remembering that wherever you are, whatever your experience, whenever you find your mind scattered and dispersed by the events of your day, the breath is always available to nourish you and help bring you back into the present moment. To a sense of stillness and peace.

[bell chimes].