

## **Meditation**

Breath, posture, placement of hands, eyes open or shut: all of these techniques form the container for meditation practice. But none of them eradicates the absurd quantity and aggravating intensity of the thoughts that flood the mind when we sit down to meditate. Please expect this. Good thoughts, bad thoughts, pleasurable ones, disturbing ones—they will come and go as we sit in meditation, watching our breath, maintaining our posture. They are the weather of the mind. Our goal in meditation is not to get rid of thoughts. Rather, the goal is to abandon identifying with each thought as it comes and goes; to watch the thoughts as we would watch the weather from an observation tower.

Feelings also arise during meditation. They often rush into the empty space created when we slow down and sit still. There is something so noble about the pure expression of feelings. The answer to anger or sadness or other negative states is not to suppress or to deny them, but to embrace them with mindfulness like a mother with a baby.

The purpose of meditation is to step boldly into reality, just as it is in the here and now. Therefore, it is helpful to sweep the mind clean of belief systems. Strong opinions can be signs of our passion and intelligence, but sometimes they spring from that part of ourselves that wants to be right, and that holds on tightly to familiar explanations. The ego wants to judge things. It does not want to delve more deeply into the full picture of reality.

Loosen the grip of our judgments, even for a few minutes, and give the whole truth a chance to reveal itself. Meditation gives you an opportunity to do that. Remind yourself that you are practicing so that you can be a peaceful person, so that the truths you discover in meditation become the way you live your life. Let your resolve to meditate spring from your longing to break open into life; not from enmity toward yourself. Let go of the burden of self-judgment by returning, over and over, to your most basic self, just as you are, with an attitude of forgiveness. Soon you will find yourself forgiving others, and forgiving the world itself.

**Don't keep searching for the truth; just let go of your opinion.**