

The Blooming of a Lotus

#16 Looking Deeply, Healing

1. Aware of my body, I breathe in.
Smiling to my body, I breathe out.
Aware of body Smiling

2. Experiencing the pain in my body, I breathe in.
Smiling to the pain in my body, I breathe out.
Experiencing physical pain, Smiling

3. Recognizing that this is a physical pain, I breathe in.
Knowing that this is no more than a physical pain, I breathe out.
Recognizing pain as physical, Only physical pain

4. Aware of the contents of my mind, I breathe in.
Smiling to the contents of my mind, I breathe out.
Aware of mind, Smiling

5. Experiencing the pain in my mind, I breathe in.
Smiling to the pain in my mind, I breathe out.
Experiencing mind's pain, Smiling

6. Experiencing the pain of fear in me, I breathe in.
Smiling to the pain of fear in me, I breathe out.
Experiencing fear, Smiling

7. Experiencing the feeling of insecurity in me, I breathe in.
Smiling to the feeling of insecurity, I breathe out.
Experiencing insecurity, Smiling

8. Experiencing the feeling of sadness in me, I breathe in.
Smiling to the feeling of sadness in me, I breathe out.
Experiencing sadness, Smiling

9. Experiencing the feeling of anger in me, I breathe in.
Smiling to the feeling of anger in me, I breathe out.
Experiencing anger, Smiling

10. Experiencing the feeling of jealousy in me, I breathe in.
Smiling to the feeling of jealousy in me, I breathe out.
Experiencing jealousy, Smiling

11. Experiencing the feeling of attachment in me, I breathe in.
Smiling to the feeling of attachment in me, I breathe out.
Experiencing attachment, Smiling

12. Experiencing the feeling of joy in me, I breathe in.
Smiling to the feeling of joy in me, I breathe out.
Experiencing joy, Smiling

13. Experiencing the joy of liberty in me, I breathe in.
Smiling to the joy of liberty in me, I breathe out.
Joy of liberty, Smiling

14. Experiencing the joy of release in me, I breathe in.
Smiling to the joy of release in me, I breathe out.
Joy of release, Smiling

15. Experiencing the joy of abandoning in me, I breathe in.
Smiling to the joy of abandoning in me, I breathe out.
Joy of abandoning, Smiling

16. Experiencing the neutral feeling in me, I breathe in.
Smiling to the neutral feeling in me, I breathe out.
Neutral feeling, Smiling

This exercise is to help us be in touch with all the feelings that arise in our minds. The feelings are either pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. We must learn to recognize, acknowledge, and welcome each one, and after that to look into its impermanence. A feeling or an emotion arises, persists, and then disappears. Mindfulness enables us to be calm throughout the appearance and disappearance of feelings. Buddha taught us not to be attached to feelings but also not to push them away. To acknowledge feelings with an even mind is the very best way; while we are acknowledging them in mindfulness, slowly, slowly we come to a deep realization of their nature. It is that insight which will enable us to be free and at ease as we face each feeling.

Feelings of fear, anxiety, anger, jealousy, and attachment are often unpleasant or painful. The steady practice of mindfulness will help us to acknowledge the painful feeling whenever it appears. In this way, we can avoid being drowned by waves of feelings, however powerful they may be. Sitting easily, we should bring our attention to the part of the abdomen just below the navel. From the rising and falling of the abdomen, we should become aware of our in-breathing and out-breathing for the duration of ten or fifteen minutes. In that time, peace of mind will be gradually restored, and we shall not be blown away by gales of emotion. As we continue to acknowledge and look deeply, we shall see the essence of each feeling and emotion as it arises. We should acknowledge and look deeply at pleasant feelings as well as painful ones, for states of mind born from freedom, release, and letting go are healthy and nourishing. Acknowledged in mindfulness, these states of mind are able to develop and last. Mindful breathing is the wholesome food for these feelings, which are so necessary in our lives.

A neutral feeling is neither pleasant nor painful. But when such feelings are recognized in mindfulness, they usually become pleasant feelings. This is one of the benefits of insight meditation. When you have a toothache the feeling is very unpleasant, and when you do not have a toothache you usually have a neutral feeling. However, if you can be mindful of the nontoothache, the nontoothache will become a feeling of peace and joy. Mindfulness gives rise to and nourishes happiness.