

Meditation 1 week 1

Introduction of myself and team.

General introduction to course

- Will get out of it what put in
- Helps to practise regularly, even if for short time each day
- Will be provided with CDs and diaries to help and give ideas of what to practise
- Will be a practice day – when?
- Helpful if you let me know if not coming. If do so week before then I can give you the appropriate diary.
- If give email address then can send handouts if miss a week

In 3s and 4s introduce yourselves and say why coming along (c. 10 minutes).

Summary of research benefits of meditation:

- Less anxiety
- More positive emotions – happier
- Improved immunity

Team – talk briefly on why meditate

Look at what meditation is and what it isn't. Write up on flip chart.

Make sure include:

Is directing the mind, getting to know yourself, practice

Isn't trance, blanking the mind

Make the point that some of these are active and some receptive.

Will introduce a model.

- Meditation is a way of working with the mind – changing awareness and changing experience. Sometimes it is called the direct method of working with the mind.

- In this course we shall be exploring two meditations: mindfulness of breathing and metta bhavana – development of loving kindness.

Four types of meditation:

- Concentrative (allowing the mind to become still and calm so when eating then eating, being more present. Will be exploring technique of mindfulness of breathing.)
- Receptive (sit quietly and open to whatever is going on. E.g. just sitting, pure awareness, just being.)
- Generative (trying to bring certain mental states into being. E.g. being more purposeful, confident, enthusiastic, cultivating kindness and friendliness.)
- Reflective (explore and contemplate a theme, e.g. interconnectedness, impermanence)

We shall focus on concentrative and generative, but all elements come into all meditations.

Make ourselves comfortable.

- have three points in contact with the ground and what sitting on
- having stable base - do more next week.
- Want to be comfortable so we can keep our attention on mental states more directly.
- We are all experimenting.

Practised directing attention:

- Around the room – can choose what to attend to
- Attend in particular to colours
- Notice shapes and lines. What has happened to the colours?
- Choose to listen. What has happened to the shapes and colours?
- Physical sensations – temperature, touch, contact with mat or cushion, sensations in the body, joints and muscles.

- Bring attention to sensations of breathing – belly rising and deflation as breathe out
- Bring attention back to the room.

Be aware of our ability to direct attention to the body or thoughts.

Any comments or questions?

Did anyone have thoughts arising? It is natural for that to happen. The practice involves being with those thoughts and bringing the mind in the direction you want.

Ancient Pali texts liken meditation to the process of taming a wild elephant. The procedure in those days was to tie a newly captured animal to a post with a good strong rope. When you do this, the elephant is not happy. He screams and tramples, and pulls against the rope for days. Finally it sinks through his skull that he can't get away, and he settles down. At this point you can begin to feed him and to handle him with some degree of safety. Eventually you can dispense with the rope and post altogether, and train your elephant for various tasks. Now you've got a tamed elephant that can be put to useful work. In this analogy the wild elephant is your wildly active mind, the rope is mindfulness, and the post is our object of meditation, our breathing. The tamed elephant who emerges from this process is a well-trained, concentrated mind that can then be used for the exceedingly tough job of piercing the layers of illusion that obscure reality. Meditation tames the mind.

--Henepola Gunaratana, *Mindfulness in Plain English*

We are going to look at how to create certain mental states. We shall be creating the conditions for certain mental states to arise.

- External conditions about the world outside
- Internal conditions about ourselves.

What are suitable conditions to generate a mental state that is calm, relaxed and alert? Examples of external condition is temperature; and of internal condition is being comfortable and not too hungry.

In groups of 3 or 4 explore the conditions to get oneself into a calm, relaxed and alert mental state. Take feedback.

- External conditions – turn off mobile phone, not hungry or thirsty, not too full, ‘do not disturb’, clock, atmosphere e.g. flower, candle, images.
- Internal conditions – intention, not too tired/ stimulated, sit still/ posture.

Practice of directing attention or awareness meditation:

- Posture
- Notice something in the environment you appreciate
- Direct attention by listening – might like to close eyes
- Bring gentle, kindly awareness to contact with the floor and cushion
- Body scan beginning with feet and toes
- If mind wanders, ok
- Having sense of whole body sitting here, relaxed and alert
- Let your attention settle on the sensations of breathing, perhaps taking a couple of deeper breaths
- Bring attention back to yourself sitting here – making a few movements, then opening your eyes, sitting quietly

Going through sheet of practical points individually then in 3s and 4s:

- where will you meditate?
- is there something small you can do to make the space more conducive to a calm and relaxed state of mind?
- when during the day will you practice?

Pool ideas for attitudes that will be helpful.

Questions?

Explain diaries and CDs and practice.

*We know what we
are, but not what we
may become.*
William Shakespeare

Four Types of Meditation

Meditation is largely a matter of mental training through consciously attending to particular types of positive experiences – experiences which sometimes arise quite naturally in the course of everyday living.

The many hundreds of formal meditation techniques found in religious or secular traditions throughout the world can usefully be considered as belonging to one or a combination of the following four loose categories.

- **Concentrative** for calming and focusing the mind
- **Generative** for bringing some quality or ability into being
- **Receptive** for being in a mode of receptive attention to experience
- **Reflective** for contemplating some theme (such as interconnectedness or impermanence)

*The greatest
discovery of my
generation is that a
human being can
alter his life by
altering his attitudes
of mind.*

William James

Any particular meditation practice may include elements of all the four approaches but with the emphasis primarily on one aspect.

The **mindfulness of breathing** meditation, for example, is primarily a concentrative meditation practice, where one settles the mind through attending to the sensations of the breathing as focus.

In the **development of loving-kindness** meditation (*metta bhavana*) one cultivates an attitude of loving-kindness using for example, memory, imagination and awareness of bodily sensations.

In either of these meditation practices, however, a balance needs to be maintained between consciously guiding attention (leading) and being receptive to whatever experience is arising (following). This attitude of open receptive attention is the emphasis of the receptive type of meditation.

Reflective meditation involves repeatedly returning the attention to some theme, again whilst being open to whatever arises.

Practical Points with your Meditation

Eighty percent of success is showing up.
Woody Allen

The benefits you gain from meditation depend on having a regular practice. To establish this, you may like to consider these practical points.

Where will you do the practice?

What will you sit on?

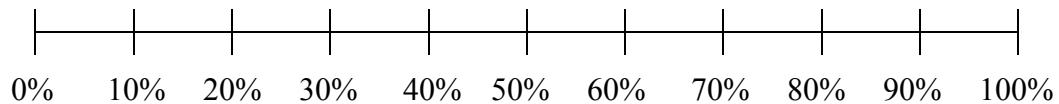
Is there anything small you can do to make the space more likely to encourage a relaxed and calm state of mind?

When during the day will you practice?

How many times a week do you expect to practise?

(We ask you to practise at least four times a week outside the class.)

How committed are you to practising this frequently?



What attitudes of mind would be helpful to bring to the practice? (e.g. curiosity, gentleness, ...)

Introduction to Meditation 1

Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover. Mark Twain

General points about the course

This course provides an introduction to two meditation practices: mindfulness of breathing and the development of loving kindness (metta bhavana).

If you miss a week, it is helpful if you can let me know beforehand, either by phoning the Buddhist Centre or by sending an email to sagaraghosa@ntlworld.com. If you give me your email address then I can send you the diary for the coming week, any handouts and let you know what we are exploring this week.

Meditation diary

The meditation diary is to help you track progress in your meditation in the coming weeks. To make significant progress, it is best to meditate every day; while doing the course you should meditate at least four times outside the weekly session. The diary for each week gives ideas and enough spaces for you to meditate six times during the week.

It is probably helpful to allow a few minutes after your practice to reflect on anything you have noticed or learnt and then make a note of it. There is a section for noting aspects of your experience (such as relaxation, tension or calm) in that meditation. This is to help you develop more skill in observing your experience. The last column is for you to note anything particular that happened and any questions you may have.

We shall have some time at the class each week reviewing meditation practice, and you may find the diary useful for that. Also there will be an opportunity to ask questions so the sheet can be useful to help you remember when the class comes along.

The meditation CDs

The CDs are to support you while you are learning meditation. Later, when you are familiar with the approach taken on the CDs, you may like to practise leading yourself in meditation in your own way. There are some silent tracks on the CD, each five minutes long with a bell at the end, which a number of people find useful for timing their own meditation sessions.

Practice day

There is a meditation practice day on Saturday 19 May from 10 am to 4 pm and this provides an opportunity to practise more intensively. It is free of charge for anyone attending this course. Please sign up on the sheet in the file at reception.

Suggested reading

The body Paramananda (a rich introduction to awareness of the body, posture and meditations on the body)

The breath Vessantara (a clear and practical guide to the mindfulness of breathing practice)

The heart Vessantara (a clear and practical guide to the development of loving kindness meditation)

Wildmind: a step-by-step guide to meditation Bodhipaksa (based on a successful on-line teaching resource)

Change your mind Paramananda (a best selling introduction to meditation)

Introduction to Meditation 1 – Diary for week 1

Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally. Jon Kabat-Zinn

This week explore what conditions help you to become calmer, more relaxed and more alert. You can experiment with the time of day, where you practise and how you practise. You are looking for any positive changes you can bring about. You can use the awareness set-up on the CD or lead yourself through something similar.

	Practice	Aspects of my experience, such as calm, exploration, drowsiness, irritation, alertness etc.	Questions and comments
Day: When and how long	Awareness meditation <i>Give some thought to the environment where you are doing the practice so that it will be a support to you.</i>		
Day: When and how long	Awareness meditation <i>Sit in a way that is calming, relaxing and alert. How did you do that?</i>		
Day: When and how long	Awareness meditation <i>Notice something you can appreciate through your sense of touch, such as the warmth of your hands.</i>		
Day: When and how long	Awareness meditation <i>Focus particularly on being kind to yourself as you practice.</i>		
Day: When and how long	Awareness meditation <i>Find any feelings of calmness, relaxation and alertness in your body or mind and dwell on them.</i>		
Day: When and how long	Awareness meditation <i>Take special care to congratulate yourself whenever you notice that your mind has wandered..</i>		

Spend a few minutes reviewing the week and make a note of anything you have learnt.

Meditation 1 week 2

Introduction of myself and team to anyone new.

Review what we did last week.

- What meditation is and isn't
- 4 types of meditation
- Exercise directing attention
- Conditions to help generate a mental state that is calm, relaxed and alert
- Awareness meditation
- Practical points for meditating at home, including attitudes

Review of week and meditation in 3s and 4s.

Questions?

This week focusing on posture and learning mindfulness of breathing meditation.

Team member taking us through posture.

Give out handout

Posture meditation

- Looking to be relaxed, upright and comfortable
- Feeling sit bones connecting with the earth under you – peaceful, broad, solid, supporting – earth holding and supporting you
- Feeling your legs collected – noticing how grounded you are
- Looking for hands to be placed so not pulling you forwards or backwards. Drop hands to your sides. Find position by rocking back and forth where most upright and let arms hang down at sides. Then keeping elbows in place, bring hands forward and place them together or on thighs.

- Feeling posture at this point – sitting on earth – legs collected – hands at rest.
- Now working with spinal column. Needing to be upright. As best you can, bringing awareness to your spinal column and feeling it upright. To test whether you have found the mid point, lean to the right and feel what that is like, then lean to the left, and go back and forth more and more subtly until you find the mid point – do the same thing leaning forward and then leaning back until you find the point of balance. Explore as much as you like and feel the alignment. Can make small micro adjustments during meditation.
- Head should be upright but with chin slightly moved in and relaxed. Head might be slightly inclined.
- Now feel earth supporting you, legs collected, hands at rest, spine upright – being present in your body.

Practice of directing attention or awareness meditation:

- Posture
- Notice something in the environment you appreciate
- Direct attention by listening – might like to close eyes
- Bring gentle, kindly awareness to contact with the floor and cushion
- Body scan beginning with feet and toes
- If mind wanders, ok
- Having sense of whole body sitting here, relaxed and alert
- Let your attention settle on the sensations of breathing, perhaps taking a couple of deeper breaths
- Bring attention back to yourself sitting here – making a few movements, then opening your eyes, sitting quietly

Explain how to do mindfulness of breathing meditation.

Questions?

Lead them through meditation.

- Taking a few moments to get an overall sense of yourself – thoughts, feelings, sensations
- Attending more fully to **thinking** – thoughts and absence
- Considering purpose in sitting here – as best can, enjoying and appreciating being here
- Bringing friendly attitude of curiosity to whatever experience as moving towards cultivating a more relaxed, alert and calm state of mind
- Attending to how **feeling** – sense of emotional experience
- As best can, bringing kindly, allowing attitude
- Searching for seeds of contentment
- Becoming more aware of **sensations in your body** – contact – sitting relaxed and upright
- Bringing awareness through whole body and concluding with whole body
- If attention wanders ok – noting, and continuing
- Having sense of whole body sitting here
- Allowing aware to settle more fully on sensations of breathing
- Perhaps taking a couple of deeper breaths then allowing breath to find own rhythm, appreciating how it continues without effort
- Four stages
- Just sitting

Give out handouts on posture and mindfulness of breathing.

Explain diaries and CDs and practice for this week.

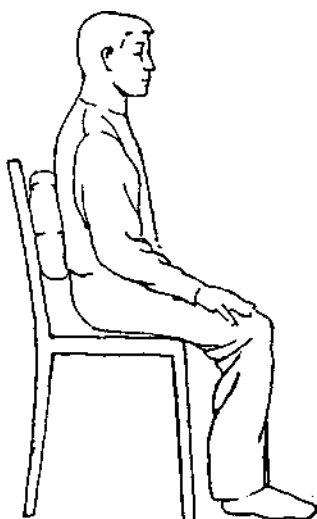
MEDITATION POSTURE - Guidelines

BASIC PRINCIPLES -

Have a FIRM BASE
Be COMFORTABLE
Be RELAXED and ALERT

Ways to sit

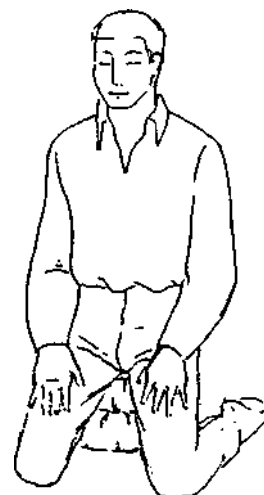
On a chair



- Use a straight back chair, not an armchair. Your pelvis will sit at a better angle and you will be more comfortable if you raise the back legs of the chair by about an inch (2-3 cms)
- Do not cross the legs, but plant the feet squarely on the ground. Place a blanket or cushion under the feet if the chair is too high.
- Sitting against the back of the chair may not be ideal. Try sitting a little forward, with a cushion supporting the small of the back.

Kneeling astride cushions or stool

An easy and popular method



Cross-legged

Options include –



one leg in front of the other

one foot on the calf



one foot on the thigh (advanced)



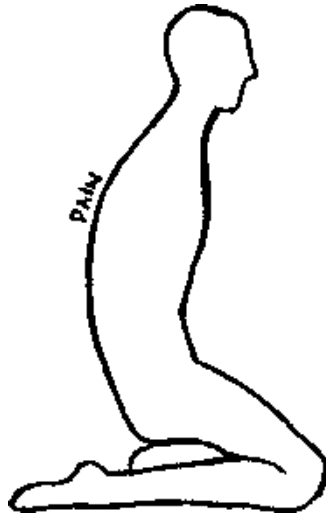
lotus posture (advanced)



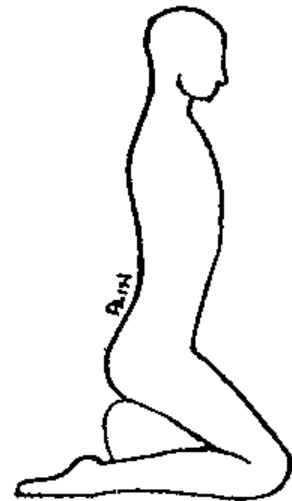
NEVER strain to get into these positions

Ideally, both knees should be on the ground. If not, support them with a cushion or rolled-up blanket.

If your cushion is too low, you will tend to bow.

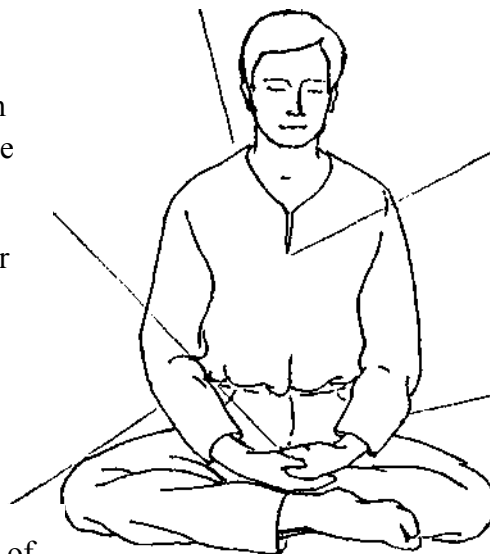


If your cushion is too high, you will tend to arch.



A simple routine for setting up your posture

- 1.** Settle down in a posture that feels comfortable.
- 2.** Check the height of the cushion. Are you arching or bowing? Adjust as necessary.
- 3.** Rest hands in lap or on legs. Use a cushion or a blanket wrapped round the waist for support.
- 4.** Relax shoulders and neck; rock head to and fro to find point of balance on top of spine.
- 5.** Breathe in deeply. Retain sense of lift and openness as you breathe out, relaxing muscles in chest and back. Repeat three times.
- 6.** Rock to and fro gently from pelvis to get overall sense of poise and balance.
- 7.** Run through the sequence again, making fine adjustments. Is your posture relaxed, firm, comfortable and alert?



Mindfulness of Breathing Meditation

*Our acts of voluntary
attending, as brief and
fitful as they are, are
nevertheless
momentous and
critical, determining us
as they do, to higher or
lower destinies.*

William James

In this practice, you engage in being in a calm, relaxed and alert state of mind through attending to the sensations of your natural breathing – you simply notice the sensations without trying to alter your breathing in any way. If at any time your attention wanders away from the sensations you gently bring it back.

Traditionally the Mindfulness of Breathing meditation is done in four stages. Initially, you would take about five minutes per stage; later this might be increased to about ten minutes per stage.

In the first couple of stage counting is used as an aid to staying on track in attending to the sensations of the breathing: in the first stage counting **after** each in-and-out breath, and in the second stage counting **before** each in-and-out breath.

In the third stage you drop the counting and continue attending to the sensations of your breathing.

In the fourth stage you settle your attention on the sensation at the point where the breath enters and leaves the body – usually around the tip of the nose, but sometimes in the mouth or at the back of the throat.

1st stage

Breathing naturally, count **after** each out-breath in sets of 10 in-and-breaths, over and over. So it goes:

breathe in, then out, and count 1;

breathe in, then out, and count 2;

breathe in, then out, and count 3;

etc. up to: in, out 10,

and then in, out, 1 again...

If your attention wanders away from the breathing gently bring it back and begin counting at one again.

2nd stage

Count **before** each in-breath. There is a subtle difference here in the quality of attention as it now involves some anticipation. As in stage one, count in cycles of 10 breaths:

count 1, breathe in and out;

count 2, breathe in and out;

etc. all the way to 10, in, out

and then back to 1, in, out...

If your attention wanders away from the breathing gently bring it back and begin counting at one again.

3rd stage

Drop the counting and continue attending to the sensations of the breathing.

4th stage

Now shift your attention to the sensation at the point where the air enters and leaves your body. For example, you might feel a slight coolness where the air first enters the nose, simply keep your attention at this one point.

Introduction to Meditation 1 – Diary for week 2

The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very core of judgement, character and will. William James

This week you are experimenting with your posture and starting to practise the mindfulness of breathing meditation. You can use the led mindfulness of breathing practice on the CD and do either the complete practice or just the first three stages.

	Practice	Aspects of my experience, such as calm, exploration, drowsiness, irritation, alertness etc.	Questions and comments
Day: When and how long	<i>Mindfulness of breathing</i> <i>How can you make the way you sit more balanced, upright and relaxed?</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Mindfulness of breathing</i> <i>How can you place your hands so they are relaxed and supported?</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Mindfulness of breathing</i> <i>Pay special attention to your posture, making subtle corrections at each stage (not just jolting back). What happens to your posture as you go on?</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Mindfulness of breathing</i> <i>At the beginning and at each stage of the practice, try noticing the more habitual and subconscious tensions. Take your attention into them and try to let them go.</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Mindfulness of breathing</i> <i>What in your posture could help you to sit more comfortably for the duration of the meditation?</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Mindfulness of breathing</i> <i>If you become distracted at any time, gently bring your attention back to your body and then to the sensations of breathing..</i>		

Spend a few minutes reviewing the week and make a note of anything you have learnt.

Meditation 1 week 3

Review what we did last week.

- Posture
- Mindfulness of breathing

Review of week and meditation in 3s and 4s.

Questions?

Lead through a mindfulness of breathing meditation.

This week going to move towards working in meditation and the idea of developing loving-kindness.

Going to do an experiment.

- Just scan through your body. Bring awareness to your body and notice what you notice. Gave a minute or two to do it.
- What other words to you associate with kindness? Write them up on a flip chart: compassion, empathy, patience, awareness, forgiveness, understanding, holding, listening, generosity, love, selflessness, respect, warmth, restraint, gentleness, ...
- With each one, as it is said, noticing any emotional response to the word.
- Choose three of the words which you respond to particularly positively.
- Now bringing awareness to your body with an attitude which incorporates these words for a couple of minutes.
- Now make a comparison of what this experience is like compared to your previous experience.

If some people notice a difference and others don't then can try to encourage those who notice the difference to explain it to those who didn't.

Questions?

How might we develop more positive emotions? What positive emotions are there apart from kindness?

How might we go about developing these positive emotions?
Discuss in groups of 3 or 4.

Make sure they are aware of contentment.

Scaling questions:

- Attend to your level of contentment sitting here in this room with your experience. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is totally contented and 1 is barely contented at all, roughly what level would you give to your current level of contentment?
- Now whatever number you have, I would like you to attend to and identify why you are not lower on the scale.
- Having done this, what has happened to the number? Is it still the same as before?
- If appropriate, think about how you might increase it by half a point.

Lead them through mindfulness of breathing meditation with emphasis on appreciation and kindness and contentment.

Explain diaries and CDs and practice for this week.

Homework: In coming week spend some time dwelling on what you appreciate about whoever you appreciate and yourself, your life and the world. What is there in your life you would not want to change? You could ask your friends as well.

Introduction to Meditation – Diary for week 3

There is nothing cold, analytical or unfeeling about it [mindfulness]. The overall tenor of mindfulness practice is gentle, appreciative and nurturing. Another way to think of it would be 'heartfulness'.

Jon Kabat-Zinn

This week continue doing the mindfulness of breathing practice, either using the CD or leading yourself. You are exploring bringing positive emotions, such as kindness, contentment and confidence into your practice.

	Practice	Aspects of my experience, such as kindness, exploration, contentment, irritation, alertness etc.	Questions and comments
Day: When and how long	<i>Mindfulness of breathing</i> <i>Bring kind awareness to your body as you prepare to meditate.</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Mindfulness of breathing</i> <i>Reflect on what you can do better than before, such as sitting in a more comfortable posture, and do it.</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Mindfulness of breathing</i> <i>If your mind wanders, bring it back to the sensations of breathing with kindness and gentleness.</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Mindfulness of breathing</i> <i>Before you start meditating, see if you can find some ways in which you are already contented.</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Mindfulness of breathing</i> <i>Notice anything about yourself that you appreciate, for example making an effort to learn to meditate.</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Mindfulness of breathing</i> <i>Find a way to cultivate more contentment in meditation.</i>		

Spend a few minutes reviewing the week and make a note of anything you have learnt.

Meditation 1 week 4

Review what we did last week.

- Bringing kindness and positive emotions into meditation
- Exercise where looked at our contentment on a scale

Review of week and meditation in 3s and 4s.

Questions?

Mindfulness of breathing as review and practice bringing in kind awareness.

What we are going to do this week – introducing loving kindness meditation.

Look at homework

Assuming that you and your life are going to change as a result of your meditation practice, in a minute or so I would like you to get together in groups of 3 or 4 for about 10 minutes and share a few of the things currently in your life that you do **not** want to change – eg qualities, friends, dog, spouse.

Feedback?

Exploration to avoid pitfalls in first stage of metta bhavana

We are going to explore further developing positive emotions. To start, make a mental note of how you are feeling at the moment...

Now, take a moment to think of someone you appreciate, possibly a friend, but certainly someone you know reasonably well...

Now, share with a partner what you appreciate about them, if possible giving examples.... 5 mins

As you were talking about what you appreciate about this person, how were you being or feeling in yourself? Spend a little time noticing...

It might not be easy to put into words, but how would you describe how you were being or feeling...

Now recollecting how you were feeling as you were appreciating that person...

Feeling warm, expansive and so on...

You can feel like this even though you know that they are not perfect ...

How come? I'd like you to notice how you can feel like this even though you know they are not perfect. How do you do it? Do by yourself...

then take feedback ...

You have a sense of appreciating the other person and their qualities even though you know they are not perfect. Now for the next few minutes I'd like you to think of yourself in the same perspective, to think of yourself appreciatively even though you are not perfect! This is the way your friends see you.

So spend a few minutes seeing yourself in this way and feeling some appreciation for yourself.

TEA

Introduce the idea of metta

Introduce metta and make points such as

- It is an attitude of well-wishing and not just a feeling, although it may be accompanied by warm feelings
- We naturally feel metta. For example, we would naturally protect a small child playing near the edge of a cliff; we naturally try to keep ourselves and others fed;
- It is universal and unconditional.
 - Universal – it is an attitude and doesn't depend on who or what it finds, but is there for all
 - Unconditional – like way mother's love is not altered when baby makes a mess or soils its nappy.
- It is caring for yourself as well as others

Exploring how to develop metta

Get into groups of 4 and come up with possible ways to develop an attitude of loving-kindness. May need to give some suggestions.

Take feedback and include the following:

- Phrases
 - May I be happy/ well/ free from suffering/ become freer
- Memories, such as memories of times when you or they were at their best
- Imagination, such as imagining rays of sunshine falling on people or people being in a beautiful place
- Attending to physical sensations, such as opening around the heart and warmth

Meditation developing loving-kindness for a friend trying 2 minutes for each idea.

- Start by bringing a friend or some one you appreciate to mind
 - having a sense of their presence
 - perhaps visualising them
 - or remembering their voice
 - bringing to mind characteristic mannerisms
 - remembering things or places associated with them
 - saying their name

Don't worry if image is blurry or can't see someone at all, just get as much of a sense of the person as you can.

Feedback/ questions

Explain diaries and CDs and practice for this week. Give out CDs and metta handout. Exploring whether easier to start with friend or self.

Metta Bhavana

Introduction

Bhavana means bringing into being. Metta is an attitude of well-wishing, loving kindness, and friendliness. While this may involve feelings of warmth, it is primarily an *attitude* of well-wishing. Metta bhavana involves increasingly developing an attitude of loving-kindness towards all beings, independent of your likes and dislikes.

You already demonstrate loving-kindness to some extent, in the way you care for yourself in keeping warm and dry, for example, or the way you would protect a person from stepping out into oncoming traffic. Metta bhavana is about developing this and extending it to more beings.

How to cultivate metta

There are many different ways to develop metta so it's worth noticing and exploring what does or doesn't work for you at any given time, such as:

- Using **phrases** to focus your intention, such as:
 - may I/you/he/she be happy
 - may I/you/he/she be well
 - may I/you/he/she be free from suffering
 - may I/you/he/she make progress
- Using **memories**, such as reconnecting with times when you were experiencing an attitude of loving-kindness in the past.
- Using **imagination**, for example, to imagine people being happy or well or to include them in warm rays of light.
- Attending to **sensations** in your body associated with loving-kindness, for example, openness, warmth and relaxation.

The stages of the practice

It is usually best to choose the people for the stages below before you begin the meditation.

You begin the practice by acknowledging your current emotional state, whatever this is. Then it is helpful to search for any elements of metta that may be already present, however small (such as an attitude of kindness, appreciation or well-wishing) and to dwell on them with a view to increasing them.

*The ultimate lesson
all of us have to
learn is
unconditional love,
which includes not
only others but
ourselves as well.*
Elisabeth
Kubler-Ross

1st stage: Self Contact and develop an attitude of loving-kindness in relation to yourself.

2nd stage: Friend Extend this attitude of loving-kindness towards someone you like or appreciate. To more easily differentiate metta from other emotional attitudes it is usually best to choose a living person of about your own age, and for whom you don't have sexual feelings.

3rd stage: Neutral person Now extend your well-wishing and loving kindness towards a 'neutral' person, preferably someone you have some contact with but for whom you have no particular feelings of like or dislike

4th stage: Enemy Include in your loving-kindness a person you dislike or currently have a difficulty with (not someone you *loathe* which might overwhelm your metta: also bear in mind that well-wishing does not necessarily imply approval of any of their specific behaviours).

5th stage: Everyone First equalise your well-wishing across all four people so far: yourself, the friend, neutral person and enemy.

Then gradually extend the well-wishing to include all living beings.

*Our friends show us
what we can do,
our enemies teach
us what we must do.*
Goethe

Introduction to Meditation – Diary for week 4

Human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives. William James

This week you are starting to explore the metta bhavana or development of loving kindness. It is a good idea to balance mindfulness of breathing and metta bhavana, and an easy way to do that is to alternate the practices. For the metta bhavana, you may just want to wish well to yourself and a friend, starting sometimes with one and sometimes with the other. You can use the CD to help you set up and then lead yourself through these two stages.

	Practice	Aspects of my experience, such as kindness, exploration, contentment, restlessness, warmth etc.	Questions and comments
Day: When and how long	<i>Mindfulness of breathing</i> <i>In the first two stages, count the numbers with more gentleness.</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Metta bhavana</i> <i>Bring to mind a positive quality you have to some extent and wish yourself well in encouraging it to grow.</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Mindfulness of breathing</i> <i>Notice any aspects of the sensations of breathing that you enjoy.</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Metta bhavana</i> <i>Bring to mind the qualities you like in someone you appreciate and notice how it feels.</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Mindfulness of breathing</i> <i>Before you begin the practice, review in your mind some of the things that you already know about meditating.</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Metta bhavana</i> <i>Bring to mind an act of kindness someone has done for you, and an act of kindness you have done for someone else.</i>		

Spend a few minutes reviewing the week and make a note of anything you have learnt.

Meditation 1 week 5

Review what we did last week.

- Introduced metta – loving-kindness
- Looked at ways to develop it - reminder

Review of week and meditation in 3s and 4s. 10 mins

Questions?

Did they prefer starting with self or friend?

Which way or ways of working worked best for you?

How to bring someone to mind

- Choosing a friend or someone you appreciate to mind
 - having a sense of their presence
 - perhaps visualising them
 - or remembering their voice
 - bringing to mind characteristic mannerisms
 - remembering things or places associated with them
 - saying their name

Which of these ways was most vivid for you?

How did you get on wishing well to yourself? Which way or ways worked best for you?

Metta bhavana – first two stages

- Sitting comfortably and appreciating time and place
- Choosing a friend or someone you appreciate to mind
- And way of working
 - Phrases

- May I be happy/ well/ free from suffering/ become freer
- Memories, such as memories of times when you or they were at their best
- Imagination, such as imagining rays of sunshine falling on people or people being in a beautiful place
- Attending to physical sensations, such as opening around the heart and warmth
- Kind awareness to body – scan then whole body
- Accepting your emotions and allowing them to be
- Appreciating yourself for being here and your natural desire for the happiness of yourself and others
- First two stages in whichever order seems appropriate
- Bringing to mind your friend
 - having a sense of their presence
 - perhaps visualising them
 - or remembering their voice
 - bringing to mind characteristic mannerisms
 - remembering things or places associated with them
 - saying their name

Feedback/ questions

Explain all five stages.

- Friend – best to have someone of about your age and for whom you have no sexual feelings. They don't have to be a best friend, just someone you like and are getting on well with at the moment.
- Neutral person – preferably someone you know but towards whom you have no strong feelings. Extending scope of metta as aiming at something unconditional and universal.

- Enemy – difficult person or someone you have an aversion towards or who doesn't like you. It is like bringing in a negative to see how unconditional the well-wishing is.
- All beings – first equalise well-wishing across all four people so far. Then move outwards to all beings in the universe – how?

How might you go about developing metta in each of these stages? Would there be differences? Take some feedback then discuss in small groups.

Do full metta bhavana practice

Discuss in small groups.

Questions about the practice. If necessary prompt them:

- Which stage did you find most difficult?
- What is your score for learning something from the meditation?
- Did you have a specific way of working? Do you have a sense of how well it worked?

Explain diary for this week.

Tell them about Meditation 2 course.

Remind them to sign up for practice day.

Introduction to Meditation – Diary for week 5

The best portion of good man's life—his little, nameless, un-remembered acts of kindness and of love.
William Wordsworth

This week you can start doing the complete metta bhavana practice. Try to see the neutral person and enemy as being broadly the same as you, for example in that they too want to be happy. You may like to use the led practice on the CD. Continue the practice of mindfulness of breathing every other day. You may like to try just using the bells and setting yourself up.

	Practice	Aspects of my experience, such as kindness, exploration, contentment, restlessness, warmth etc.	Questions and comments
Day: When and how long	<i>Mindfulness of breathing</i> <i>Notice your state of mind at the beginning of the meditation and again at the end. How do they compare?</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Metta bhavana</i> <i>Explore using your imagination to develop well wishing.</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Mindfulness of breathing</i> <i>How could you make this meditation more focused than the previous time you did mindfulness of breathing?</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Metta bhavana</i> <i>Explore using phrases such as, 'May you be well, may you be happy'.</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Mindfulness of breathing</i> <i>Spend a few breaths at the end of each stage just noticing your current experience.</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Metta bhavana</i> <i>Explore using sensations in your body, such as a feeling of warmth around the heart.</i>		

Spend a few minutes reviewing the week and make a note of anything you have learnt.

Meditation 1 week 6

Review of the course

- Mindfulness of breathing
- Metta bhavana – loving-kindness meditation
- Walking meditation

Review of week/course and meditation in 3s and 4s.

- What have you learnt about meditation?
- Which method of working in metta bhavana have you found most productive?
- What attitudes are most helpful when meditating?

Questions?

Metta bhavana using phrases

Say that going to explore phrases to use in metta bhavana. So looking for what you would wish both for yourself and for others. Explain that wanting to find universal sentiments rather than something specific like a particular new car.

Give them a couple of minutes to think about what they might wish for ...
... then share ideas in small groups for a few minutes ...
... then collect ideas on the flipchart.

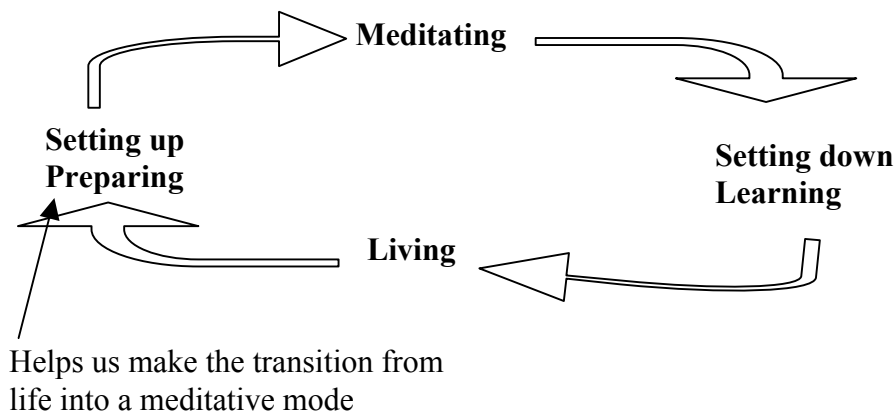
Then suggest that they might like to choose one or two of these ideas to use in the next meditation and give them a minute to do that.

- Sitting comfortably and appreciating time and place
- Preparing by choosing people to include
- And remembering the phrase or phrases you will use
- Kind awareness to body – scan then whole body
- Accepting your emotions and allowing them to be

- Finding seeds of contentment ... and confidence

Feedback/ questions

Discuss the link:



Discuss how to bring meditation into life.

Introduce three minute breathing space.

Do mindfulness of breathing

Questions and comments? Is there any difference to the mindfulness of breathing since doing the metta bhavana?

Explain about wanting feedback. Ask them to talk in small groups about what they have appreciated about the course and then what they think could be improved.

Explain diary for this week.

Meditation module 2:

Preparing for meditation

Balancing being active in meditation with being open to experience

Developing focus while keeping a broader awareness

Developing more awareness of mental states

Dealing with difficulties in meditation

Deepening concentration
Setting down at the end of a meditation session

Meditation 1 Practice day

10:00 Start and tea

10:10 Introduction + 3 minute breathing space

Going to do some more intensive practice

Helpful to stay as silent as possible – ok to talk quietly when necessary and to ask team

Using poetry

10:20 Passing an object

Get into groups of 5 to 8, sitting in a circle and each with an object.

- Passing the stone around your group and noticing your experience while doing so
- Noticing what you appreciate about the stone, not just when you are holding it, but when others have it too.
- Now passing the stone and being aware of your physical experience all the time, as best you can, when holding the stone and not holding the stone.
- Noticing your feelings as the stone is passed around – perhaps feelings of gain and loss, and focusing on your experience of receiving and giving.
- Now passing around the stone with more kindness and warmth.
- Now appreciating how each person is playing a part in passing around the stone and all contribute to giving the stone to you. And how you are contributing to passing the stone around the group, as the stone circles around.

Discussion of what that was like.

10:50 Mindfulness of breathing

Start by checking postures.

You reading this, be ready

11:15 Walking meditation

Start with a description of the practice

11:45 Intro to Metta bhavana – creating the special place

Using your own creativity to bring into mind a beautiful and special place for you.

- You may like to imagine a garden, a beach, a wood, a lake, a mountain
- You may like to fill it with colour
- You may like it to include flowers, butterflies, birds, fish, even jewels
- There may be sounds that you can hear
- There may be scents you can smell
- You may want to appreciate the textures that you can feel
- Appreciating whatever you can experience in this place

12:00 Metta bhavana using special place and letting each person enter

Dreaming the real

12:30 LUNCH

13:30 Mindfulness of breathing

A cold night

14:00 Walking meditation

14:20 Metta bhavana using body

Allowing yourself to become more aware of your emotional state, your current mood.

Adopting a curious attitude, and seeing what you can learn about it. May help to ask questions, such as

- Where in my body do I feel it?
- If it were a colour what would that be like?
- If it were a piece of music, what would that be like?

Focusing particularly on the area around your heart.

Maybe letting yourself smile a little at the person in each stage.

What the heart is like

15:00 Tea or walking meditation

15:20 Mindfulness of breathing

Walking along I followed the drifting stream

15:50 Concluding remarks and feedback and 3 minute breathing space

16:00 Finish

Introduction to Meditation – Diary for week 6

Love is the difficult realization that something other than oneself is real. Iris Murdoch

This week you are establishing a practice of both mindfulness of breathing and metta bhavana. There are a few suggestions here for exploring ways of doing the practices.

	Practice	Aspects of my experience, such as kindness, calm, curiosity, contentment, drowsiness etc.	Questions and comments
Day: When and how long	<i>Mindfulness of breathing</i> <i>Explore the difference in your energy level if you focus on the breath low down in the body compared to high up.</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Metta bhavana</i> <i>Explore ways to cultivate enjoyment in the practice. What did you find out?</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Mindfulness of breathing</i> <i>Develop a sense of kind curiosity towards whatever distracts you from the breath.</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Metta bhavana</i> <i>Check that your attitude towards the practice is kindly even if the practice does not seem to be going well.</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Mindfulness of breathing</i> <i>Bring an appreciative awareness to the breath.</i>		
Day: When and how long	<i>Metta bhavana</i> <i>Instead of trying to develop metta, take it for granted that it is already there and all you need to do is relax into feelings of well-wishing.</i>		

Spend a few minutes reviewing the week and make a note of anything you have learnt.

Introduction to Meditation feedback sheet

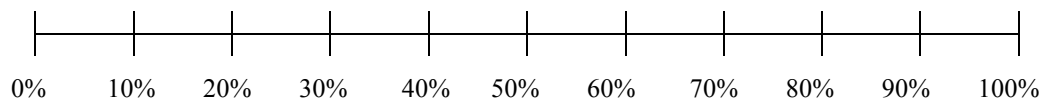
What did you appreciate about this course?

What improvements do you think could be made?

Have you noticed any changes in yourself as a result of the course?

How many times per week did you meditate on average while doing the course?

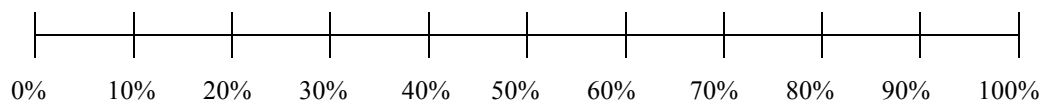
When you were meditating, roughly what percentage of the time did you use the CDs?



What did you like about the CDs?

What improvements could be made to the CDs?

Roughly what percentage of the time did you use the diaries?



Comments on the diaries:

How did you find out about the course?

Would you recommend the course to a friend?

Any other comments?