

## MtM Session - Walking

- Q&A from last week's experiences.
- This week we will mostly focus on doing walking meditation
- **Going Without Arriving** - In our daily lives, we usually feel pressured to move ahead. We have to hurry. We seldom ask ourselves where it is that we must hurry to.
- When you practice walking meditation, you **go for a stroll**. You have **no purpose or direction in space or time**. The purpose of walking meditation is walking meditation itself. Going is important, not arriving. Walking meditation is not a means to an end; it is an end. Each step is life; each step is peace and joy. That is why we don't have to hurry. That is why we slow down. We seem to move forward, but we don't go anywhere; we are not drawn by a goal; thus we smile.
- Walking meditation<sup>1</sup> is practicing meditation while walking. It can bring you joy and peace while you practice it. **Take short steps in complete relaxation; go slowly with a smile on your lips, with your heart open to an experience of peace.** You can **feel truly at ease with yourself**. (Your steps can be those of the healthiest, most secure person on earth. All sorrows and worries can drop away while you are walking. To have peace of mind, to attain self-liberation, learn to walk in this way. It is not difficult. You can do it. Anyone can do it who has some degree of mindfulness and a true intention to be happy.)
- Before we further review and do an actual walking meditation, let's start with a **10 minute quiet sitting mediation** using whichever technique you prefer.

## WALKING MEDITATION

- **How to meditate while walking<sup>2</sup>**

Walking meditation can be just as profound as sitting meditation, and has the advantage of bringing the meditative experience into our activity. There are a number of different walking meditations. Our variation is informal and easy. It allows you to be more present in your body and in the present moment. The simple experience of alternating steps with the left and right foot naturally helps create a meditative state.

- **How to start** - Before starting to walk, spend a little time just standing still. Allow your awareness attention on the sensation of breathing. Then allow the breath to return to normal and notice it going on its own for a little while. Now bring your awareness to your

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.dhammatalks.net/Books2/Thich Nhat Hanh A Guide to Walking Meditation.htm](http://www.dhammatalks.net/Books2/Thich%20Nhat%20Hanh%20A%20Guide%20to%20Walking%20Meditation.htm)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.meditationoasis.com/how-to-meditate/simple-meditations/walking-meditation/>

body, noticing how your body feels as you are standing, and becoming aware of all the sensations going on in your body.

- **Now begin walking** - Walk at a relaxed, fairly slow but normal pace. Pay attention to the sensations in your body as you walk. It is natural to find your attention drawn to the sights around you as you walk, but keep bringing your attention to what is going on internally.
- **The idea is to have your attention on the physical experience of walking** - If the mind starts getting caught up in thoughts, easily bring your attention back to the experience of walking. Notice how the body feels in great detail as you walk. The entire body is involved in the act of walking -- from alternation of the left and right foot to the swinging of your arms and hips.
- **Do 5 or 10 minute walking meditation**

#### **WALKING BODY SCANNING MEDITATION**

- There is a tremendous richness of experience to become aware of as you walk. The body loves movement, and will reward you with pleasure if you pay attention to how the body feels! So much of the time we are caught up in our mental worlds -- thinking of the past or future, planning, imagining... Paying attention to the body as you walk will help you to enjoy simply being alive
- Doing the same set up orientation as the previous walking meditation to start
- **Notice how the soles of your feet feel** -The contact they make with your socks or shoes, the textures of the fabrics touching them, the way they feel as they bear the weight of your body and the sensations in them as your walk along. Feel the entire foot, being aware of how it moves as the heel is placed on the ground, and then the movement rolls to the ball of the foot and toes. Notice how it feels as the foot lifts and moves forward. Allow your awareness to move up through every part of the body, noticing the sensations as you walk. Gradually scan all parts of your body as you bring your attention to the ankles, skins, calves, knees, thighs, hips, pelvis, back, chest, shoulders, arms, neck, head. You can scan your body randomly, moving your awareness from place to place in your body, or you can systematically scan your whole body going from the soles of your feet to the top of your head noticing the sensations of walking.
- When you become aware of tension anywhere in the body, let it go. Allow that part of your body to relax. Allow your ankles, belly, shoulders, arms, neck -- all of your body -- to relax. Let your hips swing loose. As you do this, the walking will become more

enjoyable. **The most important thing is to keep your awareness on the sensations in your body, easily bringing it back when your mind has wandered.**

- **Do 5 or 10 minute walking body scanning meditation**

## CLOSING

- Q&A
- OTHER RESOURCES

**Relaxing Walk Script**<sup>3</sup> -- the following guide is similar to doing walking meditation

This relaxation script will guide you to take a relaxing walk - not just in your mind, but actually physically walking to relax.

In this script, I will describe going outside for a walk, but you may walk indoors or outdoors. You can walk on the spot, on a treadmill, back and forth in a room, around the block.... take as short or as long a walk as your situation and the weather permit.

Throughout this exercise, monitor your body. Stop or ease up if you experience pain or discomfort. Keep all physical movements gentle, smooth, and relaxed.

Begin by preparing for your relaxing walk. Ensure that you have suitable clothing for the weather and are wearing supportive footwear.

Standing still in one place, take a deep breath in... and exhale.

Raise your arms above your head as you breathe in again... and lower your arms as you exhale.

Breathe slowly, deeply, and naturally as you do a few gentle stretches.

Keep your legs straight and bend forward. Place your hands on your knees. Feel the stretch in the back of your legs. Stretch further by placing your hands on your shins... reach down all the way to your ankles if you are able. Hold this stretch.

Slowly return to an upright position. Shake your right leg gently, shaking out the tension. Shake your left leg.

Raise your arms out to the sides at shoulder height. Keep your arms straight out beside you, now turn your body slightly at the waist to look to the right. Face forward again. Now turn at the waist to face slightly to the left. Return to centre.

Now lower your arms, and shake them gently to shake out the tension.

Gently stretch any areas that feel especially tense.

When you are ready to proceed with your walk, go ahead and begin. Walk at whatever pace is comfortable for you. Not too slow.... but not rushing either. Walk comfortably.

Focus your attention on the rhythm of your steps.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.innerhealthstudio.com/relaxing-walk.html>

Left foot.... right foot.... left.... right....

Allow this rhythm to sooth and relax you.

Continue on this relaxing walk. Enjoy the movement of your body. Feel your body becoming energized as your muscles move. Feel your limbs moving.

You can meditate as you walk by focusing your attention again on your footsteps. Count your steps as each foot touches the ground. One, two, three, four, one, two, three, four, one, two, three, four, one, two, three, four.....

As your attention wanders, direct your focus again to your footsteps.... one, two, three, four....

Continue to focus on your footsteps.

Feel your energy increase with each step. When each foot touches the ground, feel the energy rising all the way from your feet, up through your legs... your hips... body... arms.... all the way to the top of your head.

The slight vibration when your foot lands on the ground serves to increase your relaxation and help you feel calm and energized.

Your legs feel strong, supporting the weight of your body. Notice the slight weight shifts that allow you to walk. From heel, to the front of your foot, and then transferring to the heel of the other foot, the front of that foot... back to the first foot.... notice these weight shifts.

Notice the ever-repeating pattern of your steps. It is almost as if your feet are a wheel, rolling and rolling. One part contacts the earth while the other part is in the air. If time slowed down, you would notice that almost imperceptibly the weight shifts from one part of the wheel to the next, and the next, and the next.... until what was the bottom of the wheel is now the top. No part of the imaginary wheel.... and no part of your feet... remains on the ground for long before transferring the weight to another part of your feet. Continuous motion.

Continue the relaxing walk.

The motion is very relaxing. Imagine the rhythm of your feet.... it is like waves... flowing in and out.... ever repeating....

Allow your breath to flow smoothly, also ever-repeating like waves... in.... and out.... in .... out.....

Hear the sounds of your footsteps. This is a calming and relaxing rhythm.... just listening to this repeated beat. Notice all the repeated rhythms... footsteps... heartbeat... breathing.... this smooth cycle of rhythms that allows you to proceed forward at a leisurely walk.

Turn your attention now to your surroundings. Notice the environment around you... the surface you are walking on.... the temperature.... the colors..... sounds..... smells.... enjoy your surroundings..... enjoy this relaxing walk.

I'll end this script now, but you can continue to enjoy this relaxing walk for as long as you wish, feeling alert, refreshed, relaxed, and invigorated.