

Mindfulness Meditation Instructions

The following simple mindfulness meditation instructions are from the Amaravati Monastery:

Mindfulness can be developed through attention on the breath. First, follow the sensation of your ordinary breath as it flows in through the nostrils and fills the chest and abdomen. Then try maintaining your attention at one point, either at the diaphragm or -- a more refined location -- at the nostrils.

Breath has a tranquilizing quality, steady and relaxing if you don't force it; this is helped by an upright posture. Your mind may wander, but keep patiently returning to the breath. It is not necessary to develop concentration to the point of excluding everything else except the breath. Rather than to create a trance, the purpose here is to allow you to notice the workings of the mind, and to bring a measure of peaceful clarity into it. The entire process -- gathering your attention, noticing the breath, noticing that the mind has wandered, and re-establishing your attention -- develops mindfulness, patience and insightful understanding. So don't be put off by apparent "failure" -- simply begin again. Continuing in this way allows the mind eventually to calm down. If you get very restless or agitated, just relax.

Practice being at peace with yourself.