

Peaceful City Sangha: Tools for Mindfulness

Mindful Breathing

Our breathing is a stable solid ground that we can take refuge in. Regardless of our internal weather- our thoughts, emotions and perceptions- our breathing is always with us like a faithful friend. Whenever we feel carried away, or sunk in a deep emotion, or scattered in worries and projects, we return to our breathing to collect and anchor our mind. We feel the flow of air coming in and going out of our nose. We feel how lightly and naturally, how calmly and peacefully our breathing functions. At any time, while we are walking, driving, or working, we can return to this peaceful source of life. We may like to recite silently to ourselves,

Breathing in I know that I am breathing in.

Breathing out I know that I am breathing out.

We do not need to control our breath. We can just enjoy feeling the breath as it actually is. It may be long or short, deep or shallow. In time, with our awareness it will naturally become slower and deeper. Conscious breathing is the key to uniting body and mind and bringing the energy of mindfulness and peace into each moment of our life.

Bells of Mindfulness:

When we hear the sound of a bell (it may be a church bell, the chiming of a clock, or even the ringing of the telephone or honking of a car horn) we are invited to stop and come back to our breathing. If we are talking, or working, we stop. We relax our body and our mind. We let go for this moment of whatever we may be thinking and simply enjoy three full, natural breaths. We do this joyfully, easily, without any need for stiffness or formality. This moment is a gift: an invitation to come home to ourselves and touch the ease and peace that are always available within.

We may like to say silently to ourselves this little poem:

*Listen, listen,
this wonderful sound
brings me back
to my true home.*

By stopping to breathe and restore our calm and our peace, our work becomes more enjoyable and the friend in front of us becomes more real. With just three conscious breaths we can release the tensions in our body and mind. We return to a cool, clear state of being. We become free.

<http://www.mindfulnessdc.org/bell/index.html>

Free Mindfulness bell available online with no download can be set for selected intervals to help us remember to stop during work on our computer (or whatever we may be doing).

<https://www.stillnessbuddy.com/>

“Stillness Buddy is a powerful mindfulness application that... works by displaying on your desktop screen, short "moments of stillness" and longer "mindfulness pauses", spread out during the day. These breaks are very brief so they don't interfere with your work. You choose their duration and frequency to suit your preferences. You can also pause the application for a while if you need to.” Several versions to choose from, including one grounded in and helping to support the work of Thich Nhat Hanh. (about \$22)

Books:

Creating True Peace: Ending Violence in Yourself, Your Family, Your Community, and the World,

Thich Nhat Hanh. Specific, concrete practices for creating peace. <http://www.parallax.org/cgi-bin/shopper.cgi?preadd=action&key=BOOKCTP>

Anh's Anger (award-winning Children's book by Philadelphia author Gail Silver about dealing with

anger) <http://www.parallax.org/cgi-bin/shopper.cgi?preadd=action&key=BOOKAA>

Websites:

<http://pendlehill.org/> -- **Pendle Hill** A Quaker retreat center offering courses in wide variety of spiritual and arts disciplines as well as long-term study and individual retreat, in the Philadelphia suburbs.

<http://philadelphia.shambhala.org/> -- **Philadelphia Shambhala Center** offering meditation and a variety of classes and workshops in meditation and Buddhism (Vajrayana). Many offerings are free.

<http://www.woninstitute.edu/> -- **Won Institute**. A Zen Buddhist Institute in Glenside offering meditation courses in a variety of spiritual disciplines.

<http://www.thesimpleway.org/> -- **The Simple Way**. Grassroots engaged Christian group in North Philly committed to social justice.

<http://www.wkup.org/> -- **Wake Up!** young Buddhists and non-Buddhists for a healthy and compassionate society. (International)

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/261910730500081/> -- **Wake Up Philly**.

<http://www.theshalomcenter.org/> -- **The Shalom Center**, Philadelphia. Environmental, Peace and social activism grounded in Jewish spiritual practice.

http://www.buddhanet.info/wbd/province.php?province_id=59&offset=25 — Buddhist groups offering meditation in Pennsylvania.

<http://www.jeffersonhospital.org/departments-and-services/mindfulness.aspx> — **Mindfulness Institute at Jefferson**. Offering courses and programs in mindfulness based stress reduction (secular) for a fee. A limited number of scholarships are available.

<http://www.pennmedicine.org/stress/> -- **Penn Program in Mindfulness**. Offering courses and programs in mindfulness based stress reduction (secular) for a fee.

http://groupmotion.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=9&Itemid=25 — **Group Motion Workshop** Movement/ dance for non-dancers and dancers to connect deeply with and through the body, moving in relationship with others. Friday evenings in West Philly.

<http://www.studio34yoga.com/> -- **Studio 34**. Community-based studio for mind-body-arts in West Philly.s

<http://springboardstudio.net/> -- **Spring Board Studio** Studio with diverse mind-body-arts programs in Mt. Airy; many mindfulness/meditation classes.