

Exercise sheet

MEDITATION: IDENTIFYING YOUR THOUGHTS



i Take 10 minutes to complete each step.

Step 1

- Sit upright with your back straight. You can either sit on a chair or sit cross-legged on the floor on a cushion. Close your eyes and begin by focusing on your breath, on the sensations in your nose, your throat, your lungs, your belly, with each inhalation and each exhalation. Take a few moments to re-enter the present moment, the here and now, in this room.
- Then expand your attention to your whole body, as if you were enveloping your body in a bubble of breath. Treat yourself with as much compassion as possible.

Step 2

- Now turn your attention to the sounds around you. Nearby sounds, faraway sounds, above, below or beside you. Very obvious sounds and more subtle sounds. As best you can, focus on the characteristics of these sounds — their tone, duration, frequency, whether they are high or low, etc.
- Whenever you start to interpret the sounds or your mind wanders, note in the corner of your mind what you are thinking about, then bring your attention back to the sounds as simply audible sensations, as if your whole body were receiving the sounds.

Step 3

- Now turn your attention to your thoughts. Imagine yourself in front of a cinema screen and watch your thoughts file across the screen. Watch them appear and disappear from the screen. Look at them as an observer, without judging them, simply noting that they are there and that they are passing. If, at the beginning, no thoughts appear on the screen, don't worry, this is perfectly normal. Just wait patiently for them to come, as if you were waiting for a film to start.

Then open your eyes and, if you would like to, write down in a notebook all the thoughts that came into your mind during the exercise.