



Dr. K's Guide to Mental Health

Practice | Following the Breath | Notes

Following the breath is an inquisitive practice. Some practices are about doing something, while others are about discovering something. Some of us have minds that don't like to obey but love to explore. This is fine for meditation as well.

Subtlety is a key part of meditative practice. At the start, we notice just the gross things, the visible things, and the apparent things. As we practice meditation, we begin to notice the subtle things - the creeping bit of ego that dictates our actions, our cognitive biases, our defense mechanisms, our rationalizations.

We begin to find the subtle roots of our fears and anxieties, understand where our self sabotaging patterns come from. So train your mind in subtlety in order to detect the very minor things. To be able to detect the slightest flow of breath is a training in subtlety.

Practice Instructions:

- Observe your breathing
- Notice the temperature of the breath
 - Can you feel it?
 - Is it cold? Warm?
 - Does it vary during inhalation or exhalation?
- Now that you have found the feeling of breath, now see where it goes
 - Scan different parts of your body
 - Pay attention to: the tip of your nose, nasal passages, back of the throat, down into the lungs
- Now look in other places... very unusual places
 - Follow the sensations of coldness, warmth.

I won't ruin it for you but you may find the breath in places you never imagined, and realize that in order to detect, you may need to practice a very sensitive instrument.

Start to practice for 5 minutes per day and eventually building up to 20 minutes a day.