Mindfulness of Breathing - An Already Here Adventure

A choose-your-own-adventure practice book

An original temple welcome, complete practices, and choices you can follow on paper.

Begin at The temple garden on page 2.

Scenes are shuffled. Follow the page numbers at the end of each scene. You can stop or change direction whenever you choose.

The temple garden

An original fictional welcome

You step through a small gate into a well-kept garden. Beyond it stands a small but beautiful Theravada Buddhist temple. Inside, one man sits in meditation. His face resembles Siddhartha as you have seen him imagined in art. Incense is burning. Three meditation pads lie before him.

You may sit or move on. If you sit, he opens his eyes, smiles, and greets you: “Welcome. The path is wide. You may begin with your own ordinary experience, and see what it reveals.”

Your adventure

Mindfulness of Breathing. Develop bodily calm and collected attention with ordinary breathing.

“Try each invitation gently. You can question it, change direction, rest, or leave. Keep what helps and let the rest go. Ancient wisdom is an invitation to investigate, not a promise of an experience.”

Reading this book

Start using either choice below. After that, follow the page numbers rather than reading straight through. Scenes are deliberately shuffled; one scene may run over several pages. Choices appear at its end. In a PDF reader you can also click them. Keep a finger or bookmark at your current page when you pause. Two optional meetings with the man lead back to the exact scene you left.

Story and practice

This adventure is original fiction with modern practice pauses inspired by ancient wisdom. Choices and consequences are story devices, not historical events.

Detailed adaptation notes and gaps are available at the back of the book, so the telling can unfold without stopping for every editorial explanation.

Sources and wisdom

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Sit, listen, and begin - turn to page 40.

Move on and enter the adventure - turn to page 40.

Optional: read how this telling was made - turn to page 50.

How much holding is useful?

Use the shorter version if needed. Compare holding a neutral detail with letting it come and go; rest if attention is costly.

The old teaching moves through joy, ease, and the activity of feeling and recognition. These are not trophies to collect before turning the page. The question in this room is whether a little unnecessary holding can be recognized, and whether there is room to leave some of it unused.

Practice pause

Attention with a lighter touch

Take care

Persistent, unexplained, or worsening fatigue deserves medical attention. Work within your care plan; never use these experiments to push through exhaustion or delayed symptom worsening. Keep your eyes open if helpful and breathe naturally. Stop if you become dizzy, panicked, disoriented, unusually detached, or overwhelmed. Look around, feel ordinary support, and seek help if the effects persist. Do not push through to prove readiness.

1. Prepare

2 minutes. Settle somewhere supported. Pick an available, neutral sensation such as the touch of a sleeve or an ordinary sound; avoid uncomfortable body areas. Choose a comfortable position and an optional gentle timer. Shorten any phase if needed.

2. Experiment

4 minutes. For one minute, gently keep the chosen detail in mind, returning without force. For the next minute, let it come and go without tracking it. Repeat those two minutes once. Notice effort in the brow, jaw, or shoulders without needing to change it. If any form of attention costs too much, spend the remaining time resting with eyes open.

3. Compare

2 minutes. Which condition felt less demanding? Distinguish a quieter mind from a less effortful way of meeting a busy mind. Keep the lighter option if useful.

4. Return

2 minutes. End the deliberate exercise. Look around, name where you are, and notice the chair or floor. Move comfortably if appropriate. Choose one ordinary next action and give yourself time before resuming it. Record a sentence only if useful; an unfinished exploration is enough.

5. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

Which approach was more workable today?

Sources and wisdom

Cultivating care and steadiness

Mindfulness of breathing

The arrow

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 41.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 29.

A different direction is possible

You can follow another detail, continue with the shared stretch, or explore the fictional shortcut and its consequences.

The man returns to another part of the lesson while the next choice has room to form.

Listen for the final movement of the training. Attention follows change, fading attachment, cessation, and letting go. A breath arrives and cannot be made into a permanent home. The teaching connects the sixteen aspects of breathing practice with the four fields of mindfulness, the factors of awakening, and knowledge and release.

Notice, without grading

What did you discover, and what would you like to explore next?

Sources and wisdom

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Return rather than prevent - turn to page 17.

Continue with the next practice - turn to page 19.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 29.

The feeling of this sitting

Pleasantness, irritation, or neutrality can be known alongside the wish for a better session.

This sitting has a feeling tone. It may be agreeable, uncomfortable, or so ordinary that you nearly overlook it. The tale gives feeling a place without making it the director of the scene. A breath can be known while an opinion about the sitting passes through.

Practice pause

The first lean

1. Notice

Notice an ordinary sound, contact, or sight.

2. Distinguish

Is its quality pleasant, unpleasant, or neither? Unclear is an acceptable answer.

3. Watch

Does wanting more or less follow? Is that the same as the original quality?

4. Release

Let the moment continue without completing an analysis.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

Is feeling distinguishable from the demand that it change?

Sources and wisdom

Establishing mindfulness

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 28.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 29.

An optional remembered sound

Recall a familiar sound deliberately, distinguish it from the room, and let it end. This personal comparison may illuminate effort without being a breath instruction.

The man distinguishes this doorway from the old teaching. A represented place or remembered experience may help someone explore attention; another person may find nothing useful in it. Neither response needs a defense. This part of the story gives you permission to experiment without treating a vivid image as evidence of an external event or a spiritual result.

Practice pause

Constructed sound

1. Prepare

Choose a safe ordinary moment with no task demanding your attention. Decide what you expect to notice.

2. Experiment

Recall a familiar bell, voice, or short musical phrase deliberately. Let it end when you choose.

3. Compare

If possible, compare with a recording at comfortable volume. Identify the recalled sound as imagery, not a sound from the room.

4. Return

Let the experiment end. Return to your surroundings and ordinary activity. Keep observation separate from interpretation.

5. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

An optional personal exploration

This modern method is not established as an instruction in the referenced teaching. Try it only if useful; its relationship and limits are explained in the adaptation notes.

Notice, without grading

Was the comparison useful, or would you rather leave it?

Sources and wisdom

Fruits of the contemplative life

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue with the story - turn to page 15.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 29.

Return rather than prevent

Choose an ordinary contact or sound. Discover the difference between returning and forbidding departure.

The man returns to another part of the lesson while the next choice has room to form.

Listen for the final movement of the training. Attention follows change, fading attachment, cessation, and letting go. A breath arrives and cannot be made into a permanent home. The teaching connects the sixteen aspects of breathing practice with the four fields of mindfulness, the factors of awakening, and knowledge and release.

Practice pause

Stay

1. Prepare

Choose a safe ordinary moment with no task demanding your attention. Decide what you expect to notice.

2. Experiment

Choose a sound or a point of comfortable contact. Stay with it for a few moments. When attention leaves, notice and return.

3. Compare

Distinguish noticing a departure from preventing one. An unnoticed interval is unknown, not proof of continuous attention.

4. Return

Let the experiment end. Return to your surroundings and ordinary activity. Keep observation separate from interpretation.

5. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

Which departures were actually noticed?

Sources and wisdom

Analysis of the path

Mindfulness of breathing

Two sorts of thinking

Choose what comes next

Continue into the adventure - turn to page 32.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 29.

Let support do a little

Notice arm weight and explore an optional image without pushing the shoulders down.

The man returns to another part of the lesson while the next choice has room to form.

Stay beside the seated practitioner while the teaching moves through feeling. Joy and ease are known; the activity of feeling and recognition is experienced and calmed. Attention is not asked to treat a pleasant experience as the final answer.

Practice pause

Let the shoulders settle

1. Notice

Rest your hands on your lap or a comfortable surface. Notice the weight of your arms.

2. Invite

Imagine your shoulders as a coat resting on a broad hanger.

3. Listen

Allow the image to linger without pushing your shoulders downward.

4. Respond

Release the image. Move however feels comfortable and continue your day.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

What happened without force?

Sources and wisdom

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Return to the shared stretch - turn to page 19.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 29.

Optional: visit the man in the temple - carry only what helps - turn to page 47.

If ease is here

Someone who practices with care and reflection finds deep joy.

If something is pleasant, explore enjoying it without organizing the next session around keeping it.

If ease is present, you are allowed to notice it. You are not required to promise that it will stay. The man describes how a useful support can become another possession when the wish to keep it takes over. The chair remains beneath you while that wish is examined.

Practice pause

Pleasant without holding

1. Notice

Choose a pleasant contact, sound, or sight already present. Use a sense available to you; do not buy or create a stronger sensation.

2. Distinguish

Describe the detail itself, then notice any plan to repeat, improve, or prolong it. These may overlap.

3. Watch

Stay with the detail for a few seconds without adding another plan. Can you distinguish enjoyment from planning, or is the boundary unclear? You do not have to stop either.

4. Release

Enjoy what remains or move on freely.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

What was enjoyment, and what was planning?

Sources and wisdom

Mindfulness of breathing

The arrow

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 38.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 29.

Return rather than prevent

Choose an ordinary contact or sound. Discover the difference between returning and forbidding departure.

The man returns to another part of the lesson while the next choice has room to form.

Listen for the final movement of the training. Attention follows change, fading attachment, cessation, and letting go. A breath arrives and cannot be made into a permanent home. The teaching connects the sixteen aspects of breathing practice with the four fields of mindfulness, the factors of awakening, and knowledge and release.

Practice pause

Stay

1. Prepare

Choose a safe ordinary moment with no task demanding your attention. Decide what you expect to notice.

2. Experiment

Choose a sound or a point of comfortable contact. Stay with it for a few moments. When attention leaves, notice and return.

3. Compare

Distinguish noticing a departure from preventing one. An unnoticed interval is unknown, not proof of continuous attention.

4. Return

Let the experiment end. Return to your surroundings and ordinary activity. Keep observation separate from interpretation.

5. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

Which departures were actually noticed?

Sources and wisdom

Analysis of the path

Mindfulness of breathing

Two sorts of thinking

Choose what comes next

Return to the shared stretch - turn to page 19.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 29.

Less unnecessary work

Explore whether effort around an ordinary breath can soften. A busy mind can remain busy.

You notice the extra work of trying to breathe correctly. It has the earnestness of someone straightening a flower by pulling on its stem. The image makes you smile, perhaps, and perhaps it does not. Either way, the breath can continue without winning an argument about whether you are doing well.

Practice pause

Conditions for quiet

1. Notice

Sit comfortably somewhere you can pause safely.

2. Distinguish

Notice breathing and any unnecessary effort around it. Change position if needed.

3. Watch

Allow breathing to remain natural while effort softens if it can.

4. Release

End gently. A busy mind is not a failed attempt.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

Was anything being added that could rest?

Sources and wisdom

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 4.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 29.

Return with what is useful

The story can finish while ordinary life remains unfinished. Let the practices end, recognize your actual surroundings, and choose a practical next action.

The place you have been exploring continues beyond your part in it. There is still work to do and information nobody possesses yet. The man is waiting at the temple to receive an ordinary person, not an example of a completed teaching. A useful direction can be carried without making the story's ending settle the rest of your life.

Notice, without grading

Keep what helps and let the rest go. Completing this adventure records participation, not concentration, insight, or release.

Back at the temple

You return through the well-kept garden to the small temple. Incense drifts past the three meditation pads. The man opens his eyes, smiles, and welcomes you back.

The man speaks

You let breathing become something to know rather than a task to perfect. An ordinary return can be enough for the next moment.

"You are welcome to walk another adventure, or return to ordinary life. There is nothing you need to prove before you go."

An ending

To return to ordinary life, close the book here. Finishing marks participation, not an attainment.

Sources and wisdom

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Sit in the temple and begin a fresh visit - turn to page 2.

The garden does not hurry

An optional meeting - original fiction

You find the man beside the temple garden. He makes room for you to sit. This meeting is a pause in the adventure, not a required practice.

The man speaks

“Breathing is already happening. You may learn its pace without making it perform. If attention wanders, knowing that it wandered is a place to begin again.”

He smiles. “When you are ready, return to where you left the story.”

Sources and wisdom

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Return to “Mindfulness of Breathing · The seat comes first” - turn to page 40.

Calm becomes something to fight for

In this fictional branch, the character treats each wandering thought as an enemy and every ordinary breath as inadequate. The pursuit of a perfect state adds bracing, frustration, and another reason to check. This is a story about added struggle, not an instruction to alter breathing.

The man does not rescue the imagined situation with a sudden lesson that makes its cost disappear. Someone has been left unheard, a need has gone unmet, or attention has become a wall. This consequence belongs to the fiction. You can retrace the turn and consider another response without practicing harm in your own life.

Notice, without grading

This fictional branch leads to added suffering. It is not a verdict about you. Retrace it, choose another direction, or leave the adventure here.

Leaving the path

The man in the temple offers a quiet farewell. You can return to ordinary life now, or return to your bookmarked page another day. This pause is not a completed journey.

Sources and wisdom

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Try another direction - turn to page 48.

Visit the temple again - turn to page 2.

An ordinary movement

There may already be an easy place to notice breathing. Nothing needs to become deeper or slower.

A breath arrives while the room continues around you. The story follows attention into bodily experience, not away to a hidden somewhere. When a sound draws you, the breath has not been insulted. Another meeting is possible when you notice where attention has gone.

Practice pause

Room for a breath

1. Notice

Sit comfortably and notice where the movement of an ordinary breath is easiest to feel.

2. Invite

Imagine a little space around that movement, like an open window.

3. Listen

Allow a few natural breaths. There is no need to breathe deeper, slower, or differently.

4. Respond

Let your attention return to the room. Notice whether anything feels different, or simply familiar.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

What was available without changing the breath?

Sources and wisdom

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 34.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 29.

Another way into this moment

There are several ways to prepare attention. You could explore support or the effort of holding a detail in mind.

The man returns to another part of the lesson while the next choice has room to form.

Stay beside the seated practitioner while the teaching moves through feeling. Joy and ease are known; the activity of feeling and recognition is experienced and calmed. Attention is not asked to treat a pleasant experience as the final answer.

Notice, without grading

What did you discover, and what would you like to explore next?

Sources and wisdom

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Let support do a little - turn to page 43.

Return rather than prevent - turn to page 11.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 29.

An optional personal exploration

The library includes practices developed through William’s personal exploration. Their usefulness can be explored even when their precise textual correspondence is uncertain.

The man distinguishes this doorway from the old teaching. A represented place or remembered experience may help someone explore attention; another person may find nothing useful in it. Neither response needs a defense. This part of the story gives you permission to experiment without treating a vivid image as evidence of an external event or a spiritual result.

Notice, without grading

What did you discover, and what would you like to explore next?

Sources and wisdom

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Try an optional remembered sound - turn to page 9.

Leave this exploration and continue - turn to page 15.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 29.

Leaving can be part of this path

Rest, company, another practice, or an ordinary responsibility may be the next part of the walk. You do not owe the adventure a return.

The man leaves the gate unlatched. The imagined scene can remain unfinished while you answer a person, move your body, eat, or rest. Leaving the path is not made into a flaw in your character. A bookmark is an invitation, not a debt; the story can meet you again if returning is useful.

Notice, without grading

Your previous place remains available in your account when signed in, or in this browser for guests when storage works. Return only if it is useful.

An ordinary pause

You may close the book, explore ordinary life, and return to this page whenever you choose. Leaving can be part of walking the path.

Leaving the path

The man in the temple offers a quiet farewell. You can return to ordinary life now, or return to your bookmarked page another day. This pause is not a completed journey.

Sources and wisdom

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Visit the temple again - turn to page 2.

No final calmness inspection

Careful attention is praised; carelessness is criticized.

The practice can end without proving that it worked.

You look around. The sitting is allowed to be finished even if the mind still has a comment ready. The open-air gathering belongs to the old telling; the next ordinary activity belongs to your day. A breath can accompany it without needing to be kept apart as something spiritual.

Practice pause

Ease without a review

1. Notice

If an easy moment is present, notice it. If not, simply sit comfortably.

2. Distinguish

Distinguish ease from excitement about being calm or checking whether it will last.

3. Watch

Let that extra evaluation rest briefly. Notice what remains.

4. Release

Look around and continue your day. There is no state to preserve.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

What remains when the review rests?

Sources and wisdom

Mindfulness of breathing

Two sorts of thinking

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 21.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 29.

The seat comes first

Just as rain stays outside a well-thatched house, craving cannot enter a well-trained mind.

Let support be ordinary before making attention into a project.

Before speaking of breathing, the man notices where you have chosen to sit. In his telling, the original gathering is under an open sky, with experienced practitioners teaching newer ones. Here, the beginning is smaller: a place where this body can rest without being asked to earn its support.

Practice pause

A place to sit

1. Notice

Sit in a position that feels comfortable. Notice where your body meets the seat.

2. Invite

Notice two points of contact: perhaps a hip and a thigh, or your back and the chair. Compare pressure or texture. Use another supported position if sitting is unavailable.

3. Listen

Make one small comfortable adjustment, or remain still and shift attention between those points. What changed in the contact, and what stayed the same? No posture needs to be achieved.

4. Respond

Let your attention move outward while the support remains beneath you.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

Can the position be workable rather than ideal?

Sources and wisdom

Establishing mindfulness

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 45.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 29.

This breath, as it is

Through effort, attention, restraint, and self-control, a wise person can build an island that no flood can overwhelm.

Let one breath have a beginning and an ending of its own.

The man tells of training with the whole body and calming bodily activity. He does not hand you an exact shape every breath must take. Your shoulders may soften or may not. This part of the adventure can remain a careful encounter with what is actually available.

Practice pause

An ordinary breath

1. Notice

Notice a natural breath while seated comfortably.

2. Distinguish

Is this breath relatively long or short? There is no preferred length.

3. Watch

Follow its beginning, continuation, and ending without extending it. What is sensation, and what is the phrase “I am breathing”?

4. Release

Let the question go. Breathe normally and look around.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

Which part was sensation, and which part a description?

Sources and wisdom

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 49.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 29.

A breath need not stay

Notice only the arrival or ending actually apparent, without reconstructing a missed stage.

The source's final movement follows change, fading attachment, cessation, and letting go. One breath does not remain for the next to improve it. The room offers a very small doorway into that lesson: knowing an ending without asking for another ending to prove it.

Practice pause

Arriving, present, gone

1. Notice

Choose a naturally occurring sound or breath.

2. Distinguish

Notice its arrival, its presence, and any ending you can discern.

3. Watch

If you miss a stage, leave it missed. Do not reconstruct it as direct observation.

4. Release

Return to the room without waiting for another event.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

What did you observe rather than infer?

Sources and wisdom

Establishing mindfulness

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 30.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 29.

The commentary can wait

Useful thinking remains available. Explore whether this particular continuation is needed now.

For a few moments, the commentary is louder than the breath. It is planning how to explain this practice to someone else. You can let the imagined conversation wait. There is no report to deliver to the air moving here, and no special title the sitting needs to receive.

Practice pause

Let useful thinking rest

1. Notice

After dealing with immediate needs, notice what your thinking is doing.

2. Distinguish

Is the current commentary useful, or simply continuing?

3. Watch

If it can wait, leave it alone and attend to an ordinary breath or comfortable sitting.

4. Release

Return to thinking when useful. No blankness is required.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

What happened when another comment was not supplied?

Sources and wisdom

Mindfulness of breathing

Relaxation of thoughts

Two sorts of thinking

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 36.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 29.

Mindfulness of Breathing · The seat comes first

The day has been noisy. You sit down, and immediately another task appears: make the breathing practice work. The adventure begins before you take on that extra job.

The man begins a telling that will accompany the choices ahead. Its ancient lesson is larger than these brief exercises; the present-day scene is our invented doorway into it.

Under the open sky at Savatthi, a community has gathered for a full-moon observance. Experienced practitioners have been teaching newer ones, and the Buddha praises the seriousness of the work. Among the varied practices in that company, he speaks about knowing the in-breath and the out-breath.

Notice, without grading

What did you discover, and what would you like to explore next?

Sources and wisdom

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Begin with the first practice - turn to page 32.

Explore another way in - turn to page 27.

In the story, force the next calm breath - turn to page 48.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 29.

Optional: visit the man in the temple - the garden does not hurry - turn to page 23.

A return can be small

A wise person treasures careful attention.

Discover the next return without demanding uninterrupted attention.

Attention has wandered into an unfinished task. When it returns, the man does not ring a bell for failure. In the telling, the mind itself is known, gladdened, steadied, and released. A small return in the room is an introduction to that work, not its final measure.

Practice pause

Stay

1. Prepare

Choose a safe ordinary moment with no task demanding your attention. Decide what you expect to notice.

2. Experiment

Choose a sound or a point of comfortable contact. Stay with it for a few moments. When attention leaves, notice and return.

3. Compare

Distinguish noticing a departure from preventing one. An unnoticed interval is unknown, not proof of continuous attention.

4. Return

Let the experiment end. Return to your surroundings and ordinary activity. Keep observation separate from interpretation.

5. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

What was known, and what interval remained unknown?

Sources and wisdom

Analysis of the path

Mindfulness of breathing

Two sorts of thinking

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 7.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 29.

Let support do a little

Notice arm weight and explore an optional image without pushing the shoulders down.

The man returns to another part of the lesson while the next choice has room to form.

Stay beside the seated practitioner while the teaching moves through feeling. Joy and ease are known; the activity of feeling and recognition is experienced and calmed. Attention is not asked to treat a pleasant experience as the final answer.

Practice pause

Let the shoulders settle

1. Notice

Rest your hands on your lap or a comfortable surface. Notice the weight of your arms.

2. Invite

Imagine your shoulders as a coat resting on a broad hanger.

3. Listen

Allow the image to linger without pushing your shoulders downward.

4. Respond

Release the image. Move however feels comfortable and continue your day.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

What happened without force?

Sources and wisdom

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue into the adventure - turn to page 32.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 29.

Know where you begin

Notice the current posture without rearranging it for a supposed correct meditation shape.

The lesson begins with recognizing what is happening. A long breath is known as long, a short one as short. You find that the breath already has a pace before you judge it. There is relief in being a listener for a moment rather than the manager of every movement.

Practice pause

Knowing this position

1. Notice

Notice whether you are sitting, standing, walking, or lying down.

2. Distinguish

How do you know? Notice contact and position without adjusting them.

3. Watch

Stay with that ordinary knowledge briefly.

4. Release

Continue your activity; there is nothing to retain.

5. Return

Let the exploration end. Notice your surroundings and the support beneath you. Resume ordinary activity when you feel ready.

6. Make It Yours

If this works for you, make it part of your practice. If it does not, let it go.

Notice, without grading

How do you know the position?

Sources and wisdom

Establishing mindfulness

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Continue - turn to page 25.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 29.

Carry only what helps

An optional meeting - original fiction

You find the man beside the temple garden. He makes room for you to sit. This meeting is a pause in the adventure, not a required practice.

The man speaks

“Do not confuse ease with a command to stay the same. A comfortable breath changes too. Let attention be interested rather than possessive.”

He smiles. “When you are ready, return to where you left the story.”

Sources and wisdom

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Return to “Let support do a little” - turn to page 14.

A fictional turn

Explore this as a story only. The character could force the next calm breath. What direction would you like to follow?

A shortcut offers to remove the uncertainty that has made the journey human. You can hear why the offer is attractive without accepting its terms. The man leaves the fictional consequence available to inspect, and leaves another direction open. The point is discovery, not catching a reader in a mistake.

Notice, without grading

What did you discover, and what would you like to explore next?

Sources and wisdom

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Follow that fictional direction - turn to page 24.

Try the shared stretch instead - turn to page 32.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 29.

Which invitation fits now?

There are several ways to prepare attention. You could explore support or the effort of holding a detail in mind.

The man returns to another part of the lesson while the next choice has room to form.

Stay beside the seated practitioner while the teaching moves through feeling. Joy and ease are known; the activity of feeling and recognition is experienced and calmed. Attention is not asked to treat a pleasant experience as the final answer.

Notice, without grading

What did you discover, and what would you like to explore next?

Sources and wisdom

Mindfulness of breathing

Choose what comes next

Let support do a little - turn to page 13.

Return rather than prevent - turn to page 17.

Look at another possibility - turn to page 6.

Step off the path for now - turn to page 29.

How this telling was made

Original telling and modern practice

The temple man, present-day settings, connective descriptions, and reader choices are original literary framing. Historical stories retain their recorded direction. Dialogue is modern paraphrase, not a claimed historical quotation. Practice pauses are modern invitations; reading an outcome does not establish that outcome in the reader.

The sixteen trainings

These exercises introduce ordinary breath recognition, settling, feeling, attention, and change. They do not reproduce all sixteen trainings, resolve translation differences about the whole body, or teach all stages of concentration.

Sustained collectedness

A busy or easy session does not establish deep collectedness. Conduct, suitable conditions, ongoing practice, and the wider path remain necessary.

Let the shoulders settle

supporting. Let the shoulders settle: Settling effort and returning attention can support breath training. Natural breathing and temporary ease do not cover the sixteen trainings or establish deep collectedness.

Stay

supporting. Stay: Recognizing an impulse and choosing a response can support cultivation of skillful qualities. Regulation or preference alone does not establish ethical skillfulness; all four efforts and consequences need consideration.

A place to sit

supporting. A place to sit: Attending to ordinary physical experience can prepare bodily mindfulness. This modern sensory comparison omits the full mindfulness framework and does not establish insight.

Knowing this position

adaptation. Knowing this position: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: knowing the body. This modern sensory comparison omits the full mindfulness framework and does not establish insight.

Arriving, present, gone

adaptation. Arriving, present, gone: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: noticing change. Changes in viewpoint, naming, or boundaries do not establish not-self, nonduality, or release.

Ease without a review

adaptation. Ease without a review: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: settling body and mind. Natural breathing and temporary ease do not cover the sixteen trainings or establish deep collectedness.

Room for a breath

supporting. Room for a breath: Settling effort and returning attention can support breath training. Natural breathing and temporary ease do not cover the sixteen trainings or establish deep collectedness.

An ordinary breath

adaptation. An ordinary breath: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: knowing the body. This modern sensory comparison omits the full mindfulness framework and does not establish insight.

Conditions for quiet

adaptation. Conditions for quiet: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: settling body and mind. Natural breathing and temporary ease do not cover the sixteen trainings or establish deep collectedness.

Attention with a lighter touch

supporting. Attention with a lighter touch: Allowing feeling while choosing care may support steadiness. Acceptance, soothing, or reduced distress alone does not establish source-based steadiness of mind or require accepting harm.

The first lean

adaptation. The first lean: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: recognizing feeling and response. Acceptance, soothing, or reduced distress alone does not establish source-based steadiness of mind or require accepting harm.

Pleasant without holding

adaptation. Pleasant without holding: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: recognizing feeling and response. Acceptance, soothing, or reduced distress alone does not establish source-based steadiness of mind or require accepting harm.

Let useful thinking rest

adaptation. Let useful thinking rest: This invitation adapts an operation from the cited discourse: settling body and mind. Natural breathing and temporary ease do not cover the sixteen trainings or establish deep collectedness.

Constructed sound

uncertain. Constructed sound: An imagined form has a thematic resemblance to the mind-made-body passage; it may also be explored for its practical value. The uncertainty concerns textual correspondence, not a verdict on personal usefulness. Fruits of the contemplative life places the described a body represented in the mind after extensive conduct and concentration. These modern constructions are optional personal explorations, not evidence of that attainment. Keep what helps and let the rest go.

Sources and wisdom

Analysis of the path

Cultivating care and steadiness

Establishing mindfulness

Fruits of the contemplative life

Mindfulness of breathing

Relaxation of thoughts

The arrow

Two sorts of thinking

Choose what comes next

Return to the temple garden - turn to page 2.