

All right everyone, welcome. I thought we would do a brief practice to try out this mindfulness that we've been talking about. So just a quick review of the mindfulness practice.

Choose an object, keep it in mind and do it skillfully. So you want to choose an object that's easy for you to recognize and that you enjoy being with, some kind of sensation that's easy for you to notice. I'm going to choose my breath, but you could choose something like the feeling of your feet touching the ground or maybe the feeling of your hands in your palm or some other sensation that you're comfortable with. So the first thing to do is to take a comfortable position.

If your body is comfortable, it will be fairly easy to relax your mind. If your body is in an uncomfortable position, something that's strained or causing you aches, then it will be difficult to relax your mind. So take a comfortable posture.

You might find this easier to do if you close your eyes or lower your gaze. And if you're not comfortable doing the practice, you can just keep your eyes open and listen and watch and see what other people are doing. That's fine, okay. So just take a moment and just notice whatever sensations are available for you right now.

There might be sounds in the room you can hear, you might feel your feet touching the ground. Maybe you can feel the seat, wherever there's some kind of contact, and maybe you can notice your breath. So you're going to choose one of those objects.

I'm going to choose my breath, and I'm just going to keep track of it. Sort of keep it in mind.

Notice whatever sensations are associated with the breath. Now at some point you might notice that you're thinking about something else.

That's normal, that's natural, that's part of the practice. As soon as you notice that your mind has wandered into something else, into a thought or another sensation, just gently bring it back to your chosen object. Again, the mind might wander off into something else, maybe into the past, thinking about other people, other places. Just notice that your mind is wandering off, wherever your attention is gone, and gently bring it back to your chosen object. Not trying too hard, not adding any kind of judgment or commentary to it, and really feel the sensations of your object. So feel the breath.

Feel your feet touching the ground. So we're going to wrap up this practice.

We're going to keep it fairly short. This is your first time. Just take a deep breath.

Open your eyes. You're back in the room. And what did you notice? What was your experience? What happened when you realized that your mind had wandered off into something else? Did you add any commentary to it when you came back to your object? These are the kind of questions you can ask yourself, and I encourage you to try this practice on your own, at home, in a quiet place, when there's no one around. You could also do it on the bus, at the beginning of class, when you're waiting for things to start. If you find that it helps you to calm down and relax, it's a good skill to have at your disposal. Thank you.