

2005-04-27 Concentration (Week 2 Part 2)

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SPEAKERS

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So if you'd like to stand for a minute and stretch, and then we'll do a sitting. There's a psychology professor in UC Berkeley by the name of Eleanor Rouch. She wrote this once. Some years ago, I was questioned by a visiting Tibetan monk, giving me a piercing Look, he said, and do you think that's ethical? So we're parked in what we're doing here studying and learning about the mind. And if you don't get concentrated, maybe instead, you'll learn a lot about how your mind works. Engaging, arousing energy is important and relaxing is important. Both are needed in practice, not one, not just one bit. And those can also be done with both those qualities It'd be first in some way established in your posture and your body. So why don't you start by making your body your posture older. So it expresses a sense of alertness. In other way, maybe you're saying it is a posture that expresses a degree of intent. Like your intent. My, my son now is in Little League. And he's learning they're ready position. Coaches always in ready position out there and you look at their kind of and then again, they're they're intense, they're ready, you know. So yet, there's a sense of kind of can get a cautious kind of expresses someone who looked looked at you from outside, oh, that person is kind of intense. Not just kind of like couch potato kind of intense. And one way to develop that sense of alertness is to have your attention. slowly go up your spine. So your spine is a little bit more upright, than maybe you'd normally have it Gently Close your eyes. Part of this intenseness are used to feel a solid base followed. rootedness, whether your feet are solidly on the floor, rooted in the ground there, or your, your butt or your thighs are rooted in the chair, cushion. You feel the support, here you are. This is the place you're here. You're rooted, okay to be established, okay? With no apology, with no apology for who you are. Here you are. A bright, alert. Maybe dignified. And then keeping your spine alert, upright, and perhaps some inner sense of alertness or uprightness. Take a few long, slow, deep breaths, and as you exhale, relax as much as you can. Around that core uprightness. uprightness doesn't go away, but the round it's like you're hanging from it and letting go. The shoulders can hang. Arms gonna be there hanging. Belly can soften forward muscles and flesh of your face. Relax, fall away from the bone in your skull. As you take a deep breath and like go on the exhale. Perhaps you can have a feeling of your muscles and skins of your body kind of falling away from your bones relaxing Relax, deep, full

breath. As you exhale, relax the thinking mind the thinking brain. If the brain is a muscle, let it relax. Let go And then letting your breath return to normal and to whatever ways accessible to you. See if you can have a full body awareness. global awareness of your body. We're condensing concentrating our focus our attention away from people future and past concerns, things away from us. concentration or life attention. Enter into and get focused on a full body awareness. Healing in a sense, three dimensional aspect of being in a body back of the body decides to lower body, the upper half of the body And then within the body as part of the body start being becoming familiar with what the how the body experiences the breathing. started noticing your breathing develop a little more heightened sensitivity to the bodily experience or breathing And then begin experimenting or playing around a little bit with your breathing. To see if you can make the make your breathing pattern where you breathe, maybe a little bit more comfortable or pleasant or enjoyable. No, it's still sort of remains a natural breath. Maybe there's a simple way of letting go more as you breathe out. simple way of relaxing as you breathe in so you breathe in more fully by shifting your attention into the belly and relaxing it there, shifting it to the They don't have a chess. Maybe it's more enjoyable to feel letting go into stillness at the end of the opera. Maybe it's more enjoyable to breathe longer breaths or maybe it's the opposite to shorten it up a little bit. Play around a little bit. Don't manipulate the breath so much that it becomes tiring or strain but just a teeny bit, maybe small little shifts. Maybe you can't make the breath any more pleasant than it already is or quick maybe simply notice that a certain area of your body that's where the breathing feels slow but more comfortable and pleasant than other places. Feeling a place in the body that feels enjoyable to experience the breath doesn't have to be dramatic enjoyment. Just be a little hint. Then connecting to the breath and once you're engaged with the breath, the tension is there. Then arouse, that part of the mind needs to function so you can hang with a breath, hang in there with it. sustain the attention. One breath into the next breath into the next without straining or pushing or demanding expecting, can there be gentle appropriate design desire and intention this sense of intenseness and desire to get concentrated, to be concentrated. Stay with the breath letting go of everything else although the thoughts Something doesn't interfere with your concentration in the breath if some thoughts don't interfere, feelings or some mood or some sensations in the body if they're not interfering, you can just leave them in the background in the foreground, the interest in the breath engaged in the breath intent on the breath. arouse a sense of persistence, both are coming back over and over again when you get away from it. But also persistence when you're there to maintain the continuity. If it's helpful, very quietly soft whisper in the mind. Count the breaths. We often say count to 10. But if you prefer it can be a smaller number you count up to 2578. And then when you get to 10, or get to your number, then start over again. Using the counting as a little encouragement for you to hang in there taking on each breath As you're staying with a breath, kind of in the corner of your eyes in a sense, also monitor your inner state you are. You might notice if you be helped if there's any way it would be helpful, maybe to be a little bit more relaxed or something you can relax, relax in such a way that it helps you stay more with the breath. condensing the attention more fully into the exterior Breathing Relaxing any performance anxiety you have or judgments of how you're doing relaxing any pushing which is not useful, relaxing and get also engaged without any expectation of getting anything but still wanting to develop concentration, continuity. Breath after breath condensing on the breath If there are thoughts and concerns which are

really preoccupying you, you might try telling those thoughts later. Not now but later. If you take cloth to polish a brass bowl, you first have to take the cloth and connected with the ball, place it on the ball. Then you have to rub the ball with a cloth. Keep it there. It's the rubbing of the cloth which polishes the bow bow. So with your attention, place it on the breath. And then let the attention rub the breath. Stay there with the breath. Breath rub the claw of attention. the in breath, the out breath, the next in breath. The next out breath And then the last minute or two of the sitting, take a deep breath, kind of let it all go and then spend a little bit of time reviewing what that was like. See what you can learn. Just discover what that process of concentrating breath was like the last last period. Become a student of your own mind and a different qualities, qualities or activity Have your mind functions of your mind.