

# 2005-05-04 Concentration (Week 3 Part 2)

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

breathing, breath, thoughts, body, kite, feeling, spine, relax, stay, soften, intentional, attention, soft, alert, sitting, long slow deep, wrap, settling, soft cotton, ancient texts

## SPEAKERS

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So often at the beginning of a session and meditation, it's useful to be quite intentional. conscientious, careful about getting yourself settling to this place at this time. So to be intentional about your posture to take a little bit of care and having an alert, balanced, upright rooted posture might start by just getting a rooted feeling your feet on the floor, stable, solid, or your your legs and your bottom kind of on the chair on the cushion floor. Feeling is stability, they're feeling a solid connection. Feeling the connection with the floor or the chair. This is the spot where you are right now here. Now this here to be a little bit of an intentional about your spine if some attention to it and perhaps let your spine be a little bit more alert or upright. They normally would be keeping the spine upright alert, maybe a little bit more. You know, a little bit of effort or energy there with the spine. When you see if you can relax everything else around the spine, the shoulders, the arms and muscles of the chest torso. And one way to do that is to take a few long slow deep breaths. Feeling the torso as you breathe in, expanding it outwards. And then as you exhale, let go. Relax everything but the straightness of your spine. Breathing in deeply. Feeling yourself feeling your Body, be connected to your body feeling the physicality of your body as you breathe in. Now, as you exhale, relaxing or softening, even if you did a teeny bit, whatever holding or tension that you notice in your body, your face your jaws, shoulders, stomach, arms, legs. And then over the next three or four breaths, like your breathing slowly returned to normal, small steps towards normality easy, relaxed breath Breathing easily breathing in and out kind of image that's used in ancient texts or sitting down to meditate is wrapping yourself in a soft cotton blanket. monastics monks and nuns wrap themselves in a soft world. So they're your whole body, kind of his whole Held contained. Imagine yourself as wrapped with a soft cotton blanket. And the world. Your world of meditation is going to be the world inside the soft blanket. The world of your body, the world of your body here now. There's a long tradition of beginning a session of meditation with a few minutes of loving kindness meditation and for this particular session, turn to yourself With kind regard perhaps you can have some simple thoughts of goodwill towards yourself of kindness towards yourself. If you're having some struggles, perhaps you can just simply hold those with some compassion and care. Kind regard wishing yourself well. Even if the idea of being friendly with yourself

is a very foreign idea. Maybe you can kind of Stand at the edges of that possibility and then feel your breathing take A few moments here to enter the world of your body breathing. Feel, to experience how your body experiences breathing. If it's easy enough, natural enough, see if you can adjust your breathing ever so slightly so that it becomes more pleasant or comfortable. You don't want to force the breath but maybe some small adjustments. So it's still a natural breath, but it's more enjoyable. Breathing in little bit more deeply. Breathing out more fully, perhaps letting the breath be a little bit more subtle or softer or bigger. If there's someplace and then breathing the way the body breeds that is compelling interesting, pleasant Let that be your spot where you let the attention, your focus be focused on the breathing and kind of like if you're flying a kite. You don't want it you want to keep the string of the kite taut. It's too tight. It doesn't work. If it's too loose, the kite will fall. You have to give just the right tautness to the kite will stay up in the wind. So you want to keep just the right tautness of attention. There kind of a string of attention is hooked on to a particular place in your body where you feel your breathing And then for both the in breath and the out breath Breathing in and breathing out, see if you can keep that string of attention. Tight, taught, soft relax but also taught connective stays there with this very simple experience of breathing, very simple sensation in one spot. If there are thoughts going on in the background of attention Don't worry about it. Just stay with the breath in the foreground. You get carried away and thoughts. Then train yourself and letting go of those thoughts and go ball thoughts so that you can stay better with simple experience of breathing, breathing in breathing out. Sometimes it might. Sometimes it's helpful to relax or rest with experience or breathing. With the breath. Sometimes it's more important to be more intentional about it. More directed and just kind of yoke, the attention to the breath more actively keeping a focus attention on the breath, but at the same time alert to notice when the mind wanders away. begins to wander away when it does begins to soften the mind relax it. Relax the thinking brain. Let go of your thoughts. Keep The focus on the breath in the same time composing your body around the breath, settling yourself around it. So there's also a broad awareness of your body and then the whole body is composing itself rest, centering itself on the experience of breathing. If it's helpful to count the breath all means count. Just stay focused, connected. Imagine that the breath experience of breathing is the most important thing in the world that the most important and valuable thing you could possibly do right now is to be absorbed. Completely attentive, completely alert involved connected to Breathing in and breathing out. Trust that that's enough. Letting go of everything else. Then go have any judgments you have about how it's going then go have any thoughts or concerns at all Just call me breathing Just Breathing in breathing out everything else relaxes and softens around it. Keeping the mind soft and committed committed to the breath staying there, staying there. You might notice some sense of stillness. That if you include that as part of the picture, part of what's going on. That stillness actually helps you. Stay with the breath. Stay focused. The mind leaves the breath very quickly after two or three breaths, goes into thought. The next time you come back to your breathing, try to have a little bit of own for strength or extra kind of effort or commitment to see if you can go further to four or five breaths or eight or nine or 10. Stretch out how many breaths you can stay connected to Then as a way of ending the sitting, you can take one or two deep breaths to kind of Change your change yourself a little bit, wake up a little bit and then spend a minute before you open your eyes. Reviewing that sitting, judging it kind of

like a reporter just kind of notices what remembers what happens during that sitting for you Then when you're ready, you can open your eyes.