

Ton Len Meditation - Taking & Giving

(NB: try to get some stability with the first point before moving through the rest. Don't worry if you don't feel much at first, it will come with time and practice.)

1. Rest your mind for a few minutes, focusing on the breath while allowing it to bring the body and mind to rest. Try to be open to your surroundings without discriminating between this or that. Recall your motivation to heal all beings and lead them to Enlightenment. Feel it with your heart.
2. Practice whole body breathing by expanding your diaphragm fully, filling the belly and up into the lung cavity. Focus on the experience of your breath coming in and out while experiencing your body slowly expand like a balloon being blown up. Allow your breath to go out through all the pores of your body. Feel your breath go down to the base of your spine before filling the whole of your body, gradually reaching the top of your lungs, feel expansion under the collar bones, behind the shoulder blades and under the armpits. Feel the back of your mouth expand, the tongue touches the roof of the mouth, neck slightly tucked down to open the back of the head. Eyes open or closed. Once your body is full with your breath and you are open with your spine straight, spend some time focusing on relaxing with your breath.
3. Now connect your feeling sense with the drop, the seat of your subtle mind, located in the centre of your heart chakra, in the centre of the body. Know that this is your true, absolute nature, that is free of all discrimination, good and bad, the same essence as all-encompassing love and emptiness. Recall a strong feeling of love by thinking of a person or animal that evokes a sense of love in your heart. Let your body/mind fill with that feeling.
4. Beginning with yourself, imagine that all your sickness, obscurations and mistaken karmas are "vacuumed" from all the spaces in your nervous system into the centre of the pure love and awareness at your heart chakra as you breathe in. You may like to imagine it as black smoke. As it reaches that spot in your heart, all is purified, forgiven and healed. A huge sense of relief, gratitude and love beams out of your heart, filling your body with enlightened energy before going out to all beings if that feels comfortable or certain people if it is too much. You can imagine the energy is in the form of healing, loving light, rainbow colours or whatever colour comes to you. As you breathe in, take what needs to be purified into your heart on your breath. As you breathe out, offer healing to yourself (later to others). At the same time maintain awareness of your whole body keeping the openness and relaxation you've generated. Don't focus too tightly. You can go into details of specific memories or situations when taking (breathing in) and giving (breathing out) or choose to think of things more generally such as everything you would like to heal in your own life, both past and present.
5. You can contemplate what concepts limit your capacity for experiencing the two bodhicittas, concepts about yourself or anything. What stops me from being the bodhisattva I long to be? Take those limiting concepts into your heart and purify them with love, acceptance and forgiveness. You can also think about all the people you need to forgive, and heal yourself and them with the meditation. Use your creativity to heal yourself. Sit in openness, listening to any inner voices that might need to be heard. Allow those feelings to be there, sit with them, hold them in love and let them

go with the out breath. You can do this many times, for as long as you feel comfortable.

6. You can stay with yourself or one other person for as long as you need to but when you are ready, extend the feeling to another, then another and another, until you include all beings in the universe. It is good to end with all beings.
7. In the end, imagine all beings receive everything they need to feel safe, loved, nurtured, heard, strong, self-confident, humble and energized to experience the mind of enlightenment (bodhichitta).
8. For the last out breath, as the light and healing energy extends out to all beings, imagine they become buddhas. They then dissolve back into your heart which dissolves into emptiness. Rest in that state for as long as is comfortable, in non-dual awareness.
9. At any point in the meditation, beginning to end, if your mind is sluggish, put more awareness in the crown of your head with white light. If your mind is too agitated, put more awareness at the base of your spine and feel the agitated energy in the form of dark color going from the base of the spine, the perineum region down into the earth where it is burnt by the fire in the centre of the earth... (or just down and disappears).

May I be at ease

May I be at peace

May I be healed

May I feel unconditional acceptance and love for all beings

May I take all conditions as aid on my path.

May I attain my greatest potential, Enlightenment

May all beings be free.

(add whatever you wish here)

(NB: you can change the "I" to 'one being' (a name) and/or all beings to compose a prayer that works for you. Or do them all, one at a time.

Meditation advice from Chogyam Trungpa

25% on the breath and body

25% on the object of meditation

25% making friends with yourself

25% being open to all possibilities

(Prepared by Paula Chichester for Seven Pt. Mind Training Course at Land of Joy.)