

Your breath is your anchor

Welcome to the RelationKit mindfulness series. In today's practice we will use the breath as a tool to bring us into the present moment, into the here and now.

Mindfulness helps you live in the now, so that you are not stuck in the past which has been and gone, or pulled too far into the future which hasn't even happened yet. It teaches us that the most important moment is the one now.

Today we'll use the breath as an anchor, like a ship dropping its anchor into choppy seas to help it stay more still and in one place, you will use your breath to focus your attention so that your mind becomes more still and present.

So come now into your chosen meditation posture, sitting or lying down, making sure that you feel nice and comfy here.

If you're sitting, check that you are sitting at the front of your sit bones and that your back is upright but not too tense or stiff. Close your eyes if you wish to, fully or just a little.

And let yourself drop in here. Settle into the space. Begin to rest down into gravity.

Start to feel your body resting into the ground or the chair beneath you, feeling those contact points where your body meets the surface below. Maybe your feet, thighs, bottom, shoulder blades, or maybe if you're lying down, the back of your head. See how those points of contact, of touch, feel, remembering there is no right way to feel. It's just your feeling right now.

And slowly and very gently, allow your attention to travel inwards towards your breath, not changing it, just gently noticing it - your breath in and your breath out.

Resting your attention on the wave of your breath inwards and the wave of your breath outwards.

Letting your attention gather around the feeling of your breath now, so beginning to notice what is your felt sense of your breathing. Not thinking about what you 'should' feel or what 'should' be happening, just feeling your breath in your body exactly as it is.

Can you feel your breath in your ribcage? Can you let your attention rest there in your ribs, noticing your breath flowing in and noticing your breath flowing out? So you're living there in that part of your body for a moment 'being with' your breath.

Maybe feeling your chest rise on your in-breath and lower on your out-breath, or can you notice this movement elsewhere? Maybe at the back of the ribcage, or at the sides of your ribcage as you breathe? Or do you feel your breath more in your belly now?

You can just watch with your attention - you could call it your 'mind's eye' - these feelings you have in your body that are an exact consequence of your breath. Watching your breath, can you explore the breath with a real interest and a friendliness?

Ask yourself: how is my breath today? How does my body feel as I breathe in, and how does my body feel as I breathe out? Where am I feeling my breath the most now? Has its location has changed? Or not?

Staying with your breath. Maybe there's a different feeling, felt in your body when you breathe in, compared to when you breath out. If so, notice that. Is there a sense of expansion or 'waking up' as you breath in, and a softening, a releasing, as you breath out? See what's true for you in this moment. Accepting whatever you're experience of breathing is right now for you.

And with this gentle but focused attention on your breath, you are anchored in each moment. You are breathing moment by moment, and as long as your attention is with your breath, you are present - here and now.

In time the mind will wander, as it so often does, and know that this is normal; this is going to happen. Maybe many times. When you notice your mind has drifted away from the breath to thoughts, plans, memories or images, try not to get frustrated or to judge yourself. Just notice this as 'mind wandering' and collect your attention and gently bring it back to the movements, the feelings, the sense of your breath in your body.

Your breath and the feelings of your breath are your anchor now.

Breathing in, I am here, breathing out, I live now, 'here', 'now', 'here', 'now'.

See if you can stay really interested and close up to your breath, tuning in to the felt sense of your breath in your body. The breath is your anchor.

Each time you notice your attention has been pulled off and away to thoughts, images, plans or memories of some kind, gently guide it back to the anchor of your breath. Just like a ship staying close to its anchor point despite the movement of wind and waves, your mind and your attention can stay close to your breath, staying focused on the felt sense of your breath in your body. It's holding you 'here'.

Discovering for yourself that we cannot sense or feel the breath and think at the same time. We cannot be in the future or the past when we are with our breath - the breath is 'now'.

The breath is your anchor. Your breath in this moment, and in this moment, bringing you here, now.

Knowing that when the breath is here, calmness is here. Take a moment to practice this mindfulness of breathing.

And when you feel ready, begin to feel the parts of your body resting into the seat or the ground beneath you. Feel the contact they make, and, from this grounded position, notice how you feel in both body and mind. Now gradually bring your meditation to an end.

Gently open your eyes if they've been closed and come back into the room.

Wishing you a very calm and grounded rest of your day. Go gently and remember to come back to your breath any time you feel distracted, or if you mind feels a little full. Just three deep breaths can help you find presence.

See you next time.