

POSTURE

POSTURE HOLDS THE QUALITIES OF AWARENESS

The posture holds the qualities of awareness that we seek to cultivate and develop in meditation in an embodied presence.

Awareness has the qualities of stability, poise, stillness and openness that we associate with mindfulness and the qualities of intimate sensitivity and kindness that we associate with metta.

We begin cultivating these in meditation by establishing these qualities in the body, getting a physical sense of them, and finding a parallel sense of the same qualities in awareness.

STABILITY AND GROUNDEDNESS

Begin by establishing the quality of stability in the posture, with the legs in contact with the mat from ankle to knee.

Look for the quality of stability and groundedness in the physical experience, experienced in the body. Relax in to this quality in the body

Then look for the same quality in the mind, in the stability of attention. Relax in to this quality of stability in the mind.

OPENNESS

Begin by establishing the quality of openness in the posture, with the hands supported so that the weight of the arms is supported, relaxing the shoulder blades down the back so that the chest falls open. Looking for an undefended openness in the posture.

Look for the quality of openness and undefendedness in the physical experience, experienced in the body. Relax in to this quality in the body.

Then look for the same quality in the mind, in the breadth surrounding the centre of attention, an open expansive breadth in which all experience is welcome. Nothing is pushed out. Relax in to this quality of openness in the mind.

BALANCE

Begin by establishing the quality of balance in the posture, balancing the weight of the torso on the sitting bones, and the weight of the head on the neck.

Look for the quality of balance in the physical experience, experienced in the body.

Note if there is a 'held-in-balance' quality: if so relax in to the posture rather than out of it, look for an 'is in balance' rather than a 'held in balance' quality. Where the body is aligned, the muscles are not needed to keep it upright, and can relax. The quality of balance comes through the more we can relax in to balance.

Then look for the same quality in the mind: for example,

Balanced effort: balancing an intention to pay attention against the mind's tendency to distraction: responsive to circumstances. Leaning in to experience vs sitting back and allowing experience to arise: finding a balance between the two.

Balance of focus and breadth: taking as focus a particular object of attention. Balancing the experience of this against a broad and spacious awareness that contains and is not caught up in any particular experience. At the 'focus' end we can heighten the intensity with which we attend to this particular experience: like turning up the gain. At the 'breadth' end we can relax in to an open spacious awareness, allowing experience to have its place there just as it is, not getting involved.