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Breath Awareness, Slowing, and Stress Reduction

Daily Home Practice

- 1) Calming Breath – frequently/once an hour is not too much.

A single, slow, deep (your deepest) breath, preferably starting in abdomen; pulling abdomen out about an inch; hold 5-10 seconds while visually scanning body to find any unnecessary tension, relaxing whatever you find; then very slowly exhaling through mouth with sound, as you let go of as much more tension as you can. Wait after exhale for the automatic, involuntary inhale/NOT voluntarily/consciously inhaling. Support that inhale, very slowly, with your stomach muscles. You can segue into:

- 2) Normal Breathing – in 3 to 5+ minute chunks 4 times a day, eventually 10-20 minutes once or twice a day

Deep, slow, quiet, regular – can be full, or can fill only the lower abdomen – the crucial thing is belly (not chest or shoulders) expands about an inch with inhale, pause (Not to hold breath), and very slowly, exhale through mouth with sound as stomach falls about an inch.

Then rest, waiting comfortably until your Body breathes again (this rest after exhales grows lots longer with continuing cycles and practice). Repeat/recycle Normal breathing, focusing mindfully and non-judgmentally only on your breath and body experience – there’s no wrong way to do it.

The eventual goal is to “bridge” practice periods by noticing when you’re not breathing diaphragmatically, then enjoying shifting from shallow to

slow, deep Normal belly breathing. 5-9-16

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