

Inner Silence Meditation:

From fear to peace

by Myra Walden

The purpose of this practice is to reduce fear, desperation, urgency, reactivity, and impulsivity and promote self-regulation, self-control, equanimity and calmness when our needs are not met. In a calm state, we can gain clarity about ways to meet our needs, or come to peace when a need of ours cannot be met in a satisfying way.

THE CENTERING WORD: PEACE

During the meditation period you will likely have multiple thoughts, feelings, sensations, images, and will hear various sounds. When you become aware of these stimuli, disengage from them by repeating in your mind the word “*peace*” in your native tongue. Let go of attachment or longing. This is not an affirmation or a law of attraction exercise. It’s an awareness practice.

SELF-CONNECTION

Begin by becoming aware of your experience in this moment. What are your thoughts? Notice the physical sensations in your head, neck, shoulders, chest, stomach, hands, feet, and the whole body. Now, notice your emotions, and allow yourself to experience them fully. Are you sad, angry, afraid, frustrated, hurting, or something else? Connect with your feelings. Cry if you feel like it. Paradoxically, the more we allow ourselves to experience unpleasant emotions, the better we feel. Our capacity for joy increases! Now, you are ready for the next phase.

RELAXATION (3 MINUTES)

1. Set a timer for 10–15 minutes, or longer if you want; choose a gentle tone so that you are not startled when it rings.

2. Sit in a comfortable chair with your back fully supported. The back, neck, and head form a straight line. When your head tilts during the meditation period, bring it back to neutral. The feet are flat on the floor; the knees below the feet; the elbows below the shoulders; the arms resting on your lap; and the chin is parallel to the floor.
3. Take three deep breaths. Follow the air as it enters and leaves the nostrils.
4. Ring a Tibetan bowl if you have one (or find a video online), and follow the sound until it ends.
5. Bring your attention to each part of your body: the feet, legs, buttocks, lower back, middle back, upper back, pelvic region, abdomen, stomach, chest, shoulders, arms, hands, fingers, neck, scalp, ears, face, forehead, eyebrows, space between the eyebrows, eyelids, eyes, cheeks, nose, mouth, tongue, chin, jaw. Press the index finger and thumb on one hand, then on the other. Do this a few times and notice the tension on your face dissipate.
6. Survey the body to discover areas of tension. Simply notice them.

MEDITATION (10–12 MINUTES)

1. Place a hand in the middle of your chest next to the heart, and notice the silence within. With practice, it becomes easy to locate this space.
2. Focus on the silence inside your chest. Every time you notice a thought, feeling, image, or hear a sound, repeat the centering word, let go of the stimulus, and go back to the silence within.
3. Rest in the inner silence for seven minutes, or longer if you wish, coming back to it over and over again throughout the meditation period.

When the timer rings, notice the air on your skin, and come back to the room slowly.

CALMING PRACTICE

When you feel upset during the day, place a hand in the middle of your chest, close your eyes, and repeat the word *peace* slowly 8-10 times as you exhale. Then, rest in the inner silence for three minutes to restore calm. Repeat the word *peace* to disengage from thoughts. When you feel tired, do the same procedure using the word *rest*

Inspired by the work of Thomas Keating.