

TURNING THE MIND INTO AN ALLY

by Sakyong Mipham

Overview

The untrained mind is a strange sporadic entity, sometimes helping us, and sometimes wandering off in odd directions. Through the practice of meditation, we can still the mind, find equanimous balance, and direct the mind towards clearer thinking. This book describes detailed meditation techniques regarding awareness and breath, and provides guideposts on what to expect as you progress through your meditation practice.

"These guidelines are helpful because the mind is so vast that if we're left to our own devices, we'll usually just wander in thought."

Chapter 1. The Rock and the Flower

"We suffer because we want life to be different from what it is."

The union of Buddhism and Western culture is like that of a rock and flower; if pushed together without cultivation, nothing grows. Meditation (even its most basic form: *Shamatha*, or "peaceful abiding") can help us discipline our minds instead of being subject to them, such as when we choose aggression as a first response.

Chapter 2. Bewilderment & Suffering

Seeking to hide reality from the spiritually gifted Buddha, Buddha's father provided luxury within their palace. However, when the Buddha one day ventured outside and witnessed the sick, aging, dead, and wandering, he realized "life is marked by 4 qualities: impermanence, suffering, selflessness, and peace."

We expect constancy in ourselves and our surroundings (like childhood homes) when in truth they are always adjusting. We look outside ourselves for a happiness that cannot not exist externally. Once we accept life's unpredictability, we may overcome our *Samsara* (circle of suffering).

"We spend our lives clinging to an imaginary identity cobbled together from different thoughts and concepts."

Fearing loss of comfort, we concern ourselves with the satisfaction of mind and mood. Only upon accepting the basic truths of our existence – birth, aging, sickness, death – may we indulge in satisfaction.

Chapter 3. Peaceful Abiding

"Meditation is the natural process of becoming familiar with an object by repeatedly placing our minds upon it."

Meditation is like living in the wilderness; eventually we can predict its patterns. *Shamatha* meditation familiarizes the mind with its natural state by using the present as an anchor against the tides of thought. Thus, we can witness how the brain bounces off itself, always in motion yet only focusing on one thought at a time.

Chapter 4. Taking Our Seat

"The mind is the king & queen. We approach our meditation as if it were a throne in the center of our life."

To meditate, sit upright with your legs loosely crossed, arms relaxed on your thighs, shoulders neutrally aligned, face slackened, and eyes half-shut and down. Focus on stabilizing your breath – the ultimate bridge between mind & body. As the mind begins to wander, acknowledge what comes without judgement, and return focus to breathing. Start with 10 minutes per day.

Chapter 5. Mindfulness & Awareness

"The power of mindfulness is that we can just bring our mind back to the breath; the power of awareness is that we know when to do it."

Qualities of mindfulness include:

- **Familiarity:** Ease in being present.
- **Remembering:** Awareness of meditation & breath.

kibookclub.com

[Turning The Mind Into An Ally](#) (Page 1 of 5)