

how to meditate

second edition

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Why Meditate?

Everyone wants happiness yet few of us seem to find it. In our search for satisfaction we go from one relationship to another, one job to another, one country to another. We study art and medicine, train to be tennis players and typists; have babies, race cars, write books, and grow flowers. We spend our money on home entertainment systems, mobile phones, iPods, handheld computers, comfortable furniture, and vacations in the sun. Or we try to get back to nature, eat whole foods, practice yoga, and meditate. Just about everything we do is an attempt to find real happiness and avoid suffering.

There is nothing wrong with wanting happiness; there is nothing wrong with any of these attempts to find it. The problem is that we see things like relationships, possessions, and adventures as having some intrinsic ability to satisfy us, as being the cause of happiness. But they cannot be—simply because they do not last. Everything by nature constantly changes and eventually disappears: our body, our friends, all our belongings, the environment. Our dependence on impermanent things and our clinging to the rainbow-like happiness they bring cause only disappointment and grief, not satisfaction and contentment.

We *do* experience happiness with things outside ourselves, but it doesn't truly satisfy us or free us from our problems. It is poor-quality happiness, unreliable and short-lived. This does not mean that we should give up our friends and possessions in order to be happy. Rather, what we need to give up are our misconceptions about them and our unrealistic expectations of what they can do for us.

Not only do we see them as permanent and able to satisfy us; at the root of our problems is our fundamentally mistaken view of reality. We believe instinctively that people and things exist in and of themselves, from their own side; that they have an inherent nature, an inherent thing-ness. This means that we see things as having certain qualities abiding naturally within them; we think that they are, from their own side, good or bad, attractive or unattractive. These qualities seem to be out there, in the objects themselves, quite independent of our viewpoint and everything else. We think, for example, that chocolate is inherently delicious or that success is inherently satisfying. But surely, if they were, they would never fail to give pleasure or to satisfy, and everyone would experience them in the same way.

Our mistaken idea is deeply ingrained and habitual; it colors all our relationships and dealings with the world. We probably rarely question whether the way we see things is the way they actually exist, but once we do it will be obvious that our picture of reality is exaggerated and one-sided; that the good and bad qualities we see in things are actually created and projected by our own mind.

According to Buddhism there *is* lasting, stable happiness, and everyone has the potential to experience it. The causes of happiness lie within our own mind, and methods for achieving it can be practiced by anyone, anywhere, in any lifestyle—living in the city, working an eight-hour job, raising a family, playing on weekends.

By practicing these methods—meditation—we can learn to be happy at any time, in any situation, even difficult and painful ones. Eventually we can free ourselves of problems like dissatisfaction, anger, and anxiety and, finally, by realizing the actual way that things exist, we will eliminate completely the very source of all disturbing states of mind so that they will never arise again.

What is the mind?

Mind, or consciousness, is at the heart of Buddhist theory and practice, and for the last 2500 years meditators have been investigating and using it as a means of transcending unsatisfactory existence and achieving perfect peace. It is said that all happiness, ordinary

and sublime, is achieved by understanding and transforming our own minds.

The mind is a nonphysical kind of energy, and its function is to know, to experience. It is awareness itself. It is clear in nature and reflects everything that it experiences, just as a still lake reflects the surrounding mountains and forests.

Mind changes from moment to moment. It is a beginningless continuum, like an ever-flowing stream: the previous mind-moment gave rise to this mind-moment, which gives rise to the next mind-moment, and so on. It is the general name given to the totality of our conscious and unconscious experiences. Each of us is the center of a world of thoughts, perceptions, feelings, memories, and dreams—all of these are mind.

Mind is not a physical thing that ~~has~~ thoughts and feelings; it is those very experiences. Being nonphysical, it is different from the body, although mind and body are interconnected and interdependent. Mind—consciousness—is carried through our body by subtle physical energies (see page 161), which also control our movement and vital functions. This relationship explains why, for example, physical sickness and discomfort can affect our state of mind and why, in turn, mental attitudes can both give rise to and heal physical problems.

Mind can be compared to an ocean, and momentary mental events such as happiness, irritation, fantasies, and boredom to the waves that rise and fall on its surface. Just as the waves can subside to reveal the stillness of the ocean's depths, so too is it possible to calm the turbulence of our mind to reveal its natural pristine clarity.

The ability to do this lies within the mind itself, and the key to the mind ~~is~~ meditation.

that. But for those negative actions you cannot completely give up, either promise to give them up for a realistic period of time, or promise that you will do your very best to be mindful and avoid doing them.

Resolve to change your old emotional habits such as anger, jealousy, depression, criticalness, and attachment. Feel confident in your ability to change, but at the same time understand that it takes time to change, so don't have unrealistic expectations.

Dedication At the end of the meditation session dedicate all the positive energy you have created by doing this purification practice to all living beings, that they may become free from all their suffering and its causes: negative karma and delusions.

(There are two other purification practices later in the book: a meditation on the Buddha Vajrasattva, also practiced in the context of the four powers, on page 219, and a simpler meditation on page 147.)

Meditation on Suffering

The question of suffering has always perplexed philosophers and theologians—not to mention ordinary suffering human beings like us! Why is there so much fighting in the world? Why so much starvation, sickness, inequality, and injustice? What are the causes of suffering? The Buddhist view can be summarized as what are known as the four noble truths.

First, *suffering exists*. Every sentient being suffers to some degree or other. "Suffering" does not refer merely to severe pain or problems; it refers to any experience that is unpleasant or unsatisfactory.

Second, *suffering always has a cause*. The principal causes of suffering are karma (previous actions of our body, speech, or mind) and delusions (disturbing states of mind such as anger, attachment, and ignorance).

Third, *there is an end to suffering*. We all have the potential to reach a state of perfect peace, clarity, and compassion, in which we no longer experience the results of past negative acts or create the causes for future suffering.

Fourth, *there is a means to end suffering*. The way to end suffering is to gradually abandon its causes—anger, selfishness, attachment, and other negative states of mind, and actions motivated by these—and cultivate the causes of happiness—patience, love, non-attachment, generosity, and the other positive states of mind. And finally, by developing insight into the true nature of all things, we can eliminate the very root of suffering: the ignorance that sees everything in a mistaken way.

"Suffering" refers to all degrees of unsatisfactory physical and psychological experiences. There are many ways to meditate on

suffering and all are for the purpose of generating a deep sense of its extensiveness; how, in varying degrees, it permeates our own lives and the lives of all others.

The purpose of developing this awareness is not to increase our misery. On the contrary, successful meditation on suffering brings us to a more realistic view of life. And by understanding that the causes of suffering lie in our own attitudes and actions, we will gradually come to see that unraveling the complexities of our mind and thus developing control over our thoughts and actions is both desirable and possible.

Our usual view of life is unrealistic. Most of our pleasant experiences depend on external objects and situations, whose very nature is ephemeral. When these things change or disappear we cling on, unwilling to accept the reality of the situation. We want pleasure to last and are disappointed when it doesn't. And so we go, up and down, from pleasure to pain, happiness to unhappiness, all our lives.

Awareness of this reality is a step toward eliminating suffering. We will stop expecting people and things to make us happy and instead see that it is our attitude toward them that determines happiness and satisfaction. Ironically, when we stop clinging unrealistically to things, we enjoy them all the more!

Another major benefit of this meditation is that we can see that others suffer in the same way, and as a result we inevitably develop more kindness and compassion toward them.

But the main purpose of recognizing the suffering of our lives is to develop the strong intention to do what is necessary to be finally free of it. All unhappy, painful experiences are rooted in the ignorance that believes everything exists inherently, in and of itself. Seeing the emptiness, the lack, of this way of existing cuts through all confusion and problems.

Gaining this understanding, however, is no simple matter. It requires tremendous energy to concentrate the mind on the nature of things, to cut through our habitual perception of them to reach their ultimate, pure reality. The fuel that drives us in this task is the desire to free ourselves, and others, from all suffering.

The practice

Motivation Sit comfortably and relax. Generate a positive motivation for doing the meditation, such as wishing to better understand suffering in order to do what is necessary to free everyone—yourself and others—from all problems, pain, and unhappiness.

There are three aspects of suffering to contemplate. Go through each one as slowly as you like. Don't just make a mental checklist of the points but bring your emotions and intuition into the meditation; really feel every example of suffering as if you were experiencing it right now.

1. The suffering of suffering

This includes all obvious forms of suffering, physical and mental, such as the severe sufferings arising from war, terrorism, natural disasters, famine, violent crime, rape, abuse, imprisonment, poverty, injustice, racism, addiction, injury, and illness.

But it also includes all the normal, everyday problems your body experiences: aches and pains, heat and cold, hunger and thirst, bad eyesight, earaches, cuts and burns, weight problems, muscle tension, fatigue—the list is endless. Recall these experiences and how we are rarely without one or more of them.

There may be more extreme kinds of physical suffering that you experienced in the past—bring these to mind and see the possibility that they could happen again; there is no guarantee they will not.

Think of the physical suffering you will experience when you are old. Picture yourself at the age of eighty or ninety; your body degenerated and wrinkled and not functioning properly. Finally, there is death. Think of the different ways you could die and the suffering of the body then.

Contemplate the fact that it is the nature of the body to change, meet with pain, degenerate, and eventually die. Therefore it is unrealistic and unwise to be attached to it, and to cling to it as "me." Now look at mental and emotional suffering. Bring to mind past or present experiences of loneliness, depression, grief, frustration,

and illustrations from your own experience. Your meditation might take the form of an internal lecture, as though you were explaining a point to yourself; a debate, with yourself taking both sides; or a freestyle thought-adventure.

Doubts may arise, but do not gloss over them. Doubts are questions and questions need answers, so be clear about what you think, and why. Either come to a conclusion about the point in question or leave it aside for the moment and tackle it again later. If you are unable to resolve your doubts on your own, it's best to consult a teacher or more experienced student of this tradition.

If during the analysis you should develop an intuitive experience of the subject, stop analyzing and hold the feeling with single-pointed concentration for as long as possible. When the feeling fades, resume the investigation or conclude the session. This union of analytical and stabilizing meditations is essential if we are to achieve true mind-transformation. In analytical meditation we think about and understand intellectually a particular point, and through stabilizing meditation we gradually make it a part of our very experience of life.

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Meditation on Emptiness

All Buddhist teachings are for the purpose of leading one gradually to the realization of emptiness. Here, *emptiness* means the emptiness of inherent, concrete existence, and the total eradication from our mind of this false way of seeing things marks our achievement of enlightenment, buddhahood.

What is "emptiness of inherent existence"? In practical terms, what does it mean? So-called inherent existence—which all things are said to lack, to be empty of—is a quality that we instinctively project onto every person and everything we experience. We see things as fully, solidly existing in and of themselves, from their own side, having their own nature, quite independent of causes, conditions, parts, or our own mind experiencing them.

Take a table, for example. We see a solid, independent table standing there, and it's so obviously a table that it seems ridiculous to even question it. But where is the table? Imagine taking it apart and laying the pieces out on the ground. Now see if you can find the table: is it one of the legs? Or its top? Is it the glue or nails that hold it together? Or even one of its atoms?

If you investigate thoroughly, you will discover that you simply cannot find the table you think is there. That does not mean there is no table at all. There is a dependently-existing, changing-from-moment-to-moment table—the "table" that we merely label onto its parts—but this is not what we see. This is the crux of the problem. We experience not the bare reality of each thing and each person but an exaggerated, filled-out image of it projected by our own

mind. This mistake marks every one of our mental experiences, is quite instinctive and is the very root of all our problems.

This pervasive mental disorder starts with the misapprehension of our own self. We are a composite of body—a mass of flesh, bones, skin, cells, and atoms—and mind—a stream of thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. This composite is conveniently known as “Mary,” “Harold,” “woman,” or “man.” It is a temporary alliance that ends with the death of the body and the flowing on of the mind to other experiences.

These stark, unembellished facts can be rather disquieting. A part of us, the ego, craving security and immortality, invents an inherent, independent, permanent self. This is not a deliberate, conscious process but one that takes place deep in our subconscious mind.

This fantasized self appears especially strongly at times of stress, excitement or fear. For example, when we narrowly escape an accident there is a powerful sense of an I that nearly suffered death or pain and must be protected. That I does not exist; it is a hallucination.

Our adherence to this false I—known as self-grasping ignorance—taints all our dealings with the world. We are attracted to people, places, and situations that gratify and uphold our self-image, and react with fear or animosity to whatever threatens it. We view all people and things as definitely this way or that. Thus this root, self-grasping, branches out into attachment, jealousy, anger, arrogance, depression, and the myriad other turbulent and unhappy states of mind.

The final solution is to eliminate this root ignorance—with the wisdom that realizes the emptiness, in everything we experience, of the false qualities we project onto things. This is the ultimate transformation of mind.

Emptiness sounds pretty abstract but in fact is very practical and relevant to our lives. The first step toward understanding it is to try and get an idea of what it is we *think* exists; to locate, for example, the I that we believe in so strongly and then, by using clear reasoning in analytical meditation, to see that it is a mere fabrication,

something that has never existed and could never exist in the first place.

But don't throw out too much! You definitely exist! There is a conventional, interdependent self that experiences happiness and suffering, that works, studies, eats, sleeps, meditates, and becomes enlightened. The first, most difficult task is to distinguish between this valid I and the fabricated one; usually we cannot tell them apart. In the concentration of meditation it is possible to see the difference; to recognize the illusory I and eradicate our long-habituated belief in it. The meditation here is a practical first step in that direction.

The practice

Motivation Begin with a meditation on the breath to relax and calm your mind. Motivate yourself strongly to do this meditation in order to finally become enlightened for the sake of all beings.

Now, with the alertness of a spy, slowly and carefully become aware of the I. Who or what is it that thinks, feels, and meditates? How does it appear to you? Is your I a creation of your mind? Or is it something that exists concretely and independently, in its own right?

Now, try to locate it. Where is this I? Is it in your head ... in your eyes ... in your heart ... in your hands ... in your stomach ... in your feet? Carefully consider each part of your body, including the organs, blood vessels, and nerves. Can you find your I? It might be very small and subtle, so consider the cells, the atoms, the subatomic particles.

If you do think that your I is a part of the body, then what would happen if that part were removed in an operation, or damaged in an accident? And what happens to the I when your body ceases to function at death?

Perhaps you think your mind is the I. The mind is a constantly changing stream of thoughts, feelings, and other experiences, coming and going in rapid succession. It's never the same from one moment to the next. Which of these experiences is the I? Is it

Think now how few people or creatures on earth share these freedoms and chances with you. When you have considered this deeply, you will realize how rare and precious a life like yours is. Really appreciate your good fortune.

Once you have seen the disadvantages your life is free of and the advantages you enjoy, decide how best to use your precious opportunities. Think of all the possibilities open to you—work, travel, enjoyment, study. If you wish to offer service to others, there are countless opportunities to help those less fortunate than you. But the most meaningful and beneficial thing you can do, both for yourself and others, is to develop yourself spiritually: overcoming the negative aspects of your mind and increasing the positive, and actualizing your potential for enlightenment.

Try to see the limitations of a lifestyle geared solely to materialistic gain. Think of the insignificance of fame, wealth, reputation, and sensual indulgence when compared to the goal of enlightenment. Why aspire to only temporal achievements when we are capable of so much more?

See if you can feel a sense of joy and appreciation for the wonderful situation you have. Resolve to use your life wisely—doing your best to avoid harming others, and instead helping them as much as you can, and developing your love, compassion, wisdom, and other positive qualities that will enable you to actualize your highest potential.

Dedication Finally, dedicate the energy and inspiration you have gained from doing this meditation to the ultimate happiness of all beings.

3 Meditation on Impermanence

Everything in the physical world is impermanent, changing all the time. Some changes are obvious: people grow up, get old, and die; buildings and bridges wear out and fall apart. The environment goes through a complete transformation from one season to the next; flowers wilt, paint cracks and peels, cars break down.

The source of this external transformation can be traced to the cellular and molecular composition of matter, where change is not so obvious. At this invisible level, minute particles are constantly coming into or going out of existence, gathering and dispersing, expanding and contracting—always in motion, always fluctuating.

Our conscious world is also changing constantly. Sometimes we are happy, sometimes depressed; sometimes we feel full of love, other times full of anger. Memories of conversations and events, thoughts of the future, ideas about this and that fill our minds one after the other. A few moments of looking inward will show us how quickly the mind is changing: it's like a railway station at rush hour! Streams of thoughts, feelings, and perceptions flash by, in every direction, without ceasing.

This constant change is the reality of things, but we find it very difficult to accept. Intellectually, it is not a problem; but real acceptance of impermanence rarely, if ever, enters our everyday behavior and experience. Instinctively, we cling to people and things as if they were permanent and unchanging. We don't want

the nice person or the beautiful object to change, and firmly believe that the irritating person will never be different. And when we are depressed or dissatisfied, we think we will be that way forever.

We cling especially strongly to our view of our own personality: "I am a depressed person," "I am an angry person," "I am not very intelligent." We might indeed be this or that, but it is not the whole picture nor will it always be like that; it will change.

By not recognizing impermanence we meet with frustration, irritation, grief, loneliness, and countless other problems. We can avoid experiencing them by becoming familiar with the transitory nature of things, recognizing that they are in a constant state of flux. Gradually we will learn to expect, and accept, change as the nature of life.

We will understand not only that change simply happens but also that we can bring about change. We have the power to change what we are, to develop and transform our minds and lives.

The practice

Motivation Sit comfortably and relax completely. Take time to calm and concentrate your thoughts by mindfully observing the breath. When your mind is calm and settled in the present, generate a positive motivation for doing the meditation. For example, you can think: "May this meditation help bring about greater peace and happiness for all beings," or: "May this meditation be a cause for me to become enlightened so that I can help all beings become free of suffering and become enlightened as well."

Then, turn your awareness to your body. Think of its many different parts—arms, legs, head, skin, blood, bones, nerves, and muscles. Examine them, one by one; probe them with your feelings. Contemplate the nature of these things: their substance, their texture, their shape and size. Be sensitive to the body at work, the movement that is occurring every moment: the ebb and flow of your breath, the beating of your heart, the flow of your blood, and the energy of your nerve impulses.

Be aware of your body at the even more subtle level of its cellular structure, that it is entirely composed of living cells coming into existence, moving about, reproducing, dying, and disintegrating.

On an even subtler level, all the parts of your body are made of molecules, atoms, and sub-atomic particles, and these are in constant motion. Try to really get a feeling for the change that is taking place every moment in your body....

Now, turn your attention to your mind. It, too, is composed of many parts: thoughts, perceptions, feelings, memories, and images following one after the other, ceaselessly. Spend a few minutes simply observing the ever-changing flow of experiences in your mind, like someone looking out of a window onto a busy street, watching the cars and pedestrians passing by. Don't cling to anything that you see in your mind, don't judge or make comments—just observe, and try to get a sense of the impermanent, ever-changing nature of your mind.

After reflecting on the impermanence of your inner world—your own body and mind—extend your awareness to the outer world. Think about your immediate surroundings: the cushion, mat, or bed you are sitting on, the floor, walls, windows, and ceiling of your room, the furniture and other objects in the room. Consider that each of these, although appearing solid and static, is actually a mass of tiny particles whizzing around. Stay with that experience for a while.

Then let your awareness travel further out, beyond the walls of your room. Think of other people: their bodies and minds are also constantly changing, not staying the same for even one moment. The same is true of all living beings, such as animals, birds, and insects.

Think of all the inanimate objects in the world and in the universe: houses, buildings, roads, cars, trees, mountains, oceans and rivers, the earth itself, the sun, moon, and stars. All of these things, being composed of atoms and other minute particles, are constantly changing, every moment, every millisecond. Nothing stays the same without changing. Concentrate on this experience.

5

Meditation on Karma

*Do not commit any nonvirtuous actions,
Perform only perfect virtuous actions,
Subdue your mind thoroughly—
This is the teaching of the Buddha.*

—The Dhammapada

If everything is empty of inherent, independent existence, then why are we sometimes happy, and at other times depressed and miserable? Why do good things and bad things happen to people? One explanation is that ignorance of the empty nature of things still pervades our minds, and until we free our minds from ignorance we will continue to have problems. But another explanation is that, although everything is empty on the ultimate level of reality, on the relative or conventional level the experiences we have are subject to the law of cause and effect, or karma.

Karma is a Sanskrit word that means “action”—it refers to the process whereby the actions we do are the causes of effects or results that we will experience in the future. Positive actions lead to positive results such as good rebirths in our future lives, being healthy, getting what we need and want, and being treated well by others; negative actions lead to unfortunate results such as bad rebirths, health problems, failure to get what we need and want, and being abused by others.

The law of karma is also known as the law of cause and effect. But when we use the word “law” it should be understood as a natural law, like the law of gravity, rather than a law that was invented by anyone such as the Buddha. Through his meditative

insights, Buddha became aware of the law of karma and explained it to us so that we could have more control over our lives and experiences. If we learn about karma and do our best to refrain from negative actions and do positive actions, then we will experience more happiness and less suffering. The results of our actions follow naturally, just as we enjoy good health from eating nutritious food, but get sick if we eat unhealthy or contaminated food. There is no one who rewards us for positive actions or punishes us for negative actions.

Some common questions and misconceptions about karma

People sometimes wonder if the law of karma applies only to those who believe in it, but not to those who do not know about or believe in it. If that were the case, it would be better not to know about karma, and the Buddha would have done us a disservice by talking about it! In reality, karma is a universal law that applies to all beings, whether they know about and believe in it or not. It is similar to gravity—all beings are subject to gravity, whether they are aware of it or not—or to poison—whoever eats poison will get sick, whether or not they believe that it's harmful.

Another common question is whether karma means that we have no free will. For those who are unaware of karma, there is little or no free will because they don't know the causes of good and bad experiences. Although they want happiness and success and don't want problems, they may avoid creating the causes of happiness—being honest and generous, for example—and may do the very things that bring problems—such as lying and cheating. On the other hand, those who know about karma are free to act in ways that will bring the happiness they wish for, and avoid the problems they don't want. So karma means that *we* are the creator: *we* are responsible for our experiences, rather than an external creator, or other people and circumstances.

Some people have the idea that since everything is empty, there is no good and bad, no right and wrong. This idea is totally mistaken,

and also extremely detrimental to our spiritual development. Enlightened beings and those who have a direct, non-conceptual realization of emptiness see all things as having the same nature: emptiness of inherent existence. But emptiness does not negate the relative, conventional level of things. Things still exist on the relative level, and their existence is subject to the law of dependent arising: they exist in dependence on other things, such as causes and conditions. On the ultimate level, things are empty, but relatively, there is suffering and confusion, which is the result of negative actions, and there is happiness, which is the result of positive actions. So karma, cause and effect, definitely exists, and we would be wise to live according to it!

Some people have no trouble accepting karma; they may even have had an intuitive understanding of it their whole life. Others are sceptical and ask for proof. But it's difficult to come up with concrete proof because karma is in the mind, and the mind is non-material. The way it works is that when we do an action with our body, speech, or mind, a subtle imprint is left on our mindstream, similar to the imprint left on camera-film when we take a picture. Later, when we encounter the right causes and conditions, that mental imprint will manifest in the form of experiences that occur in our mind, similar to the pictures that materialize when the film is developed.

Lama Yeshe said that we can see the workings of karma in our own life. When we're in a bad state of mind—dissatisfied with ourselves and our life, or angry at the world—then everything will go wrong and we will attract problems. But when we're in a good state of mind and treat people with respect and consideration, we're much more likely to have good experiences. So our own experiences are proof that our attitudes and behavior affect what happens to us in our daily life.

If you have difficulty accepting karma, it could be useful to check your reasons, and ask yourself if they are good, solid reasons. For example, you might find it difficult to accept because it's a foreign concept, one you didn't hear about from your family or education system. Is that a valid reason for rejecting something?

Some people find the idea of karma uncomfortable. They may think, "If I have lots of problems in my life, that means I must have done lots of bad things in the past, so I must be a bad person." This is an incorrect conclusion. There is no such thing as a "bad person." The minds of all unenlightened beings are afflicted with ignorance and other delusions that motivate us to act in unskillful ways, creating problems for ourselves and others, but this is not our true way of being. We all have the potential to become free of ignorance, delusions, and karma, and to become fully awakened, compassionate beings. We can't undo what was done in the past, but we can change ourselves from now on, and the teachings on karma show us how to start doing this.

People sometimes focus more on the negative side of karma—"you do bad things and bad things will happen to you." But we shouldn't forget the positive side of karma. It's important to remember all the good things about our life—the very fact that we have a human life, relatively good health, people who are kind and helpful to us, the opportunity to learn and practice spiritual teachings—and realize that these came about because we created lots of good karma in the past, and we can continue to create good karma in this life as well.

The purpose of meditating on karma is twofold: to develop the awareness that we are responsible—we are the creators of our own experiences—and to learn which actions bring suffering, so we can avoid those, and which actions lead to happiness, so that we can engage in those.

The practice

Sit comfortably and relax your body and mind. Let go of thoughts of the past and future, other places and people; resolve to keep your mind focused in the present on your meditation.

Motivation Generate a positive motivation for doing the meditation, such as wanting to have a better understanding of karma so that you can avoid doing actions that bring problems to yourself and others, and can be more beneficial, both to yourself and others.