

Dipa Ma's Sitting Practice Instruction

How do I practice Vipassana [insight] meditation?

Dipa Ma: "Sit [with your back straight]. Close your eyes and follow the rising and falling of the abdomen as you breathe. Feel the breath. When watching the breathing in and out, ask yourself, "**Where is the touch of the breath?**" Keep your mind on the touch only. You are to do nothing with the breathing, only feel the touch. If it is heavy, let it be heavy. If it is short, let it be short. If it is fine, let it be fine. Just feel it.

When your mind wanders away, notice this and say to yourself, "Thinking," and then come back again to the rising and falling of the breath. If you feel a sensation somewhere else, like pain in the leg, then take your mind to the pain and note, "Pain." And when it goes away or fades, then again come to watching the touch of the breath. If restlessness comes, note "restlessness."

If you hear a noise, say to yourself, "Hearing, hearing," then again come back to the feeling of the breath. If memories come, know them as "memories." Anything you see, anything that comes to mind, just be aware of it. If you see visions or lights, just note "seeing" or "lights." There is no need to keep any of it, to make it stay. Simply observe.

In insight meditation, you are observing the rising and falling of the breath and the phenomena that arise in the mind and body. So there is a shifting of the mind from sensations felt, both painful and pleasurable, to thoughts as well. Whatever is happening is to be noticed, then that will go away, and another thing will come. In this way, insight practice is a method of observation. All six senses [the mind being the sixth] will arise. Just watch them arise and pass away and come back to the feeling of the breath. Anything you see, anything that comes to mind, just be aware of it."

