

## *Mindful Meditation*

Meditation involves the practice of focusing on your internal state and learning to quiet the mind, body and spirit, *at will*, with the help of the breath. Experiment with the Meditation Exercise below:

- Stretch out on the ground or find a comfortable position on your chair, couch or bed.
- Turn the lights down if possible and make sure that you have enough space around you.
- Close your eyes if you are willing, though this is not necessary.
- Take a deep breath from the belly (you can practice this with your eyes open so that you can watch your belly distend with air as you breathe deeply).
- Focus on the experience of the breath and your body's reaction to each breath.
- Repeat the deep breath, observing how tense muscles relax as oxygen flows there with each breath.
- Breathe normally, continuing to focus on each inhale and each exhale.
- For a deeper experience, count to four as you inhale, and count to four as you exhale.
- Should you wish to invoke an even deeper state of relaxation, count to six as you inhale, and count to six as you exhale.
- With even more training, you may be able to deepen the relaxation further as you count to eight as you inhale, and to eight as you exhale!
- Finish with a deep breath, then open your eyes.

*What was it like to focus only on your breath for a few minutes?*

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*What response did you notice, if any, in your body?*

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