



Newsletter, Summer 2018

HONOURING THE PAST

A few days ago, a friend was telling me how hard he was finding life. Released from prison last autumn, he'd fallen off a roof while working in December. Since then, his bashed-up ankle has kept him from getting out of the house much. With so much unstructured time and nothing to give him a sense of purpose, he was feeling low, and his self-image was nosediving. He was also experiencing sharp feelings of guilt and shame for the things he'd done which landed him in prison. He said he was really struggling with those memories, and thoughts of what a bad person he is.

I can relate. It's hard for me to square the hurtful and thoughtless things I've done with the image of myself I project to others. I wind up swinging between two extremes. On one hand, remembering something I did can make me feel hateful and a failure as a human being. At the other extreme, I downplay what I've done: I wasn't myself at the time, I was under a lot of pressure, it was the other person's fault. Or I just try to sweep it under the carpet, and carry on with the 'positive' image I've cultivated for so long.

Both of these ways of relating to our thoughts are rooted in conceiving of ourselves in a particular way. In the first situation, we have an image of ourselves as losers, scumbags, no-hopers. In the other, we picture ourselves as perfect, able to do anything, fair and helpful to everyone. But to live freely, we have to honour all parts of ourselves, including things we've done which we regret.

"Yeah right," you may say. "How do you honour *those* things?" Well, the same way you'd honour anything: let it show itself, don't try to do anything with it, try to see deeply into the causes of it, don't add more stories onto it.

This is really hard.

But it's possible, and indeed healing. And it's greatly helped

by a regular practice of meditation, because when you are meditating, you are focussing the mind simply on the breathing. This develops your concentration and after a while, it can be easier to let things come and go in the mind as they will, without trying to do anything with them: neither blocking them, nor

churning them over and creating new stories. It becomes easier to keep peering, with attention grounded in your breathing, into your experience as it's happening. You stop adding additional stories onto what's going on and let go of your "life situation." Instead, you are just life, right now.

Kindness itself

There is something happening in us all the time - whether we are aware of it or not - which is vaster than anything we can imagine. It is kindness itself, and it can contain and accept all parts of ourselves. It doesn't really matter what you call it, but spending time in the silence of meditation allows that timeless, unimaginable activity to come forward and be with those parts of you which you may not be proud of. It helps you see the causes of things you've

done. And it can help you to forgive yourself.

It is also important to honour positive aspects of the past. Many people in prison do a short reflection at the end of the day, thinking about three things they are grateful for, or bringing to mind the acts of kindness that others did for them today. And you can remember those things which you've done for other people recently, no matter how small those acts seem.

The Prison Phoenix Trust turns 30 years old this year, and you can help us honour *our* past by spending some time each day in stillness, looking inside. The letters in this newsletter from fellow human beings point clearly to the essence of what the founders of this charity were getting at: the healing power of silence, the breath, yoga and meditation to aid us on our journeys.



Cake anyone? Patron Jeremy Irons helps honour three decades of the PPT at a recent celebration.



ABOUT THE PRISON PHOENIX TRUST

The Prison Phoenix Trust supports prisoners in their spiritual lives through meditation, yoga, silence and the breath.

It recommends breath-focussed stretches and meditation sensitively tailored to students' needs. This safe practice offers students ultimate peace of mind. The PPT encourages prisoners and prison staff through correspondence, books, CDs, newsletters, free taster workshops and weekly classes.



**Love from Sam - and Lucy, Sally,
Jason, Clive, David, Kaye,
Victoria & Brent**



**"You are not a problem
that needs solving."**

~ Eckhart Tolle, Author, b. 1948

From
HMP Warren Hill

For the last ten months I've really got into my yoga and meditation. I am in therapy at the moment dealing with very traumatic issues to do with childhood, addictions and dysfunctional relationships. The yoga and meditation have contributed greatly to some major breakthroughs I've been making recently.

This includes giving up all mood altering medication, stopping smoking, going on a vegan diet and not isolating myself anymore. I've broken the habit of being passive. I used to be extremely impulsive - I've reined that in as well. I also gave my television back about ten months ago, and stopped listening to the radio five months ago. I have recently got a new job as resettlement rep for my wing.

Yoga and meditation can enhance a prisoner's sense of wellbeing, and this prison would benefit greatly if we had a qualified teacher come in. I've been making enquiries, and someone suggested you might be able to help.



From
HMP Ashfield

A month into 2018 and I'm feeling generally positive.

I've kept to my new year's resolutions as well as I expected. I'm ordering the healthy option on the menu most days, and am managing to resist buying biscuits and cakes on the prison canteen each week. It is surprising how quick my measly prison wages are mounting up now I'm not wasting money on rubbish. I've also managed three sessions of yoga this week, two in-cell and one in a group that's just started up. The group is a six-week course aimed at beginners like me and is supervised by an officer in her own time on a Thursday evening. A little difficult, but definitely beneficial and we come away feeling more relaxed.

I also started listening to the *Freedom Inside* programme on NPR on a Sunday evening. It's great because it's not too long that I get bored or lose interest. I find these sort of sessions easier than making up my own program or stretches. I feel

more comfortable and motivated if I've got somebody guiding me.

With meditation (as with many other things!) my biggest problem is motivating myself to get started. I always seem to make excuses to myself to put it off or do something else. I want to make an effort so that next time I write, I can tell you how well I'm getting on with it.

Last week also saw my last session with one of the mental health team here. Over the last twelve months he has been helping me to overcome my self esteem and mild anxiety issues. It's been a huge help. Now I'm much more willing to try new things, like writing to you and signing up to the yoga class. I've got plenty of positive things to be thankful for and to focus on.

From
HMP Bure

We all have a wish list - we want this and that, we want to meet this person or hit that stat. But when we take time to just sit and have some quiet time we begin to think about what we really need and we are at calm with ourselves and we want to help others more. And when people wind us up we stay calm as the meditation and yoga all helps. Then people ask - why are you always happy and calm? They do not think that yoga and meditation can help with that. I was like that until I gave it a go. I just wished I had done it when I was younger.



From
HMP Hatfield

Aged 53 I was given a 16 year sentence, and on my arrival at HMP Leeds I was enrolled on a Safer Custody programme. On the course I met my tutor to be, Helen White, who introduced me to yoga, and I have been doing a stretch ever since (pun intended!).

I am now a qualified yoga teacher and teach both staff and inmates here. These classes are popular and I always try and create a positive vibe within the group, with humour always near the surface. Yoga creates a common ground between staff and inmates, which is so important in these environments. My working week fortunately includes working at a local yoga studio, invaluable experience for teaching yoga on my release.

They say "don't waste your time" while in prison and to make the most of it. I've missed a lot of family life and



Prisoners'

lost family and friends along the way, but yoga and meditation have given me a new found freedom. Even in closed prison conditions, practising yoga gave me a feeling of freedom and peace I had never experienced before. I have never felt more free in my life.

If you want to improve your health, mental health, flexibility and learn coping mechanisms that will not only help you with the problems in prison life, but on release for the rest of your life then give yoga a try. But don't think it will be easy because it takes work, commitment, and most of all, belief.

I am enjoying the many benefits of practising yoga and being a teacher, and have been privileged to witness some remarkable achievements by people who were sceptical about yoga before trying it.

For all the support I have received during my journey I would like to express my sincere gratitude to:

- The number one, two and three governors at HMP Hatfield
- The Gym PEIs
- My OMU
- Other staff members who have been supportive
- The owners of the yoga studio where I work on day release and the staff who have made me feel so welcome
- Namaste to all the people I have had the privilege to have shared, learnt from, taught and practised yoga with
- And one massive thank you to the Prison Phoenix Trust who do so much wonderful work throughout the prison system. You picked me up when I was at my lowest.

From
Bombat Piset Prison,
Thailand

The education I have received in these seven years of prison are of such a great value for my entire life to come. This disciplined life I have I could never have achieved outside. Like the order of my toothbrush and toiletries: all have to be exactly placed to fit in my tiny locker. If I don't arrange even the smallest thing well, then everything is out of order. My three blankets I have (one as a pillow, one to lie on and one to cover me) must be arranged in the morning in military



Check out the yoga and meditation column each month in Inside Time.

Letters



fashion. It takes time for someone who does it the first time to fold it the way they order us to here. My daily washing of uniform and dishes, my preparing of food and drink... If you could see all the things I get done in one day you would be surprised. It's proper discipline I've been following for seven years, including my daily workout.

Yoga and meditation is the start of my day, the real awakening and bringing out the sunlight. I feel the results so much that if I don't do them I can count my thoughts rising day by day. It's so amazing what a daily practice can do and then again, what happens if I stop for some days, like in January when I had the flu. That tells me that I can never stop practising: the benefit is too much.

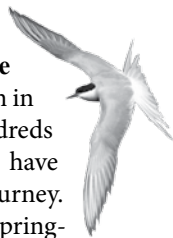
You once told me not to expect the euphoric feelings while practising, but I still have them sometimes and they are much more intense than before. Two mornings ago some other inmates made a lot of noise as they were leaving the cell, but they did it when I was at the highest level of euphoric feelings. It was so amazing. I kept thinking the whole day about how strong it was. It is not every day like this, but still nearly every day I find seconds of great peace combined

with a true or pure joy.

All that is the reason why I have to leave the first hour in the morning as my precious time of practice. Even once I leave this prison I will always make time and wake one hour earlier for it. Only a daily practice can move us faster on our way of changes, of cleansing, of loving. There is no ending what this lifestyle has ready for us. It gets only better and better!

The Prison Phoenix Trust turns 30 years old in 2018. The author of the letter below, who wrote to us soon after we began corresponding with prisoners, clearly saw the need for our work. He also spelled out the essence of the PPT: encouraging and accompanying people on their spiritual journeys. The charity has since grown and evolved, but supporting people in prison in their spiritual lives is still the heart of our work, three decades later.

The truth of the matter is simple. There **IS** a need for what you are trying to do. In every prison in this country there are hundreds of isolated individuals who have begun their spiritual journey. They may have been spring-boarded into the river of the meaning of life via religions, psychology, philosophy or whatever, but all of them would have first asked the questions Who



am I? Where am I going? What does it all mean? Because the early stages of a prisoner's spiritual development are born mostly from suffering, deprivation and long periods of solitary confinement, the young journeyer is often quiet, mindful and to degrees a little recluse.

A man who has opened his mind for the first time and who by so doing becomes aware of his own spirituality does not climb the stairs to the highest possible landing and shout at the top of his voice, "Something has happened to me!" or "I'm free!" or "This prison is an illusion!" No, the man who treads the path in prison treads softly and quietly.

Paradoxical though it is, because prisons are the least peaceful places to start with, they soon become the best possible places to continue because negative behaviour of others is blatantly obvious. It is easy to make good ground once the first step has been taken and after balance has been found. There are hundreds of people in prison treading this path on their own – softly and quietly and very careful not to communicate the experience for fear of misinterpretation.

What prisoners need is what you are trying to do ... a group ... a body of people ... an organisation ... to recognise and sing out loud without fear or shame. My God! There is a need.

- G.H. serving a life sentence for murder

Meditation Corner



High Anxiety

A few years ago I was asked to pick up a visitor from Heathrow. Karl, a meditation teacher, was travelling from Germany for a conference with other teachers from around the world. This was an important gathering and my task was to meet Karl and drive him to the conference in Oxford. This sounds simple, but my mind went over a million scenarios that could go wrong. Annoyingly, I did not know what Karl looked like. In a crowded and stuffy airport how was I supposed to recognise him? Why choose me when there were others who knew Karl?

Passengers were appearing in the arrival lounge and it seemed about the right time for Karl to appear. It soon became clear that he was not among those who vibrantly stood out with loud, colourful clothes, excessive luggage and noisy chattering. There were one or two



By Jason

religious people too - members of the clergy in dog-collars, even a Buddhist monk in orange robes. But still no sign of Karl, and the flight had arrived nearly an hour before.

The arrivals office staff were not particularly helpful and they only confirmed that the passengers should probably all have appeared by now. I started to get anxious as Karl could be wandering about anywhere, probably annoyed at not being picked up. Frustrated at my failure at this simple task, I sat down. I decided to leave Karl to find his own way to Oxford. I had done my best and could do no more - and besides he probably knew how to find his way without my feeble intervention. Best of

all though, admitting failure meant there was one less thing to think about and a weight off my mind.

You can probably guess what happened next: I became aware of someone sitting across the lounge in the café. Looking unconcerned and not in any great hurry to do anything, it was, of course, Karl. We met, he smiled and said I had come at just the right time. He must have been waiting over an hour, but he wasn't fussed and seemed to have rather enjoyed sitting there amongst all the people. He brushed aside my apology for being late.

The most striking thing about Karl was how he stood out by his absence of thought and concern - in complete contrast to the activity and stress that was all around including my own worries. When I decided to give up and let go of my anxieties, Karl was right there ready to be met.



Yoga Every Day

 By Lucy

Yoga can make you feel better. It can reduce pain, make you less stiff and help you sleep. It can also make you feel calmer, happier, and able to stay positive when times are tough. So it makes sense to do yoga every day.

Sometimes it's hard to find the time or space for a long session. But this routine can be done in a few minutes without any special equipment, in a small cell. Try it every day for a week, maybe as soon as you get up or just before bed, and let us know how you get on.

These pictures are from *Freeing the Spirit*, an easy to follow guide to yoga and meditation, free for prisoners and staff. If you'd like a copy, write to us at The PPT, PO Box 328, Oxford, OX2 7HF.

1. Happy Cat



Breathe in.

2. Angry Cat



Breathe out.



Flow between these poses ten times.

3. Child



Stay like this for ten slow breaths.

4. Down Dog



Hold for five deep breaths. You can bend your knees to make this easier.

5. Warrior



Stay for five deep breaths. Repeat on the other side.

6. Side Angle



Stay for five deep breaths. Repeat on the other side. For an easier stretch, rest your elbow on your leg.

The Gift Of Life

By James

7. Tree



© Illustration Korky Paul

Balance for five slow breaths each side. If you wobble, that's normal. Just try again!

8. Cobbler



© Illustration Korky Paul

Sit up straight but be relaxed. Stay for five deep breaths.

9. Easy Twist



© Illustration Korky Paul

Five breaths each side, or more if you like.

Since my release from HMP Sudbury in July 2017, I was on tag for the first four months, which was fine. I was happy to be home again and relished in the things I used to take for granted: a garden, carpet, a bath, a fridge with cold water in it, my family, sleeping by my wife at night on a comfy bed with a real pillow.

I had a slight mishap one night when taking photos of things to sell on eBay. I dropped a pump and it landed right on my tag, smashing it off my ankle. I called it in immediately and it was replaced within the hour. The next day, I was told by probation that the board would be deciding whether or not to recall me to prison! Thankfully they just sent me a strongly worded letter and a final warning. Things can change so quickly.

It has been tough to find work. I went for dozens of interviews and was offered all but two of the positions I went for, only to have the offer retracted just before my start date. I assume that HR departments google before hiring these days. I have made a fist of going it alone and have had some success. Some weeks I do well and climb out of debt; then a few lean weeks and we end up in a hole again.

Rebooting

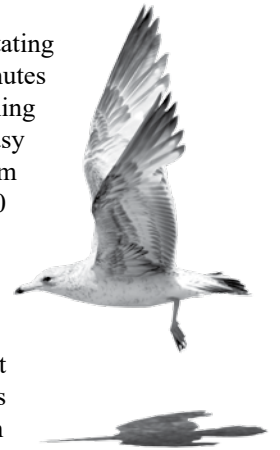
I'm positive and begin each day by rebooting through meditation. I struggled to keep it going when first released. The unexpected pressure of readjusting and facing financial responsibilities made developing a routine difficult. It was at those times I struggled the most, and

then I got your letter. That day I went for a walk and thought about all the things I promised myself I would do when I was released. The next morning I not only got up at 6.00 and started easing myself back into meditation, but quit drinking the four strong cans I was "rewarding" myself with every night. I quit smoking too!

I began meditating with five minutes each morning until it felt easy to do more. I am now back to 30 minutes each morning, after doing a session of yoga (taught from the books you sent me in prison) and I seem to float through the day like I used to in prison.

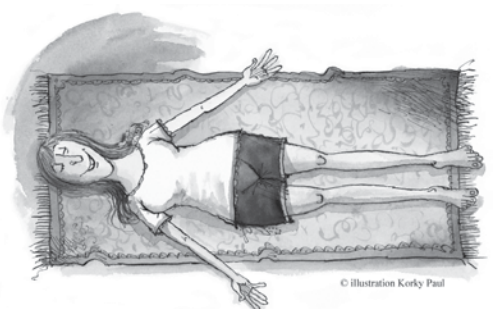
Life can be just as tough once the gates are unlocked, but if we find the space to be kind to ourselves - be patient, still, feel each moment - then we can begin to cherish the gift of life. Each day is one we won't get back, wherever we are.

I end each day with a few minutes reflecting on what I am grateful for, and it seems to be helping. I am learning to accept the things I cannot change and am developing the courage to change the things I can. For anyone who has gone through NA or AA, you will know the last line... and the wisdom to know the difference.



10. Rest

Lie still for at least five minutes, focussing on the feeling of breath flowing in and out. If your thoughts wander, gently bring your focus back to your breathing.



© Illustration Korky Paul

Telling a New Story

From Fuchū Prison, Japan



I am on to the letters section in your book *Peace Inside*. I'm finding it quite intense! I have a six day holiday coming up so am looking forward to the opportunity to get some good reading in and have a crack at some longer sittings. I've done a couple of 30 minute sits and despite freezing my ass off I have never slept like I did on those nights for as long as I can remember. Awesome! But the more I'm sitting the harder I am now finding it to stay in my mind's saddle.

When I first started I was surprised how easy it was, but now my mind's doing this trick where it stays with the count but simultaneously thinks about other things. That's kind of got me on the ropes a bit. I switch to breathing in for five seconds, holding my breath for eight seconds, breathing out for eight seconds and holding for five seconds. I do about five minutes of doing that repeatedly then return to just counting my out breaths and it helps a little.

I think maybe meditation is a lot better



in warmer climes. It's like three or four degrees in my cell at the moment – anywhere other than bed is a nightmare. Sitting at my desk writing this I have to be careful I don't turn into an icicle.

I have just had four visits with my eleven year old daughter who I had not seen in nearly seven years. A long time in the life of someone so young (my daughter - not me lol). It was amazing. She straight up knocked me out! In that first moment when the door opened and she walked in all I could think was, "Life's awesome!" So we had a great time together in the 30 minutes allowed each day.

The whole song

Before you go into the visit room they put you in basically a closet with a seat to wait. It's super claustrophobic - even after six years, every time I get in there my mind loses it until I get a grip. This time I used the 15 minutes waiting time to do my 5,8,8,5 breathing practice. Going into my visit after just this small amount of counting - wow, what a difference it made. I felt so much more in control of my emotions. Another thing I have discovered in the days after saying goodbye is the clarity I can recall the visits with. It's never been like this. As soon as a day later, my memories become blurred. This time the memory of the visit is so clear it's like I'm watching a DVD in my mind's eye.

I struggle with faith but there is clear evidence meditation has benefits. It's like I'm finally starting to hear bits and pieces of music the band's been playing all along. I'm in now. I want to hear the whole song! Seeing certainly helps with the believing part.

I was tested severely when news of my uncle's death reached me several weeks ago. On receipt of the news I felt nothing. My uncle - who was my godfather - was dead, and it was as if there was ice in my veins - no feeling at all. I could not make myself feel anything and this did not sit comfortably with me - I felt terrible. I knew I had my grief in me somewhere. Why couldn't I find it and get it up to the surface?

Two weeks later, my friend of five years got parole and went home. I spent the morning of his leaving bawling like a baby with wind. I guess we know where that grief was after all. It was just buried, hiding deep beneath my prison-hardened thick skin. Good news though: nearly seven years in the joint, and I'm still me. I'm still human! My uncle's death will leave a hole in my life and heart. Now that I've been able to grieve though, I can at least learn to live with it.

I just wanted to share that with you. Like Rachel says to Freebird in *Peace Inside*, "Why don't you tell yourself a new story?" This is something I believe in strongly. I'm constantly rewriting, improving and updating mine.

Breathing Through

A letter from the archives



This letter, like the one on page 3, is from the earliest days of the Prison Phoenix Trust. This person's name has been lost in our archives but it is still clear how deeply he has been helped by yoga, meditation and breathing practices.

When I first got a copy of your book, I was in the segregation block. I was by stages depressed, violent, angry and confused, and my state of mind at the time of reading it was to say the least, unstable. My first impressions were, "Well this is a

lovely book, but how does it apply to real life?" However, I started to use the yoga, which I was able to get right into because I was in 23 hour a day bang up.

Eventually, I became interested in the meditation. I found I was able to centre myself and become more aware of my emotions, therefore I was able to observe them and let them be what they were, rather than cling onto them and let them control me.

I guess the breathing exercises were the last thing I thought of trying. I couldn't grasp the concept of breathing being

anything but just an essential bodily function. However, I soon found that just a few cleansing breaths before yoga or meditation or just to start the day were enormously beneficial. I guess the most powerful of the breathing exercises on a practical level is the breath of fire. I find that this enables me to dump the heavy anger that was very intense at the time, and also restores the lost energy that is drained by such powerful emotions.

Since the time I started these practices, about a year ago, I have felt that my spiritual growth has been steadily progressing.



Serving Up Something Wonderful

By Sandy Chubb



Sandy has been involved with the PPT since it formed as a charity in 1988. She was one of the first prison yoga teachers, and served as Director from 2000-2010. A friend to all of us, we are delighted to welcome her as a Patron.

Years ago I read some advice by the German psychoanalyst Carl Jung. He said if your pots and pans tip over and spill, you should say to them: "Nice pots and pans, how good you are to help me today!" Then ... all will be well.

Without knowing it, you'll find you become less careless and the pots stop having accidents. He saw clearly that we aren't separate from anything in the natural or human world so everything deserves our attention and respect.

You know those days when you are out of order, dropping things, bruising yourself by banging off a doorway, slopping the tea as you put down your mug too roughly. Well, as soon as you register what is happening, you can change it. Take a moment to gather yourself into who you truly are, one whole flawless universal being, and relax for a second or two in it by breathing gently. So simple, but then harmony reigns and you are in tune with the day.

A lot of men and women doing time recognise their essential wholeness and they've taught me a lot about acceptance and flexibility. Once in a prison in Ireland, our meditation group was given a room with two windows missing while an inch of water covered the floor. My dismay at the freezing cold and soaking floor dissolved when each man put his chair in a circle and either drew up his legs onto it or just sat with his feet and shoes in the wet.

In these grim conditions, something wonderful came into the room and touched us all in the deep silence. A kind of generosity of meeting opening up to us which we were opening up to ourselves. Do those men still remember it - like I do?

The touch of compassion occurred many times over the years of sharing yoga and meditation in prisons. When you arrive you walk into jail blind, never knowing what to expect. You might have lost your room, the prison officer may not want to take you to your class, the class might be full of anger or upset about something on the wing. It teaches you to sharpen up and look for solutions but they



Sandy teaching yoga at HMP Weare, the now closed prison ship

never arrive through one person alone.

As soon as you look for a way through, something begins. At first nothing happens and it isn't just about people agreeing or not agreeing either. Once wheels are set in motion, you can stand back. Hopefully things are then allowed to come together in their own time. Strange as it may sound, unseen, the floors and walls play their own part too.

Yoga and meditation is a way to explore the natural easy breath and in particular, silence. And silence is a sacred, alive activity. When you lose yourself in silence, you begin to see you cannot avoid benefiting others, just as the mug of tea benefits you. In turn you want to replace it with care.

An Aspect of Myself

The Prison Phoenix Trust began because its founder Ann Wetherall was doing research into spiritual experience and discovered many people doing time had experiences right in their prison cells. As she asked them to share their stories with her, gradually the letters grew from other jails. Finally she started the PPT so that people can see that none of us are isolated and alone, even though we feel

it, because we are part of a boundless unconditional love and compassion.

Some of the letter-writers expressed their amazement, surprise and joy of discovery. For some it was just a glimpse, while others had experiences which offered them tremendous freedom of mind. One man wrote afterwards to say he looked out of his cell window and saw some flowers several landings below and all he could see was RED and YELLOW! The force of the happiness of his experience leapt off his letter.

Last month I was asked to be a Patron of the PPT. It was an unexpected pleasure to accept and it got me thinking about all the young people and adults I've met or written to over the years and what it is we share. I never met anyone who didn't seem to be another aspect of myself. Exactly myself. In the perfection of wholeness we live in, unseen by us because of our daily anxieties and problems, meditation seems to me a necessity. You want to see this absolute compassion unfolding ever more clearly. Touching that in meditation everyday seems as crucial to me as murmuring a few words to the pots and pans ... and the morning cuppa.





Let Your Breath Lift You!



By Brent

Depending on whether you exercise or not, today you will breathe in and out between 17,000 and 28,000 times. Every breath is new and unique. Amazing! As you read this, can you notice your breathing? What does it feel like right now?

Breathing is a vital natural process providing healthy clean air to energise our bodies. When we breathe well, we're more likely to feel well. For example, consciously breathing in a relaxed rhythm will help make your body feel more relaxed. In yoga, certain ways of breathing can help you feel more connected to yourself and your life, as well as to all existence.

In the three-part breath you breathe in slowly and deeply as you visualise (and feel) your lungs filling from bottom to top - first by expanding the abdomen, or belly, then the middle rib cage, and finally the upper chest. When you breathe out, you visualise (and feel) the breath emptying in reverse, from top to bottom, gently pulling in the abdomen slightly at the end to empty the lungs completely. Try it like this:

1. **Put your hands on your belly and breathe in deeply and slowly.** Feel the hands moving outwards as you breathe in, and relaxing inwards as you breathe out. Feel your belly moving for five breaths.
2. **Now put your hands on your middle rib cage.** When you breathe in, be aware of your belly expanding as before, and feel the rib cage expanding after the belly has expanded. When you breathe out, feel the rib cage relaxing, and then sense the belly relaxing. Keep your hands in this middle position for five breaths.
3. **Finally, put your hands with the finger tips resting on your collar bones.** As you breathe in, be aware of the belly expanding, then the middle part of your chest, and finally, the upper part of your lungs, underneath your hands, will fill with air. This is harder to feel, so if you can't, don't worry: just be aware and visualise the lungs filling in this area. Breathe out and feel the emptying in reverse: upper chest, middle chest and belly. Do this for five breaths.
4. **Now rest your hands on your lap, and continue in the same way.** Feel the whole in-breath coming in, rolling like a wave up the body: belly, mid-chest, upper chest - and rolling out again in reverse. Sit and do this for five minutes.



While this is called the three-part breath, it's really just one continuous activity: breath, body and attention all at one with each other. Let us know how you get on with this. We'd love to hear from you!

“We must welcome the future, remembering that soon it will be the past; and we must respect the past, remembering that it was once all that was humanly possible.”

~ George Santayana, philosopher and poet, 1863 - 1952

This newsletter goes to prisoners and prison staff, and to many friends who offer us their encouragement. We receive no statutory funding, but rely wholly on supporters who understand the value of meditation and yoga, silence and the breath in empowering individuals and society to heal. In this, our 30th year, we're looking for 30 people who'd like to set up a regular donation of £42 each month (or £500 per year), giving us some financial ballast as we head into the next three decades. If you'd like to be one of those 30, please get in touch.

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