

Sole of the feet meditation or informal practice

What Is It & How Is It Useful?

Appropriately responding rather than reacting, in times of stress while experiencing, negative emotions such as anger or frustration is a significant challenge.

The practice of “sole of the feet” can help us to regulate our emotions.

This practice can help us to quickly calm down and resist the urge to act out in an aggressive or unskillful manner. It is important to note,

however, that it is not about eliminating the emotion altogether (which is unrealistic). It is about keeping the emotion manageable so that we can still function and think clearly. It is normal to feel intense emotions but we can learn to reduce their intensity so we can respond rather than react impulsively.

In times of intense emotion, we can choose to stop, to breathe out and focus on the sole of our feet for a while until the emotion is dissipated.



The purpose of this exercise is to shift the attention quickly from a stressful interaction or trigger to a neutral grounding point in the body— the soles of the feet. This, in turn, has a calming effect on the body, and the attention can be used to gain perspective and better problem-solving.

To begin, practise this mindfulness exercise while all is well, throughout your day when you find yourself standing or sitting. It is a way to become more present and aware in the here and now. So that it is easier to remember to practice it in moments when you find yourself stressed.

Instructions

1. Stop, pause a moment, while you are in the middle of feeling some intense emotions
2. If you are standing, stand in a natural rather than a stressful or aggressive posture, with the soles of your feet flat on the floor. If you are sitting, sit comfortably with the soles of your feet flat on the floor.
3. Gently push on the floor with your feet to become more aware of the point pressures and the pause.
4. Take 2-3 long exhale and then breathe naturally.
5. While you are feeling stress or angry. Notice the thoughts and let them flow naturally, without restriction. Notice how intense the emotion feels in your body. Eg tightness, discomfort, rapid or shallow breathing.
6. Now, shift all your attention to the soles of your feet again.
7. Slowly, move your toes, feel your shoes covering your feet, feel the texture of your socks, the curve of your arch, and the heels of your feet against the back of your shoes. If you do not have shoes on, feel the floor or carpet under the soles of your feet.
8. If you wish you can keep breathing naturally and slowly, keeping the focus on the soles of your feet until you feel calmer.
9. Remember that once you are calmer, you can walk away from the incident or situation or alternatively, if you need to, you can respond to the incident or situation with a calm and clear mind using relevant communication skills, responding skilfully rather than reacting mindlessly

This advice is of a general nature only and does not take into account particular conditions. For further assistance contact a general practitioner or psychologist.

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