

Mountain Meditation - adapted by Nikki Myers from the work of John-Kabat Zinn

Please sit tall a long spine and your head held erect. Allow your shoulders to fully relax.

Close your eyes and bring your attention to the flow of your breathing. Feel each in breath and each out breath. Observe your breathing without trying to change or regulate it . Allow your body to be still. Sit with a sense of dignity, resolve, a sense of wholeness, in this very moment.

As you sit, picture in your mind's eye as the most beautiful mountain that you've ever seen orf can imagine. Hold the image and feeling of this mountain in your mind. Let it gradually come into greater focus. Observe its shape - the massive base rooted in the earth's crust, its steep or sloping sides. Notice the massiveness, how solid, unmoving, and majestic it is from all angles, close and far away.

Whatever its appearance, just sit and breath with the image of your mountain. And then when you feel ready, bring the mountain into your body so that the mountain in your mind's eye and the body sitting become one. So that as you sit you share in the massiveness, the solidness, and the stillness and the beauty of the mountain. You become the mountain rooted in the sitting posture, your head becomes the peak, your shoulders and arms the sides of the mountain, Your buttocks and legs the solid base. Experience a sense of lifting from deep within your pelvis and spine, with each breath become more and more a breathing mountain, unwavering in your stillness, completely what you are,

beyond words and thought. A centered, rooted, unmoving mountain.

And as you sit as the mountain become aware of what changes... the the sun travels across the sky, night follows day and day follows night. There is a a canopy of stars, the moon, then the sun. Through it all, the mountain just sits, experiencing the change of each moment. Constantly changing, yet always just being itself, the mountain remains still as the seasons flow into one another and as the weather changes, moment by moment, and day by day. The mountain just sits in calmness abiding all the change.

In summer, there's no snow on the mountain except maybe the peaks. In fall, the mountain may wear a coat of colors. In winter, a blanket of snow and ice. In any season, it may find itself covered in clouds or fog or covered by freezing rain. People that come to see the mountain may comment on how beautiful it is or on how on cloudy days they can't see it's beauty. *None of this matters to the mountain. It simply remains its essential true self. The mountain's magnificence and beauty are not changed one bit by the way people see it or don't see it. Seen or unseen, in sun or clouds, hot or cold, day or night, it just sits, being itself. Through whatever, the mountain just sits unmoved by what happens in the world of appearances.*

We can embody the same unwavering stillness and rootedness as the mountain in the face of everything that changes in our own lives over minutes, over hours, over years. In our lives and in the meditation practice, we constantly experience the changing nature of mind and body. We have periods of light and dark, our

moments of color and dullness. We sometimes experience storms in our inner and outer worlds. We go through times of darkness and pain, as well as moments of joy. Even our appearance changes as we experience a weather all its own.

By becoming the mountain in our meditation practice, we are able to connect with its strength and stability and adopt it as our own. We can use its energies to support our energy to move through our moments with calmness and clarity just as the mountain does. We begin to see that our thoughts and feelings, our emotional storms and crises, even the things that happen to us, are very much like the weather on the mountain.

We tend to take it all personally but actually this weather is impersonal. The weather of our lives is not to be ignored or denied. It is to be, honored, felt, known for what it is and held in awareness. As we hold it in this way, we come to know the deeper silence, stillness, and wisdom of the mountain. Mountains teach us this. May we be still and listen.

Please now return your focus on the flow of the breath....