



## Establishing a Daily Practice

One of the keys to establishing a successful daily practice is to actually start the evening before. Instead of waiting till you wake up to set your intention for the day, set your intention to wake up with some time dedicated to reflection and/or meditation before you go to bed at night. You will find that this is extremely helpful as you've already laid the groundwork to wake up with intention.

1. Upon awakening, as soon as possible, start shaping your motivation by calling to mind that you have the opportunity to awaken to another precious day. It is wonderful if you can bring into your mind as quickly as possible a reminder of just how fortunate you truly are and set the intention to use this day as an opportunity to develop yourself and live it meaningfully. Ideally, it is best to do this while you're still in bed and as you place your feet on the ground to get out of bed, consciously step into your day with attention.

2. Before your day gets busy take a little time for reflection and/or meditation. We suggest that every day your reflection includes a little time dedicated to three thoughts to inspire your day:

- Call to mind an accurate assessment of your life – Reflect on how fortunate you are to have the life of opportunity you do. So many in our world don't even have the opportunity to have an education, have drinking water in their own home or freedom to make choices in their own lives. Bring to your awareness all of the things you have to be grateful for. Make it relevant and personal.
- Having called to mind the opportunities you have, take a moment to reflect on the impermanent nature of life. Call to mind the truth that death is certain and the time of death is uncertain. Think of all those you have known that have passed away. Don't do this in a morbid way, but as an affirmation of the precious and fragile nature of life. To remind yourself that this day is a gift and will never come again – you have it but once.
- You have a life filled with opportunities but it won't last forever. We invite you to take a little time to ask yourself what will be important to you at the time of death. Is it all the things you typically worry about throughout the day? What will really matter? What is a meaningful life to you? How do you want to live this day? Set your intention to not waste this day and live it with attention and intention, cultivating the qualities that you find meaningful.

The above three thoughts are merely a suggestion. If you find all three or any one of them beneficial, then include them in your daily reflection/contemplation time.

3. In order to cultivate attention in your life it is important to include some meditation. We usually suggest a mindfulness of breath meditation as it is extremely efficient in developing attentional balance. We have some guided meditations available for your convenience varying in length from five minutes to 24 minutes. If you are just starting a practice, it is important to not try to do too much too soon. Quality is much more important than quantity. We suggest you start off with a shorter time and then gradually increase the amount of time that you meditate. There are further directions and helpful tips in the meditation section.

4. After your meditation, we suggest you take a little time to read and reflect upon the daily quote and the activity for the day. If you find the activity to be something you are inspired to engage in, set a strong intention to do it for the day. Otherwise, call to mind something you do want to focus on today such as patience, listening, or another quality you would like to develop. Each activity invites you to stop a few times throughout the day and note some reflections. Included in the Resource Library is a "[Daily Mindfulness Check In](#)" form to print and use as a guide. If you can do this, you will find it extremely beneficial. If you found a particular activity very beneficial and would like to do it for more than one day that is absolutely appropriate.

5. At the end of the day we suggest that you take a few minutes to reflect upon the day. Take a little time to note what went well and what you would like to improve. If there is something that was difficult and you did not handle it skillfully, take a little time to reflect upon what happened and how you would like to handle it more skillfully the next time. Set strong intention to handle it skillfully next time. We have a meditation that can help you with this titled Transforming Unskillful Events. Remember to be gentle with yourself, and that this is practice, not perfection.

6. Before bed, set again your intention to wake up and dedicate some time in the morning to your mindfulness practice.