

The N.E.S.T. Meditation

There is extraordinary power in knowing ourselves very well. It brings a sense of peace, helps us get unstuck and live from our deeper truths. In mindfulness practice, this self-knowing doesn't come through analysis, but through direct awareness of what we're experiencing *right now*. The N.E.S.T. meditation is an excellent tool to help that process:

N — Number. On a scale of 0 - 10, what's your current level of reactivity? 0 is very open-hearted and peaceful. 10 is very close-hearted and stressed. 5 is the tipping point. A 2, 3 or 4 suggests something is going on, like a little anxiety or frustration, but it's not enough to close us off to others. A 6, 7 or 8 suggests that something is going on pretty intensely, and right now we're really not able to "be ourselves" and openly connect with others.

E — Emotion. Particularly with respect to your Number, what emotions, feelings or mental states are happening right now? Find three and silently label them. Here's some examples: tired, alert, confused, sad, anxious, worried, glad, grateful, frustrated, angry, apathetic, numb, embarrassed, self-doubting, stressed, etc.

S — Sensation. Particularly with respect to the Emotions present, what body sensations are connected to them? Like stress or anxiety producing tight/tense sensations in the chest, or gladness producing warm, flowing sensations all over. Or, just notice what the most obvious body sensations are right now—like the pain in your back, the pulsing in your forehead, or your hunger sensations in your tummy.

T — Thought. Particularly with respect to the previous letters, what are the main storylines running through your head? Rather than reflect on the entire thought-chain, just notice and label the "headline" or main point of those thoughts. For example, "I have so much to do tonight," or "I don't understand this exercise." You likely have 2-4 main headlines running through at any given time.