

Mindfulness of Breathing Meditation

Four Tetrads (16 Aspects)

1st Tetrad – Mindfulness of the Body (focusing on the breath itself, as part of one's experience of the body)

- Breathe in *long*; breathe out long.
- Breathe in *short*; breathe out short.
- Breathe in *sensitive to the whole body*; breathe out sensitive to the whole body (breathing is noticed in relation to the entire body, and no longer narrowly focused on the sensation of the breathing).
- Breathe in *calming the body*; breathe out calming the body.

2nd Tetrad – Mindfulness of Feelings (focusing on the feelings created by the way one pays attention to the breath)

- Breathe in sensitive to *rapture*; breathe out sensitive to rapture.
- Breathe in sensitive to *pleasure*; breathe out sensitive to pleasure.
- Breathe in sensitive to *mental fabrication*; breathe out sensitive to mental fabrication.
- Breathe in *calming mental fabrication*; breathe out calming mental fabrication.

3rd Tetrad – Mindfulness of the Mind (focusing on the state of the mind as it tries to stay with the breath)

- Breathe in *sensitive to the mind*; breathe out sensitive to the mind.
- Breathe in *satisfying the mind*; breathe out satisfying the mind.
- Breathe in *steadying the mind*; breathe out steadying the mind.
- Breathe in *releasing the mind*; breathe out releasing the mind.

4th Tetrad – Mindfulness of Dhammas (focusing on the mental qualities – the component factors that go into shaping the state of the mind – that are involved in developing dispassion for the whole process of fabrication)

- Breathe in dwelling on *impermanence* (inconstancy); breathe out dwelling on impermanence (inconstancy).
- Breathe in dwelling on *dispassion* (fading of lust); breathe out dwelling on dispassion (fading of lust).
- Breathe in dwelling on *cessation*; breathe out dwelling on cessation.
- Breathe in dwelling on *relinquishment*; breathe out dwelling on relinquishment.

The Great Rewards of This Practice

This is the kind of breath meditation, the Buddha states, that gives great rewards. It develops the *four establishments of mindfulness*; it develops all the *seven factors for awakening*.

You're developing **mindfulness** in keeping the breath in mind. As you analyze how you're doing this practice skillfully or unskillfully, how you're fabricating your sense of the body and mind in the present through the breath and the feelings and perceptions around the breath, that develops the **analysis** of qualities as a factor for awakening. You try to do your best to fabricate these things in skillful ways, and abandon any unskillful fabrications – that's your **persistence, energy, effort** as a factor for awakening. As you do these things skillfully, refreshment and ease arise – those are the **rapture** and the **serenity** factors for awakening. You develop **concentration** and the ability to watch with **equanimity** all these things as they're happening. When you have all these seven factors together, they're the qualities you need to bring the mind to awakening. And these factors are all being developed as you practice these sixteen steps.

Source: Notes are based on the following transcript: Thanissaro Bhikkhu. "The Breath All the Way (16 Steps)" (October 2010, No. 3). http://www.dhammatalks.org/mp3_index.html (Dhamma talks and writings of Thanissaro Bhikkhu – <http://www.dhammatalks.org/>)