

3rd and 4th instructions of the BODY TETRAD

Ayya Khema, in Who is My Self, writes about the advantages of practicing mindfulness of the body.

1. “One of the advantages of being mindful of the body is that while we practice, we are also keeping the mind in its place, not allowing it to roam discursively.
2. A second advantage is that mindfulness purifies. If we are actually watching what we are doing, we cannot in that moment be upset, angry, or greedy. The Buddha counsels us over and over to use the body as a mindfulness-object. In the first place, we can feel the body and touch it; we do not have to search for its presence. If we practice in this way, we will realize in a very short time the peacefulness that arises, the absence of all mental turmoil. For how can we be aggravated, or desirous, or disliking while we are watching what is actually happening?
3. Thirdly, body-mindfulness keeps us in the present moment, and eventually we may learn that there is no other moment.”

Read the first tetrad

First tetrad initially helping us get established in samatha or tranquilly or calm
Later we'll come back and revisit the body from more of a vipasyana perspective
but even in the initial bare attention of the body some wisdom about being
embodied, the nature of having a body, may arise
Helping set up the conditions for concentration by bringing us to what's actually
happening with our breath and body.
Out of being stuck up in the head fantasizing, fabricating
Practicing just noticing the body,
Can take a while to become proficient at this but it can get to the point where you
can just check into the body to become present and find your breath during any
activity to ground yourself in mindfulness.

3rd and 4th Contemplations of the Body (*Kaya*) Tetrad

...Sensitive to the whole body...

Awareness opening up to the whole body, breath no longer the exclusive object of focus. The breath is still there to help us concentrate and is part of our overall experience of the body.

...Calming the whole body...

Our awareness of the body calms (willing for it to be as it is without reacting)
The experience of the body itself calms and is less distracting (it is unified with an overall field of mindfulness)
Can identify the 4th contemplation arising naturally as the fruit of the third (if we become sensitive to the whole body it will calm as a result of *paticca samuppada* or dependent origination)

TWO PATHS: CONTROL & RELEASE

1. Control

“Control” here is used in a descriptive and neutral sense, not negative

Wise use of discipline

Not harsh or forced

Watch out for the far enemy: alienated awareness

2. Release

Letting be

Being with what is without changing it

Watch out for the far enemy: confusion and laziness

Alan Wallace, in Buddhism with an Attitude, says mindfulness “is a state of stable attention that may be wide open and spacious or tightly focused, as one desires.” ...
*“Buddhism offers many methods of training attentional stability that can be categorized into two basic approaches: control and release. The **control approach** entails being able to focus and sustain attention on a chosen object at will. The goal of the control model is to become master of one’s mind...To assess stability of attention, observe whether the chosen object is held in the attention or not. To assess vividness of attention, observe whether the object is clear or not...The second approach to meditative stabilization is the **release model**...Instead of applying specific antidotes to all the toxins in the mind, one simply tries to stop polluting one’s mind-stream with grasping onto afflictive thoughts and emotions. This can be done quite simply by maintaining one’s awareness without distraction and without mental grasping...The technical term for the release model is “settling the mind in its natural state.”*

Control approach:

Causing the flesh body to calm through calming the breath body (the breath is the conditioner of the body)

- This is done through building by strengthening our concentration (*samadhi*) on the breath
 - Make the effort to keep your attention with the breath moment by moment, unwavering, and building toward one-pointed attention
 - By building jhana our experience of the flesh body calms (not necessary to enter jhana completely)
- This can also be done by focusing on allowing the breaths to lengthen (let go of any hurrying of the breath)
 - More a “not doing” than a “doing.”
 - Forcing the breaths to lengthen is not skillful as it will give rise to tension that is the opposite of the contemplation on calming

Release approach:

Letting the body be as it is in each moment

Experiencing it with curiosity, kindness, precision and appreciation

If there’s some aspect of the body we resist being sensitive to we gently soften around that experience and lean or ease into it

Reactivity in the mind is calmed which then affects our experience of breath and body (the quality of breath will change naturally in this approach)

THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP OF BREATH AND BODY AND MIND

Even though we're mindful of things just as they are (*sati*) the very act of our being aware creates a new condition that tends to calm the breath and body (*kaya*)
Calming the breath and flesh bodies has the fruit of calming the mind *citta* and provides a basis for the mind to do the further work in the sutta.
The body tetrad provides a *samatha* (calm, tranquility) basis from which to proceed with further *samatha* and *vipasyana bhavana*

Part of the third and fourth contemplations is noticing to the inter-relationship of breath, body and mind.

Meditations:

Bring out a middle way attitude to the body transcending two extremes

Identifying with the body (I am the body)

Negating the body

We have a body, we are aware of it without being attached and identifying wholly with it