



Walking Meditation

by

Maria Brown

Many factors - such as my life changes and choices, family, community and structural facts - have combined to protect or undermine my mental health. I find that a type of walking meditation helps to bring me back into balance. During these meditations I practice mindfulness. I ask myself, "What is my mind full of today and how is it affecting me?"

So what do I meditate on while I'm walking? Mostly remaining upright and making sure the wheels of my walker are not hindered, which would throw me headfirst onto the ground.

Next, I meditate on my surroundings. I can't go too far without needing a break so I sit where I am and look out at the treeline. I search the grounds for squirrel activity or butterflies. I listen for traffic or children at play. In other words, I meditate on life. I ground my feet and absorb the healing power of the earth. When I sit still with my feet flat on the ground, I can feel it, sense it, hear it as its energy begins to course through me. I can smell the life going on around me - the hint of trees and the musk of the soil.

With all these factors satisfied, I consider what stimulates me these days and what I am grateful for today. I allow many images to drift through my mind. The presentation and flavors of foods, the smiles on my grandchildren's faces, the time I went with friends over a Mother's Day weekend to Maumee for the bass run. I caught a fish with an unbaited hook. The times I cursed the rain while standing at the bus stop without an umbrella and dreaded the walk home, only to have my mood lighten at the thought that if it were just 30 degrees colder snow would be falling and I would not be complaining as it fell on my shoulders.

I have walked in blazing sun during the dog days of summer, the fragrant leaves falling in autumn, the bitter cold and stillness of winter, and the buzzing vibrations of spring. I have to admit that my best exercise is walking, so as long as I'm able to do so I will!

Walking pushes me past the frailty of aging, the dysfunction of my body, my family restructuring as my parents transitioned and I was suddenly bumped up the hierarchical ladder only to find that "mother" takes on an entirely different meaning now that my son has a family. Losing my place required a lot of adjusting and walking. Moving past the limitations of my social-economic status and a national community which refuses to acknowledge that we are here and here to stay.

In closing, I'd like to encourage those who can to spend a few minutes a day in the elements. Feel the wind and the rain on your face again. Remember the child you were who was excited to jump into every puddle of water you saw. Remember the walk to or from your girl/boyfriend's house holding hands. Remember the sound of crickets singing an opera until you got close. Remember fireflies. Remember catching snowflakes on your tongue. All these things are outside. And if you can't physically go outside, look out the window! - Maria Brown

Many thanks to Maria for her thoughts on meditative walking. We'd love to have you join us. You can learn how to take part by clicking [HERE](#). There is no obligation to share, but if you'd feel the urge, please email your submission to AgelessMindProject@gmail.com.

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