A Way With Words

Some forms of meditation use a short phrase or an inspirational passage that is memorized and repeated silently as the focal point for meditation. For some, having words to focus attention on works well and is very appealing. Another benefit of using an inspirational phrase or passage is that the ideals of the inspirational words are incorporated into your consciousness. It is like planting seeds in your consciousness and watering them with your attention so that your best self and ideals will flourish in daily life.

- Try Dr. Herbert Benson’s generic relaxation technique, a form of meditation which uses a short inspirational phrase on the out-breath. See Steps to Elicit the Relaxation Response [1].

- For an in-depth experience with Passage Meditation and Eknath Easwaran’s Eight Point Program visit the Blue Mountain Center of Meditation website [2].

Break into the peace within,
Hold attention in stillness
And in the world outside
You will ably master
The ten thousand things  ---  Lao Tsu

The secret of health for both mind and body is not to mourn for the past, not to worry about the future, or not to anticipate troubles, but to live the present moment wisely and earnestly. ---  The Buddha

Sometimes we want something different and need something different on a particular day, so a word meditation is really nice because it it's kind of a heavier anchor, so to speak, and it allows us to get more grounded. And the meditation that - the word meditation that I really enjoy is called Gatha and it's from the Koru approach. We use a meditation poem adapted by Thich Nhat Hanh and it involves words and phrases that are repeated. And students are invited to say the words and phrases silently to themselves after the instructor. And try to link the words and phrases to their breath as
best they can. Okay. So first involves getting into a meditation position. Feet on the floor and just repeating words and phrases after me. And you repeat them silently to yourself. As best you can, you'll try to link those words and phrases to your breath.

Right, so I'll basically say the words and phrases first and there are a couple of other instructions so there are very very simple words and phrases they're very very simple words and phrases and these are examples of phrases but sometimes I invite students to make up their own and use words that are meaningful to them.

And the phrases are I know I am breathing in. I know I am breathing out. I calm my body and mind. I smile. I dwell in the present moment. I know this is a precious moment.

Okay, that's it. It sounds a little, you know, woowoo, but it really isn't. Okay it's really very effective and it works.

With the phrase I smile I'll invite students to actually put a smile on their face and just notice what happens right and that's a little positive psychology and sometimes even if students don't feel like smiling and they're feeling kind of down or blue just putting a smile on their face during this meditation can make a difference so they're invited to pay attention to that and see what happens.

Should we try it? Ok.

So I'll invite you to close your eyes and repeat the phrases after me:

I know I'm breathing in.
I know I'm breathing out.
I'm calm my body and mind.
I smile.
I dwell in the present moment.
I know this is a precious moment.

Now we'll repeat that again. As best you can you try to link the phrases to your in and out breath.

Know I'm breathing in.
Know I'm breathing out.
Calm body and mind.
Inhale.
Smile.
Exhale
Know this is a present moment.
I know this is a precious moment.

breathing in

breathing out
calm
smile
present moment
precious moment
in
out

calm
smile
present moment
precious moment
in
now you can try on your own maybe just saying in and out or calm and just linking the words that you say to yourself to your in and out breath

I'll invite you to again feel your feet on the floor knowing that you can return and use this
poem meditation called Gatha any time.

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