

Sixty Second Serenity Practice

by Leslie Temple-Thurston

Change is fast becoming the defining characteristic of our current times. As the transformational energies entering collective, global consciousness accelerate, we are, as a species, having to learn to become comfortable and fluid with rapid change. Not an easy thing for Homo Sapiens, who traditionally becomes very uneasy and resistant when cycles of change come around. Rapid change leads to our perception of a speeding up of time. In the next four years we will experience a continuous sense of time's speeding up. For those of us on a spiritual path who consciously and pro-actively embrace change, it is essential that we develop tools which give us the capacity to adapt and flow with changes. One of the essentials is being able to remain balanced while thoughts, emotions and even our physical world is shifting and moving. Maintaining balance means staying centered. Staying centered makes for an effortless passage through inner and outer changes. If you have ever seen a potter centering a lump of clay on a potter's wheel, or have ever thrown a pot yourself, you are aware that when the clay is perfectly centered and balanced, it appears quite motionless on the wheel no matter how fast it is turning. Whereas, if the clay is not perfectly centered and the wheel is accelerated, the imbalance soon exaggerates into such a wobble that the clay can actually spin right off the wheel.

This is a metaphor for our state of consciousness in these accelerated times. All the indicators are pointing towards increased acceleration, especially over the next four years. And we must prepare ourselves to meet the challenge. Thoughts and emotions have the capacity to pull our awareness off center. Especially when faced with what appears to be a crisis, we get hooked and tend to spin out. If we foster a deeper understanding of the energy dynamics of being centered and of spinning out, we can consciously remember to realign our energy by cultivating the habit of centering several times a day. The centering technique that I am going to describe here has the effect of balancing the awareness through the medium of the subtle body and can be done practically anywhere at anytime. In fact, it is advantageous to our growth into the awake state to practice it in the midst of the commotion of life.

Using our capacity to be in the witness, we must use vigilance to watch ourselves throughout the day. We must observe dispassionately what sort of state we are in all the time. The criteria we would be watching for are tiredness or tension in the body; a slumping posture; irritability; exhaustion; tunnel vision on a mental, emotional, or physical level; or feelings of overwhelm, depression and boredom. These states are often precursors to hypersensitive over-reactions, which are the kind of events that throw us off. As soon as we find any of the above, we should stop what we are doing and employ a centering technique. The one I will describe here takes roughly a minute and can ensure peace of mind throughout the day. Most important is that you give yourself permission to stay centered. With the forming of this intention, you will have a purpose to your witnessing and a promise to yourself that you can cope with whatever situations arise, anytime, anywhere. The centering technique unfolds as follows.

Sit (even in your car) or stand (even in a line at the bank or supermarket) in a balanced and symmetrical position with the weight evenly distributed between both sides of the body.

Take some long, deep, releasing breaths, and mentally remind yourself to let go. Do this breathing enough times to ease all of the tension spots in your body: diaphragm, shoulders, neck, jaw, scalp, calf muscles. Now become aware of the soles of your feet touching the ground. If sitting, become aware of your sit bones connecting to the surface of your seat. Expand your awareness and sense your surroundings. If you observe a negative reaction, let it go, until you feel neutral and accepting. Next, become aware of the third eye area, between and slightly above the eyebrows. Hold the attention there for about five seconds. Then locate a spot in the center of your head by drawing the attention back about three inches from the third eye. (If you need help finding the center of your head, imagine this third-eye line intersecting with a line that connects your ears.) Three glands reside here, roughly in the middle of your head. They are the pituitary, the hypothalamus, and pineal glands. All serve a complex, vital function in maintaining your sense of mental, emotional, and physical well-being. After the focus of energy is established and has built-up in the center of the head, then drop the awareness down through the middle of the body to the base of the spine. This spot at the base of the spine is called the perineum and is between the anus and the genitals. Hold the awareness there, and allow the energy to build in that spot for awhile. Then move the energy slowly back up the mid-line again, to the center of the head.

This mid-line of the body, roughly corresponding to the spine but slightly in front of the spine, is not only the axis of the physical body, but is the source that gives rise to all of your subtle bodies as well. In Sanskrit, it is known as the *Shushumna*. It is the stillpoint, the eye of the storm, so to speak. It is also known as the middle pillar, the tree of life, and the core (after which CoreLight is named). Once aligned with the Shushumna, the awareness can realign all of the other systems. The power of this centered alignment is such that it pulls the energy patterns of thought and emotion back into balance. Now simultaneously hold the attention at the spot in the center of the head and along the Shushumna, allowing the energy to build and build. As it builds, energy and awareness expand and radiate beyond the body and out into the aura. Keep the focus on the center of the head and on the Shushumna, and let it emanate from there, filling the body and the aura completely.

The longer you can hold this position, the more you will experience a release of emotional and mental patterning, and the more the body will restore itself. With practice this configuration of centered awareness, which is really a little mini meditation, can become permanently instituted. It is aided by a more formal practice of meditation, but it really serves the overall purpose of meditation, which is to become centered at all times no matter what you are doing, no matter what is happening in your life. Eventually, the permanent instituting of this particular centered configuration will naturally give rise to the state of samadhi, which is unity consciousness.

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