

## SUBWAY MEDITATION (SEATED)

Meditating on the subway is probably not ideal, but it sure beats getting aggravated with your inner dialogue or skipping a meditation session altogether. However, it is important to maintain some level of awareness for your safety. So, please do not attempt this meditation if it's crowded or if you notice someone around you who is drunk, acting erratically, or doing anything else that might seem threatening or unpredictable. You don't want to have your bag or wallet stolen or miss some kind of approaching danger. And, meditation-wise, you can always try again later.

- Check-in with your environment and people around you to make sure that it's safe to practice now.
- Turn off your iPod or mp3 player. You might want to keep wearing the earphones in order to reduce the likelihood that someone will disturb you, however.
- Sit with your feet flat on the floor and legs uncrossed.
- Have an erect, relaxed posture. You might want to sit on the edge of the seat to ensure that you remain alert, while keeping your spine long and naturally curved. Some seats will provide this kind of support naturally, like the benches on the 4, 5 trains.
- Keep your head level and parallel to the floor.
- With your eyes open, rest your gaze on the floor of the train, about 2 to 3 feet in front of you. Be careful to keep your head up and not drift downwards with your gaze.
- Breathe naturally through your nose. If the subway is particularly malodorous, you can breathe through your mouth by slightly lowering your jaw.
- Mentally, you have two options of where to rest your attention in order to make sure that you do not miss your subway stop.
  - *Mindfulness meditation option:* Turn your attention to your breathing. Simply notice the sensations in your chest and abdomen with each breath in and out. Do not change your breathing in any way. Simply notice it. Maintain your awareness of your breathing until the announcement of your subway stop.
  - *Concentration-based option:* Determine the number of subway stops until your destination. After each station, repeat silently the number of subway stops remaining until you reach where you want to go. So, for example, if you're traveling the four stops on the Q train from 7th Ave. in Brooklyn to Union Square, then you'll count "4, 4, 4, 4..." from 7th Ave. to Atlantic, then switch to "3, 3, 3, 3..." and so on. You arrive at your station when the train stops after you have been repeating "1, 1, 1, 1..." For meditations like this one, it is often helpful to time your repetition in sync with your breathing (i.e., repeat the number with each breathe in and out).
- Stop the meditation and leave the train once you reach your stop. After you exit the car and walk a safe distance away from the edge of the platform, take a moment to pause and notice your mindset in moving forward. Congratulate yourself on participating in the meditation, and purposefully determine your next course of action before switching back to automatic pilot. If you're going to run for your connecting train, do so with awareness!