

## WALKING MEDITATION (Source- Kornfield, Jack *A Wise Heart*)

*Walking meditation is a simple and universal practice for developing calm, connectedness, and embodied awareness.*

Select a quiet place where you can walk comfortably back and forth, indoors or out, about ten to thirty paces in length. Begin by standing at one end of this “walking path,” with your feet firmly planted on the ground. Let your hands rest easily, wherever they are comfortable. Take a few deep breaths and then open your senses to see and feel the whole surroundings. After a minute, bring your attention back to focus on the body. Center yourself and feel how your body is standing on the earth. Feel the pressure on the bottoms of your feet and the other natural sensations of standing. Let yourself be present and alert.

Begin to walk a bit more slowly than usual. Let yourself walk with a sense of ease and dignity. Relax and let your walking be gracious and natural, as if you were a king or queen out for a royal stroll. Pay attention to your body. With each step feel the sensations of lifting your foot and leg off the earth. Then mindfully place your foot back down. Feel each step fully as you walk. When you reach the end of your path, pause for a moment. Center yourself, carefully turn around, and pause again so that you can be aware of the first step as you walk back. You can experiment with the speed, walking at whatever pace keeps you most present.

Continue to walk back and forth with mindfulness for ten or twenty minutes or longer. As with the breath in sitting, your attention will wander away many times. As soon as you notice this, acknowledge softly where it went: *wandering, thinking, hearing, planning*. Then return to feel the next step. As with training a puppy, you will come back a thousand times. Whether you have been away for one second or for ten minutes, no matter. Simply acknowledge where you have been, relax, and come back to being alive here and now with the next step you take.

Use this walking meditation to calm and collect yourself and to live more wakefully in your body...you can learn to enjoy walking for its own sake instead of being lost in planning and thinking. In this simple way, you can be truly present, bringing your body, heart and mind together as you move through your life.