

Walking Meditation extract from  
Orientation Joshua Tree 4 28-Feb-09

Now, walking meditation: Do not put your attention on your feet; stay with your spiritual friend. Keep radiating loving-kindness to your spiritual friend while you're walking. The walking is for exercise, to get your blood flowing. Now one thing that happens in retreat and it's very frustrating to me but I can't get people to stop doing it, is you'll be sitting on the floor and you say, "Well, I'm uncomfortable." And it's been forty-five minutes or an hour or something like that, and then you get up off the floor, and you sit in the chair. Don't do that. The walking meditation is every bit as important as the sitting meditation. If you get up from the floor and just go to a chair and sit, what happens is your mind starts to dull out. Because you haven't got your circulation going so well. The walking meditation, you don't have to do it super slow, walk at a normal pace, but stay with your spiritual friend. Now, at first the walking meditation is going to be somewhat difficult because you're not used to it. And you're used to walking around, walk from here over to there, you're used to thinking this and thinking that and ho-humming around. So the walking meditation is a very important aspect to help break old habits of thinking while you're walking instead of radiating loving-kindness while you're walking. Now I want to keep your meditation going from the time of your sitting, getting up, going outside, keep your meditation on your spiritual friend. Walk no less than fifteen minutes. When your walking is good, you can walk longer. OK? You can walk up to forty-five minutes; I don't think any longer than that is really useful. You get tired after that.

So after you do your walking you stay with your spiritual friend, come in, sit again.

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Now, let's go back to the walking a little bit. While you're walking, don't be looking around too much. Where your eyes go, there goes your mind. And your mind will start thinking about this and that and become distracted. Now at first the walking is going to be difficult because you're not used to staying with your object of meditation while you're walking. That's OK. That's only natural. As soon as you

notice that your mind is distracted, let it be, relax, smile, come back to your object of meditation. While you're walking, if you keep your eyes down six or seven feet in front of you, not in a real focused way but just a gentle gaze, and stay with your object of meditation, this is the way to do the practice. Not by putting your attention on anything other than your spiritual friend. Now, after fifteen, twenty minutes, it's time to come back and do the sitting. You come back, you keep your meditation going all the time. You don't put breaks in it. You keep your meditation, stay with your spiritual friend. Come, you sit down, now the first ten minutes of the meditation, you start sending loving and kind thoughts to yourself again. After then minutes you go back to your same spiritual friend, and stay with them the rest of the time. Again, while you're walking, while you're eating, while you're going to the bathroom, while you're taking a shower, it doesn't matter. Stay with your spiritual friend.

Now what can happen, is your meditation can hit a space where it becomes very good. And now it's time to do a little bit of walking because your body's starting to achy a little bit, it just feels right that you should get up and walk. Stay with your spiritual friend. You can get into a jhāna while you're sitting, and you can keep that jhāna going while you're walking.

Transcript prepared by Uma Sarason  
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