

Meditation on the Soles of the Feet Training

From Singh, Lancioni, Winton, Adkins, Singh & Singh (2007)*

Skill

Controlling the urge to be physically or verbally aggressive

Rationale

When an incident occurs or a situation arises that typically makes you angry and you feel like either verbally threatening or hitting someone, it is important to control these feelings. We try not to threaten or hurt people when we disagree with them. There is a simple way of quickly calming yourself.

Steps of the Skill

1. If you are standing, stand in a natural rather than an aggressive posture, with the soles of your feet flat on the floor.
2. If you are sitting, sit comfortably with the soles of your feet flat on the floor.
4. Cast your mind back to an incident that made you very angry. Stay with the anger.
5. You are feeling angry, and angry thoughts are flowing through your mind. Let them flow naturally, without restriction. Stay with the anger. Your body may show signs of anger (e.g., rapid breathing).
6. Now, shift all your attention to the soles of your feet.
7. Slowly, move your toes, feel your shoes covering your feet, feel the texture of your socks or hose, the curve of your arch, and the heels of your feet against the back of your shoes. If you do not have shoes on, feel the floor or carpet with the soles of your feet.
8. Keep breathing naturally and focus on the soles of your feet until you feel calm.
9. Practice this mindfulness exercise until you can use it wherever you are and whenever an incident occurs that may lead to you being verbally or physically aggressive.
10. Remember that once you are calm, you can walk away from the incident or situation with a smile on your face because you controlled your anger. Alternatively, if you need to, you can respond to the incident or situation with a calm and clear mind without verbal threats or physical aggression.

Scenes to Use in Role Plays

1. Responding to someone who is saying something that offends you.
2. Responding to a peer who threatens to hit you.
3. Responding to a staff member or co-worker who is not nice to you.
4. Responding to someone who pushes you around.

Special Considerations When Teaching This Skill

1. Angry thoughts occur to all of us but not all of us act on all of them. In addition, anger can be justifiable and necessary depending on the context. Therefore, we do not want to eliminate anger entirely.
2. Anger is a strength because it provides us with information about the situation we are in, and alerts us to do something positive to change the situation.
3. Do not ask the individual to actively stop angry thoughts. The thoughts stop by themselves when the focus of attention shifts fully to the soles of the feet.
4. Remind the individual to breathe naturally. It is not necessary to take deep breaths.
5. This type of meditation can be done while standing, sitting, or walking slowly. Of course, with some modifications, it can be done while lying down but may not be convenient in the rush of daily activities.