

## **Why do Buddhists meditate?**

**Video transcript for 'Meditation, step by step', with Bettany Hughes and Ani Lhamo.**

**Bettany Hughes:** I've come to the Tibetan Buddhist centre at Samye Ling in Scotland to discuss meditation with Ani Lhamo, who's been a Buddhist nun here for over 25 years.

Can you tell me why you meditate?

**Ani Lhamo:** It's something that totally sustains me and it's a bit like taking medicine or vitamins. Normally we think mainly in terms of keeping our body healthy, so meditation is about keeping the mind healthy.

Definitely life is much more peaceful, happier, easier to achieve what we can achieve. Easier to assess and not worry about the things we can't achieve. Easier to relate to the world, to others and of course to oneself.

**Bettany Hughes:** How do you actually manage to stop yourself getting distracted when your mind is racing and full of other things?

**Ani Lhamo:** To be able to settle the mind we use some kind of object and the easiest one in a way, is the breath, because it's there anyway. So what we do is just bring our attention onto the breathing, not to try and change the way we are breathing, to notice it.

The simple act of following the movement of the breath is something very profound.

**Bettany Hughes:** Just step, by step, talk me through a typical meditation process for you.

**Ani Lhamo:** The first thing is to sit in a comfortable, but balanced position, with the back straight, but not too tense. And then the idea is to allow oneself to relax physically and also mentally.

So whatever it is that is disturbing us, big worries about work, life and all that's going on, let that recede a little.

And to help that process, follow the movement of the breath or focus on one thing and use that as a means of being less distracted by the multiplicity of thoughts and emotions.

In the beginning our minds are like a crazy waterfall, just cascading down and carrying us with it and gradually it becomes more stable but meandering river running along.

And eventually the aim is to be like a vast still ocean. Anything can happen, but the ocean itself is not disturbed.