

**Mindfulness Meditation Lesson #1 (July 13, 2013)**  
**“Staying Centered from the Start”**  
**--by The Gardarev Center--**

[Note: A suggested list of additional materials can be found at the end of this lesson.]

Before most artists and writers even turn on their computers, take up a paint brush or pick up a camera, thoughts begin to fill their heads, thoughts that often give rise to feelings of self-doubt about the worth of their work and their ability to get the task at hand done. If left to run rampant, these thoughts can greatly hinder the creative process. Some people find it useful to do the following about 5 minutes before they start to work on a project:

1. Assuming you have no physical or emotional challenges to doing so, find a quiet place, sit in a comfortable chair or lie down on a comfortable surface in loose clothing. You might want to use a clock to let you know you have 5 minutes to do this lesson.
2. Assuming you have no physical or emotional challenges to doing so, breathe easily and gently, slowly tracking your “in” and “out” breaths. Do this for one minute in a relaxed manner.
3. Then simply notice the thoughts that start to fill your head. Just notice them without judging them. When you realize you are “thinking about these thoughts”, just gently go back to noticing your “in” and “out” breaths. Don’t force yourself to breath in any particular manner. Just breath naturally and easily.
4. Follow this exercise for 5 minutes. At the end of the 5 minutes, gently open your eyes and slowly move back into regular physical activity. Then start your project. Later on in the day, check in with yourself to see if you found following this lesson helpful.

**Resource Materials:**

Below is a list of resource materials that you might find useful to supplement this lesson #1:

1. Book: The Artist’s Way, by Julia Cameron
2. Book: The Relaxation Response, by Herbert Benson