



# UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

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## **Meditation for Election Stress**

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As we approach Election Day, I would like to run away from the whole mess, or turn back the clock much more than one hour and start over, maybe, back in the early 60s when everything was looking up. Political divides in our country can give rise to feelings of fear, sadness, and anger. Such feelings can lead to acting out, blaming, or giving up — none of which are helpful or enlightening for ourselves, or those around us.

Mindfulness can help us experience uncomfortable feelings without being overwhelmed by them. This ancient Buddhist practice enables us to feel our feelings with interest, presence, and balance — giving us time to consider a helpful, creative response, instead of shooting from the hip.

To experience this for yourself, I invite you to sit comfortably, upright but relaxed, feet flat on the floor, eyes closed. Let your attention settle on your breath — in and out. Breathe normally, naturally, but observe where each breath begins and ends. Is there a tiny space between the end of each in-breath and each out-breath?

Is there a space at the end of each out-breath before the next in-breath begins?

How do you feel right now?

Are there any thoughts or emotions that you notice trying to take you away from focusing on your breath.

If so what does that thought or emotion feel like in your body?

Is it located anywhere?

Is it in your throat, your chest, your abdomen, your jaw? Whatever, or wherever, it might be, once you notice it, see if you can gently let it go, by refocusing your mind on your breath.

In the minute of silence to follow, continue to breathe in and out, observing your breath. Should thoughts or emotions arise, note that you are thinking or feeling something, gently let whatever it is go, and return your attention back to your breath.