

## **Guided Sitting Meditation**

This guided sitting meditation will help you learn to simply be and to look within yourself with mindfulness and equanimity. Allow yourself to switch from the usual mode of doing to a mode of non-doing. Of simply being. As you allow your body to become still, bring your attention to the fact that you are breathing. And become aware of the movement of your breath as it comes into your body and as it leaves your body. Not manipulating the breath in any way or trying to change it. Simply being aware of it and of the feelings associated with breathing. And observing the breath deep down in your belly. Feeling the abdomen as it expands gently on the inbreath, and as it falls back towards your spine on the outbreath. Being totally here in each moment with each breath. Not trying to do anything, not trying to get any place, simply being with your breath.

You will find that from time to time your mind will wander off into thoughts, fantasies, anticipations of the future or the past, worrying, memories, whatever. When you notice that your attention is no longer here and no longer with your breathing, and without judging yourself, bring your attention back to your breathing and ride the waves of your breathing, fully conscious of the duration of each breath from moment to moment. Every time you find your mind wandering off the breath, gently bringing it back to the present, back to the moment-to-moment observing of the flow of your breathing. Using your breath to help you tune into a state of relaxed awareness and stillness.

Now as you observe your breathing, you may find from time to time that you are becoming aware of sensations in your body. As you maintain awareness of your breathing, see if it is possible to expand the field of your awareness so that it includes a sense of your body as a whole as you sit here. Feeling your body, from head to toe, and becoming aware of all the sensations in your body.

Being here with whatever feelings and sensations come up in any moment without judging them, without reacting to them, just being fully here, fully aware of whatever you're experiencing. And again whenever you notice that your mind wandered off, just bringing it back to your breathing and your body as you sit here not going anywhere, not doing anything just simply being, simply sitting. Moment to moment, being fully present, fully with yourself.

Now as you sit here once again allowing the field of your awareness to expand. This time, expanding your awareness to include thoughts as they move through your mind. So letting your breathing and sense of your body be in the background and

allowing the thinking process itself to be the focus of your awareness. And rather than following individual thoughts and getting involved in the content and going from one thought to the next, simply seeing each thought as it comes up in your mind as a thought and letting the thoughts just come and go as you sit and dwell in stillness, witnessing them and observing them. Whatever they are...just observing them as events in the field of your consciousness...as they come into your awareness and they linger and as they dissolve.

If you find yourself at any point drawn into this stream of thinking and you notice that you are no longer observing them, just coming back to observing them as events and using your breathing and the sense of your body to anchor you and stabilize you in the present.

The thoughts can take any form, they can have any content and they can be either neutral or very highly charged. If thoughts come up that have fear in them, then just be aware of fear being here and letting these thoughts come and go. The same for worries, preoccupations, and so on. Regardless of the feeling that a thought might create for you, just observing it as simply a thought and letting it be here without pursuing it or without rejecting it. Noticing that from moment to moment, new thoughts will come and go.

As the meditation ends, you might give yourself credit for having spent this time nourishing yourself in a deep way by dwelling in this state of non-doing, in this state of being. For having intentionally made time for yourself to simply be who you are. And as you move back into the world, allow the benefits of this practice to expand into every aspect of your life.

## **Meditation on Loving kindness**

In this meditation on loving kindness, allow yourself to switch from the usual mode of doing to a mode of non-doing. Of simply being. As your body becomes still, bring your attention to the fact that you are breathing. And become aware of the movement of your breath as it comes into your body and as it leaves your body. Not manipulating the breath in any way or trying to change it. Simply being aware of it and of the feelings associated with breathing. And observing the breath deep down in your belly. Feeling the abdomen as it expands gently on the inbreath, and as it falls back towards your spine on the outbreath. Being totally here in each moment with each breath. Not trying to do anything, not trying to get any place, simply being with your breath. Giving full care and attention to each inbreath and to each outbreath. As they follow one after the other in a never ending cycle and flow. If distracting thoughts arise, acknowledge them, then return to the practice.

And now bringing to mind someone for whom you have deep feelings of love. Seeing or sensing this person and noticing your feelings for them arise in your body. It may be simply a smile that spreads across your face, or your chest becomes warm. Whatever the effects, allow them to be felt.

Now letting go of this person in your imagination, and keeping in awareness the feelings that have arisen.

Bring yourself to mind now. And seeing if you can offer lovingkindness to yourself, by letting these words become your words...

**May I be happy**

**May I be healthy**

**May I ride the waves of my life**

**May I live in peace**

**No matter what I am given**

And noticing the feelings that arise and letting them be, as you look within yourself with mindfulness and equanimity.

When you are comfortable, try offering lovingkindness to someone who supports you, who has always “been on your side.” Bringing this person to mind, imagining them perhaps across from you, and letting these words become your words...

**May you be happy**

**May you be healthy**

**May you ride the waves of your life**

**May you live in peace**

**No matter what you are given**

Once your feelings flow easily to a loved one, turn your attention now to someone with whom you have difficulty – it’s best not to start with the most difficult person, but perhaps someone who brings up feelings or irritation or annoyance. And seeing if you can let these words become your words as you keep this person in awareness...

**May you be happy**

**May you be healthy**

**May you ride the waves of your life**

**May you live in peace**

**No matter what you are given**

Notice the sensations and feelings that arise within you. And seeing if you can just allow them and let them be.

And now bringing to mind the broader community of which you are a part. You might imagine your family, your workmates, your neighbours, or fan out your attention until you

include all persons and creatures on the planet. And including yourself in this offering of lovingkindness, as you let these words become your words...

**May we be happy**

**May we be healthy**

**May we ride the waves of our lives**

**May we live in peace**

**No matter what we are given**

Notice the sensations and feelings that arise within you. Sitting with them for a few moments until you are ready to end the practice.

## **Awareness of Breath**

This guided meditation on the breath will help you learn to simply be and to look within yourself with mindfulness and equanimity. Allow yourself to switch from the usual mode of doing to a mode of non-doing. Of simply being. Sitting in an erect posture, either on a straight back chair or on a cushion. As you allow your body to become still, bring your attention to the fact that you are breathing. And become aware of the movement of your breath as it comes into your body and as it leaves your body. Not manipulating the breath in any way or trying to change it. Simply being aware of it and of the feelings associated with breathing. And observing the breath deep down in your belly. Feeling the abdomen as it expands gently on the inbreath, and as it falls back towards your spine on the outbreath. Being totally here in each moment with each breath. Not trying to do anything, not trying to get any place, simply being with your breath. Giving full care and attention to each inbreath and to each outbreath. As they follow one after the other in a never ending cycle and flow.

You will find that from time to time your mind will wander off into thoughts. When you notice that your attention is no longer here and no longer with your breathing, and without judging yourself, bring your attention back to your breathing and ride the waves of your breathing, fully conscious of the duration of each breath from moment to moment. Every time you find your mind wandering off the breath, gently bringing it back to the present, back to the moment-to-moment observing of the flow of your breathing. Using your breath as an anchor to focus your attention, to bring you back to the present whenever you notice that your mind is becoming absorbed or reactive. Using your breath to help you tune into a state of relaxed awareness and stillness.

Now as you observe your breathing, you may find from time to time that you are becoming aware of sensations in your body. As you maintain awareness of your breathing, see if it is possible to expand the field of your awareness so that it includes a sense of your body as a whole as you sit here. Feeling your body, from head to toe, and becoming aware of all the sensations in your body. So that now you are observing not only the flow of breathing, but the sense of your body as a whole.

Being here with whatever feelings and sensations come up in any moment without judging them, without reacting to them, just being fully here, fully aware. Totally present with whatever your feelings are and with your breath and a sense of your body as a whole. And again whenever you notice that your mind wandering off, just bringing it back to your breathing and your body as you sit here not going anywhere, not doing anything just simply being, simply sitting. Moment to moment, being fully present, fully with yourself.

Reestablishing your awareness on the body as a whole and on the breath as it moves in and out of your body. Coming back to a sense of fullness of each inbreath, and the fullness of each outbreath. If you find yourself at any point drawn into a stream of thinking and you notice that you are no longer observing the breath, just using your breathing and the sense of your body to anchor you and stabilize you in the present.

Just being with your breathing from moment to moment, just sitting in stillness, looking for nothing and being present to all. Just as it is, just as it unfolds. Just being right here, right now. Complete. Human. Whole.

As the practice comes to an end, you might give yourself credit for having spent this time nourishing yourself in a deep way by dwelling in this state of non-doing, in this state of being. For having intentionally made time for yourself to simply be who you are. And as you move back into the world, allow the benefits of this practice to expand into every aspect of your life.

## **Mindful Body Scan**

Try to focus on your breathing until you tune into, find, sense, or feel the rhythm that is most comfortable and soothing for you. If that seems hard, do not worry, just breathe in as comfortable a way as you are able. When you have done that, focus on your legs. Notice how they feel for a moment. Now imagine that all the tension in your legs is flowing down through your legs and down into the floor and away. Let it go on its way. So, as you breathe in, just note any tension and then, as you breathe out, imagine the tension flowing down through your legs and out through the floor. Imagine your legs feeling grateful that they can let go. Sometimes people find that if they slightly tense their muscles as they breathe in, and then relax as they breathe out, this can be helpful. Just spend as much time as you find is helpful to you exploring the idea of letting that tension go with kindness .....

Now let's focus on our bodies and imagine the tension in our bodies from our shoulders down to our stomach and again, as you breathe out just imagine the tension leaving this part of your body, going down through your legs, down through the floor and away. Again, if it helps, just gently tense your stomach and back muscles as you breathe in and then relax them as you breathe out. In a way it can be like imagining emptying a vessel of the tension that's now running through your legs and down through the floor..... Your body is grateful and you feel kind towards it.

Now focus on the tips of your fingers, through your wrists, your arms and elbows and shoulders. Imagine that the tension that was there can be released - can be let go of. So, gently let the tension go so that it can run off down through your body, down through your legs and out through the floor and away..... Now imagine the tension that sits in your head, neck and forehead. The tension has been your alert system in action and it would like to be released now - to take a rest. So again, as you breathe out, just imagine it running down through your body, down through your legs and out down through the floor.....

Now we can focus on your whole body. Each time you breathe out, focus on the keyword RELAX. Just imagine your body becoming more relaxed..... Just spend a minute or so doing this. We will now end this exercise by taking a deeper breath, moving the body around a little and noting how it feels and how grateful it is to you for spending time to try to let go of the tension. When you are ready, get up and carry on with your day.