

## Guided Meditation: Meditating with Truth

**Gil Fronsdal**

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Greetings. Welcome to our here in California, our Sunday morning Sit and Dharma talk. As an introduction to this talk, I want to say something about truthfulness: that there is one place where, if you're interested in Buddhist practice, you should always be truthful. There are other times when maybe you don't want to say the truth. It's a complicated topic about when to speak and not speak the truth. But unequivocally, when we sit and practice, and in other times as well, we always want to be truthful towards ourselves.

We always want to be honest towards ourselves, in ourselves. The practice of mindfulness could be seen as a practice of truth telling for ourselves, just recognizing clearly what is here. Maybe it's a process of truth and reconciliation to really sit quietly and still, and really be honest about what's really happening here in the present moment, and to learn to do that in a way that's compassionate and that's non-reactive, that's kind, that's supportive. But a willingness to really sit here. Hopefully, many times, seeing what's true in the moment is enjoyable and valuable, and an onward leading and deepening in a nice way. Sometimes it's not so wonderful to be here for ourselves with what's—there's difficulties inside and challenges—but to learn how to tend, attend to whatever we're sitting with is a huge part of what this mindfulness practice is about.

It's not about necessarily being different, but it's being truthful about what is. It's about learning how to be present for what is with care, with kindness, with support, without contraction or hate or greed, just here, sitting in the truth of the moment. So, to take a meditation posture, and to spend a few moments moving around a little bit and adjusting yourself to find a posture that really feels like the place where your line or the posture which is the posture that is maybe most supportive for you. To be attentive to the experience of the moment as you meditate, to be here and to softly close your eyes. Perhaps, if it's possible for you, to let there

be a softening within, perhaps taking a few long, slow, deep breaths, and as you exhale to let go, relax into your body. Here and there is something about being present for the body.

The body is always in the present moment. The mind might be wandering off and thinking about other times and other places. Not only is the body always in the present, there's something true about the body. Some people say the body never lies. As you exhale, soften yourself into your body. Soften yourself into feeling the truth of the body sitting here.

As you exhale, perhaps you can relax the thinking mind. Relax whatever tension or pressure or agitation that maybe is in your head or anywhere at all that's associated with thinking. There can be an art to relaxing that's a release, relaxing more deeply into the truth of the moment, what's happening now within. Then the rhythm of breathing in and breathing out can be your friend. If you gently stay with that rhythm, stay with a constancy of breathing in and breathing out as if it's a thread or a thread line through your experience. It might protect you from getting swept away in thoughts and reactions and feelings.

Not to deny those things, but not to be swept away in them in the middle of all things. For this meditation, see if you can trust your breathing, trust being mindful of breathing. Trust that's all you need to do, really, to stay with your breathing and to be truthful about what's happening in the moment. Those two things: breathing and truth, breathing and recognition of what's happening. Perhaps you can let there be a quiet, a quietness and stillness within. There's nothing so much you have to do or think about.

Here is to settle into the truth of the moment, a process of the body and heart having truth and reconciliation. Breathing in the middle of all things, with a quietness that has space and room for everything. Remaining here aware of what's happening in the moment, staying in the flow of the present moment, the flow of the body breathing. Then, as we come to the end of this sitting, to bring to mind this world that we live in, the human world, which in many ways is sick. There's the illness of COVID-19. There's the illness of racism.

There's the illness of political division. It's animosity. The illness of economic inequality and challenges, and the list could go on. Or maybe you have different ways of understanding this, in whatever ways that this world of ours is challenged. I'll use the metaphor of ill. Perhaps you can see that you are the medicine, rather than you are the victim of it all, or you as part of the illness.

Maybe there's some way, maybe a small way, that you can see yourself as the medicine for this world, and that how you are and what you do is oriented towards making this world a better place, that how you talk to people, how you see them, how you relate to them in so

many different ways that we act in our lives. It can be the medicine, can be supportive and helpful for others. May it be, as we engage the Buddhist practice, that one of the motivations, one of the purposes we have for it is to be the medicine for the world, is to be a kind of person who can not only wish for the welfare and happiness of others, is concerned with their well-being, but who acts that way as well. May it be that our collective practice that we all share. May it be that it is for the welfare and happiness of all beings everywhere. May all beings be happy.

May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free from affliction. May all beings be at ease. Baba.