

Guided Meditation: Mindfulness with Selfing

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Hello and welcome. One of the aspects of Insight Meditation is to delve deeply into the source of our experience of life, where the experience of life begins, before we add a lot of interpretations, before we add a lot of concepts on top of it. One of the concepts that we add is the idea of self, me, myself, and mine. It can be innocent enough and appropriate enough. Nowhere does the Buddha say there is no self. Though that's a very popular idea that many people, and some teachers, still teach.

But what we should focus on for today is how we add self on top of our experience. For example, if we have pain, there's a world of difference between experiencing the pain carefully, respectfully, and wisely, and living close into the idea that it's my pain. I'm feeling pain. As soon as we say the word I or me or mine, it becomes a magnet for all kinds of cultural ideas, religious ideas, philosophical ideas, personal ideas. Commercial ideas, ideas coming from advertisements, about what the self is and how the self should be and what the self is and judgments and fears and all kinds of things.

Some people find that when they feel something uncomfortable especially, but it could be something also pleasant, they can experiment with going back and forth between saying pain, to acknowledge the pain in the knee, for example, versus saying my pain. If you're really attentive, very quiet and still, not kind of rethinking about it and trying to figure all out with your thoughts, but really still and quiet, like you're giving lots of space, silent space to feel this, you might feel that it's easier when the pain is just pain than when it's my pain. There might be little micro-muscles that contract around the pain even when we identify with it in some kind of seemingly innocent way. There's an extra mental activity that's a little stressful when we say my pain. It's just simpler and quieter for a quiet, settled mind and *samādhī* to just recognize pain. Pleasure, just pleasure.

Where it gets particularly interesting is around thinking. Rather than saying I think or judging oneself, oh no, I'm thinking again, I shouldn't be thinking, I have to do something about my thinking, I, I, I, I keeps coming in over and over and over again. Maybe once or twice it's innocent. But when it's a constant stream of this I, I, I, I, I, chances are it's not so innocent, in a way, a better way of saying it. Chances are it doesn't come with an absence of stress, absence of tension.

So rather than I'm thinking, thinking is occurring. Discomfort is occurring. Not liking is occurring. It's time to return to the breathing is occurring. Returning to the breathing is occurring. Now there is breathing in and breathing out. Keeping it kind of airing, moving in that direction of not adding the unnecessary I'm doing.

It doesn't have to be with words like saying I. It can be a sensibility, a sense we're kind of organized around me, myself, and I. As the agent, as the experiencer, the victim, all these things. With the Insight Meditation, the idea is to be radically simple. Know, thinking, feeling, sensing, as a simple experience, and let the self take care of itself. Don't think about it right now.

Don't bring it in as best you can, because chances are if you bring it in, either subliminally or consciously or even with the words that you say when you're thinking, you're adding a level of tension or pressure. You're adding a sense of narrowing down the field of attention. The field of attention can stay bigger without that. Right? So to assume a meditation posture and to kind of sway back and forth, rock back and forth, to sense and feel how the body wants to be positioned. You're shifting a little bit out of the thinking mind that says, how should I be positioned? Finding a stability in your posture.

If your eyes are open, lower the gaze, gently, and then in a simple, quiet way, close the eyes, and to be in no hurry, to meditate with an expansive sense of time. With no hurry, just in its own time, gently take some deeper breaths, deeper breaths that remain comfortable. Letting the exhale maybe extend a little longer. But as you exhale, relax your body. A release into a more stable, grounded attention within the body. Letting the breathing return to normal.

To sense, feel into your body, but without the I or your... Feel into the body without an agenda, without trying to do anything more than just sense what wants to be sensed, what wants to be felt in the body. If what you feel is tension, tightness, breathe into it with the inhale and soften on the exhale. An open awareness to the body. To feel whatever is most predominant, whatever sensations are loudest in your body, and allow them to be there. If there's any tension associated with them, either in themselves or in your relationship to them, breathe into the tension, breathe with it.

On the inhale and on the exhale, soften, relax. Then in the same way as you did for the body, let there be an open awareness to your mind, to the mental activity, and to feel, sense the sensations, the ones that are loudest or strongest, or call your attention, less focused on what you're thinking about, but rather the sensations and feelings in the mind. If any of that has tension or pressure or contraction as part of it, inhale, feeling it and sense it, exhale, soften, relax the mind. Then having an open awareness to the body breathing. Noticing, feeling, whatever way, whatever sensations are strongest or call attention to themselves in relationship to breathing. Sensing and feeling the experience of breathing from a place in the mind that's quiet, still, open, to being embodied with the breathing.

Maybe instead of an open mind, an open body. We're awareness, open awareness throughout the body. Feeling, sensing the parts of breathing that occur without the need of ideas of I am breathing. It's my breath. As we continue, let every experience that occurs just be itself without the addition of I or me or mine. Breath is simply breath. Sensations are simply sensations. Thoughts are simply thoughts. Ideas of self are simply ideas. Moments of awareness are simply moments of awareness.

Nothing more, nothing extra. Each thing occurring without an added tension, pressure, narrowing of attention. In the last minute or so of this sitting, to have an open awareness, to allow yourself to sense and feel places within you, maybe cozy places within you, that are content to exist without the intrusion of be, myself and mine. Content to operate without the need to be identified as I and me. Where in your body, heart and mind is there a place of comfort that selfing has no need to interfere?

Then from this place, open awareness, where open awareness itself, open sensing, feeling, knowing, can exist without being appropriated by self, without the extra layer of I'm aware, simply aware, and to have this simple awareness be open to the world around us, to other people, to the natural world, to anything and everything we see and sense and smell and hear. So it can be a channel for goodwill. As we end, bring forth whatever feelings of attitudes of goodwill you have for others. In whatever way is easy for you. It doesn't have to be universal. It doesn't have to be universal. Your goodwill, that you identify with the effort that it says something about you. Simply goodwill, well-wishing, that can be radiated out into the world, carried by these words. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe.

May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free and to bring the self into it. May we each dedicate ourselves to the idea that, may I be a conduit for goodwill into the world. Thank you.