

Guided Meditation: Yes to the Whole

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Hello and welcome to our meditation. For today, I'd like to emphasize sitting in meditation in a holistic way, sitting in meditation in a way that does not select out of our holistic experience something in particular to be preoccupied with. Something selective that keeps the whole out of the picture. Most times when we're preoccupied with me, myself, and mine, we've selected something in our experience. We've selected something in who we think we are that we think we're supposed to focus on and be concerned with, and we leave out a lot. We might leave out our physical body because we're so involved in thoughts, and we're not really embodied.

We might leave out our emotional life because also we're involved in some kind of story. We might be involved in feeling preoccupied with what's pleasant and unpleasant. We might be concerned with stories. We might be concerned with our ideas of what meditation is. And it narrows the field. The idea in mindfulness meditation is to come into a place where awareness is broad, awareness is holistic, that all of who we are is allowed to just be present in a nice way.

In both the early Buddhism and later Buddhism, they use an expression to kind of point to this wholeness of things that are not part of the selectivity that narrows this field of attention. They call it suchness or thusness. They do as a siddha meditation and just be thus, just be such, without selectivity, without narrowing down, without leaving things out. Maybe even without trying to include things too much, just kind of to be present in an open, full, kind of embodied, heart-bodied, mind-bodied, embodied, and hearted way. To support that, there's an art to being embodied. There's an art to being with the breath.

It's not selecting one thing out of the whole, but rather it's placed at the center of the whole. In that center, to be grounded so that we then can include the whole out of that center. I

don't know if this makes sense what I'm saying, but let's try with meditation. So to assume a meditation posture, and there's a way of the posture you take, no matter whether you're standing, sitting, lying down, the posture you assume to be careful with it so that there's a way in which you are intentional, the way that you are caring for your body and your posture, that you're beginning to gather yourself into your embodied experience. The posture can be a help to that. If we sit in a way that's so relaxed against the couch, and it's quite nice, but it might not be as much as engaging the body so something wakes up, that feeling of vitality or life.

Many people are focused on sight and eyes that might limit the fullness of the experience here and now. So there is a tendency in meditation to suggest closing the eyes for the purpose of quietly feeling and sensing the body more fully. As we feel the body, you might become aware of places where there's tension, tightness. It's okay. But at the same time, tension is a sign of something in your mind, heart, body. It is over-selecting, over-focused on something that causes a tightening.

As you exhale, relax and soften the places of holding in your body. Relax in rhythm with the rhythm of breathing. Maybe relax on the exhale. If your body is still, maybe the biggest movement in your body is the movements of breathing. Not movement that's separate from the whole body, but movements that's like the waves in the ocean, swells in the ocean that rise and fall, that are completely part of the ocean, part of the whole. So, if... Feel the rising and falling with the movement of breathing.

If you have a sense of being grounded, settled in your breathing, settled in the grounding spot from where breathing begins and returns, the expansion of breathing in, the swelling of the wave, feel or imagine that it grows to fill your whole body. As you exhale, your whole body follows the exhale back to the grounding spot, the settling spot at the end of the outbreath. One of the primary ways in which we limit, select out of our whole experience, something in particular is through our thinking or through our emotional responses. As you breathe, being aware of the whole, whatever arises, whatever appears, gently, quietly, say or imagine saying, yes, just say yes, as a way of inviting it to be part of the whole, not to be caught in it, preoccupied by it. But yes, this too can be part of the whole, saying yes as an alternative to being caught and involved in a limited experience, saying yes to include into the whole.

One of the ways to allow the wholeness of who we are is not to define ourselves, not to select some part of who we are as more important than other parts, or less important than other parts. Not to avoid having ideas of what we should be doing and shouldn't be doing, that somehow obscures the simplicity of simply being here, whole, with everything of who we

are allowed to work together. A big yes to all of it. Then as we come to the end of the sitting, to feel for a few moments, even if it's with the help of your imagination, what it's like to allow all of yourself to be here peacefully because to be caught up in greed and desires, aversions and resentments, that's a way that limits the whole. It's a way of being selective. But to be here whole, yes to all of who we are, for a few moments here, peacefully allowing it all to be here.

Then imagine looking upon others the same way, being careful not to define others, not to reduce them to some particular aspect of being human that you're preoccupied with, where they're not the object of desire or aversion, seeing others as whole, allowing them to be fully there, not limited in any way by our gaze, and in the wholeness of the other, wishing them well. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. Thank you.