

## Guided Meditation: Just This

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Hello and welcome to our morning meditation. This meditation is a continuity of so much of what we've done so far this year, but it focuses on something very simple. Maybe it takes a lot of learning, a lot of practice, to be able to be radically simple with mindfulness practice. The radical simplicity, understanding why it's so valuable, is to have the wisdom to know that this is okay. Not only is it okay, there's tremendous benefit from this simplicity. This is one of the great consequences of doing this practice and understanding Buddhist teachings.

The simplicity is represented today by the word "this." This is what is happening. This is what the experience is of this moment. The "this" is always meant to be particular. It isn't "this" that, you know, this is the world spinning around, circulating the sun. That's kind of, to know that, that's kind of abstract.

We do that from memory and from understanding and learning that we know that. But the "this" of the immediacy of direct experience—this. Sometimes it's nice to add the word "just" in front of it: just this. So, just breathing in, just the sensations of movement and stretching, expanding pressure that happens with the inhale, just those sensations, just the exhale, just the sensations of the exhale. "Just" means as a present moment experience, if I just allow the inhale, or any other experience, to be itself without any reference to the past, any reference to the future—just this breathing in.

There is no need to think about a past inhale that was so much better, and in comparison, this one is not so good. No need to think about, well, probably not the next inhale, but maybe, you know, in a few days I can get a good inhale again. There's no need to bring in the past or bring in the future in the practice of just this. As I said earlier, this is actually a very wise, sophisticated thing to do, even though it seems radically simplistic. It seems like we're putting aside all our wonderful sophistication, all our wonderful intelligence that can include past and future and analysis and judgments and opinions. Just this.

This. If there's an itch, just an itch. If there's a sound, just hearing. If there's an emotion, just happiness, just calm, just sadness, just grief. Whatever it might be is respected and allowed to be there. It's phenomenally generous to allow each thing to be and leave it alone, without getting wrapped up or entangled in it with our more sophisticated mind that can place it in the context of past and future, desires for something else, aversions—just simply, just this.

Then, most radically, just this can be without any imposition, any addition, anything of relating the experience to oneself, identifying with it, defining ourselves by it, even something as simple as "my inhale" or "my pain." It's not anybody else's, but just this, without the overlay of this simple, sometimes very innocent concept: me, myself, and mine. So, to assume a meditation posture, a posture of some deliberateness, a posture of deliberateness, so you can inhabit with your posture this moment, this place. A small ritual of assuming a meditation posture that reminds your whole body and mind to be just here, just with this, just now. That ritual of coming into just here, just now, can continue with taking some deep, full inhales and relaxing on the exhale. Letting the breathing return to normal.

In here, just breathing in, just this. If you're feeling tense in any way, let that just be—just this tension. How simple can you be to know it, to feel it? Let it be as it is. Let things unfold as they do. Just this.

Without a future, without a past, without anything needing to be different, because that need is an extra mental activity—just this breath, just this sensations, just this. As we come to the end of this sitting, is there a way that now, after meditating, can you allow just this, some way your body is calmer, more settled, to be here with just this? Is there some way that your mind is more calm, so it's a bit easier to be just with this? And your heart, just this. If the mind wanders off in other things and other times, can that be just this, just thinking?

May your ability to just be here with this, the simplicity of this, absence of a lot of complications and interpretations and judgments—just this. May it allow us to see others simply, without our projections and assumptions and overlay of associations. Just this with some other person so we can see others with goodwill. See others clearly, with a clear heart. May it be that this practice we do gives us the clarity and simplicity to meet the world with goodwill. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. Thank you.