

Guided Meditation: Wholeness

Gil Fronsdal

September 29, 2025

Keywords: meditation, posture, mindfulness, body awareness, equanimity, goodwill, compassion, well-wishing, present moment, integrated whole

So now, when you couldn't hear me speak, I said that I hope now I've set it all up and pushed all the buttons. But now I believe all the buttons are pushed, that all the setup is done. Being away for a month, I was kind of rusty with all these different... the technology of being a stage hand here in the morning when I come up, come down to set up everything for this. So I'm happy to be back with all of you and happy to be sitting here. Little bit maybe as a follow-up for me of teaching a month-long retreat, that there's something very invaluable about becoming... familiar with meditation, that sitting down to meditate is a homecoming. Sitting down to meditate is a coming, returning to a certain familiarity of posture, of body, of sentiment, so that just sitting down is enough.

To begin feeling some kind of feeling of wholeness, some kind of feeling like this is the temple, this is the home, this is the place where I belong, where I'm settled, where I'm most myself, here in this posture. And then to build on that. So to assume a posture that is... your meditation posture, if you've been doing this for some time. If you're new to this, a posture that helps you to be comfortable, but also have a balance between a comfortable posture and an alert posture. A posture that awakens an alertness of the body. Rather than taking the body offline when we're meditating, the idea is to have a posture that a little bit brings a kind of aliveness, a vitality of attention through the body.

And often that means a posture that's intentional. So not just a posture that allows you to settle back the most possible, like on a couch or something. But it gives a little attention to... a kind of giving life to an awareness in your body and gently closing the eyes. And if you are familiar with meditation, take a moment to feel how the posture is familiar to you. Like you're returning to an old friend and you're getting reacquainted to the feelings, sensations of this posture, this body in this position. If you're new, see if you can... soften and relax your attention, your inner gaze, to have a global feeling of your body, to feel the whole of it.

To feel the posture as a whole, the body as a whole, is a source of an alternative way of being alive, perceiving our world, being with ourselves. Then the kind of way we perceive, if we're through tension, we are limiting ourselves, narrowing the attention down to a particular preoccupation. And then within this body, as part of the body, gently, comfortably, take a few longer inhales, maybe so you can feel your ribcage, your belly, your shoulders... expand as you breathe in. Maybe even the more subtle expansion of the back rib cage. Feeling the whole torso expand as you breathe in. Maybe like a jellyfish opening up wide in the water.

And on the exhale, feel it all come back, contract inward, like the body of the jellyfish coming down, coming together to propel it through the water. For you, the exhale, a movement into the present. To be really here, like the contraction of the jellyfish pushes the water out the back so it can move along. So as you exhale, let go of your thoughts and preoccupations. So you can move along here in the flow of the present moment, being in your body. Okay. Letting your breathing now return to normal.

But continue for a little bit longer with the wide, broad feelings of expansion as you breathe in, coming together, contraction as you breathe out. As you breathe in and the torso expands, notice if the thinking mind is tense or tight under pressure, and if so as you exhale, release the tension. Soften in the thinking mind, continuing being centered on your breathing. Maybe with a center, a grounding spot at the end of the exhale, beginning of the inhale, and with an awareness of breathing that grows and expands outwards through the whole body as you breathe in. And the whole body gathers, softens as you breathe out. Letting your awareness travel outwards with the inhale, shifting your attention to breathing and the body instead of thinking.

And if there's any tension around thinking, soften as you exhale. Softening, softening so the mind participates here with the body breathing. Breathing, becoming aware of your whole body. Breathing in, aware. Breathing out, relaxing, softening the body. The more the body relaxes, the more it's possible to feel the whole body, the global experience.

The more we feel the global experience of the body, the more room there is to relax or to hold the tension spatioously, openly with equanimity. And as we come to the end of this sitting, to once again, as we started, to feel your body, your posture, and to see if there's some way that you are more calm in your body, in your being, maybe more settled, more able, to have a broad awareness, felt sense of your body, your body and mind as an integrated whole. And in this sense of global awareness, integrated whole, with your imagination, visualize or remember, think of the people you will encounter today or tomorrow, people who are known to you, people who are strangers on the street. And in this broad global awareness, extend

your care to have a basic goodwill, a basic generosity of well-wishing, basic kindness, compassion, care for all the people you'll be encountering, privately in yourself, to hold people, to relate to people with care. May they be happy, may they be safe, may they be peaceful, may they be free.

It may it be that as we are at ease and present in our whole being, that that becomes a vantage point from which to wish well for others. May everyone, may all beings be well. May all beings be at ease in themselves. May all beings be safe. May all beings experience peace and well-being. May all beings be free of oppression and poverty and hunger. And may it be that our goodwill... contributes to the welfare and happiness of this world. May all beings be happy. Thank you.