

Guided Meditation: Wholesome Vitality

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Hello everyone and welcome. Welcome to this meditation. Hello everyone and well. And one of the themes for this week is the idea that in the teachings of the Buddha, he emphasized living or action, what we do, more than emphasizing truth. In fact, sometimes he would change a subject when people asked about the truth to talk about how people behave, what they do, and to orient oneself around action so that in such a way that we learn how we act through body, speech, and mind. So the very acting is beneficial, is beautiful, is wholesome, is skillful.

And many times humans act unreflectively. They just say things and do things and think things, kind of on automatic pilot without giving much care to it. Some people don't want to give care to it because they feel like they'll be too self-conscious or too inhibited or it becomes too forced or artificial. But the opposite is true in the Dharma practice that we're learning to settle, to wake up in the midst of our lived life, to be able to discover how we can act in a way that is deeply satisfying, deeply meaningful, deeply nourishing, that it's beneficial for ourselves and for others. It's a phenomenal orientation that switches from abstract propositional truths to concrete immediacy of what we're actually doing. So meditation itself is an action.

And many people don't want to view meditation as action because action means doing, and many people are just doing all the time. The relief from doing is being, doing nothing except allowing the hum of vitality, of liveness, to just support us, guide us, inspire us, allow us to relax and feel at home or feel at ease here without the need to do anything. But to choose to do that is a doing. And even though the art of meditation has a lot to do with undoing and not doing, it's still a way of living. It's still a way of existing. It still emphasizes a certain way of behaving, showing up for this life of ours. It is a kind of action.

And so the question or the orientation for this meditation is to really take meditation seriously as a very mature, a rich opportunity to live this moment, to live now, to behave now, to act now, to be here now with all of who we are, to show up. If you go stand, it's had a great view of a natural wonder—the Pacific Ocean here in California, or looking over a vast mountain range, or across vast open prairie, or anything—it can feel so wonderful to be alive and present and fully there. We're there. So meditation is not just a place to let go and relax, but relaxing is just the beginning of showing up with all of our senses in a relaxed way. It's kind of like turning on the light.

So, assuming a meditation posture, that posture that orients you to meditation as an intentional activity, it turns out the deepest forms of relaxation, ease, do not come by slumping, but there's something about the wonderful natural tautness of alert, relaxed muscles that allows for something deep inside to relax. So assuming a posture and closing the eyes. And with the eyes closed, feel the aliveness, the vitality, the hum of the senses throughout your body. And where in your body are sensations most alive? And where in your body are sensations least active? And without focusing on any particular place in the body, if you have a broad panoramic view, field of sensations, of vitality, hum, vibration throughout your body. If you have sensations, sense of vitality, you are alive now.

And in that globe of sensations, vitality, does any of it feel enjoyable, nurturing, nourishing? Does any of it feel wholesome or sweet, beautiful? And dropping out of the thinking mind, the control tower in the head, and dipping into the body to feel and sense from the inside out whatever goodness there is in the broad flow of sensations. And one of the actions while you're meditating now is the act of being aware, the act of sensing, the act of simply knowing. In whichever one of those is easiest for you, appreciate the miracle of being aware in the middle of your body, throughout your body. The miracle of sensing and knowing.

Not so much being the doer of meditation, but being the allower of awareness, of sensing, knowing. And within the field of sensations, field of knowing, allowing the sensations of breathing to be as they are, as you know them, feel them, relaxing the thinking mind, to make space to let there be silence that better senses and feels and knows the activity of your body and mind being alive right now. Not so much what you are doing, but what your body-mind is naturally doing in simply being alive as you sit here, as you meditate. In the way the Buddha was interested in action, more than abstract or propositional truths. So in meditation, to be more interested in the lived life, the aliveness of here and now, rather than abstract thoughts, rather than living in the world of thoughts, to live in the world of the dynamic aliveness of the present moment through our body.

How we experience our lived life of the present is very dependent on how we act, what we do with our actions, our speech, and our mental life and thoughts. It is possible to prioritize living actions, being the actions, that are wholesome, beautiful, nourishing, and not being pulled into and reinforcing the actions, the speech, the thoughts, which are not wholesome, not beautiful, not nourishing. We can discover a higher quality sense of our own vitality and aliveness. And as we do so, may it be that how we live in the world, how we talk, how we act, supports others, so the quality of their aliveness can feel, can be happy, filled with safe sense of safety, peace and freedom. May it be that we contribute to the welfare and happiness of the world. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. Thank you.