

## Guided Meditation: Ah vs Ouch

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Hello and welcome. So today the meditation, I'd like to keep it very simple, but sometimes the most erratically simple can also be the most sophisticated and profound. It can be deceptively simple, and so not take it seriously in all the way, the full value of it. And the simplicity is to be attentive here to the present moment, to be aware of what you're doing, and sitting quietly, maybe with the body relatively still in meditation. Okay. The primary doing is your mind.

What happens to what you're doing with your mind? And if your mind is quiet and you're not thinking much, then the primary doing is the way in which you are attending to the present moment, the way that you're aware, the way you're mindful, the way you're focused. If you're not being aware, if what you're doing is thinking and a lot or little involved in thinking, that's what you're doing. If you're scratching an itch just like I did myself just now, that's what I'm doing. If I'm adjusting my posture, I'm doing that.

If I'm questioning something or wondering something or trying to fix something, I'm doing that. Be aware. Be mindful of what you are doing. And as you do, notice if what you're doing has any kind of ouch in it, like a little bit hurts, and a little bit, or quite a bit, there could be a big ouch. In Buddhism, in a more sophisticated way, we say there's suffering or there's stress, but it could be very mild, just an ouch. Or is there an ouch?

So if you meet yourself with open awareness, with kindness, with simple awareness, there might be something about that that's an ah. If you see that you have strong feelings, emotions or dispositions, and you see it as this is having a mind or having a heart with... irritation or anger with sadness, with happiness, as opposed to I am angry, I am sad. This I am and taking all of ourselves this way is a little bit of an ouch. It might be relative to that, just how this is a heart with. It's only a piece of the whole. Maybe it has more of an ah.

So mindfulness of ouch and ah, of what you're doing. And even if what you're doing is allowing yourself to rest in being, that's still a kind of doing. And is that resting, ah, or ouch? Just that. So, to begin the doing part, and each step of settling in, see if you can do it with grace or gentleness or beauty in such a way that there's a, even if a very subtle, ah, this is good. So assuming your meditation posture and do so with care, caring for yourself to be in a nice meditation posture adjusting all kinds of small details of your posture.

Okay. And gently closing your eyes, letting your eyes rest in their eye sockets. In a caring way, a graceful way, taking some deeper breaths, relaxing, softening on the exhale, letting your breath return to normal. And on the inhale, with care, with softness, without harshness or strain, let your attention roam around your body to notice where there's tension. And on the exhale, to relax. On the inhale, feeling the thinking mind.

On the exhale, relax and soften the thinking mind. And to whatever degree your ability to be aware and mindful seems close to the thinking mind, see if as you exhale, you can lower your center of awareness into your torso. Lower the center of your being and becoming aware of the rhythm of the torso, expanding in contraction, contracting as you breathe. And see if as you practice mindfulness that you can stay close to what's ah, not necessarily what you're experiencing, but whatever is a doing, an action, an activity of the mind, be careful that you don't do ouches. See if you can gently, appropriately, shift to a simple ah in how you're aware. Is what your mind doing more an ouch or more an ah?

And maybe there's something about the being aware simple, ordinary, clean awareness, which is one of the deepest ah. As we come to the end of the sitting, there is a way that no matter whether we're feeling really good or feeling lousy, feeling pleasure or pain, that one of the most beneficial ways of being, of doing, is to be very still or quiet at the center of our being, present, available, open to it all, without being for or against, without being reactive, without being identified with anything. If anything, we identify with a quiet, still place within, from which awareness... observes and knows and feels an awareness which is free of contention, free of conflict, free of grasping, free of resisting, confident, clear, still and quiet, deep within in the fullness of our being, and then to gaze upon the world, be still and gaze upon the world kindly, without contention, without conflict, in the heart, so that the heart can be present with goodwill.

May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be peaceful. Know how to be at rest, the center of their being. Confident, clear, knowing peace, knowing non-conflict, knowing a heart set free. May all beings be happy. Thank you.