

## Guided Meditation: Empty of Projections

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**November 04, 2025**

**Keywords:** emptiness, projection, meditation, self, awareness, kindness, goodwill, compassion, breathing, sense of beingness

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Hello and welcome. This week we are, I'm discussing the topic of emptiness. For this guided meditation, I would like to mention two things. One of the characteristics of human mental functioning is the ability to predict, assume, and generalize in order to find our way through life. We use our imagination and our thoughts. But the downside of it is that we sometimes project onto things what is not there.

We project our values, we project our judgments, we project our bias. We project our assumptions in ways that turn out to be wrong. Part of what meditation does is to give us the experience of sensing, feeling, knowing, and observing without any projections, without the extra. So empty of our projections. Yes.

In meditation, it's usually wise to err on the side of having less rather than more. So even empty of state of consciousness, state of awareness, a state of beingness, where we're free or empty of judgments and commentary. So that's one. The second is that our attention is often filled with our preoccupations. In meditation, we err on the side of emptying our mind of its preoccupations. Part of the way this works is to simply recognize what is empty, how things are empty.

And then from there, appreciate that freedom, that peace, that ease. So to begin the meditation, gently close your eyes and take a few long, slow deep breaths, emptying and releasing ways in which you hold yourself tense, tension in the body. Let your breathing be normal and relax the thinking mind. Relax the tension or agitation connected to thinking. Then take a few minutes here to relax more deeply in the mind, in the head, the space between the ears, behind the forehead. Soften and open the area of your brain between your ears.

Almost as if you can relax your ears themselves, or the ear canal deep in the ears, and then allow yourself to hear the sounds around you. So it isn't so much that you're actively listening

as you are relaxing and opening and allowing the natural functioning of hearing to hear. Hear my voice, hear sound. If there are no sounds, in a relaxed, maybe imaginary way, hear the silence. Allow yourself to hear, open 360 degrees, not searching for any particular sound, allowing whatever sounds come, whatever silence comes. Maybe whatever sounds you hear, they arise free of your making them, free of you intending them, making them willfully.

The sounds in a certain way are empty of anything that you can identify as who you most are. The sounds are empty of self, yourself, just sounds arising. The space through which the sounds travel is also empty of self. Can you feel or sense, recognize how sounds and silence, maybe space, can be empty of your projections, your ideas, your desires? You might have ideas, projections, assumptions, judgments, but those are clearly distinct. Allow the sounds to simply be themselves, independent of any attribution, any self-referencing, any projections, assumptions, likes or dislikes, any preferences and ideas about the sounds, which are clearly independent of the sounds themselves.

Those projections, if they mingle or are painted on top of the sounds, on top of the silence, are like painting with watercolors on a moving river. The paint immediately disperses and flows and disappears. Allow yourself to hear sounds in and of themselves, the simplest way in which they are empty of any idea of what they are. In and of themselves, relax the thinking mind, soften tension in the mind. Then, in the same way that you're listening to sounds, maybe still with a metaphor of listening, listen to the sensations of your body breathing. Allow yourself to sense them and feel them without projections, without assumptions, liking and disliking.

Those might still occur, but stay close to how the actual sensations of breathing are empty of those ideas. Breathing occurs independent, free of the ideas that you have about the breathing. The experience of breathing can be empty of self, empty of ideas of self. To sit here quietly, allowing breathing, the sensations of breathing, to be free of the ideas, projections, expectations, free of anything associated with you being the doer, you being capable or incapable. Allow breathing to occur without the imposition of any ideas. Breathing empty of self, just breathing.

As we come to the end of this sitting, allow your attention, your thoughts, your imagination to spread around the community you're in, the land you're on, out across province and state, this country, the whole world. The phenomenally incountable majority of things in the world are empty of you, are free of you, your ideas of you, your thoughts of you, your feelings of you. The world is empty of you, except for how you project onto it, how you interpret it, your ideas of it. For a few moments, allow the world to be as it is, empty of you. Most of the world

is empty of you. Let that be a gift to the world.

Let that give more space, more freedom for everything just to be simple. And you become so simple that you don't have to operate all the time on ideas of me, myself, and mine. It's fine to have those ideas, but they are ideas, maybe accurate enough ideas. But give yourself the great benefit of your thought streams, your awareness, your sense of beingness, to be empty of those ideas, of me, myself and mine. Everything is just allowed to be as it is.

Then, picking up the idea of kindness, goodwill, compassion, picking up the idea that you can offer some degree of goodwill, care, love to this world of ours. Picking up the idea that you can spread that, you can have thoughts of goodwill, well-wishing that spreads from you out into the world like a gentle sound that travels through the air to touch the world and wish the world well. Almost as if you've emptied the world of self, ideas and projections. So you're a cleaner broadcasting of goodwill. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe.

May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. And if you're going to have projections and judgments, ideas about this world, maybe more often those can be ones of kindness, compassion and care. May this practice we do support us to spread more goodness into the world. Thank you.