

Guided Meditation: Yes

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Hello, I'm from IMC. Happy to be here with you. And so one of the really great practices or ways to practice that I have learned over my years of practice today is to have a wholeheartedness in the practice, to give ourselves wholeheartedly to what we're doing, have our heart involved with it all, and to give ourselves fully to the activity that we're doing here now with the practice. And I learned that partly by learning all the ways in which I wasn't doing that, and seeing the drag of that, seeing the... the downside of not being wholehearted and seeing how great it was to be fully involved. So the word that I love to represent this, which I use, is not a mantra, but as kind of instruction, is the word yes. So if I'm doing something whole-some, if I'm doing the practice, if I'm doing practicing mindfulness or *samādhi*, sometimes I'll say to myself in a very enjoyable or welcoming way in my mind, I'll say the word yes, yes.

And it often kind of brings me either a smile or the equivalent of a smile. I just feel delighted and happy to be able to, to more than just say yes, but the yes is more like a prompt to be fully here, be as fully as I can, to enter into here, to enter what I'm doing, to, you could almost say, to become what I'm doing. And not to hold back, not to be in the control tower directing myself to do something or telling myself to do something or in the control tower trying to do something in the control tower thinking, you know, I should be doing it. Yes is to enter into the doing, is to become the doing. And kind of wholeheartedness, this is what I'm doing.

So to assume a meditation posture... And it's meant to be also a posture that for you, in just the right way, can represent this yes, that now I'm going to do something with the completely or fully as I can with my whole being, not just the mind. As if wholehearted means, also means whole body. And the idea is to have a posture of ye, that's a kind of expression of yes, certainty I'm going to be here doing this. That has a balance of being alert and relaxed. It's possible to have a posture that over-emphasizes relaxation or over-emphasizes alertness.

Is there a medium, is there somewhere in between that range? Is there some place that is a delightful, wonderful way of embodying yes, gently closing the eyes and feeling the body. To feel your way into how the body is aware, is alert, how the body is present. How the body in the meditation posture is a choice, is a way of engaging. It's a way of being here. And to feel the body from the inside out, feeling the sensations.

And if the sensing of sensations is an important part of our capacity to be aware, and then taking a few long slow deep breaths. Just not tiring breaths, not challengingly deep or full. But where the breathing is a kind of gentle yes. Yes to being here with breathing, yes to being present. A yes that encourages you to feel this breath fully. Letting breathing return to normal.

And a gentle, kind of reassuring yes, attitude of yes, to relaxing the body. Relaxing the face, relaxing the shoulders, relaxing the belly, maybe relaxing the whole body. And as you exhale, to soften, relax the thinking mind, the thinking muscle, and becoming clear that whatever you're thinking about, for right now, if it's not about the meditation, it's not needed. It's at best, second best, and first best is saying yes to how you can be aware of the present, present experience of body, breathing, where the wholeheartedness is a full participation with the activity of sitting here, the whole body sitting here, where emotions are included in that whole experience. The mind is included as part of the whole, where breathing is at the center of all things, and a gentle yes that opens and relaxes you into your present moment experience here and now.

Is there a way you can quietly, gently say yes to being fully or wholeheartedly here in your mindfulness? So you're not directing your mindfulness from the control tower. It's more like you are becoming mindful. Becoming the awareness itself. Is there a way of saying yes to your practice that quiets your thinking mind?

As we come to the end of the sitting, to consider an attitude of yes to the activity you're engaged in is useful. If you're going to be doing it, even if you don't want to do it, if you're going to be doing it, if it's happening, even if you disagree, but it's happening and you're there, if you're doing it, then you have to do something. To have an attitude of yes, that's mostly... letting go of resistance, holding back, being half-hearted, if you're going to do it, do it well, do it wholeheartedly. Yes, and how can this be translated to being with others? Not agreeing necessarily with others, not going along necessarily without what people want. But is there a way of wholeheartedly showing up since you're there already, yes, here I am.

And is that kind of yes a way to meet anything and everything with friendliness? May it be that we show up to be friendly, first and foremost, because we're confident in our yes to being

present. May all beings be happy, happy, May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. And may we know how to say yes, to be wholehearted, to support that possibility. Thank you.