

## Guided Meditation: Simplicity of Being

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**November 27, 2025**

**Keywords:** gratitude, appreciation, meditation, breathing, present moment, simplicity of being, contentment, kindness, Thanksgiving, awareness

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Hello. Hello on this Thanksgiving morning in California.

And one of the really wonderful qualities that gradually grew in me as I did my early years of practice, it kind of grew unexpectedly, unexpectedly, knowingly, at first, to just kind of have a slow, slow gradual something awakening in me. And what it was was a deep appreciation, a deep kind of gratitude for life, for meditation, for breathing, for awareness, being present, for the communities I sat with. It was almost as if it was appreciation and gratitude for no reason or for no subject of what I'm appreciating, no subject for what I'm grateful for, it was a state of gratitude, a state of appreciation that didn't need a reason. And I can't explain to you exactly how that arose or how to have that kind of gratitude. But it had a lot to do with becoming undistracted in a soft, open, careful way. And the opportunity to stay close to my direct experience, an opportunity to be here at home in the present moment without a lot of preoccupations, a lot of desires, a lot of aversions, distractions, just here in a simple way.

And maybe it was the appreciation, the gratitude came from, the simplicity of being, the miracle of being, just here and now. So to assume a meditation posture, a posture that for you is suitable to experience a simplicity of being, a posture for finding a deep contentment, comfort, for just being alive at this moment, in and of itself, of course there are problems and issues and things going on, but to settle through them, to not be caught in those concerns, to be able to let them be there on the side for now, to be able to settle in here, to the simplest way of just being alive. So a posture for that, whatever posture that's good for you. And to gently close your eyes and to lower your attention, like you would lower yourself into a comfortable bath. Lower your awareness into the bathtub of your body. Feel your body from the inside out, as if maybe the awareness is almost like the gentle water, lapping up the sides of the bathtub, the lake, the pool, with awareness feeling and sensing your body just as it is, just as it appears.

And then to take some fuller breaths as a way of touching your ribcage, your belly, your chest, touching your body more fully, almost like the inhale touches all around the stretching, the moving of the rib cage, being touched by the movement of breathing. And as you exhale, maybe a longer exhale than usual, like the ride, the exhale all the way to the end, letting go as you take that ride, that slide, with breathing out, letting your breathing return to normal, and to find in your body, in your torso, deep inside. Is there a place of quiet appreciation, quiet feelings of gratitude, quiet feelings of maybe contentment or simplicity, deep inside, kind of deeper than any of your concerns, preoccupations. Right here, and maybe as you breathe, to have the breathing influenced by gratitude. Have your breathing, breathing with appreciation. Breathing itself arises out of contentment here and now in the simplicity of breathing.

As we come to the end of this sitting, is there some way now that you could touch into the simplicity of being, putting aside your thoughts and concerns, past and futures? Simply being here in the simplest possible way, breathing, feeling the body, allowing yourself to be as you are with a kind of gentle intimacy to your present moment experience. And might there be some appreciation of that simplicity of being, maybe a contentment that doesn't require a reason to be content, a simple appreciation that doesn't require something to be appreciating, anything particular, just appreciation, a gratitude that doesn't need something to be grateful for, a gratitude for the simplicity of just being alive and breathing and sensing that is below any level, any preoccupation of thinking, free of any stories, evaluations. And might that appreciation, gratitude, have space within it for the people you'll encounter today, for the food that you'll eat, for whatever circumstances of life that supports you, that holds you. May your simplicity of being allow the flow of simple gratitude, simple appreciation, here and now, just here, just now.

May all beings be appreciated, may all beings be respected and cared for. May all beings receive thanks. May all beings be loved and respected. May all beings experience kindness and friendship. And may our simplicity of being be the source from which our appreciation, thankfulness, care and kindness flow. May we touch each other's hearts. Thank you.