

Guided Meditation: Harmony With Emotions

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Hello and welcome to our morning meditation.

And sitting down here in my meditation posture to meditate with you all, I feel quite happy. And the happiness has something to do with a variety of things, but for the main one at the moment is that... And taking this posture and sitting down, I am going to come into a kind of a process of discovery and harmony with what's here within me, that this is a very welcome posture to enter into or receive, to welcome all of who I am. And it's kind of like an opportunity for all of this to... come into a kind of harmony where it's all included. That in ordinary life, I'm focusing on particular things and taking care of things, I have something that has to be done. And so there's a directiveness of attention, there's a concern with particular things.

But here in meditation posture, it's a chance to let it all just arise and show itself and be here and to discover, to allow, to come into harmony or allow this system, psychophysical system, to come into harmony. And part of this way in which meditation supports a deep harmony within us, where all of who we are can be there, is to appreciate our emotions, to value them, to make room for them. And part of what I think of meditation is that when we're sitting in meditation, when we're practicing in a posture of meditation, that we are finding a posture, both physically posture, but also an attitudinal posture that allows, that makes room for all of who we are, where we create a container or a context or a space for what's here to show itself and to move and to unfold, to dissolve, to do what it needs to do. But the key of it is to have part of who we are to get out of the way where we're not neither participating in our emotions, actively feeding them and reacting to them, judging them, but just making room, allowing the emotions to be there. But also we're not succumbing to them, we're collapsing into them, which is a kind of reaction to them.

It would be kind of like we stand tall or we stand upright. There's kind of a dignified, upright posture, whether we're laying down or sitting, that there's a kind of a... a intentional posture in which in this posture of meditation, we're sitting in the middle of it all, we're being in the middle of it all, in a posture that makes room, allows it all to happen, while at the same time, not identifying with it, not defining ourselves by it, not judging it, not making something out of it, and not collapsing to it. So we're ever here, and that emotions are both messengers, emotions are in one way or the other an attempt of our inner life to come to kind of a wonderful harmony with our circumstance, to be in relationship to our circumstance. And while we're meditating at least, to trust it all, trust it just to be aware, trust it just to make room for it and to have an ability to be with what's happening.

So rather than being a tense person, we're sitting here with tension. Rather than being a sad person, we're sitting here with sadness. Rather than being a calm person, we're sitting here with calm. Rather than being an angry person, we're sitting here with anger. Rather than being a confused person, we sit with confusion. Rather than being a scared person, we sit with fear. None of this defines us. None of this is us. But all of it is to be included and held with respect and care, but without being defined by it. And this allows something profound to happen.

So to gently close your eyes, and with your eyes closed... to adjust your posture, your physical posture, so the posture itself can be somehow a bigger container, a bigger intentional place within which we can feel all of what's here. For some people, for this purpose it helps to be a little bit more centered on the spine. So the spine is upright and there's a little bit of strength and stability in the spine. Maybe the chest becomes a little more expansive, pulling in the spine between the shoulder blades. So the chest comes out a little bit. And adjusting the head, so the head is not hanging forward. But the head is kind of like tall enough to look over the walls of the labyrinth. The head is above... the lotus flowering out of the mud, muddy waters. Kind of uprightness or straightness of the vertebrae of the neck, the crown of the head, being lifted up into the sky.

And then taking a few long, slow, full breaths, relaxing as you exhale. A few more fuller inhales, where you stretch and expand the torso as you breathe in, as a reminder, as a connection to your ability to be wide and large enough to hold anything that's within you without being defined by it. And then letting your breathing return to normal. In the same way with the inhale, feel the expanding of the ribcage, the belly, as if you're making yourself large enough, have enough room, breathing room, for how you are right now. And as you exhale, to relax, settle, so that you're not caught in how you are.

As you breathe in, to imagine that the mind expands as well, like a gas that expands and blows up, kind of radiates outward, the mind radiates, flows, opens wide as you breathe in. Thoughts drift away. Thoughts drift away. And as you exhale, the thinking mind quiets, relaxes. And then now, to notice what your mood is, what your emotion is, emotional state, mental state, the simple, simple recognition of how you are.

And whatever your emotional state is, your mood, where do you feel that the most in your body? So that you're not thinking about it or that the thoughts about how you are is not the most predominant. But rather what you highlight is how it feels in your body, what part of your body seems most activated or most alive with how you're feeling. And then gently, with your breathing, breathing in, breathe. And to make an expansive space around how you feel, breathing room. And as you exhale, to feel how you are, leaving it alone, letting it be, creating wide space around how you feel. And relaxing the thinking mind as you exhale, so you can better feel it in your body.

With a inhale, welcoming to how you are, whatever it might be, with a welcome that frees you from being defined by how you feel. And then with an exhale, feeling it more fully, as settling, relaxing around it, and as calmly and quietly as you can. Acknowledge what it is you're feeling, almost like you're saying hello without identifying with how you feel. And then returning to your breathing, centering yourself, breathing in and breathing out. Leaving how you feel alone while you entrust yourself to breathing.

Noticing how you feel your mood, mental state, emotional state. But be with it like you would if you became really still, quiet, because an unusual bird has landed a few feet from you and you don't want to scare it away. So you're very quiet and peaceful and still just to allow it to be there as you watch it. So be this way with whatever way you're feeling. Be with it, feel it in the body. But let your awareness, let your core of who you are, be very still and quiet, non-reactive, so you don't interfere.

And then gently, without changing much, begin again with mindfulness of breathing, maybe almost the same way, where the sensations are breathing, are like a little bird hovering nearby. And then to end the sitting, acknowledge how you are, acknowledge how you've shifted from the beginning of the sitting to now, and in the middle of it all, take some fuller breaths, breathing in and connecting to your wider body, the edges of your body, against the space, against the chair, the floor, the bed, and then letting your breathing return to normal again.

And as a way of getting ready for this, to end the meditation, in a sense, return to the world of others, take the time to wish others well. The people of your life, known and unknown,

wish them well. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free of suffering. And while you can't make that happen automatically for all beings, maybe in small ways you can contribute to this happening for the people you encounter today. May you be. A force of peace and goodness in this world. Thank you.