

Guided Meditation: Embodiment

Gil Fronsdal

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Hello and welcome. And one of the orientations I come into pretty quickly when I sit down to meditate like this is to tune into my body, to kind of assume and enter my posture, my body. It's like a homecoming. It's a way of opening up very widely, in a sense, to the whole body is the general feeling I have. It's a time to, almost now, it's almost, because I've been doing it for 50 years, almost natural to kind of settle the activated energies in the head and the brain, the thoughts that I'm thinking about, and let something settle and move from this conceptual world that's so easy to live in, down into my body. And if there's a lot of feelings and emotions here, those are just our means by which to open up more widely to let the whole body hold those, be the temple in which the feelings can exist.

And so this idea of just dropping, having the body be a phenomenal context, phenomenal container, or a phenomenal field of life to be connected to all of who we are. There's a kind of sense of wholeness, being whole. That is not any particular detail, not any particular place to fixate the attention, but it's more like a broad awareness. Sometimes I liken it to the kind of broad peripheral vision we have with our eyes. Even if we're focusing on something particular with a central vision, there's an almost effortless way in which the peripheral vision can take in the wide range of what's happening around us without fixating on it, without maybe taking in the exact details of it all. But there is a knowing, awareness, a perception of this.

And so this broad awareness of the body. So to assume a meditation posture, and to gently close your eyes, and with the support of your breathing, breathing a little bit fuller than usual, to feel a connection to your body from the inside, and to relax on the exhale. Kind of relaxing from the head, the thinking mind. It's kind of like the melting of ice or melting of butter, that something about awareness then melts and flows and settles down into the body, into a broad awareness of the body as we exhale. Okay. And a broad awareness of the body as we inhale.

Kind of a perceptual shift from being preoccupied, caught with something in particular, to a panoramic perception, panoramic vision, sense of the whole body, and letting breathing return to normal. And still, having the inhales arise from deep inside, from the beginning place of the inhale, and awareness to spread with the inhale widely through the body, and a settling, relaxing, melting on the exhale, to the very end of the exhale. Maybe the grounding place, the settling place, deep within where the exhale ends. Maybe having the little bit of the exhale, more sensitive awareness of the face and the head as you inhale, in a broad softening of the face, the head as you exhale. Having awareness spread out on the inhale up into the shoulders to feel the shoulders. And if there's tension or holding, to allow it to melt or soften on the exhale.

On the inhale, feeling the front of your body, the chest, the belly, wherever there might be some tension or holding. Gently, lovingly feel it as you inhale. A wide panoramic awareness that doesn't fixate on anything, but includes a wide field of sensations. And as you exhale, let there be a softening, a melting of the chest, the ribcage, diaphragm, belly. And then the same kind of rhythm with the inhale, to feel in a broad, expansive way the sensations, the experience of the thinking mind. Not so much the content of your thoughts, but what the experience of thinking is like.

And on the exhale, letting any tension in the thinking mind soften, melt, or expand into the wide panoramic space of awareness. Taking a few moments now for a broad, global panoramic awareness of your body, maybe letting awareness roam around the body, maybe have awareness be like the radiating warmth of a heater that spreads its heat evenly throughout the room. And then within that broad experience of the body, gently, softly settle into the center of it all with the breathing at the center of it all. The settling place, the grounding place with breathing, an intimacy with the experience of breathing within the wide field, like walking on a beautiful path, in a beautiful spring field where you're very clear of the flowers, the path you're on, the feet that walk. At the same time, there's the wide field and the sky that's also part of the picture. So, each step of the breath, the rhythm of breathing in and breathing out, within the quiet and silence of broad peripheral awareness of your body.

If you find yourself thinking, notice how that might take you away from a broad, settled awareness of your body here and now. And for these minutes, have a preference for your embodied experience instead of the thoughts you're concerned with. And if you want to stay connected to the present moment with your experience breathing, being in your body. If that's what's important, that's where you'd like awareness to be. Notice how the thinking mind is taking

away from you what is not given. Your thinking mind pulls in your awareness to feed it, to support it, to get lost in it.

Your thinking mind is taking what is not given. Relax the thinking mind, letting awareness return to the home of your body. And as we come to the end of this sitting, to notice if you're more settled or calm than you were at the beginning. And if so, does it provide you with a deeper connection to yourself, a deeper intimacy, closeness, that somehow more connected, more connected, embodied than being lost in thought, being preoccupied with the world of thinking and planning and doing. And as you feel more embodied, is there in that embodiment a sensibility and orientation of goodwill, kindness, care for the world, for yourself, for your family and friends? To breathe with it, to breathe through, to breathe out of that care, as if your breathing is spreading, radiating kindness out into the world, radiating the embodied warmth, well-being, delight of the heart's goodwill.

And for a minute or so, to have that be your choice, to spread goodwill, kindness with your imagination, your thoughts out into the world. And anything else that your mind does, your thinking mind, it's going to be, it's taking what is not given, because what is given is your care and your kindness of present moment awareness. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free.

And may we stay close to our body, our direct experience. That kindness is more often the default. Thank you.