

## Guided Meditaiton-Simple Presence and Love

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Hello and happy new year. I'm delighted to sit here and have the wonderful joy of wishing you well for this new year. Hello and I hope that you're... I hope that this foundation of starting today with the 7 a.m. will be part of the fresh way of beginning a new year and to enter this year with greater dedication to offering your wonderful presence, your wonderful heart to this world.

And for this morning's meditation, I would like to suggest something radical. And that is that for you to experiment, to see if you can find the simplest way to be present here and now, rather than doing something to be mindful, how simple can you be so that you recognize that you're present? How simple can you be so that... you're left with a very simple kind of awareness, mindfulness, presence that's less a doing and more a expression of your being. Not something you do, but something you allow for, because you allow yourself to be simple. Not thinking about the past and future, not trying to solve something, not trying to make something happen. How simple can you be?

How much can you just shed? How much can you just let fall away that takes you out of the simplicity of this moment? So assuming a meditation posture, and even though this might be a beginning with doing something, see if you can adjust your posture so that there might be more sense of embodied presence in which you will be radically simple, almost like the body makes more room, more strength, more availability to be present in a radically simple way. And then closing your eyes, and then as if you're expanding out as a massage, out through all the complexities of your life, and relaxing it on the inhale, exhale. Take a deep breath, expanding, touching, stretching out into whatever seems complicated right here and now. However you are, on the exhale, settle, relax.

A little bit longer exhale than usual. So something inside can settle into a simplicity of being. And then letting your breathing return to normal. And if your breathing is not normal, it's

okay. Be simple with that. Experience your body expanding and contracting as you breathe, allowing yourself to feel the simple sensations, physical sensations associated with breathing.

Maybe the way the body experiences breathing. For the body, it's very simple. The bodily experience in the present doesn't involve a future or a past. The physical experience in the present, the simplicity of it doesn't need anything to change from the body's point of view. It's a simple experience of the moment and to allow the rest of you, your mind, your thoughts, join into that simplicity. How simple can you be here and now while your body breathes a simplicity that doesn't need to change anything.

Even if some part of you is involved in complicated thoughts or feelings, is there in the middle of it a simplicity of being, attention? It's all okay. In the simplicity of awareness, at the center of it all, what is the simplest awareness, knowing, mindfulness that's available for you? When you don't try to be aware, but you allow yourself to be aware as simply as is available. Some people might appreciate the idea of presence, the simplest form of being present. Here and now, a sense of being presence.

Maybe the simplicity is a feeling of aliveness. What is the sense of simple presence? that arises out of you. It is you, more than it's something that you do. How simple can you be to feel the simplest form of attention, presence, awareness, here, as you breathe, letting the thinking mind join this simplicity of being. Nothing that needs to be thought about.

Feeling your way into what is simpler than thinking. And in the simplest way you can be aware, being present, might there be in that simplicity something simple, maybe quiet, maybe very modest, but might there be something in the family of love? Might there be something that resembles *mettā*, kindness, care, goodwill, a warm-heartedness, compassion, a form of love that might be called appreciation, delighting, love which is an inspiration of delight. Maybe it takes the form of a tenderness, a gentleness, a radiance of goodness. Might there be a way that in the simplest way of being present, being aware... There is also found something very simple form of love, of kindness.

And as you breathe, to breathe with that love, to breathe with loving awareness, how simple can you be in being here and now, present, the simplicity of being in the middle of this moment, a simplicity of being that puts aside judgments and interpretations. Maybe putting aside reactions for or against. Allowing yourself to be alive in the simplest possible way. As if for these few moments, everything around you, everything within us, the room you're in, the place you're in, everything is okay. Everything is safe, relaxing into a simplicity of awareness. Just here.

And is there in this simplicity something that you could characterize, associate with love, kindness, a tenderness, gentleness within, a warmth within? that carries kindness, friendliness, carries love. And imagine that radiates from you. Not that you're actively radiating, but like a small heater that just allows its heat to radiate beyond the edges of the heater. Your love radiates out into the world and bring to mind into your imagination, the people that you'll be encountering today, including strangers and people you barely know, and for these next few moments, to let them into your heart, into your circle of care, as if your radiance of love can touch them as well.

Touch, touch them with your well-wishing. May all of you be happy. May all of you... be safe. May all of you be peaceful. May all of you be free.

And to have that circle of warmth, begin with you, stretch outside of you, include you, and include everyone. May all of us be happy. May all of us be safe. May all of us be peaceful. May all of us be free. Thank you.