

Guided Meditation: Wholeness

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December 19, 2024

Keywords: mindfulness, meditation, body, heart, breathing, awareness, tension, relaxation, biosphere, beings

So good morning, everyone. Good day. Welcome. And this morning, as a way of beginning, I would like to evoke the image of standing on a wonderful high mountain peak and on a very clear day. And this mountain peak is on the edge of a vast land that's below. Nothing is higher.

And you can see a far distance, the great plains below, the mountain ranges to the north, the ocean to the west, great rivers to the east. And in standing there, on this day, you look around and what stands out is all the different weathers that you can see. In some areas, you see that it's raining, clouds, maybe rainbows. In other directions, maybe higher up, you can see in the distance, far from you where it's sunny, you can see that it's even snowing. And down below, you see across where the ocean is, you see fog banks coming in, and it's clear that down in the valleys that somehow the wind is turning and maybe the soil is being kicked up so that you see little tornadoes or windstorms. And other places further down, you see that it is blue skies far to the south, and places where it looks like it's maybe almost desert-like, and clear, warm, it looks down there.

And so you see that so many different kinds of weather, and as you watch it, you see it shifting and changing. Clouds move, rain comes and goes. But what stands out is that even though you can differentiate these different parts of the weather, it's just all part of the same weather system. They're all interrelated. You could in some sense say that there's a continuity between all the different weather that you see, that there's no line and barrier between one and the other. And they're all in some ways in relationship to each other.

The weather is a whole. And in a sense we can know that the weather of the whole planet is this global weather pattern that influences each part and they work together. And now we think, sometimes we think, scientists now think of the global weather as a single whole that

is interacting with itself. So the same way, as we sit on our mountain peak of meditation, on our cushion, our chair where we're sitting, all that we experience in ourselves can be like the weather. We can certainly see that there are different emotions and feelings and sensations happening. But there's some way of seeing it as all part of a larger whole.

To not create strong lines, boundaries between one thing and the other. The boundary between your hand and your arm is an arbitrary line. Your fingers and your palm. You know, we usually don't separate that when we think of the hand. We can, of course, think about finger. We can, of course, think of the hand, separate from the rest of the arm.

But there's also a continuity and they all work together as a whole. Our heart is part of the whole, our whole body. The heart nourishing the body, and the heart nourishing itself by how it works. But the heart exists completely interdependent on everything else in our body. And so in meditation, the idea, one way to approach it, is not to get too focused on one particular thing as if that's the most important thing, but rather to see that all that happens to us is part of one larger whole.

And often the part of our life that we're preoccupied with is only a very small percentage of what keeps us alive and going in any given moment. 99.999% of what keeps us alive and living when activated conscious are processes within us that we don't control, that we can support, but that operate without our conscious effort. And so the 99.999% of who we are is a larger part of the whole than the particular part that we're preoccupied with, that we define ourselves by. And so to behold very lightly any way we define ourselves, anything that we're preoccupied with, and instead of getting absorbed in preoccupation, stand on the mountain peak of mindfulness and see it all as part of the weather, the larger weather system, without being caught in the divisions that the mind makes.

So to take the whole of your body and assume a meditation posture. And to lower your gaze, perhaps gently close your eyes. And as you are, what's the broadest way at this moment that you can feel your body? What are the sensations in your body that appear, flow, express themselves as you're sitting here? And to see it as part of a larger whole.

And then within this body, maybe as part of the whole, experiencing how the body breathes, the movements of breathing, sensations of body as you breathe. And as a way of entering into your body more fully, take a few fuller breaths, relaxing as you exhale. Letting your breathing return to normal. On the inhale, see if you can experience, recognize, notice what the thinking mind is like, how it feels, how activated it is. But to feel it as part of the wider whole. It's just a piece of the weather of who you are, relaxing the thinking mind.

And then feeling, as part of the whole, how things are for you in your heart center, almost as if whatever is in your heart center, whatever your emotion is, is nested in a wider whole of your body, mind, awareness. No need to be focused or fixated on how you feel. There's something better than that. And that is to allow it to be nestled in the wider whole of your body.

And then finally to center yourself on your breathing. In some ways, breathing, the processes of the body connected to breathing, touch every cell in your body. As you breathe in, let your awareness grow and spread throughout your body with the inhale. And as you exhale, relax back into some center, some root stability within. Being with a whole of your body. Maybe a whole that includes all things about yourself: thoughts, feelings, sensations.

When there is tension in the body and mind, we are compromising the whole of who we are. For the body and mind to soften and relax helps us move back into the whole. And as we come to the end of this sitting, might it be possible for you to relax more fully into your body or to allow yourself to sense as wide, as broad as a field of your body as possible? Maybe the humming, vibrating, flowing sensations of your body. Whatever broad sense of the whole body that you can rest in and relaxing, softening any activation of your thinking mind.

And in that relaxation, allow there be a broadening, a further broadening of awareness to take in the whole without centering yourself on anything in particular. And then to expand, relax outward with a relaxed gaze or a relaxed sense of all the beings, human and others, that are found in your neighborhood, that are found in your city or county, province. As if all of them are part of a whole working together. Part of the wider biological social systems that can live harmoniously together as a whole. And maybe feeling a sense of kinship with all living things, all living things.

All living things have a common source, origin. All living things exist together in the whole of the biosphere. And may we care for the whole and for the individuals. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful.

May all beings be free. And may we extend our care to contribute to that possibility. Thank you.