

## Guided Meditation: Onward Leading Thoughts

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**March 20, 2025**

**Keywords:** samādhī, meditation, breathing, goodwill, generosity, suffering, clinging, well-being, calm, peace

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So welcome, everyone, to our morning's meditation. And one of the invaluable areas to care for, be careful with, and caring is it has to do with our thinking, thinking during meditation. Okay. Some people are at war with their thoughts. Some people are enamored with their thoughts. Some people are 100% committed to their thoughts.

Some people are subservient to the authority of their thoughts. Every thought is true or something. But in meditation, the idea is to start learning how to think and what to think about that supports *samādhī*. And at this approach stage of *samādhī*, there can still be thoughts. But the difference is that now the thinking comes from a deeper layer, level, deeper source within us than anxious thoughts, desirous thoughts, thoughts that have a lot of clinging involved or force behind them or a lot of ego or self around them.

And the thoughts that come into play are quieter, softer, lighter, more like they float through rather than they don't have any force, they don't have any force behind them, there's no tension connected to them. And they are thoughts that have to do with the meditation itself. Very simple thoughts about, yes, this is good. Yes, here's where the attention should be. What happens if I come a little closer in to the sensations of breathing? What happens if I open up more widely to the sensations of breathing?

Can I just stay longer with the sensations of breathing? Okay. These very simple, sometimes they're a little bit like giving yourselves instructions, sometimes they're a little bit like exploring the situation, just trying very subtly different ways of being with the experience. It's very small adjustments, very small things. It would be almost as the thoughts would be almost as a light, almost as almost not there, as it would be driving down the freeway, and the subtle ways in which you're constantly adjusting the steering wheel to stay going straight.

And it's done almost probably without any conscious thinking, but there is a conscious engagement that's there. So that light almost. So there's a way of thinking. And that way of thinking how is also can be akin to love, can be akin to love. being gentle, non-assertive, a kind of thinking that is not going to be judging and not going to be reactive or alarmed, but just like, oh, here, here my friend, let's try this, let's be here.

Like you're with a friend who's maybe trouble with something, and here, let me, let me, you know, let me put my hand on your shoulder. or here, would you like to link arms as we're walking through the park? Here, I'm here with you. And so there's no kind of thoughts that are making opinions up or stories up or reacting or projecting ideas. It's very simple instruction about the experience. And sometimes they're very subtle thoughts that just to yourself, kind of very simple, are doing field notes, describing the situation.

Oh, And you know you're doing this thinking appropriately. If it doesn't distract you, it keeps you on track, keeps you right here in a nice way. You feel the support of it. It's like a friend who, you know, puts her hand gently on your back shoulder saying, it's okay, it's okay. You can do this, something. And... And then, and part of that is to begin to recognize, oh, here, this is the onward leading nature.

This pleasure, this well-being, this is good, yes. This can help me stay. Stay with us. Stay with what's happening. And this is the onward leading. This is where it's here.

And the onward-leading nature of *samādhi* at some point can feel like a gentle... thread, a gentle cord which is pulling you along. And maybe like you have a, you know, maybe you have a, you're on a sled and you can feel that your friend in front of you, or maybe it's a horse or something, is pulling you along and you can feel the pull. You can feel the direction or you can feel the slide is here. Right. here.

And maybe that's the thoughts. The very subtle here. Yes, now. So feel the pull, the pull of *samādhi*. So assuming a meditation posture, and as you're sitting here without anything else, just recognize in the broadest possible way how you are. How are you now?

How would you answer that question, even in very simple ways, feeling how that is for you. to be this way. And then taking a gentle but full breath. And in the exhale, settle into the very middle of how you are, where the edges can relax. Closing your eyes and feeling how you are in your body.

What's the global, general feeling sense of being in your body? And then in the middle of that, taking a few long, full breaths. and as you exhale to settle into the middle of all that, along the edges to relax. In a more general way, what's the global experience of breathing? And

then breathing a little deeper than usual.

On the exhale, settling into the middle of your breathing, with the edges relaxing, taking two or three more deeper breaths, and the exhale, letting your thinking mind, settle, relax, letting your breathing return to normal, and feeling the rhythm of breathing in and breathing out. At the end of the exhale, having a pause that's just long enough that the urge to breathe in can be accompanied by a little thought, subtle, quiet, loving thought. Yes, yes to breathing in as you allow the inhale at the beginning of the exhale. Maybe experiment with a very subtle, quiet thought. It simply says, instructs, let go with no demand, no expectation, just a reminder to be with the letting go of exhale and very calmly, gently.

Recognize maybe with little thoughts. Recognize any signs you have of becoming settled, becoming calm, becoming intimate with the cycle of breathing in and breathing out. The quiet thinking, sometimes a non-verbal thinking, the non-verbal knowing, that keeps you connected to the process of settling, concentrating, entering into an immersive experience of *samādhi* with your breathing. And might there be some place deep inside, deep inside the center of your settledness or calm, where there's a gentle pull that says here, come along here, settle here, focus here, or perhaps more profoundly, you can feel the gravitational pull that has the message, let go here, let go into here, this place, this spot.

And if it feels right, let there be a subtle, quiet thinking about your meditation experience. that helps quiet the thinking mind, that reassures the thinking mind. It's okay to be quiet, to be here, to simply engage in dipping in to the *samādhi*. And as we come to the end of the sitting, to see if from the quietest place where you can think, or maybe the deepest place, the place that is most settled and calmed, content. Have thoughts of goodwill, thoughts of generosity, of respectful care for the people you might encounter today.

Strangers, people in stores, places of work, neighbors, people on the road, friends, And from the deepest place available for you, the deepest place of well-being, or memory of deep sense of peace, well-being, wish this for others, almost as if you can offer what you have to others. Wish it, offer it. May all of you be happy, calm, content. May all of you be safe. breathing breaths that are reassuring.

May all of you be peaceful, free of agitation. May all of you be free of suffering, clinging. And may we share together. May we mirror for each other, our deep human capacity for feeling happy, safe, peaceful, and free. May this be something we see in each other and support in each other. Thank you.