

Guided Meditation: Appreciation

Gil Fronsdal

February 02, 2026

Keywords: love, appreciation, meditation, awareness, present moment, breathing, contemplation, inner reflection, humanity, kindness

Hello and welcome everyone to this guided meditation. And I find myself quite happy, settled to be here and happy to share this theme, ongoing theme on love. And this week I would like to talk about elements of love or components of love so that we can better understand it, better tease apart both the different elements and tease apart the things that are confused as love. And so I want today I'd like to begin with the topic of appreciation, that love involves appreciation of someone, sometimes something, and the simplest open-handed form of appreciation that wants nothing in return, just as a certain kind of delight or valuing, respecting, enjoying another person for their own sake, for how they are independent. Right? Of wanting something in return.

And it's a wonderful thing to appreciate someone in this kind of open-handed way, to know that they're alive, to know that to appreciate knowing them, and maybe the inspiration that comes from knowing them, the goodness that comes, the wholesome feelings that come from knowing them, to be able to have this wonderful positive regard. And it kind of, you know, maybe the heart smiles, thinking about the person, being with a person. It's just such a, there's so much goodness in knowing them. So to appreciate. We appreciate others. We have the experience, hopefully, of someone appreciating us. And we appreciate ourselves.

And that last one is profoundly important in meditation. To really be able to appreciate oneself so well that almost appreciation disappears in favor of a kind of a smile, the heart smiling at our own existence, our own beingness, is a very useful framework, platform, foundation to better appreciate others. So to begin, to assume a meditation posture, together with an appreciation of our body, our ability to maybe find a posture that is supportive, whatever posture that might be, sitting, standing, lying down, even walking, and to gently close the eyes. And just as you are, without any further ado, can you find some way, easy way, to appreciate yourself, or to appreciate this body and heart and mind that is going to be sitting here

in meditation. Maybe appreciating that you are caring for yourself in this way by meditating. Maybe appreciating that you value yourself enough to engage in this profound process of contemplation, inner reflection, awareness.

And with appreciation, to slowly, gently. Take some deeper, fuller inhales so your ribcage expands. Your diaphragm is pushed down. Maybe the belly expands and relax as you exhale. Maybe a somewhat longer exhale than usual. Laying your breathing, return to normal.

And with a normal breathing, scan through your body to feel where there might be some holding that can be relaxed. Feel that area on the inhale. Soften, relax as you exhale. As you breathe in, feel or see if there's any ways in which you are tense or aversive or judgmental to yourself, any ways in which you are critical or braced against yourself. And if that's the case, it's okay to know it as you inhale and maybe to appreciate yourself instead on the exhale, to relax any holding, any attachment or tension that you have towards yourself. Anything short of a kind regard, widen the attention, widen the appreciation within which breathing in and breathing out travels through your body, centering yourself on your breathing.

Knowing that breathing, the body breathing is a way that you are being cared for, a way in which you're being kept alive and with enough energy to sit here and meditate, to appreciate breathing, to think of breathing as your body appreciating itself. And may you with every breath allow for a wide, maybe silent appreciation of yourself, of your beingness, being alive, your aliveness here and now, without commentary, without judgment, without debate, simple human appreciation brought into the forefront with every breath, allowing the thinking mind to be quieter, letting go of thoughts, except for the simplest idea of appreciation, almost like the single word is enough to feel, sense, and opening to the deeper valuing, of oneself, one's breathing, of the simplest experience of being alive. Meditation is a time to put aside thoughts of being right or wrong. Put aside memories of right and wrong, shoulds and shouldn'ts, to spend time with the most simple, basic experience of life, of humanity. Where present moment awareness comes with appreciation for this present moment experience of being alive, being human, and maybe caring for oneself by sitting, by practicing meditation, practicing awareness.

And as we come to the end of this sitting, to now bring to mind some person that you appreciate, where there's no expectations of anything in return. It's not an exchange, it's not a... It doesn't take the form of a desire for something from the person. An open-handed appreciation, where you're delighted, happy, that you know this person exists, that you value having known them. And sit with that appreciation, the feeling of it, the sense of it, the thoughts of it. And let your breathing spread the appreciation out into the world, maybe out towards the

person or in all directions.

And to spread that sense of appreciation out into the world, towards all people, maybe from the safety, seclusion of your meditation, and then, there's some modicum of appreciation of all people, the miracle of them being alive, the shared humanity that we have. Just a natural way of having the heart smile or be uplifted in appreciation of the whole world. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. And may our growing appreciation of others help this be possible.