

Guided Meditation: Look Again Freely

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Hello and welcome. And as we begin our meditation, I'd like to introduce the theme for this meditation. And it's along the lines of the series now on love. Love is part of Buddhism, part of meditation, part of a wise life. And this week, talking about the different elements of it, and the element I'm going to talk about today is that the kind of love, that spiritual love, love of goodwill and friendship, is one, hopefully always, all love, is one that has respect in it.

And I like very much the use of this English word respect for *vipassanā* practice. *Vipassanā* is the Pāli word that means to see clearly. And respect, it comes from the Latin root, to look again. To give a second look at something. Don't just settle on the first impressions. Don't settle on the first interpretation, reaction to something.

But to respect something is to look at it again. But how we look again... so that it's fresh, with fresh eyes, open eyes. We're not carrying with us our predispositions and prejudices and things with us as the art. But what I'd like to do today is not emphasize, emphasize respect as the step of looking again. Something happens in your experience, and you... give it a second look. You take a deeper look at it. You bring it into focus.

But rather than that second look, what I want to emphasize is the transition between the first knowing of something, first experiencing or seeing of something, and the transition from that to giving the second look. In between those two, there's a place of choice. In between those two, there's a place of choice, of a transition, of like a little pause, a little understanding that now we're going to do something different, we're going to look again. And that rather than let that be a fleeting moment that you hardly notice, where maybe what you identify and what you think is important is you as the seer, you as the knower. But maybe right there in that transition, there's a different kind of identity, a different basis to appreciate that the one who has the choice, the place of choice, the place of changing, the place of choosing to see,

there there's freedom. There there is some whole different way of being that is independent of what's being seen and our response, reaction to what is seen.

Right there, if you need to identify with some part of yourself, identify the one there, that moment, who says, okay, let's look again. Let's take a second look here. Let's be more present here and then be more present. Be more aware of what's happening. But begin appreciating that choice. It might come with a simple thought. Appreciate thinking in that way. It might come with an impulse, it might come with a non-verbal kind of instruction that you tell yourself, take a second look here.

So see if in that transition you find some freedom, some self-respect, some agency, something that you value about yourself, something you appreciate about yourself. That in that transition you're not caught. In that transition, maybe you're not your normal, the self that you identify with. Maybe you are freer than you think. Maybe you have more agency than you think. In that simple movement, and maybe that's something to appreciate and value.

So, to assume a meditation posture, and right there, that same thing there, the movement to adjust your posture to good meditation posture, right there, there's a transition where you're making a choice. Can you do that freely, easily, and then gently closing your eyes, and notice how you feel in your body. Notice the sensations, the tensions, the emotions, and then to take a second look at your body. Take a second look at all that as a form of respect. And then maybe take a few deeper, fuller breaths with a longer exhale, relaxing the whole length of the exhale, letting your breathing return to normal.

And with breathing as the default, as the center, if your mind recognizes anything else that's compelling to your attention. You already know it, that it's there. And see if you can use that transition of choice to give it a second look where the ability to choose predisposes you to look with fresh eyes with respect for what you're looking at. Not judgment, not preconceived ideas. Can you discover something new, a new way of being in the transition from the first look to the second look, looking again, rather than identifying with being the one who sees or knows experiences. See if you can fall back into a deeper place inside where there's the choices made to look again, to know again, to look with more clarity, to know more simply.

And then as we come to the end of the sitting, what would be like now to turn your attention out into the world with respect, with not caring with you the old information, the old judgments, the old emotions, but to turn now towards the communities around you with fresh eyes, where the choice to look respectfully is to have the freedom and the agency to look without preconceptions, prejudice, agendas, to look upon the world without imposing yourself and your ideas on it, to look with respect as a form of love. That maybe resonates

with the goodwill of these words. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. And may we gaze upon people respectfully so that in our very gaze we are offering them the gift of safety, of peace, of freedom from our own attachments, gazing with respect. Thank you.