

Guided Meditation: Settling into Goodwill

Gil Fronsdal

February 05, 2026

Keywords: mettā, goodwill, kindness, meditation, aliveness, well-being, relaxation, attention, heart, practice

Good morning. Hello. Welcome. And one of the benefits of practicing meditation is to slow down, steady oneself, rest in some form of inner stability and non-anxious state, vitality, to be present for what is, rather than overriding it, missing it, because we're barreling ahead to the next moment, the next activity, too busy doing, or too preoccupied in our concerns and our own mind, in the heart.

And to calm down and to be more present, to see more clearly, to see ourselves more clearly, see others more clearly, it allows us to feel and recognize how deeply we can be sensitive, aware of others, aware of ourselves. There's so much information that passes back and forth. There's so much resonance. There's so much humanity that exists between people who are present.

And when we have a lot of time, when we have a sense of well-being, it's almost natural to have goodwill. I say they would rather than to practice goodwill, to just be, to smile, to say hello, to offer someone a helping hand, to offer them a cup of tea, to do a lot of small gestures of care, respect, from a sense of rapport, appreciation. And this source within of goodwill, well-wishing, can become a phenomenal reference point, strength for our lives that we can be devoted to. It can feel like the capacity for goodwill, the capacity for care and love is so healthy, it's so integral to who we are, that we don't want to lose it. We would like to live from that place, not because we should, but because anything less than that is a loss, is a diminishment of ourselves. And this is a phenomenal thing to discover.

The naturalness of some degree of goodwill, it may be the simplest type. From our simplicity of being, there can be care. So to begin this meditation, sitting, assuming a posture that is just the right posture for you, the posture that is somewhat intentional, so that there is a greater sense of vitality, aliveness in the body. We're not over-emphasizing a relaxed posture, which

sometimes dampens the natural feeling of vitality, aliveness, even lying down. It's possible to adjust the spine, where the shoulder blades are, the shoulders sometimes, the arms, even the fingers, the positioning of the head, the position of the legs, gently closing the eyes, and with a sense of permission or a sense of broad okayness with how it is, allowing it to be the way it is, spend a few moments to sense and feel your own body, letting the attention roam all over, just checking in.

Like you're checking in with a good friend you haven't seen for a long time, saying hello, and to feel this inner aliveness, vitality, just a little bit more in the process of taking some deeper or fuller breaths, not vigorously, just enough to wake something up, wake up a sense of sensations, connectivity to our body, our torso, to the rib cage, and to relax on the exhale. You spend a little more time softening on the exhale, relaxing any tension, softening around the tension, and to do so with an attitude of goodwill, kindness, care, in the simplest forms it might take, with appreciation for the different parts of the body, with goodwill to the parts that are tense or tight or hurt, a gentle softening, a gentle goodwill, bringing the same goodwill to your thinking mind, feeling any agitation, tension, tightness, without ambition, without upsetting anything, gently, with goodwill, kindness.

Let there be an undemanding, unambitious softening, relaxing of the thinking mind on the exhale, and lowering the attention to experience the body breathing. The body knows how to breathe, and in doing so, the body is caring for itself, providing the needed oxygen and removing the unneeded carbon dioxide. And perhaps you can connect, be present for your breathing with goodwill, kindness, kind attention. A kind of attention that doesn't crowd your breathing or interfere with it or try to do and accomplish something through it. But attending to breathing with appreciation, with goodwill, with kind attention that allows the breathing to relax, to breathe itself, and perhaps the vitality, the aliveness of attention, of your body, heart and mind, just maybe it can be informed, suffused with goodwill, with kindness, gentleness.

Whatever arises, whatever is happening, to know it, to be aware of it, with the simplest forms of goodwill, kindness, careful that you notice the mind wandering off. Maybe feeling the pressure, momentum, the tension of thinking, relaxing that, settling back, settling back into a place of goodwill, goodwill that suffuses awareness, knowing, attention to whatever is happening. As we approach the end of the sitting, if you like, gently drop the word *mettā* or kindness into your being and let yourself relax into the goodwill, the kindness, the goodwill, the *mettā*, so not a projection of goodwill, but a resting back into it.

And then as we come to the end of the sitting, imagine you've come to the end of a hike, the

end of a trip that brings you to a great vista, a mountaintop, and there's a bench. And you sit down on the bench, relax into the bench. It feels good to be supported having arrived. And then you gaze out across the land with relaxed and soft eyes. And so, to let yourself relax into whatever sense of goodwill, *mettā* you find in your heart and your torso and your mind, just relax into it, release into goodwill. And from there, gaze out across the world with goodwill sitting on your bench.

No one needs to know that you have goodwill and there's no need to justify it or to have a reason for it. It's just what flows through the eyes, through the gaze. Be at rest and gaze upon the world kindly. And may these words encourage in you this ability to rest back and to gaze forward into the world. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. May all beings be appreciated through your gaze. May all beings be respected through your kind regard, may you delight in a resonance, the rapport with all beings. May all beings benefit from your goodwill and kind gaze. May our practice benefit this world. Thank you.