

## Guided Meditation: Nothing Extra

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Good morning. I had a little bit of technical difficulty, so please let me know if you can hear me fine. I'd appreciate something in the chat. Good morning. I had a little bit of technical difficulty, so please let me know if you can hear me fine. I just muted something. Can you tell me again if you're hearing fine?

Okay, wonderful. Okay. And so let me get all set up. So I'll take a moment just to appreciate who's here right now. I started a little bit late, so I didn't get a chance to get a sense of all of you. But gosh, a lot of old friends and new current friends, new friends. It's wonderful.

So we'll go ahead and get started. The topic this week is the art of being nobody and somebody. So I want to start with a very short *Zen* story before we go into the guided meditation.

A student asked their teacher, "What is *Zen*?" The teacher replied, "When hungry, eat. When tired, sleep." And the student said, "But everyone does that." And the teacher said, "No, when most people eat, they're thinking about a thousand things. When they sleep, they're dreaming a thousand dreams." And sometimes when we meditate, we're also thinking about a thousand things. The teacher didn't say that, but in *Zen*, you know, when hungry, eat; when tired, sleep.

So let's begin the sitting, taking an alert and relaxed posture, allowing the eyes to gently close, letting the body be supported by the chair, the cushion, the floor. Just the hands resting easily, and beginning simply by arriving here in this body. Just noticing the experience of being here, putting aside any cares or concerns that might be lingering, leaving later for later.

Taking a few deep breaths, with each exhale you might settle into your body a little bit more, relaxing a little more deeply. And when you're ready, allowing the breath to return to normal, taking a little time to get a global sense of your body. You might allow the attention to meander freely throughout the body, relaxing any obvious tensions.

You might notice sensations of pressure, of touch, of warmth, of movement, just noticing, allowing things to be as they are, releasing anything you're holding. You might begin to notice the movements of the breath, perhaps the movement in the chest, the belly, the rib cage, the throat, the air coming in and out of the nostrils, however the breath is for you. And allowing the attention to settle, to rest wherever it feels most at ease, what feels easy to connect with. There is no right way, just settling into the rhythm of the breath however it is, just resting in this body, in this breath.

There's nothing to manage, nothing to figure out. Sounds may come and go. Thoughts may come and go. Sensations changing moment by moment, simply allowing experience to unfold, simply noticing what arises and passes away.

The movements of the mind, you might notice the mind liking certain experiences, quiet, clarity, comfort, and maybe disliking other ones, restlessness, discomfort, confusion. You might notice these movements. Gently notice if there's any leaning toward what we like, any pulling away from the unpleasant, and see it all arise and pass away.

Maybe a memory appears, an image of yourself, a plan for later, a moment of comparison, a moment of concern. Just noticing how the mind creates worlds very quickly. But also notice how easily these worlds can fade, like waking up from a dream, and just returning again to the simplicity of breathing, of this body, of sitting here.

Nothing extra is needed, just living experience unfolding, breathing, hearing, sensing, thoughts appearing and disappearing. Nothing extra. Nothing is missing. Just this, this sound, this breath, this moment. Whatever shows up belongs. Nothing special. Mindfulness has room for everything.

And as we begin to come toward the end of the meditation, take a few moments to again feel the body globally here, now, allowing the attention to meander throughout the body, sensing, feeling. Now you might take a few deeper breaths. It's always helpful to take a little time as we come out of meditation, just like we do when we begin, with each breath feeling the body relaxing, feeling the vitality in your system. And when I ring the bell, gently, and when you're ready, opening your eyes.