

## Guided Meditation: Kindness

**Ines Freedman**

**May 15, 2026**

**Keywords:** meditation, breathing, body, awareness, kindness, restlessness, sadness, Lawrence Krauss

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So good day. Welcome back to this. This is the last of the series.

And I'd like to begin with a reflection I read recently. It was adapted from the physicist Lawrence Krauss. So he said, "Every atom in our bodies came from a star that exploded." The atoms in your left hand probably came from a different star than your right hand. The carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, iron, all the things needed for life were created in the nuclear furnaces of stars, and the only way for them to get into our bodies was for those stars to be kind enough to explode, explode! The stars died so that we could be here today.

So all this effort we humans make to become somebody, to perfect ourselves, to defend ourselves, and yet here we are, temporary arrangements of ancient star dust, just breathing together for a brief moment. So today, rather than trying to improve ourselves, perhaps we can practice including every part of ourselves in our meditation, nothing left out, allowing all of our stardust to be included.

So let's begin the meditation, settling into a posture that allows dignity, alertness, and ease. Allowing the eyes to close. Arriving here fully. Putting aside any cares or concerns. Any ideas for later. Being centered in the body. The body here now.

Allowing the attention now to meander throughout the body in your own way, relaxing any tensions that can be relaxed. Let go of any holding or bracing. Relaxing or softening any habitual tensions, maybe the face, the shoulders, the belly. Keeping a soft belly, back, arms, and legs. Connecting intimately with the body.

And from within the body, you might become aware of your breathing as simple inhaling, exhaling, just knowing you're breathing in, knowing you're breathing out. You might take a few long, slow, deep breaths, with each inhale connecting more intimately with the moment.

With each exhale, relaxing a little more deeply, letting go, settling in, allowing the earth to support you. And when you're ready, allowing your breath to return to normal, to the normal rhythms.

And staying close to the body, to the breath, is staying very simple. This body is part of the world around it. The same oxygen moving through forests and oceans moves through us now. The warmth of stars lives quietly in this body, just present; enough, nothing else is needed.

You might notice sensations appearing, sounds, thoughts, feelings. All these are objects of the mind appearing and disappearing, moving in and out of awareness. There's no need to sort it. There's no need to sort experience into good and bad, wanted and unwanted, just allowing it to be just as it is, welcoming whatever shows up in our awareness.

Letting this meditation be wide enough to include all of ourselves, any foibles, any imperfections, they all belong in our kind attention. If restlessness is here, that too belongs; if sadness is here, joy, confusion, tenderness, doubt, it all belongs. None of it is outside the practice. Staying connected with this breathing body, breathing in, breathing out.

If any unwanted sensation or thought appears, see if it's possible to allow it to be known. Perhaps silently offering this too can be held in kindness.