

## Guided Meditation: Gratitude

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So, hello and welcome.

And I'm struck, as I came to IMC here today and got ready for this teaching on YouTube, by how many people have contributed to IMC, their labor, their time, their money, to make this place exist. Allow me to come here into this wonderful room. They've set up the technology. They've had cameras and recordings and computers and all the stuff that we have here. And many people have come through and offered their loving care and attention, volunteering. And we've slowly built up this wonderful meditation center, this wonderful capacity to teach, a place for me to come.

And coming here today, I felt such gratitude. I feel so fortunate. In a sense, I feel fortunate in being the recipient of so much goodness, so much love and care, and what a wonderful thing.

And then there are people, all kinds of circles of people, that support IMC, that support our community, support me, support the people in the neighborhood here, and the circles of people who are doing things for each other. It's just phenomenal. Recently, the electricity company came and trimmed some of the branches from the trees that might interfere with the power lines. And in a way they're caring for us, and caring to make sure there's enough electricity coming here, and that there's not damage. And there are caring people, street cleaners and garbage trucks come by, and they're all caring for things that are essential for the working of what we need here.

And so to sit in a field of gratitude, to sit aware of gratitude, not as a should, not as a Pollyannaish thing, but as a source of joy, a source of delight, and a source of not being caught up in me, myself, and mine, not being caught up in a negativity bias. We complain about how there's not enough, or people don't do enough, or something. There are too many things

which are wrong. As I sit here at this moment in this room, I don't see anything that's wrong. I don't have anything that I can think of right now to complain about that's actually here and present in the moment. It's remarkable that that's the case.

I can certainly come up with a list of things that are not here, that are in the future, the past, are annoying or difficult, challenging. But so much is working. And from time to time it's really good to take that in, to be nourished by it, to be inspired, to let it bring joy, bring the light. Let it be the source of a warmhearted relationship, of kindness, of care, friendship, of gratitude, of goodwill.

So to sit today with gratitude. So to assume a meditation posture. And I know that there are many things challenging in our bodies, illness, aches, pains, disabilities. At the same time, to be alive means that plenty is working, plenty is going well enough to be attentive, to come to meditation. To have the technology to be doing this right now.

And so for this meditation, let's begin by tuning in to what is working. Not denying that things don't work, that there are challenges, but maybe a different context, a different approach to being aware of all of it, because it's rooted in gratitude. And beginning with the eyes closed, and appreciating this body that's breathing, this body that one way or the other has cared for us, made it possible for us to do what we do. One way or the other has accompanied us with all the things that have happened in our life. Maybe it works well more than we realize.

To appreciate this body with your capacity to be aware. As if awareness is a gift. Awareness is food and fruit of care, of love, of respect, of gratitude. Receptive gratitude.

To the next inhale. To the rhythm of breathing in and breathing out. Grateful for the mindfulness, the sensitivity of being aware of the body breathing. Maybe a gratitude that predisposes us to be receptive in the awareness, appreciative of the awareness, the attention that operates even when we are not trying. Right here and now, present-moment attention to listening, sensing, feeling, knowing. Knowing that we're thinking instead of participating in our thoughts, being aware, this amazing human capacity we have, grateful, open, with whatever ability you can choose, sitting here silently, quietly. Breathing with all there is to be grateful for, right here.

And as we come to the end of this sitting, is there something about how you might be a little calmer, settled, maybe more open, maybe more sensitive after this period of meditation, that allows you, gives you room for more gratitude, more appreciation for what is done for you that keeps your life going? That supports you both directly, but also so much supports us indirectly. Gratitude for the meditation, gratitude for the *saṅgha*, gratitude for your capacity

to care for yourself through meditation.

A certain kind of joy, that appreciation that comes with gratitude, which comes with a sense of delight, joy of how we've benefited by so much that's provided to us. Even the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat. And is there a way that gratitude suggests a way of walking through the world, not necessarily always grateful, but always receptive or appreciative, always putting value in what we see, what we touch, what comes our way, what's present that sustains our life? What's present that can support our hearts? Our ability to care and love.

And may the gifts that we receive inspire us to give in return, to give our appreciation, our goodwill. Our well-wishing. May we give an appreciation and a wish for others to be well and continue to be well. May all beings be happy, may all beings be safe, may all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free.

Thank you.