

## Guided Meditation: Steadiness

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Hello and welcome to this meditation. And we're doing equanimity, *brahmavihāra*, which means that the equanimity that is rooted in love, the love that's rooted in equanimity. And the word for that is *upekkhā*, which means to kind of gaze upon. So to gaze upon people, gaze upon the world with love, to gaze upon oneself with love, an equanimous love.

There's another word that is translated sometimes as equanimity that is a wonderful support for this gazing with equanimous love. The Pāli word is three very simple, ordinary words that comes out to a long word that sounds difficult, *tatramajjhataṭṭā*. And it means standing in the middle of this, or stationed in the middle of this. Some people translate it as balance. Some people translate it as stability.

But to be stable. There's a long history of people using the image of a mountain to represent the body sitting in meditation. Stable, upright, with a wide base if you're sitting cross-legged. And having a stability that helps us, and steadiness, and kind of maybe sometimes uprightness, where we're not going towards or away from anything. We're not tightening up or pulling back. We're just present, we're rooted, as if being rooted here is the protection.

Being rooted here allows us to gaze upon everything peacefully, gaze upon everything with love, as if it's kind of a real sense of groundedness. The ground supports us, the ground holds us up, the ground protects us. And then the stability of the spine, a steadiness. The spine is standing, stationed upright with some strength, a little bit of, if the back allows for it, to find a way to sit that's not only relaxed with the spine, but has a certain kind of feeling that now the spine is alive, it's present, it's involved in the meditation, it's stable. There's a stability there, there's a holding itself steady and strong, even kind of a confidence.

And the mind becoming steady, deeply rooted, grounded, often comes with a feeling of lightness, feeling of settledness, almost like the center of gravity of the mind begins to shift from

the top of the head downward, settling and settling, so to be stable, balanced. So to begin, maybe closing the eyes or lowering the gaze and to feel your body. Feel the weight of your body against the surface that holds it up from the pull of gravity, your chair, your cushion, the floor, your bed. And maybe imagining yourself in your posture to be like a mountain with a solid base, the mountain that doesn't move in a strong wind.

And where, as you let your attention drop into the lower part of your body, where does it feel most grounded, most rooted? An image that's also used is imagining deep roots that go into the earth that hold you stable and steady, grounded, grounded. And feeling the base of your spine, maybe the tailbone area, unless it's painful. Maybe feel whatever degree of stability, weight, rootedness is there. The base of your spine, breathing into it, breathing with it.

And then seeing if there's gently a steadiness or standing tall or firm that travels up your spine, maybe up to the place between your shoulder blades, and feeling globally in your body whatever stability or steadiness that's physically present for you. You might feel unsteady and imbalanced in some ways, but for now, look for the places where there is feelings of stability, steadiness. Maybe your hands, face down, on your thighs. Maybe softening the belly and letting there be a settling there.

And then feeling that stability, groundedness, rootedness here. Is any of that pleasant? Is there any pleasure or goodness, rightness, assurance that comes from feeling that stability? And let that be a reference point now for breathing, mindful breathing, maybe where breathing breathes through or with the stability, the steadiness, or the groundedness is the source from which the inhale begins, the exhale returns, inviting the thinking mind to become quieter. So the mind too relaxes into the steadiness, into the assurance.

Might there be some feeling of stability, groundedness, balance that can be reassuring for staying present here, now, feeling where the strongest sensations of stability, steadiness is in your body, groundedness, and spreading your awareness to see how that stability, groundedness, spreads outward into the rest of your body. Is there a soft maybe spread of sensations or a glow, gentle vibration, gentle reassurance? And to allow yourself to be settled or rooted in this inner physical stability, might it allow you to gaze upon things calmly, to gaze upon your experience, here and now, with a calm steadiness, openness, that's balanced, not caught in for and against, a steady, soft gaze that almost floats between the different things that you gaze upon.

And might it be possible for that gaze to be a gaze of love, gaze of kindness, goodwill, compassion, or simple love supported by the inner stability. A love that needs nothing, that wants nothing. A love which is private, so don't have to be accountable for it, or show that it's any

particular form of love. Just your way to gaze upon the world with love.

And then, as we come to the end of the sitting, to turn that gaze, quiet, stable, grounded gaze, out across the land, to include the people in your lives, family and friends, colleagues, neighbors, to include people across the land and around the globe, gazing upon it all with a balanced, equanimous love, without fear, without anxiety, and from this equanimous love to wish wellness to everyone.

May all beings be happy, may all beings be safe, may all beings be peaceful, may all beings be free, and may we offer this in whatever small way we can, simply by how we stay present, balanced, stable, and present for the world, gazing upon the world with equanimous love.

Thank you.