

Guided Meditation: Why Not Love

Gil Fronsdal

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So hello and welcome. And as we do this last meditation with a love series, I'd like to leave you with a simple question for the meditation. Maybe you'll remember this question through the meditation, maybe through the rest of your life. If you have nothing better to do than to love, why not love? If you have nothing better to do than to be friendly to all things, why not be friendly? If you have nothing better to do to be peaceful, at ease, why not be at ease?

And if you have something better to do than any of those things, is it really better? Is it better for you, is it better for the world? Why do you justify giving up your love, giving up your friendliness, giving up your peace and ease? At a minimum, all the things that you need to do, all the things that life asks of you, can't you do it better with love? Do it better with friendliness? Do it better with peace and ease? Why give the love up?

If you have nothing better to do than love, stay close to the love. So take a meditation posture, gently close the eyes, and gently, caringly take some deeper breaths, fuller breaths, but easeful breaths, and relax on the exhale, relaxing in your body on the exhale. Sometimes it's possible to relax more deeply if, at the end of the exhale, you hold your breath for two seconds, three seconds, a short period of time, and feel your body. See if you can support the body to relax more deeply. The holding of breath pulls the attention into the body, into the present, maybe feeling more fully the body, letting it relax in those few seconds.

And then switch that to holding your breath briefly, a second or two, three, at the top of the inhale. But as you hold your breath, bring your attention into your mind to let it become quiet. There's a natural alertness when we hold our breath. Something important is happening. And let that alertness be peaceful and quiet, like a windshield wiper that's clearing the rain from the windshield, holding your breath to experience the quiet and silence of an aware mind.

And then, with breathing normally and not holding the breath anymore, settle into the body breathing, seeing if, accompanied with your breathing, the rhythm of breathing in and breathing out, you can breathe together with some deep place within where there's care, love, friendliness in the most ordinary, simple way, nothing dramatic, and to breathe through it, breathe with that care, stay close to it. Letting care, friendliness, love be a reference point of what you're growing into as you meditate, as you breathe, gently growing into the possibility of a greater care with each inhale and each exhale. Staying close to your breathing so that awareness, attentiveness is at the center of your being, so that care and love is at the center. In all other things, it's fine for them to be that way, but they're on the edges of that center. No need to get distracted or caught in what's on the edges, but with the breathing at the center, love at the center, there's a gentle rhythm of expanding out and touching it. Touching all things which are not love on the inhale, relaxing all things which are not love on the exhale.

If you're involved in thoughts, distractions, if you're involved in attitudes and fears and emotions, is that involvement better than love, better than peace, better than a simple caring attention? And if it's not better, can you switch to be involved with love, care, and easeful attention, not as a denial of other things, but as a way of holding all things?

And as we come to the end of this sitting, and as we come to the end of this almost seven months of exploring, discussing different facets of love, may we end with a question. Why not love? Why not love more? Why not return to love more often? To care, to friendliness, kindness, compassion, appreciative joy, goodwill, equanimous love, care, considering whatever way that you've been affected by these teachings this year on love and gathering it all together inside of you. Maybe remembering what touched you the most, or the sum total of it, how it lives in you and your heart. And what is your wish for how you want this to continue living in your life?

In whatever way you were touched, how would you like it to make a difference for you in the life you choose to live? And as we come to the end with a dedication of merit, dedication of benefit, may we do it together as a community. All of those who are participating live right now, and the even larger group of people who are listening to these talks, participating in these meditations later, afterwards. For those of you who are listening later, for your now, may we all together as a community dedicate the benefits, the merit, the learnings of this series on love for the benefit and welfare of the whole world. May we find ways to live in this world, to contribute to the good. May we live in this world altogether as the sum total of us contributing to happiness, greater safety, greater peace, and greater freedom.

May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. Thank you. And before I pause here...