

Guided Meditation: The Meeting of Sensations and Awareness

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So, hello, everyone, and welcome. And so, today is the last day of these five qualities, characteristics of the *Dharma*. The last one has to do with what one personally can know for oneself. What is known for oneself has to be for oneself and no one else.

So, there are such things that we know for ourselves. If you're hungry, that's something you're supposed to know for yourself. There are inner sensations that give you that message. If you're thirsty, if you're sleepy, and if you're cold, you might know that for yourself, if you have a clear enough mind.

So, what we know for ourselves has to do with this meeting place of life and the way we recognize it, the way we know it, and are present for it. You might know something for yourself because you've learned it. You might know how to work your dishwasher, if you have one. When you first maybe got the dishwasher, it wasn't so clear. There was a new one. You didn't know how the buttons worked.

And so, in the beginning, you didn't—you did not know—and you maybe were confused by it. It took a while to get the hang of it. And then now, after maybe some time, you know, and you know for yourself, and you don't think about it. It's second nature.

But the place where you can know something for yourself, that place where there's that inner kind of understanding and knowledge in your relationship to something in the world, you now know it. Even if it's second nature, it's not the instructions, and it's not the dishwasher. But between the two, there's a clarity, there's an ease, there's a confidence, there's an understanding that operates. And this is where that place in between, that place where, in the midst of being aware of something, there's something there that we can know for ourselves.

And for today, what I suggest for this meditation is that it has to do not just with being aware of it, but with a certain kind of clarity, confidence, something dynamic that exists between your capacity to be aware and the sensations within you that you can be aware of. Then there is this rich dynamic between them, the relationship that arises between them, that doesn't only arise because the two of them meet. So it isn't just the plain mindfulness, boring mindfulness, of being aware that we're trying to do here. Oh, that's an in-breath. That's an out-breath. That maybe is boring, and it's not just the breath by itself.

Like, what's the big deal? Rather, it's in between the two. There's a relationship. There's a connection. There's an attunement. There's something that begins happening that only you can know for yourself.

Sometimes it's said that in a relationship with another person, like a close relationship, there's you, the other person, and then the relationship that gets created between them. And that relationship is dynamic and changing, and you can be attuned to it. It's kind of invisible, maybe. So, in that way, when you sit to meditate, what is that dynamic, rich place that arises in the connection between mindfulness of something and the sensations you're mindful of? And even if you're not so clear what it is, the fact is that it's what you know for yourself.

Where is that place that knowing for oneself can occur? What's it in the form of? Is it in the form of a clarity, a form of a confidence, a form of a receptivity, a form of an openness? Stay close to that. Stay close to this dynamic place of something there. Don't look for anything. Don't try to engineer it. Don't.

But rather, just stay close to that place where you would know something just for yourself, like you know hunger. So, assuming meditation posture, to know and feel your posture from the inside out is to be attuned to sensations that only you have to know for yourself. You can't go to Emmanuel. You can't ask another person, "What am I feeling here?"

And to feel and sense from the inside your posture, are there any messages, any sensibilities, that it would be good to adjust your posture in any way at all? Or to adjust it in ways that the posture participates in helping you be aware, be awake? The posture is a posture that allows for a kind of dynamic relaxation that also is enlivening.

And if you feel yourself into your body, scanning your body, is there some place in your body, some sensations, that kind of give you the message, "Here, come here. Attend to this. Feel this. Be with this, because this is the place where you can settle. This is where you can relax more."

It's here that you can stabilize your attention in the present. And if there's a place inside that calls your attention to stabilize, to calm, to center yourself, breathe from that place or breathe through that place. In some way, let your breathing, the sensations of breathing, accompany places of stability, steadiness, relaxation. And as you exhale, allow for a calming throughout your body, throughout your mind.

And what is it about breathing, being in your body, that only you can know, only you can feel from the inside? No one else can feel it. And in the contact of your mindfulness and the feelings, can there be a space, a dynamism, an aliveness, a clarity into which you settle that invites, "Here is the place of peace. Here is the place where the *Dharma* is onward leading."

In that dynamic space, peaceful space between sensations—sensations of breathing—and the mindfulness of them, the mindfulness of sensations, is there any force inside of you that keeps you separated, pulling away? Or gripping on and pushing, pushing forward, contracting? Does that somehow interfere with your resting in that quiet place in between, the meeting place of sensations and awareness?

Sitting here meditating, what are the most tranquil or peaceful sensations within you that only you can know, that belong to the deep personal world below your thoughts, below your ideas and reactions to things, deep within in the world of sensations? And does that tranquility, or peace, or steadiness, however small it is, somehow belong to this different world—not the world of sensations by themselves, not the world of mindfulness, awareness—but somehow between the two, in the place where it's dynamic? The meeting place, the place where it's onward leading.

And as you breathe and exhale, allow for the relaxing of any way that you're pulling away or reacting. Allow for the relaxing of any forces that keep you swirling or distant from that deep place inside, where you know for yourself it's onward leading to greater peace, tranquility.

And as we come to the end of the sitting, expand wider and wider circles from this wonderful middle place, meeting place of the sensations of the world and your awareness of it, this dynamic place. What arises that only you can know? Look for what is wholesome and nourishing, and gaze upon the world from this nourishing place, calm place. Gaze upon the world kindly, peacefully, softly, with a soft gaze.

Wishing well-being for all. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. Thank you.