

Guided Meditation: Dynamic Stillness

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Hello and welcome. So, over the last couple of weeks, I've given some guidance instructions to bring us, bring ourselves, right into the middle, right at the center of a certain kind of mid-point of our life. Right there, where life kind of begins, where sensations of the present moment arise, and we meet them. Based on that, we interpret them. We tell ourselves what it is. We recognize things.

Once we recognize where it is, we might have associations with it. We assign meaning to it. We have values we put on it, and then that stimulates more thoughts and discursive thoughts and stories and imaginations. Pretty soon, we've lost touch with the direct sensations, and we may be in this world of conceptualization and stories and ideas. Maybe we're there for years. We've left the present moment behind.

To bring ourselves right there, where the *Dharma* is found, this deep place where present-moment intelligence is found, the deep place here where we can recognize what is wholesome and unwholesome, is at the heart of this path of freedom, this path of deep wisdom that the Buddha is offering. And what I'd like to suggest for today is that staying close to that has a lot to do with what we don't do. We tend to overlay so many interpretations, ideas, and reactivity on top of what's here. That's extra. So, place yourself right in that middle point here.

Let that mostly be a place of non-doing, a kind of finding this place of dynamic stillness. Not to push anything away, not to deny anything, not to affirm anything, but to find a dynamic place in the middle where there's a strong attention, a strong stability, a kind of stillness within. But we're not holding ourselves still. We have the stillness of the early morning dawn over a very peaceful lake, where everything has become quiet and still, soft but unmoving, denying nothing. And if a bird flies through the air, if a fish jumps out of the water, it kind of doesn't disturb the dynamic stillness here.

So, to assume a meditation posture takes some care. Have a posture that expresses, manifests attention—attention arising out of the body. Standing meditation often can bring us into our body if we close our eyes, because we need to stay attentive to the body to be able to stay balanced. In sitting meditation, if your back and body allow it, allow the back to be self-supporting, more straight and upright. So that the weight of your body is not leaning against a backrest. A backrest can support the body.

It's attention coming out of the body, not the mind. If you're lying down, place your hands, your arms, in a position of attention. Maybe find a way to adjust the head, or the part of the back between the shoulder blades, so that those places contribute a sense of intentional attention. Some people lying down will bring up their feet close to their bottom, bending the knees, so the soles of the feet are flat against whatever surface you're laying on. That can create a little bit more sense of being present, attending, and gently closing the eyes.

And as you exhale, relax the body in whatever way is easy for you and obvious. And if not relaxing, let there be a softening in the body, in the face, in the hands and arms, maybe in the tops of the thighs, the belly. And in your own way, feel deep into your body to see: is there some way in which you're bracing yourself from life, pulling back? Some way in which you're reaching forward into the future, wanting something? As you exhale, relax the bracing, the wanting. And on the exhale, soften the mind.

Whatever feeling or sense you have of the mind, the thinking mind, allow whatever vague sense of edges to the mind that you have. Let it begin dissolving into the space around it. And then search within for a place that has a soft, dynamic stillness. Maybe like a column, like the spine, or some other place within that has a feeling of holding you upright. Maybe someplace deep in the belly. Maybe the dynamic stillness is in the space just beyond the edges of your body.

No matter how small or big, stay close to where there's a dynamic stillness that's related to your ability to be aware, or supports your ability to be aware in a similar kind of still way. Not reacting, not interpreting. That keeps you close to the lived experience of the moment, keeps you close to the sensations, ever moving, ever changing. But in the middle of that ever-changing world of sensations, let there be a place of inner stillness. Trust the non-reactivity there.

Let your thinking, your ideas, your fears and desires, let them dissolve into the changing, shifting world of movement around the inner stillness. One breath at a time. Perhaps a dynamic stillness that has a location deep within, or perhaps a dynamic stillness that has no clear location. It's almost as if maybe it's everywhere, or nowhere at the same time. It just is.

Maybe in the middle of awareness itself.

Stay close to a dynamic stillness within that might guide you to not get involved with anything—not with thoughts, not with emotions, not with desires or aversions. That gives you a choice to stay free of whatever arises, because you can rest in the place of stillness. And with the reference of a dynamic, quiet stillness within, can that help you identify what is wholesome and unwholesome, what is healthy and unhealthy, what is skillful and unskillful in the flow of the present moment? How you respond and react, and what you do and don't do. Can you be more sensitive to how healthy and unhealthy the movements within are, in reference to a dynamic stillness?

And might there be a place of dynamic stillness within that makes room for goodwill, for gazing upon the world with soft eyes, kind eyes? As if a gentle light of dawn rises and spreads across the land, so in your imagination of the world you live in, let there be the light of goodwill, kindness, love, spread across the land, wishing:

May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. And may we know something about a dynamic stillness of attention that is a gift that supports the peace, the safety, and the freedom of others.

May we be a source of good for this world. Thank you.