

Guided Meditation: Supported by Deep Thinking

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So, hello, everyone, and welcome. One of the themes this week is: How do we speak to ourselves? In meditation itself, an idle mind will get in trouble.

Some people, when they meditate, think they're not supposed to do much at all. Just relax, be, not try to do anything. Maybe be with their breathing. Sometimes there is a kind of passivity with which meditators are meditating.

Sometimes that passivity is just the right medicine for an overactive life, and things can settle. But at some point, that passivity is maybe counterproductive, because then it's very easy to begin slipping into distracted thoughts. There's something about involving your thinking mind in the process of meditation which is allowed and helpful and meaningful, useful. But we have to know how to do that, how to use thinking, how to speak to ourselves in a way that supports the meditative process.

There's two things I want to emphasize today. One is that while there is a movement toward becoming calmer, quieter, less active, to kind of moving toward kind of deep peace, it might be enabled, supported by a certain kind of sense of purpose. To feel like this is important, this is valuable, this is very auspicious. Very important to have the opportunity to meditate, and we don't want to let it go by being distracted. We don't let it go by as a lost opportunity.

So there's a sense of purpose. This is what we're doing, a clarity of purpose. So there was—there's a kind of a bit of strength, a little bit of gathering ourselves together. This, in fact, is what I'm doing. This is important for me, so that the mind doesn't just kind of easily wander off. Like, yes, here I am.

And the other is that when we—we can—it's possible to include thinking as part of meditation, but to do so from the deep mind. To do so from this place that's not where discursive thinking

goes on. Conversational thinking, storytelling thinking, judging thinking happens more on the surface mind. I think of it happening more up in the head.

The deep mind, the quiet mind, has an intimacy to it. It feels like it's coming from maybe deep within. It can sometimes feel like it's more of a silent knowing than an active thinking. But there's a silent knowing that's operating that can be exploratory, questioning, guiding. Guiding us: here, stay here. What is this like? How do I meet this?

And that deeper mind that's engaged in the process of meditation is a mind which is not activated, reactive. It's a mind that's peaceful, quiet, but it is purposeful. It's being focused here, and we have to listen carefully. We have to kind of be very close to this place that's on the borderline, maybe between thinking, like speaking to ourselves gently, and a kind of silent knowing about the present moment, about what's going on—a silent questioning or exploration.

So those two things: sense of purpose, and the thinking from the deep mind. It's only about this practice itself, about this present moment that is there to explore and help you, guide you in all the ways you are. How can that all be channeled, organized, harmonized to help us be present, calm, and clear?

So, to assume a meditation posture. And gently close the eyes. And take some larger breaths, a comfortably long inhale, and a comfortably long exhale. And as you exhale, relax your body, release the shoulders.

And then let your breathing return to normal. On the inhale, scan through your body to see where you want to relax the body next. And on the exhale, soften the body.

And chances are that searching for some place in your body to relax, searching for where there's tension and holding, does involve some kind of deeper reflection, exploration, consideration—maybe from that deep mind. Maybe it's nonverbal. It involves a sense of purpose to look and see, and to relax.

And then to let go of that effort to relax and settle in with your breathing. First, by getting to know your breathing better. How is your breathing now? And that simple way in which you look for the answer to, “How are you breathing now?” maybe that uses the deep mind. The quiet mind, the mind that carries no stress, the mind that's underneath and deeper than your normal thinking mind, conversational mind.

And then settle in to your breathing, with the support of this deep way of knowing—the deep mind, the nonverbal mind, or the verbal way of talking to yourself that comes from a deeper,

quieter place. And to use that now to be your own guide to meditating, being present, calming, and becoming clearer with the mind's eye.

The thinking mind that supports meditation, that gives purpose to our efforts, can be as simple as saying the word “here” to increase a sense of purpose or dedication to being here, and to call on some deep place inside that's quiet and peaceful. The peaceful mind. To say the word “here,” inviting you to really be here with your attention.

With very simple thoughts, check in with your posture. To maybe adjust it, or maybe see how you can rest in it. Is there anything in your body that you can relax? That helps you to settle in to here.

And for a couple of minutes near the end, see it from your deep mind, from the quiet, peaceful way of thinking that has no pressure, no tension. Maybe a nonverbal knowing. Have goodwill, well-wishing for yourself. Kind of a simple, friendly attitude to this human being that's you, with the openness and the generosity of well-wishing.

Maybe with simple thoughts of appreciation, wishing well. That's maybe specific to particular parts of your body, your heart and mind, as you sit here.

And then, coming to the end of the meditation, to bringing up in that deep mind, that quiet place deep inside, the people you're likely to encounter today, or encounter the next time you might leave your home. And if you have goodwill for them, wishing them well, where would that well-wishing come from in yourself? What's this source in your heart, your deep mind? Maybe the place of nonverbal knowing, and to extend that goodwill toward those people.

Maybe with a silent intention, opening. Maybe with a simple word like *mettā*, friend, love, extending your goodwill to the people you'll be encountering today, known and unknown, intending to meet them from the source inside that's capable of being friendly, kind.

And may it be that this practice we do in this large community may each of us, in our own way, contribute to the welfare and happiness of people we encounter, spreading the goodwill, the goodness. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free.

Thank you.