

Guided Meditation: Maturing Thoughts

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October 01, 2026

Keywords: right speech, wise speech, beneficial speech, meditation, present moment, deeper mind, nonverbal mind, peaceful awareness, thinking mind

Hello and welcome to this week of considering wise speech, *right speech*, beneficial speech. And for the meditations, we're emphasizing how we can speak to ourselves, how we can actually think in meditation. Not condemn meditating or feel like we have to stop thinking entirely, but rather to stop thinking distractedly, stop thinking about things that have nothing to do with here and now, and the here that's right here in our meditation, and the now that's so now that we're not so caught up or concerned with past and future meditation, just how we can find our way here.

To be with our experience in a settling way, a peaceful way, a liberated way, and so to have our thoughts, our thinking, be about the meditation, about our direct experience, and to be attuned to the impact we have through our thoughts as we think about things. What impact does it have on our body, our hearts, our mind? And that's true for any thinking, but when it's done for how we think meditatively, it means that we're very sensitive to how we're thinking about the meditation itself, and where that thinking comes from.

That the thinking comes from maybe the deepest place or the most central place within us, the most peaceful place or the calmest place, the most intimate place within. That's below the layers of reactivity and beliefs and stories that we can often live in, and to think in ways that's calming, that's settling. But also think in ways that is affirming for our maturity. Think in ways that expresses some confidence and sense of rightness to be here and present, and to pay attention to the impact of our thoughts.

Do we think in ways as we meditate that undermine us, that diminishes us, where we treat ourselves maybe as incapable, or that we need a lot of reassurance and compassion, as if we're not really able to manage on our own? Or do we treat ourselves harshly and critically, as if we're wrong and not doing it right? Instead, to treat ourselves with dignity, with value, with respect. Yes, we can do this. We're capable. We're here in a full way.

So to begin to take whatever physical posture that's right for you, but for this sitting, take an inner posture. Whatever way you are, some of you might be lying down, some might be sitting, some might be standing, some might be doing walking meditation as you listen. But the inner posture—that of being mature, being capable—an inner posture of dignity and value. An inner posture of confidence for these few minutes, that in the special, for some people, sacred time of meditation, here and now, just for this time, to be with yourself. An inner posture of confidence, respect, value, of having some importance. Yes, I can be here.

And to feel that inner posture of dignity, or uprightness, or integrity, or confidence, and to have that—maybe imagine it a little bit like a strong mountain or pillar that is stable. With a wide base within, gently closing your eyes and taking some large, deep breaths, and keeping that inner strength, maturity, uprightness, as you exhale to relax the body around it, like rain washing down the sides of the mountain. And then to let your breathing return to normal, and I'll offer you some instructions for how you might think now about the meditation.

And your job is to think in a way that the impact of the thinking doesn't diminish you, doesn't undermine you, criticize you. If anything, it's feel supportive. And so, to ask yourself some very simple questions: How are you here and now? How are you in your body, heart, and mind? Where's there holding? Where would it be easy and appropriate to relax or soften? How would it be nice to feel and be with breathing? And what's the tone of voice that you're speaking yourself? These instructions.

So that's an example. So please see if you can be thinking during this meditation. Thinking thoughts of instructions, guidance that support you to be calmer, steadier, more clear and present, where the ordinary thinking mind, distracted mind, quiets down, becomes more peaceful, as a deeper mind gently supports your discovery of the present moment. Yeah.

Even without intentionally thinking about meditation instructions for yourself, there can be operating almost nonverbally a knowing, nonverbal background decisions to be here, come back, start again, pay attention here. The ability to stay in the present moment can be guided by the deeper mind. It's almost like allowing the deeper mind to show how I can guide you into peace and stillness, with or without thinking. But if you're thinking about other things, switch to thinking about the meditation again, and then maybe become quieter.

You could ask yourself, in a very quiet, open way, where inside is the deepest place of calm, of peace, even if around it is swirling. Where are you most settled, and how could you rest there? And if you are thinking a lot, you might ask yourself: In what way can you open up widely to be so? Awareness is larger than your thinking. How can you then accept the thinking mind and allow the thinking mind to rest in the peace, the calm that's beyond the edges of thinking.

And you could, for example, ask yourself, as we come to the end of this meditation, is there any sense of peace or calm or quiet beyond the edges of your body, edges of your mind, in the wider space around you? And if you imagine that space to be wide enough to cover a great territory of land around where you sit, what is it like to hold all the people in that area within that peaceful awareness, where they go about their life, and your calm awareness has room for them all? Quietly, peacefully, and as we get ready to end the meditation and become part of this wider world, to wish them all well, to wish the best for them.

May all people be happy. May all people be safe. May all people be peaceful, and may all people be free. And may how I know them and speak to them contribute to their well-being. May all people be happy.

Thank you, and to make some follow-up comments about this meditation this week, this thing about thinking as part of meditation. Of course, you don't have to do that. Some people find it agitating or troublesome to do it. But in fact, is it? If you really are honest, is it better than the alternative?

Sometimes it's so easy, comforting, even maybe even more relaxing, to think thoughts that are not good for you. To think the usual thoughts and fantasies, and other times in other places, and we slip into these habits or the addiction to thinking so strongly that it can feel like we're doing heavy work to not do that and to be thinking about meditation. And we think it's better just to be quiet, but then we spin off quite right away.

And so, to intentionally gather ourselves by thinking about the meditation, to become enter into it and be here, and then we start learning something about how this deeper mind works. We begin recognizing that it doesn't have to be so self-conscious or even purposeful. That we are guiding ourselves into peace, into being present, into clarity, into well-being. It's almost as if the deeper mind, maybe even the nonverbal mind, has a knowing. We have a knowing, a deeper knowing. How to do this? How to find our way?

And the interface between this deeper mind, deeper knowing that might be nonverbal, and the more verbal talking about ourselves, talking to ourselves about meditation and what's happening in our experience, doesn't have to be a sharp line. But both of them can be part and parcel of a peaceful mind, a quiet mind, a centered mind that can center itself right here. So I'm hoping that this week shows you something about your thinking mind that can be very supportive for the deepening of meditation, deepening and supporting, and it can be seen as thinking that brings you to the end of thinking. So thank you.