

Guided Meditation: Breath at the Cross Roads

Gil Fronsdal

October 27, 2026

Keywords: guided meditation, mindfulness, breathing, awareness, goodwill, compassion

Hello and welcome to this guided meditation.

And I'm already feeling somewhat quiet. So we'll start, and as many of you have recognized by now, I put a lot of emphasis on breathing as the center of meditation, the heart of it. Not to be the exclusive domain of mindfulness, but to be the center of it, from which we then move out to include all aspects of our life. All experiences.

One of the things that I find valuable about breathing is that I think of it as sitting at the crossroads of all aspects of our life. One way or the other, how we breathe, that we breathe, the oxygen that comes in, the carbon dioxide that goes out, all the different systems within us that require oxygen—all the different—so much goes on that's connected to breathing. It sits at the crossroads, and sometimes, sitting at the crossroads where all things must pass, you see it all.

Like the story of if you want to be a nature photographer in the plains of Africa, it's exhausting and maybe takes a long time to get a lot of photographs with different animals if you wander around the plains. But if you sit at the watering hole that all animals need to come to, it's a much better way to. So, the watering hole, the crossroads of our life: breathing.

So, close your eyes and take a few moments to check in with yourself here.

Some people are saying the volume is low, so I'm going to take a little pause to see if I can turn up the volume. So, for those of you who wrote that the volume was low, has it gone up now? So let's see if it's changed at all. For those of you who wrote that the sound was low, I'll wait a little bit and then I'll continue.

Yeah, I don't need to hear from the people who sound as good. I was hoping to hear from the people who said that it was low. Yes, much better. Okay, so we'll continue.

So, checking in with your breathing, is there a place in your body where it's easiest to be with your breathing? The sensations of breathing. Some place where breathing feels calm, pleasant, or feels like it kind of is the stable center for everything to do with breathing.

For some people, it might be someplace in the belly. For some people, it might be in the chest, in the diaphragm area. For some people, it might be deep in the pelvic cavity. Especially when they're breathing in, there's a gentle pressure there—a weight deep in the body from which the breathing arises and returns. For some people, it might be a place in the middle of the torso, halfway between the front and the back. And for some people, it might be in the nostrils or back of the throat.

And as we meditate now, see if you can have your awareness resting or arising from that center point of breathing, as if you're at the crossroads or as if you're at the watering hole. The photographer at the watering hole is sometimes a little bit hidden, so as not to interfere with the animals. The person at the crossroads just sits and watches everything come and go without interfering.

So, resting at the center of breathing and allowing all things to come and go, especially breathing in and breathing out. Being aware of breathing from a place at the center of it all, the crossroads, and whatever arises, whatever occurs while you're breathing. Maybe let the breathing be almost as if breathing—the inhale, exhale—is saying yes. That kind of silent yes, not agreeing with anything, but yes. Being aware of this, touching this, being with this, whatever arises.

And as we come to the end of the sitting, might there be a place inside now, inside your body, that feels welcomingly calm or still? Some aspect of breathing—maybe the end of the exhale, or the beginning of the inhale, or the pause between inhale and exhale, exhale and inhale. Where there's something that feels peaceful, settled, even if other parts of you are unsettled, find the place where it feels most settled or calm, and have your breathing breathe through that or with that.

And to the degree to which you can be centered or in the calm, settled place, from that place, how do you look upon the world? How do you look upon the life that you'll be having today? The people you'll meet. If you can stay close to that settled place, trusting it, guided by it, how do you look upon the world?

And from that place, can you find a way to gaze upon the world kindly? To gaze upon the world with goodwill, at some generous attitude of some sympathy and compassion for how difficult life is for so many people, and to gaze upon them not with the eyes of criticism or

judgment, or to reduce them to being a problem, but to see them more broadly and fully in their full humanity.

May it be that this meditation that we do, mindfulness, helps us to see people more real, more fully, for all of who they are—what's difficult and what is wonderful. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. And may we contribute to that possibility more than we take it away.

So, thank you, everyone, and I appreciate this time. And I'm going to take a pause now for my.