

Guided Meditation: Waves of Breathing

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Hello and welcome.

And to keep the meditation somewhat simple today, to continue with an emphasis on breathing. And you're welcome to hold this very lightly. In fact, holding it very lightly is often how meditation should be treated. Because when it's light, then the awareness, the mind can float easily. It doesn't have to trudge through swamps or up steep cliffs.

So, one of the ways to practice with breathing is to have a very, very simple image, imagery that supports it. And there are two; they're closely related. One is a gentle rising and falling of large waves moving across a great ocean. And then, on the inhale, it's the rising of the wave, as the wave approaches and it lifts whatever is floating on the top of the water.

And the exhale is coming down the other side of that wave, so it's a big curved wave. It's not crashing against the coast; it's out in the ocean. And so, it's being lifted and lowered, lifting, lowering. And that rhythm is that there's a simple image, and to feel the expanding of the belly, maybe the chest, the torso, as you breathe in. And the contracting of that as you breathe out, and that's the lifting and the falling, the lifting and settling on this wonderful wave.

The other is it's an updraft of air, and your whole torso is the wings of a bird. And the updraft lifts you, and then you soar down. On the exhale, glide, and lift up. And glide on the exhale.

So, if this kind of imagery supports you to stay really continuous, the idea is to stay as continuously as you can with the inhale, continuously as you can with the exhale. So you're right there from the beginning, the middle, and end of the sensations of the experience, the expansion of the inhale. And right there, beginning, middle, and end of the exhale. But to do it kind of lightly, and kind of float on the water, float on the air with your wings. And enjoy it.

See it as kind of a wonderful, kind of almost like play that lets your thinking mind become quieter as you give yourself over to this experience of breathing. So, assume a meditation

posture and gently close your eyes. And without then anything else, just at the end of the exhale, pause for a second or two to see if the whole body can settle, relax a bit, and then breathe in. Don't hold your breath so it becomes uncomfortable. Just a little holding at the end of the exhale, to allow for sensing and relaxing of the torso.

As you breathe in, getting to the top of the inhale, pause for just a moment. So maybe you can then breathe a little in, a little bit more, a little bit more fully. It's almost like you're allowing yourself to inhale more. It's not work; it's just an allowing. And then relaxing your breathing, and no longer holding anything, just allowing the rhythm of breathing in and breathing out to move through your body, feeling it as a slow rhythm, a beat.

Breathing in, breathing out. Relaxing the mind, quieting the thinking, and settling into the body breathing. And if there are things you're concerned about and thinking a lot, maybe don't worry about it. Let it recede to the background the best you can. In the foreground, riding the waves of breathing in and breathing out, allowing the inhale, allowing the wave to catch you and lift you.

Allowing the inhale to lift you up, and then sliding down the backside of the wave as you exhale. Giving yourself over to this rhythm of being lifted and sliding down, relaxing, feeling the whole inhale—beginning, middle, and end. The whole exhale, beginning, middle, and end. If you find yourself thinking, don't concern yourself with that, except for giving yourself over again to your breathing, riding the inhales and exhales.

And as we come to the end of this sitting, to continue if you are so, to ride the inhale like a wave or an updraft. But have the wave be wide and big, stretching out into the world, filling the world with awareness. As if you or your attention rides the inhale out into the world. To see and touch this wide world with all its people and animals encompassing the planet, and as you exhale, let it all settle back into your heart without resistance.

Opening your heart to all beings as you breathe in. Letting it all settle into your heart as you exhale. And this is one way of making a connection between your meditation and the wider world—to feel its relevance. And riding on your inhales and exhales, wishing all beings well. Maybe with whatever calm and subtleness that comes from this meditation—a calm care and love, compassion for this suffering world and this joyous world. And the strange way the two live side by side.

May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. Thank you.