Guided Meditation: Body Free of Ideas

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Hello and welcome, and for. As we start this week, a new series of teaching and meditation, I would like to begin today with an emphasis on staying mindful of the body, but in a particular way. That is, the body is also the canvas upon which we have a lot of ideas and values and concepts and expectations and orientations.

There's a selectivity process in terms of picking up and focusing in daily life around particular parts of the body that we're particularly concerned with. Maybe in the morning we're concerned about our hair; that takes more focus than the back of our elbows. Perhaps we're concerned about the clothes we wear and how we appear. Some of that concern with the body is appreciative. Some of it we don't appreciate. We're kind of unhappy with some ways in which some part of our body appears, and maybe we'd wish it was different.

And we wonder what people think of us. We might spend a lot of money on changing how we look, fixing how we look, adjusting how we look. How so? There's a selective process by which we are concerned with certain parts of how we look, how we are, our body. We're not neutral. We have preferences, we have judgments, we have ideas, and we do the same thing for other people.

We're not neutral observers of human beings, but we're looking at particular highlights that are important for us to pick up and recognize. So when we sit and meditate, this happens as well. Even as something as simple as being present for the breathing, we might have ideas about what the right way of breathing is supposed to be, or expectations of what it's supposed to do, or expectations of how it's supposed to feel. Or we're trying to pay attention for particular signs and symptoms of what the good breathing is in meditation. We have all these certain things. It isn't that we're neutral, but we are orienting ourselves to certain things that should appear or not appear the way that we want them to be, or don't want them to be.

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So one of the options in meditation is to understand this difference between what the body presents on its own, free of our all the all the ideas, the palette of ideas that we paint on top of it, and just very, very, very simple. Allow the body to show itself at the level of sensations, not the level of ideas and preferences. And because that can be difficult, one of the ways to practice mindfulness is simply to see the difference between the raw, simple sensations and what we add on top of it: the ideas, the projections, the focus on what we think is important. So, if this makes sense, then maybe we can try it today.

So to begin with, assuming a meditation posture, with the idea that attention awareness is not only done with the mind; it's done with the whole body. In all the nerve endings that pick up sensations in the body, this is the home for awareness. And to assume a posture that supports a whole-body awareness, and then within that body, to allow breathing. To breathe in fully, without any tension or strain, an easy way to breathe in a full inhale and breathe out a full exhale, relaxing the body as you do so. And letting the breathing relax, as if breathing can breathe itself just fine. And checking in to feel how breathing is on its own terms.

So there's a receptive awareness to the sensations of breathing, without the overlay of expectations, ideas—what should be and shouldn't be; ideas of what a right breath is and a wrong breath is; what a better way of breathing is or a worse way—without any idea overlaid on the sensations of breathing. And if there are ideas, see the difference between the sensations and the ideas. How the ideas are distancing, are distinct from the sensations, staying close to how the body experiences breathing, how the breathing body experiences itself, where the ideas about breathing are not really needed, except the idea of staying present for breathing. Yeah.

If you're thinking about other things than your breathing, see how that's a distancing separation from your direct experience of your body sitting here. Settle into the breathing, the living rhythmic sensations of breathing, and let the ideas, thoughts evaporate, dissolve, fade away as you stay with the concrete experience of sensations here and now.

As we continue, open up your awareness, your sensing, to as wide a global experience of your body as is easy. Like the body becomes a vast ocean, and the breathing are waves that move through it. Feeling the sensations of the body, the hum or vibration of the body, where the moving, alternating sensations of breathing are part of this wider field, ocean of sensations. And for a few minutes, putting aside ideas about the body and judgments about the body, in favor of allowing yourself to feel how the body experiences itself, free of ideas.

In whatever way the sensations of the body appear, let them appear and be absorbed into the body. Let them appear and flow through the body, and allow different parts of the body to

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show itself at different times, randomly. No agenda. Just open to body sensations. Without living in the ideas or projections onto the body, just body by itself.

And can you get any sense of what it's like to allow the body to sense itself, free of ideas we've learned from the world, from others, free of our desires and expectations and ideas of what should and shouldn't be there? Radical simplicity of mind. Where the body is free of the mind's expectations, free of the mind's wanting to be different than what it is. Even if you only have hints of what this is like, feel that difference. Freeing the body to be itself as it is, as it is in the present moment—just the present.

And might it be a gift to the body to leave it alone, to be itself in its present moment unfolding? It might it be a kind of a gift to the world to simply see it, hear it, know it without expectations, desires, desire, shoulds and shouldn'ts, but in the present moment, just now, letting all things be just as they are, so that you are not adding any extra stress to your mind and any added difficulties for this world. To gaze upon the world with a gaze that's free of stress, free of suffering, free of desire.

So there's a clear channel for the heart's goodwill, wishing everyone well. Wishing that each person's heart feels the love from others, care from others, safety from others, and that we can contribute to that possibility. Wishing may all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. Thank you.

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