Guided Meditation: Natural Growth

Gil Fronsdal

November 09, 2026

Keywords: meditation, present moment, breathing, natural phenomena, awareness, goodwill, peaceful attention, me, myself, and mine

---

Hello and welcome to our Monday meditation, beginning of the week, and with a new theme for the week. To introduce it indirectly, there's a particular kind of attention that we offer when we are watching something grow. If we are watching a flower grow, or years ago, it was watching a cicada coming out of its shell, kind of its old skin. And the fascination of watching that slow movement of coming out and growing. Watching a stream, the trickle first, then grow as it rains. To watch a wave—a wave grow and get larger, and then break and rush up on the sandy beach.

There's something about growing that calls on us to be in the present moment. It calls on us to attend in a careful way and watch in a certain way. Watch with a kind of, like, this is something to take in and to notice and really see what's happening. It isn't that we're trying to get anything for ourselves. It isn't that we're trying to develop something in ourselves or make something happen. In a certain kind of way, maybe what's happening to us is put aside.

And maybe part of the relief, sometimes, of paying attention to something that's growing or swelling or unfolding is that we're not caught up in our me, myself, and mine. So that kind of attention is possible to bring to our meditation. We are attending to ourselves, but not in the way in which we're trying to fix something or make something happen or judge ourselves or measure ourselves. It's almost like we're bringing attention to ourselves as a natural phenomenon. And like the waves rising, swelling, and lifting, and growing as they approach the beach, or as a cicada slowly makes its way out of its skin, or watching a bird flap its wings to get up high, and then to soar and circle around and around.

We can look upon ourselves this way. And the swell that maybe we can watch is a swelling of breathing—the rising, the lifting, the surging—and then the release to the exhale, the washing up on the beach. Just watching this natural phenomenon that we share not only with all

Creative Commons License: Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International

humans, but with mammals. It's a deep, ancient, natural phenomenon that has been shaped by our environment and nature, our circumstances. And we can watch nature and the breathing.

And as we do this, we have a particular orientation: that which would watch what grows, watch what flows within us, watch what unfolds. That's very different than what we're trying to do or make do. It's almost like if we can get out of the way, watch and get out of the way, feel and get out of the way. We're watching, being with natural phenomena.

So, assume a meditation posture. And, as a way of almost like being birdwatchers, for some people, the naturalist of ourselves. And we watch; we know with the mind's eye. So we close our eyes gently and awaken the mind's eye, the body sensitivity, to step out of our ordinary me, myself, and mine. To settle back, to watch and feel, know natural processes within us, beginning with breathing.

And even if there is some control around your breathing, even if it feels forced or effortful, some aspect of breathing might feel just a natural process—natural sensations, movement, a release, a letting go—that is not being controlled, not being directed. That doesn't seem to have effort that originates in self. A natural process of breathing. And like settling back, resting in a nice location to gently gaze upon this natural phenomenon, letting it be itself, but watching the surging and receding. The expanding and contracting of breathing.

And perhaps, rather than looking directly into the center of breathing, whatever that might be, let a relaxed, open awareness be with the edges of breathing—the edges where it expands and contracts the most—and just beyond the edges, where breathing has an influence. A soft, maybe vague influence into the body itself, like the water a wave leaves in the sand when the wave has receded. Letting something inside become quiet, a quieting of the thinking mind.

So you can hear a field of corn growing. When it's growing fast enough, it crackles and snaps. Or hear and see and feel the changes on the beach as the waves rise and fall. Watching, feeling natural processes within. Can you watch or feel or sense yourself? Where within are you growing, growing in the practice?

Even if you don't see the growing, where's the place within that is opening, softening, expanding, quieting, settling? And allow yourself to sense that. Not looking at it directly, but with the edges of awareness, breathe with where you are growing with the meditation. Where you are changing for the better.

And as we come to the end of the sitting, be a naturalist of how your awareness of the world changes, softens, opens, can be quieter, more receptive. Less straining, wanting, reacting.

Creative Commons License: Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International

Awareness which is open, expansive, as if it spreads out across the lands like a wave of kind awareness, a wave of peaceful attention.

And as we end this sitting, in these waves, send out your goodwill, your care for the world. Send it forth on these words. Maybe you repeat them for yourself. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. And may I contribute to that possibility for all beings? Thank you.

Transcript is machine generated and may contain errors.
Creative Commons License: Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International