Guided Meditation: Relaxed, Open Awareness

Andrea Fella · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Three-Month Retreat (IMS 2010) · 41:33

This morning, I'd like to offer a guided meditation that moves into a kind of relaxed, open awareness. You're free to follow along or simply note hearing.

As we go through this process, it's really helpful to keep coming back to relaxation. Allow yourself to relax, settling into the present moment with relaxation.

Begin by bringing attention to the sensations in your head. Notice whatever sensations you find there—pressure, pulsing, vibration, tingling, dryness, coolness. Just noticing the physical sensations in your head.

Relaxing.

Allow your attention to expand a little bit to include not only the sensations in your head, but also the sensations in your neck. You might think of your awareness almost as a bubble that can gently expand to include more experience, now taking in the experience of physical sensation in your head and your neck.

Relax and expand the awareness. Allow this bubble of awareness to expand to include your shoulders, so that your attention takes in the sensations of your head, your neck, and your shoulders.

Relax.

It seems easiest not to do this but more to allow it—allowing the attention to expand. Allow the bubble of awareness to expand further to include your torso, taking in the sensations in your head, your neck, your shoulders, and your torso. Both inside and outside, on the surface and inside the body. Allow the awareness to take in from the top of your head to the bottom of your spine, from the front to the back of your body, from side to side.

Relax.

Taking in the experience, the physicality of the experience—pulsing, vibration, tingling, pressure, lightness, coolness, heat, whatever you're experiencing.

Allow this bubble of awareness now to expand outwards a little bit to include your arms and your hands, so that the bubble of awareness includes the entire upper part of your body: head, neck, shoulders, torso, arms, hands.

Relax.

Just notice what's obvious. See what you can open to, as opposed to what you can try to find. Settle back. Receive the experience of the upper part of your body.

Allow this sensitive, cognizant bubble of awareness to relax and expand still further to include your hips and your buttocks. Allow this awareness to expand to include your upper legs, your thighs and your hamstrings. Allow the awareness to take in the experience of your head, your neck, shoulders, torso, arms, hands, buttocks, hips, thighs, and hamstrings.

Relax and allow the awareness to expand now to include your entire body, including your lower legs and your feet.

Feel into the texture of the awareness, this sensitive bubble of awareness.

Relax. Relax the mind. Relax the body.

Relax, allowing this bubble of awareness to expand still further beyond the edges of your body, as if this bubble of awareness could expand to the size of the room. Let go of the idea of the edges of your body while staying connected to your physical experience.

Allow your attention to open also now to the experience of hearing. That bubble of awareness has already expanded. Allow it to just also pick up on the sounds. You don't have to do too much work to hear. This entire time you've been listening to my voice and paying attention to the bodily sensations. Simply allow the attention to take in the experience of the body, the expanded sense of the awareness, and the experience of hearing.

Sometimes you might notice that with a sound there is a corresponding physical ripple effect through the body.

Staying open to body sensations, the expanded sense of awareness, and hearing, notice too now—allow this expanded sense of awareness to also take in your mental experience. A good place to begin this is noticing the impact that this experience is having on your mind right now. Are there thoughts, feelings, calm or agitation, tranquility, ease? Just noticing resistance, whatever is happening, staying connected to bodily experience, the hearing, and the experience of the mind.

Appreciate your mind's ability to know. Feel into the texture of knowing, almost as if this sensitive bubble of awareness were like an amoeba that met all experience.

Taking in the physical experience of the body—vibration, tingling, pulsing, pressure, lightness, heaviness, hardness, softness, coolness, heat, moisture. Taking in the pitch and tone of hearing. Taking in how the mind is responding to this experience, and in turn how that impacts the body. Taking in how awareness is noticing experience.

There are different ways that awareness takes in experience. Sometimes it might feel like awareness is

suffusing the experience.

Sometimes it might feel that awareness is flowing from one thing to the next. Sometimes it might feel like awareness is jumping from one thing to the next. Sometimes it might feel that awareness is very still, and experience is simply appearing and disappearing within that space.

There's no one right way. Just notice how your awareness is meeting experience right now.

Relax. If you notice the mind wandering off into thought, when you notice that, first acknowledge that you have woken up into that thought—and then simply connect with whatever is obvious within this field of expanded awareness.

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