Meditation: Breath Love In, Breath Love Out

Jack Kornfield · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Jack Kornfield · 24:18

Let us begin in the simplest way with some time for meditation.

If you would, let yourself find a way to sit or be where your body is stable, comfortable, and steady at ease. If you're in a chair, place your feet flat on the floor; if on a cushion, find a way that your body rests steadily on the earth.

For this time, meditation is an invitation to turn our attention to our own body, heart, and mind.

Let your eyes close gently. Take a couple of deeper breaths just to release whatever goes with that. Exhale to become more present. Let your eyes and face be soft. Loosen the jaw. If you like, you can roll your head in a circle to release your neck and let it find a simple upright position. Let the shoulders relax and the arms and hands rest easily.

Feel the weight of your body—your bottom, your legs, your feet—the weight of gravity, and how you can let go and be fully supported just where you are. The earth fully supports you, steady and stable. Let the belly be soft and the breath natural. Let the heart be soft as well, ready to receive whatever arises with a spirit of kindness and compassion.

Now, with this embodied presence, begin to pay attention to this mysterious human body, this human incarnation and bodily form. Feel how it is breathing itself. You don't have to do anything. It breathes in the breath of the atmosphere and oxygen. Feel the breath wherever it's easy—the nostrils, the back of the throat, the chest or belly. If it helps, you can put your hand on your belly and feel it rise and fall in the palm of your hand.

With kind attention to each breath, invite a sense of ease. Breathing in and out with ease and calm. Breathing in with ease, breathing out calm and steady. The whole nervous system relaxes, stands down. Body and attention, heart and mind all come together, just feeling this breath.

Of course, there will be thoughts and emotions and sounds that arise as you sense each breath. Let them rise and fall like waves of the ocean around the breath. Feel how the breath breathes itself in the midst of it all.

Now add *mettā*, or loving-kindness, to each breath. Very simple. As the breath breathes in, fill your body with breath and kindness, loving-kindness. Let each breath in fill your whole body and being with loving-kindness for yourself. With each breath out, feel, sense, or imagine in any way you can that you're sending love out to the whole world. Breathing in love for your whole being, naturally and easily. Every

breath out, sending love to the world. If the breath gets soft and quiet, let the love get soft and quiet as well.

Notice as you breathe—breathing in and out love—how there's a natural trust. A trust that after the breath breathes out, it will breathe in again, all of its own. After it breathes in, it breathes out all on its own. Trust the earth to hold you wherever you're seated. Trust the mindful, loving awareness to notice and hold it all—the breath, the love, all the waves of experience that come and go.

In the midst of it all, there is a stillness, a listening.

In this stillness, ask your body: What does my body want or need as we go through this new change of seasons? Now that you're present and quiet, let your body tell you. What do you need for the seasons ahead? What do you want?

Trust that you can know.

What does it need to be at its best? You can listen in this deep presence and stillness.

Just as you listen to the body, you can listen to your heart. As the seasons turn, as the year ahead begins—what does the heart want? What does it need to be at its best? You can know.

And in the same way, ask: What does my spirit need and want for the next season? What would serve? What would bring the best? You can know.

Take whatever gifts of understanding your body and heart and spirit offer. Let the quieting of your mind, the tending of the heart and breath, let this well-being stay with you—even after the bell invites your eyes to open.

So that was a simple practice of deep listening: quieting the mind, tending the breath, body and heart, and listening. Something we need these days. We get so busy. There's so much else going on. And just to pause, to stop, to breathe with love and listen.

Transcriptions produced locally using Swiss low-carbon electricity. Corrections and rewriting by cloud-hosted AI.