

Week Six: Gratitude (11 minutes)

00:01: This is a breath and gratitude meditation. Beginning this meditation now by settling into a comfortable seated posture. When you're ready, taking in a few satisfying, deeper inhalations and exhalations. With each outbreath, allowing yourself to settle a bit more into a relaxed and comfortable meditation posture, a posture that reflects both a sense of comfort and wakefulness.

00:49: Choosing now to either close your eyes or if you'd prefer, allowing your eyes to remain open, with a soft, fixed gaze, allowing your hands to rest comfortably, and experiencing the feel of your feet in contact with the floor, aware of the weight of the body being held and supported by the chair or surface it rests on now, taking a few moments to notice any tightness holding or bracing in the body, and inviting it to soften as best you can, settling in, transitioning into simply being here now.

01:50: And now, becoming aware of the breath, just the breath, and the felt sensations of the breath as it naturally enters and leaves the body. The body knows just how to breathe, so there's no need to control or manipulate the breath, just being with the natural rhythmic sensations of your body breathing now, really connecting with each breath with a kind, observant curiosity, gently relaxing into each breath. And when your attention wanders away from the breath to some other experience, whatever it may be, a sound, a body sensation, or a thought, simply noticing that your attention has wandered, and without judging the fact that it's wandered, gently coming home again to the breath, beginning again fresh and new. So resting now in awareness of observing just this breath, just this moment.

[20 second pause]

03:46: And now, allowing this focused awareness on the breath to recede a bit into the background. Of course, the breath is always here for you to come home to refresh or renew, but now, we turn our practice towards exploring gratitude. As human beings, you might notice how we tend to give enormous amounts of attention to things that we don't like or that disappoint us. Or challenge our ways of seeing the world around us. One way to work with these thoughts and emotions is to add a gratitude reflection to our mindfulness practice. Gratitude reminds us of our connections. And it helps give us perspective. It reminds us to acknowledge and appreciate the sources of ease, contentment, and happiness in our lives. It's important to note that gratitude isn't about denying what's wrong or solely acknowledging the positive or avoiding the negative or unpleasant aspects of our lives. Rather, gratitude allows us to move from our often autopilot or solely critical perspectives and helps us to appreciate, to acknowledge, and to savor the good in our lives. The remainder of this meditation now will offer gratitude phrases that you may repeat silently to yourself. Please feel free to change any of the phrases or words to those that may resonate better with you. Or you may let go of the phrases or words altogether, and instead experience a felt sense of gratitude, as if allowing the words and phrases to simply wash over you like a gentle mist. With gratitude, I remember all the people who have supported me throughout my life. With gratitude, I remember the care and labor of generations of my ancestors.

[20 second pause]

06:54: I offer gratitude for the beauty and abundance of nature in its many forms. I offer gratitude for the creatures of the earth, sky, and sea. I offer gratitude for the measure of health I have been granted.

[20 second pause]

07:25: For the family and friends I have been given to love, I offer gratitude. And I offer gratitude for friends and family who have loved and cared for me throughout my life. For the communities of people who surround me at work in my neighborhood or the larger community, I offer gratitude.

[15 second pause]

08:19: For the gifts and skills, I was endowed with and that I may share with others, I offer gratitude. For the teachings and lessons life has offered and continues to offer me, I offer gratitude. And I offer gratitude for the wisdom and caring I have cultivated and continue to cultivate in my life.

[30 second pause]

09:20: Letting go of the phrases now and offering gratitude for anything else that may arise for you now, perhaps small or larger

10:07: And now, allowing this gratitude reflection to recede into the background. And allowing your awareness to be with the breath now. Just the breath as it enters and leaves the body. And pausing to gently notice the overall quality and condition of the mind, body, and heart now, as we begin to bring this meditation practice to a conclusion. Following this meditation, you may wish to take some time to write down a gratitude phrase that you found helpful or an aspect of gratitude that you would like to share with someone, finding opportunities throughout your day now to continue to acknowledge and cultivate gratitude. So now, when you're ready, opening your eyes, if they've been closed, maybe looking around the room, if you'd like, and taking in a couple of deeper fuller breaths. And when you're ready, slowly and gently, resuming the remainder of your day.