

Week Three: Heal (13 minutes)

00:02: With this practice, we learn how to deal with stress in the inevitable difficulties in our lives by cultivating a deeper awareness of our inner strengths and the goodness in our lives. So we begin this meditation now by taking in three satisfying, deeper inhalations and exhalations. With each outbreath, allow yourself to settle a bit more deeply into a comfortable meditation posture, allowing your body's posture to reflect both a sense of ease and wakefulness.

00:55: If you haven't done so already, choose to either close your eyes or, if you'd prefer, simply allow your eyes to remain open with a soft, fixed gaze. Allowing your hands to rest comfortably. 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 the surface that it rests on now. Maybe taking a few moments as well to notice any tightness holding or bracing in the body and inviting the body to soften as best you can. Settling in, transitioning into simply being here now.

[15 second pause]

02:12: When you are ready, become aware of the rhythmic quality of your breath as it enters and leaves your body. Giving yourself some time to really connect each breath with your body breathing. Without having to force the breath in any way, observing where you feel the sensations of the breath most vividly and resting, anchoring your attention there, softening into each breath, noticing the unique qualities and the sensations of each in-breath and each outbreath.

[20 second pause]

03:17: And when you notice your attention has wandered away from the breath to some other experience, whatever it may be, whether a sound, a body sensation, or a thought, noticing that your attention has wandered and, without judgment, simply coming home again, reconnecting with your breath and beginning again. Resting in awareness, observing just this breath, just this moment.

[10 second pause]

04:12: Allowing this focused awareness on the breath to now recede a bit into the background. Of course, the breath is always here for you to come home to, to refresh or renew or to anchor your attention. But for now, taking a moment to reflect on how easy it can be to dismiss or not see the good in our daily lives. This may be especially true when going through stressful experiences or challenging times. And yet, when recognized and held in our awareness, these small, pleasant moments, these gestures or recollections of goodness may actually serve as an antidote, enhancing our ability to navigate life's difficulties with greater ease. So now, practicing intentionally cultivating an awareness of the goodness in our lives. We begin by recalling an experience, perhaps recently or in the not so distant past, when you experienced an awareness of goodness in your daily life. Maybe it was experiencing the beauty and awe of nature, love of family or dear friend or a pet. Or maybe an appreciation for a kind gesture extended to you or one that you extended to another. Or perhaps the goodness of a more general feeling of appreciation for a life circumstance.

06:12: Taking a moment now to bring to mind an example of goodness in your own life. It doesn't matter what it is, small or big, past or present. Just holding an image of this goodness now. Allowing this recollection of goodness to vividly take center stage in your awareness. And now when you're ready, notice what it feels like in your body, mind, and heart, to be recalling this goodness, gently noticing any emotional tone or any sensations in the body associated with this sense of goodness.

Maybe I am aware of the freshness of this experience, even in recalling it now. Noticing any warmth or softness in the body or whatever may be present for you now. Softening into the felt sense, the embodiment of this goodness as if drinking in the goodness, savoring it, enjoying any warm-heartedness you may be experiencing, letting this feeling of goodness really sink into your body, mind, and heart. Allowing it to encompass your being, becoming a part of you, growing and strength and vitality as you sit in stillness, in awareness, and appreciation.

09:12: If you'd like now, while holding the sense of goodness in your awareness, gently bring to mind a current mild to medium stressor or difficulty in your life and allow that stressor to be held and embraced by the goodness you have been recollecting. As best you can, holding the difficulty with compassion and caring as it gently rests in this field of goodness, recognizing the full rich tapestry of your life, of our shared human condition, remembering that even when things are difficult, you can find moments of beauty and kindness in yourself and others and in the world around you.

[20 second pause]

10:57: When you are ready, letting go of the recollection of goodness in your stressor now and simply begin with your breath. As best you can, riding the waves of your breath with kindness and caring, allowing whatever is present to simply be as you breathe in stillness. So now in these last couple of moments, taking in a few deeper and fuller breaths and out breaths. As you honor your practice, however this meditation experience was for you today, whether you found your practice easy or difficult remembering that you're learning a new skill and that that takes patience, perhaps especially with this practice of allowing a healing self acceptance and kinder awareness to take root as you navigate the inevitable stressors and difficulties of being human.

[30 second pause]

12:42: Taking in one last deeper breath and out breath now as we bring this meditation practice to a conclusion.