

A GUIDED MEDITATION ON FINISHING BUSINESS AROUND PAIN

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(To be read slowly to a friend or silently to oneself.)

[This is a variation on the exploration of Emotions around Pain meditation. It may be particularly useful to those working with serious illnesses of questionable prognosis.]

Find a comfortable place to sit and let your eyes close.
Bring your attention to the breath.
Let awareness focus on the sensations that accompany each breath.
Gradually allow awareness to come to the level of sensation.
Feel the breath as it passes in and out of the nostrils.
Focus on the moment-to-moment sensation that accompanies each inhalation and each exhalation.
Mindfulness of breathing.

As awareness settles into the level of sensation, besides the breath, other sensations are felt in the body.

Allow the attention to move toward these other sensations.
Does the mind label these pain? Just notice what is happening.
Nothing to create.
Just the moment as it is in clear awareness.
Allow awareness to approach more closely these sensations.
Let awareness approach the center of the moment-to-moment sensations arising in that area.

As awareness attempts to approach the moment-to-moment sensations in that area, what is felt?

What emotions cluster around these sensations?
Various states of mind arise to “protect the pain.” But turn it to suffering.

Is some stress noticed around these sensations? A sense of betrayal?
Is there fear resisting the entrance of awareness?
Is there anger or shame around the pain?
How does anger differ from shame?
And where is love and forgiveness?

Explore in the silence whatever feelings arise around discomfort.
Are these feelings a kind of unfinished business with the unpleasant in our lives? A kind of grief? Are they the lamentations of those parts of ourselves we have still not integrated into our heart?
Nothing to judge, but note judgment if it arises.
Does judgment accompany pain?
Nothing to fear, but note fearfulness if it is present.
Does fear accompany the unpleasant?
No reason to doubt your ability to heal, but note doubt if it encapsulates the pain.
Does doubt limit further progress?
Cure comes or does not come to the body. But healing is a matter of the heart.

Let the belly soften to receive the moment in mercy.
There is a healing we took birth for. Each moment is it.
To open the heart in hell, to make peace where once there was war.
Even if the body goes its own way the heart will know that way and beyond.

Forgiveness settles unfinished business.
Turning toward that unfinished mental pain that surrounds physical discomfort begin to send mercy into the center of the moment-to-moment sensations that arise in that area.
Forgive this poor body. Have mercy on you.
And forgive the fear and anger and shame that constellate uninvited around pain.
Just note their natural presence with a soft awareness.
Send forgiveness to the pains of the mind and body that they may be received by the heart rather than leaving us lost in the minds.
There is grace when the heart touches the disheartened.
Turn to your body, as if it were your only child, and say, "I forgive you."

Let awareness enter the moment-to-moment sensation arising and dissolving in the vast spaciousness of being.
Allow a merciful awareness to receive gently the feelings and sensations in the area of discomfort.
Not attempting to change anything. Force closes the heart. Just receiving in mercy and loving kindness this body of sensation, this mind of feelings, of fears and doubts, of bewilderment and hope.
Have mercy on you. Let the sensations, let the feelings float in the

vast spaciousness of awareness, not holding to anything, not pushing anything away.

Just mercy and awareness meeting feeling and sensation moment-to-moment as they arise and dissolve in the flow of consciousness.

Let the heart receive the body and the mind with a healing kindness and care that softens to each sensation. Let it all come and let it all go in mercy and awareness.