

A GUIDED MEDITATION ON THE EMOTIONS AROUND PAIN

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

Let your eyes close and bring your attention to the breath.

Let awareness come to the level of sensation.

As awareness begins to establish itself in the moment, allow it to approach the area of discomfort.

Just feel what is there. Nothing to change. Nothing to do about it.

Just sensations arising in the moment.

Let all be just as it is.

As awareness approaches the area of discomfort, is there any tension noticed, any rigidity that it must pass through?

Is there a pushing away of this investigation? An unwillingness to go further?

Just notice whatever resistance might arise.

Notice what limits the approach of awareness.

Is there a quality of holding around the area of discomfort?

Examine it. No need to change anything.

Receive the moment as it is.

Nothing to define. Just allowing a willingness to know, just allowing a not knowing, to receive the moment.

As awareness makes contact with the sensations that arise in the area of discomfort, what feelings are present in the moment-to-moment flow around sensation?

Does thought arise? Do certain feelings accompany unpleasant sensations? Do other images arise?

What are the voices around pain?

What is the tone of voice of the feelings that huddle around the unpleasant?

Do they repeat a certain theme? A certain state of mind?

What emotions are noticed there?

Is there fear or shame?

Is there anger or doubt?

Nothing to create, just receiving the moment as it presents itself in a receptive awareness.

Do any of these feelings limit the entrance of mercy into the pain?

Do any of these feelings seem to resist letting the healing in?
Is there unfinished business around the pain? Is there some grief? A sense of betrayal? Feelings of failure?
So little mercy we have for ourselves.
Is there a sense of urgency in the mind which creates stiffness in the body, a holding around pain?
Has life become an emergency?
Are there feelings, moods, held in the body, associated with discomfort?
Is there guilt or doubt? Feelings of betrayal?
Is there a sense of helplessness or hopelessness?
Does this grief around pain free it or enslave it?

Have mercy on yourself. Soften to the holding.
Soften the discomfort.

Allow the body to open and soften around whatever hindrances, whatever holdings present themselves.

Soften the tissue all around discomfort—let it begin to float in a merciful awareness.

Let the body cradle its hurt places as if it were embracing its only child.

Nothing to push away.

Opening moment to moment all around sensation. Softening the tissue, the flesh, the hardness around sensation.

Allowing sensation to be received in a merciful softness, a willingness to meet it with kindness rather than grasping it in fear and trembling. A willingness to let it go, to let it float in the vast space of the heart.

Whatever attitudes, feelings, or thoughts accompany discomfort, let them float too.

Let the whole mind and body be received moment to moment in mercy and softness.

Whatever arises into awareness, just let it be.

Notice how judgment or fear or even a longing for healing can tighten the area.

Let these mental images come and go. Notice how even expectation can create tension and let it too float in the vast spaciousness of awareness.

Watch how a hard thought can harden the body. See this process soften to it. Notice how feelings can amplify discomfort.

And soften yet more deeply.

Observe how softening lets it all float in edgeless awareness.

Allow each sensation and each moment of feeling to arise and dissolve in soft, open space.

Receive each particle of emotion or sensation as if for the very first time.

Acknowledging even the slightest tension or holding in a soft, allowing awareness, let the healing in.

Just allow the open space of a merciful awareness to receive the constant flow of change in the area of discomfort.

Receiving constantly changing feelings, sensations, moods, hopes, fears, and the deeper healings which present themselves when we hold nowhere.

Let all that arises in the mind body come and go with mercy and awareness.

Let the heart receive it all. Healing entering directly, finishing business. Letting go of the suffering so the pain can float in a loving kindness the aching body longs for.