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File 2a – Thursday morning guided meditation

So take a few deep breaths into the belly. It's always good to do this at the beginning of a sitting, just to reaffirm that you're here; nowhere else but here. Your mind will try and complicate this whole thing but really it's very simple. That's the difficult part; keeping it simple.

So take your attention to the top of your head and feel the sensation on the top of your head however it feels right now; not how you'd like it feel, how you think it would feel. Just try and feel the direct the sensation without your mind coming in between and judging it; tainting the sensation because that's what the mind does.

Feel the sensation of your eyelids on your eyes. Don't visualise. Try and feel the direct sensation however subtle, whatever it is: pleasant, unpleasant. What we're doing here is using the sensations in the body to keep us in the body as much as possible. Feel your breath going through your nostrils. You don't need to think about it – just feel the sensation. Feel your lips, your tongue touching your palate, your jaw and your chin, the back of your head. And keep breathing into the belly.

The body is not going to feel relaxed at times and that's not the aim of this. The aim is to be in the body however it feels. Keep coming back to where you are right now.

Feel your shoulders. This is the place where many people feel tension at times. So if you feel tension here or any part of the body try and keep your body still and watch your reaction to that tension. Go to your left shoulder and go down your arm to your left elbow and feel your elbow. Then go down to your left hand and feel your hand and feel your thumb and each finger.

Go to your right shoulder and feel your shoulder. Go down your arm to your right elbow, then down to your right hand and feel your hand. And feel you thumb and each finger. Keep breathing deeply into the body. Feel both arms and both hands.

Take your attention to your chest and as you breathe in and out through the nose feel the gentle movement of your chest with the breath. Then go down to the abdomen. This is the most tangible place in your body to feel the breath – to be with your breath. It's a very definite movement.

Your body is breathing. You don't need to control the breath. If you don't think, your body will still keep breathing but without the tension. And in deep, dreamless sleep, that's what happens. Your body actually recovers when your mind is not present; your body takes over. And your body is far more intelligent than any mind, than any intellect however sophisticated and mature. This is becoming purely intelligent. No great mind has ever been able to replicate the intelligence in the body.

Feel your thighs, your left knee, your right knee, your left foot and your right foot. Feel your spine. It's good to keep your spine straight without being rigid – this isn't about being rigid – straight and flexible.

Alert – you need to be very alert. So each time you realise you've been lost in thinking – at that moment your back in your body – bring your attention back to the breath in the abdomen. If there are other sensations that are dominant feel them. But use the breath in the abdomen as an anchor – an anchor in your body.

So give yourself time to settle into this, into this retreat. Try not to make any judgments about it. Just sit. Feel the sensations. Watch that movement away from your body and keep coming back to where you are right now.