



## 15 MINUTE MEDITATION

BY TARA BRACH

Estimated, Unofficial Transcript:

“This is a meditation guide from the New York Times. You're about to listen to a mindfulness meditation by Tara Brach, a psychologist and founder of the Insight Meditation Community. It lasts for 15 minutes. Before you begin your meditation, find a comfortable place to sit away from noise and commotion. Are you there? Keep your back upright and your eyes closed. Now listen.

In the silence and the stillness, let your awareness sweep through your body and just notice if there's any obvious areas of tightness, of tension. Sense what wants to let go a little right now.

You might sense a little bit of a loosening or softening around the shoulders. Perhaps a melting or a dissolving sensation inside the shoulders. Perhaps a softening of the hands. Let there be an openness to the chest, maybe a softening at the belly, relaxing through the pelvic region.

Aware of the places of contact where your hands touch each other, the thighs, the legs, where your bottom touches the cushion or the chair, feet touching the floor. Just aware of the sense of pressure and warmth, and if you could feel your whole body from the inside out just sensing the tingling and the vibrating, the heat or the cool. This whole play of sensation.

Including sound in your awareness, close sounds in the room. ... The appearing and the disappearing of these words. And the spaces between sounds, listening to the more distant sounds. Listening not just with your ears but with your whole awareness, letting sounds wash through, noticing with listening that there's nothing to do. Sounds appear and are known spontaneously by awareness.

Sense the edgeless space that all sounds are appearing in. Just relaxing into that openness that's listening. Totally receptive, there's a listening to and a feeling of the whole changing flow moment to moment.

It's quite natural for the attention to contract and go inside of thoughts, so you forget the awareness it's listening. When that happens, when you notice thinking, not a problem just to recognize, "Oh, OK. Inside a virtual reality." And then pause and reopen the attention and begin listening again to the sounds you actually hear instead of the thoughts in the mind. Listening with your whole awareness. Relaxed, receptive, just letting sounds wash through.

Each time the mind drifts into thoughts is an opportunity to practice arriving again in presence. And in this meditation letting sounds be a home base, this open, relaxed presence. Listening to the changing flow of sounds. If you find some strong experience arises, pleasantness or



unpleasantness in the body, to listen to and feel that in a very intimate way, allowing what arises to be there, offering that listening presence, accepting gentle.

If some strong emotion arises, fear or sorrow, listening to and feeling that with the same receptivity as you might listen to sound. And when it no longer calls the attention, resting again in this openness and the silence that's listening to this life.

You can begin fresh in any moment, just simply noticing where the attention is, and choosing to arrive again, bringing that friendliness and interest right back here, opening the attention to listen to the sounds that are appearing and disappearing moment to moment. You might re-relax in the body some, listening to and feeling the moment.

In these last few moments, bringing that listening and receptive attention to the heart, just listening to your own heart, sensing the state of your heart in this moment.

The intimacy of listening to and feeling the life that's right here, offering whatever prayer or blessing, wish of well-being to your own heart, whatever most resonates in this moment. Bringing to mind a dear one so that you're listening to and feeling that person, that being, their energy, offering whatever prayer, whatever wish or blessing resonates.

And then sensing the heart space that holds all beings so that you're listening to the lives, consciousness and beings everywhere, offering your prayer.”

## ABOUT TARA BRACH

[www.tarabrach.com](http://www.tarabrach.com)

Tara Brach's teachings blend Western psychology and Eastern spiritual practices, mindful attention to our inner life, and a full, compassionate engagement with our world. The result is a distinctive voice in Western Buddhism, one that offers a wise and caring approach to freeing ourselves and society from suffering.

In 1998, Tara founded the Insight Meditation Community of Washington, DC (IMCW), which is now one of the largest and most dynamic non-residential meditation centers in the United States. She gives presentations, teaches classes, offers workshops, and leads silent meditation retreats at IMCW and at conferences and retreat centers in the United States and Europe. Tara's podcast receives over a million downloads each month.



Her themes reveal the possibility of emotional healing and spiritual awakening through mindful, loving awareness as well as the alleviation of suffering in the larger world by practicing compassion in action. She has fostered efforts to bring principles and practices of mindfulness to issues of racial injustice, equity and inclusivity; peace; environmental sustainability, as well as to prisons and schools.

In addition to numerous articles, videos, and hundreds of recorded talks, Tara is the author of the book **Radical Acceptance** and **True Refuge: Finding Peace & Freedom in Your Own Awakened Heart**. She has a son, Narayan, and lives in Great Falls, VA, with her husband, **Jonathan Foust** and their dog, kd.

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