



Please find a sitting position
that allows you to be alert,
your spine erect but not rigid,
and also relaxed.

Now close your eyes
and rest your hands
in an easy effortless way.

Take a few moments
to scan through your body,
and wherever possible,
soften and release
obvious areas of physical tension.
We begin the practice of coming back
by establishing our home base.

While there are many possible anchors
such as sound or sensations throughout the body,
the most common
and the one we'll be exploring here is
the breath.

Please breathe naturally
and simply notice where the breath is easiest to detect
and where the breath also feels pleasant or at least neutral.
So you might be paying attention to
how the breath feels as it flows
in and out of your nose,
you might feel the touch of your breath
around your nostrils
or on your upper lip,
or perhaps you feel the movement of your chest
or the rising and falling of your abdomen,
or perhaps you feel your whole body like a balloon
expanding with the in breath,
deflating with the out breath.

So just take some moments
to bring your attention
to the sensations of breathing in one of these areas,



a relaxed attentiveness.
There's no need to control the breath.
Rather, sense you're receiving the breath
much like you'd listen to sound.
With a relaxed awareness,
discover what the breath is really like
as a changing experience of sensations.
This life breath is your home base,
a place to rest and be aware.
So in these next moments,
simply relax as the breath comes in,
noticing what it's like,
and relax with the exhale,
letting go
and again noticing
the immediate experience of sensations.

Noticing where your attention is,
you might find that
your mind has drifted off into thoughts.
This is completely natural.
The mind is conditioned
to move off into thinking about the future,
the past.

When you become aware of thinking,
you might use a soft and friendly mental note.

Just say thinking,
thinking,
and then pause and simply re-relax.

Just open the attention again
aware of the sounds around you,
re-relaxing your body,
feeling the aliveness in the body.
Relax your heart.
Without any judgment,
just allow yourself to gently return again
to the inflow and outflow of the breath.



Let the breath be an intimate friend,
a home base that reconnects
you with your own presence.

As you resettle with the breath,
you might notice other experiences,
the background sounds perhaps of a passing car,
wind,
a bird.

You might feel sensations
of warmth or coolness.
Whatever's in the background can be there
without drawing you away.
Just continue to rest with the breath,
to relax with the breath,
with the intention of noticing when you can
when you drift off into thought.

If you discover that the mind has drifted again,
simply pause,
re-relax,
open the attention.
Without any judgment,
gently come back into this moment.
Just to remember,
the thoughts are not the enemy.
You don't have to
clear your mind of thoughts.
Rather,
you're developing the capacity
to recognize when thoughts are happening
without getting lost in the storyline.
Each time you notice that you've drifted
or noticed you've gotten lost,
it's an opportunity to strengthen your muscle
of remembering of again arriving here now,
gently coming back
into living presence.



As you notice the mind getting quieter,
you might sense the peace that arises
when you relax even more
and immerse your entire awareness
into the inflow and outflow of the breath.
Breathing in,
know that you're breathing in.
Breathing out,
know that you're breathing out.

Be aware of the beginnings and endings of each breath
fully here,
awake,
at home,
in presence.

The poet Wu Men writes,
"Ten thousand flowers in spring,
the moon in autumn,
a cool breeze in summer,
snow in winter.
If your mind isn't clouded
by unnecessary things,
this is the best season of your life."

You can practice this meditation of coming back
informally as a way of quieting and collecting your mind
at any time of the day.
Simply bring a full yet gentle attention to the breath,
relaxing with the in breath,
relaxing with the out breath,
and then continue on with your activities.



As a reminder,
for some people,
the breath is not the best anchor or home base.
It may be hard to detect and connect with
or in some way unpleasant,
so if that's the case for you,
you might let the play of changing sounds be your anchor,
or the feelings of sensations throughout the body,
or perhaps just the sensations in your hands.

It's fine to experiment and find
what sensory present home base
most helps you to settle
and quiet the mind.