

Stepping into Self Love

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Finding the Calm within the Chaos

"Self-Love, You are Worthy"

*When life feels hard and nothing seems to go right, it is so easy to lose our sense of peace. Life can be extremely overwhelming at times. Powering through life's difficult moments asks us to dig a little bit deeper and find some handy tools that can be utilized to regain stability and a sense of calm within. External factors/noise cause us to be thrown off track - finding a space of "quiet" on a daily basis as these tools are being practiced and tapped into is essential.*

## **CENTERING**

Finding a comfortable position lying down on the mat on your back (*alternative position*). Taking a moment to shuffle around, adjust anything that needs to be adjusted as you settle into your most comfortable position. Know that you are not stuck in this position if you find yourself in need of having to adjust your position, scratch an itch or sneeze please do so, but ideally, we would like to lie as still as possible throughout the session.

If you feel safe enough to do so, allow the eyes to close otherwise a soft gaze is suggested .... Arms comfortably resting alongside the body, allowing the palms to face toward the ceiling taking on a gesture of both surrender and receiving, as you bring your feet anywhere from hip to mat width apart. Giving yourself permission to begin to sink into a space of stillness. Right now, you have nowhere else to be, nothing else to do except lie on the mat, listen to the words being spoken and keep drawing your attention back to the natural flow of your breath.

In your mind's eye visualise the four walls of this room and see if you can place yourself in relation to these four walls. Know that within this space you are completely safe .... As you become aware of sounds that you can hear far off in the distance, connecting to one particular sound and perhaps painting a visual in your mind's eye of what this sound looks like.... Drawing your awareness closer to yourself, identifying any sounds that you can connect with, within the space you find yourself in.. the music softly playing, your neighbours breathing or snoring... finally, honing in on your sense of hearing further still as you become aware of any sounds that you can hear from 'self'. This may be an actual sound (such as your breathing or it may show up as inner dialogue or conversation) Whatever it is that you do find, there is no need to try and analyse or understand – you are simply being made aware of what is going on internally, both mentally as well as emotionally for you in this moment and know that whatever it is, it is ok.

Drawing your awareness toward the rhythmic beating of your heart against your chest... notice the pace of your heartbeat and welcoming it's presence exactly as it is. Whether it may be beating a little fast or not..

Finding a lengthened, expansive breath in through the nose and as you release this breath allow a heaviness to start settling into the body. Another lengthened breath in as you exhale allowing yourself to sink a little deeper into stillness.

Drawing your awareness to the very top of the head as you begin to guide your attention toward the forehead, ....allowing the eyes to soften. Unclench your jaw, maybe run your tongue along your teeth, swallow and relax the tongue away from the roof of the mouth.

Deep lengthened breath in and on your exhalation notice the shoulders become heavy, As you guide this feeling of heaviness along the length of both your arms, through the wrists – into the palms of the hands toward the fingertips. Feel the rise and fall of your chest as you naturally and

effortlessly breathe in... & out ... The expansion and contraction of your belly as you continue to deepen into both your inhale ...& your exhale ...

Notice the pelvis become increasingly heavier as you continue to breathe - as this heavy sensation continues to travel the length of both your legs. Through the upper thighs, knees, shins ... the ankles toward the soles of the feet and finally your toes. With the entire body now deeply relaxed the attention travels toward the various meeting points between the body and the mat. You are relaxed yet completely supported as you become aware of the back of the head making contact with mat, the shoulder blades and the mat. Backs of the arms against the mat, the sacrum, back of the legs against the mat and finally the heels.

### **3 PART BREATH/FULL YOGIC BREATHING**

Your breath is like your very own superpower – which if, with practice and patience, is utilised correctly becomes a tool that you have at your disposal always. Our guided visualisation is all about self-love and self-worth. Taking the very first step toward tapping into self-care and self-love is the realisation that your breath provides you in any given moment with exactly what it is you need to be ok.

We are beautiful, complex beings with depth. With that depth comes an array of wonderful and unfortunately sometimes “not so wonderful feels”. Our feelings and emotions lead to the body having a response – in a way our emotions (if awareness is not brought to it) can dictate what our body does. When we are in a state of emotional discomfort – Your heart rate may increase, breathing may become strained or shallow, sweaty palms.

These physical sensations can be quite scary, but they don't have to be. Learning to draw continuous awareness toward your breath, and becoming aware of what happens within the body and your mind as you begin to harness the breaths power can help us to turn our attention away from the everyday noise in our lives and constant chattering that goes on in our minds. Acknowledging our feelings and emotions are so very important, allowing ourselves to feel these emotions are equally as important, releasing these emotions and physical responses attached to the emotions are key in allowing ourselves to healthily move through whatever it is we are going through. And the breathe helps with all of this.

#### ***Step 1:***

Every single persons breath is unique and the breath is linked to the pace and rhythm of your heartbeat. Placing both hands on your belly, exhale completely and as you inhale isolate your breathing to the belly alone. Keeping the ribcage and uppermost chest as still as possible allowing the belly to expand like a balloon.

#### ***Step 2:***

Releasing the belly breathing and shifting the awareness toward the ribcage as the belly and collarbones now remain still – allow the ribcage to expand out toward the sides.

#### ***Step 3:***

Releasing the focus on the ribcage as your attention shifts to the clavicular area/collarbones. Clavicular breathing is ironically the breath that we tend to tap into in moments of anxiety and stress. It is an extremely restrictive breath which worsens our state of anxiety as breathing becomes shallow and rapid the heartrate follows and automatically quickens to match the rapid pace of breathing.

## **COMBINING THE BREATH:**

The breath is like a wave, it originates from deep within the belly. As the belly expands this wave continues to travel into the ribcage and finally the breath allows the collarbones to lift (ever so slightly) on the exhalation this wavelike pattern reverses. The collarbones lower, ribs knit back together and the belly softens as the navel draws toward the back of the body – allowing the last little bit of air to be released from the body.

Our yogic breathing or 3 part breath not only allows enough oxygen to enter into the bloodstream but has a deeply relaxing effect on the body as the breathing pattern allows the heartbeat to follow suit. Breaking the breath up into 3 parts allow us to know exactly how much oxygen can be drawn into each part of this breathing pattern and trains the body to breathe correctly. Let's combine the breath.

*Emptying the lungs of breath completely:*

Inhale into the belly, ribs, upper-chest ; Exhale upper-chest, ribs, belly draws in.

Inhale – belly, ribs, chest ; Exhale chest, ribs, belly

Inhale – belly, ribs, chest ; Exhale chest, ribs, belly

Returning the breath back to its natural flow - Take note of how your body is feeling right now.

Releasing the body and focusing in on any thoughts you might be having. Perhaps your thoughts are all jumbled. Maybe your mind is still stuck with the body trying to fix any discomfort now that you are aware of it ...

Moving toward the heart. What are you feeling... Without attaching to any one feeling. Just notice what comes up.

## **INTENTION**

Now that we are a little more aware of what is going on for us emotionally, physically as well as mentally we are going to mentally be repeating affirmations of self-worth. These are positive statements, phrased in the present tense repeated with conviction and belief that they are true. Positive affirmations may feel strange or hard in the beginning because there is often an element of self-doubt related to speaking positively about ourselves. How we speak to ourselves, about ourselves however on a daily basis, hold an enormous amount of power and these statements are extremely beneficial. Mentally repeat after me.

I am at peace with myself

I value myself as a person

All people have value, and I am valuable too

I deserve happiness

I allow myself to feel happy

Yesterday does not define me

Everyone makes mistakes

I forgive myself

I accept my shortcomings

I accept my strengths

I allow myself to feel all my feelings

I accept myself wholly

My efforts are good enough

I do not have to be perfect – nobody is perfect  
I enjoy my quirks – they are what make me unique  
I do not need to compare myself to others  
I feel secure in who I am  
I am uniquely and wonderfully made and perfect just as I am  
I am confident  
I am as valuable as the next person  
I am capable of handling difficult situations  
I believe in myself  
I love myself  
I am valuable

## **GUIDED VISUALISATION**

### **SELF-LOVE**

We are more than often unnecessarily hard on ourselves. Our desire to be heard and understood, to be loved and accepted by others, although understandable often makes us forget one extremely important thing. That we are worthy of our own love and acceptance as well, and that we are more than worthy of receiving love from others exactly as we are. There is no one individual on this earth that is the same, nor is there something as a perfect human on this entire planet. Each one of us harnesses a very unique gift that we were given at birth and our ability to love and accept these gifts that we have been given is what allows us to contribute a little “piece of ourselves” with every interaction we have. You matter. You are valuable and you deserve a life lived in abundant happiness and joy and it all starts with being “ok” with yourself as you are, despite.

There are many ways that we can take care of ourselves and express self-love. We can read poetry, pamper ourselves with massage, take long walks in nature, or spend time with our friends (or therapist) for support. Or we can take 5 min a day to simply meditate on self-love.

Focusing on “why” we love ourselves on a daily basis gives us permission to get real and vulnerable with ourselves. Sitting with our thoughts and feelings, rather than pushing them away, is an act of love. When we focus on our heart, we are able to create a compassionate space from which we can feel, without judgment, whatever it is we need to feel. During this time we are not beating ourselves up about whatever we think we did wrong or however we think we can’t “measure up” we are simply allowing ourselves to be human. Reaching a space of clarity regarding our feelings related to ourselves as well as others actions, words or judgements toward us allows us to then calmly communicate how it is that we feel with those that we love.

As soon as we leave the present moment and allow our thoughts about self or others judgements or opinions about us (good or bad) to consume our attention, we can feel ourselves drifting away from the experience of this compassionate space.

Our thoughts absolutely are not permanent; they come and go. When we take a step back from them and let them pass, we see that any unworthiness we feel is only temporary.

So, instead of being hard on ourselves and getting caught up in the usual “not enough” storyline when we face self-doubt and lack of self-love, go find your “quiet space” and use this meditation to remind yourself that you are worthy of your own love and compassion. In your mind’s eye begin to create and visualise a space that is all yours. Your breathing is natural and

you notice again the very steady, slow, rhythmic beating of your heart against your chest. You are completely relaxed and at ease. This is your space, so go ahead and fill it with objects and things that you love and that you find comforting. Notice how effortlessly the mind connects to colours that you find calming or soothing and how your space is being filled with variations in depth related to your calming colour... Feel free to explore a little, ....what else do you connect with in your space ? A smell perhaps, reminding you of a fond memory ? ... Can you hear anything within your space ? Perhaps a melody faintly playing in the background. One that brings warmth to your heart. However it is that your mind is allowing this space to take shape and form, allow it to be exactly as it is ....

After familiarising yourself with your space, knowing that you are completely calm and at ease begin envisioning a mirror or a surface in which you can clearly see your reflection... Notice the shape of the mirror. Whether the mirror has any intricate detail or whether it is a plain reflective surface. As you start focusing in on the reflection being shown, again take time to take in the detail. Notice your height and your posture.... Are you standing tall or are you hunched in toward yourself. What are your arms doing ? Perhaps you are waving back at yourself, or maybe you are protectively wrapping your arms around yourself. Notice the colour of your shirt, pants, dress. The texture of the fabric. Allow your gaze to travel back toward your face. What is it that you see reflected back at you ? Look closely at the shape of your face, colour of your hair and how it falls around your face. The colour and texture of your skin... The curvature of your mouth. Are the corners of your mouth lifted in a slight smile, or do you seem sad? Finally – Connect with your own gaze ... and linger there. How many colours can you find within your eyes ... what is it that your reflection is trying to communicate to you in this moment ? Listen intently to the words that are NOT being spoken, but that you know to be true... Whatever it is that you find reflected back at you – you now have the opportunity to communicate what it is that your reflected self needs to hear from you. Words – which only you can give. You have the opportunity to let your reflected self-know how deeply they are loved, cherished, valued... Perhaps, how very very sorry you are for having neglected them. You have the opportunity – to tell your reflected self (in essence, yourself) how very much you love them (yourself).

Drawing your awareness back to your breath - On each inhale, mentally tell yourself “I am worthy,” and on each exhale, “I am enough.” Let each inhale draw in self-love and each exhale release what is no longer serving you. Notice what happens in your heart when you speak to yourself in this kind loving way.

## **ROTATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS**

We will now begin a systematic journey of sensory awareness throughout the body. You will move your awareness to different parts of your body as soon as you hear them named. Please say the name of the part to yourself and feel that part of your body but do not move any part. The practice begins on the right side.

Right hand thumb ... 2nd finger ... 3rd finger ... 4th finger ... 5th finger ... palm of the hand ... back of the hand ... wrist ... forearm ... elbow ... upper arm ... shoulder ... armpit ... waist ... hip ... thigh ... knee ... calf ... ankle ... heel ... sole of the foot ... top of the foot ... right big toe ... 2nd toe ... 3rd toe ... 4th toe ... 5th toe.

Left hand thumb ... 2nd finger ... 3rd finger ... 4th finger ... 5th finger ... palm of the hand ... back of the hand ... wrist ... forearm ... elbow ... upper arm ... shoulder ... armpit ... waist ... hip ... thigh ... knee ...

calf ... ankle ... heel ... sole of the foot ... top of the foot ... left big toe ... 2nd toe ... 3rd toe ... 4th toe ... 5th

Now go to the back of the body ... right heel ... left heel ... right calf ... left calf ... right thigh ... left thigh ... right buttock ... left buttock ... lower back ... middle back ... upper back ... the entire spine ... right shoulder blade ... left shoulder blade ... back of the neck ... back of the head.

Top of the head ... forehead ... right temple ... left temple ... right ear ... left ear ... right eyebrow ... left eyebrow ... middle of the eyebrows ... right eye ... left eye ... right nostril ... left nostril ... right cheek ... left cheek ... upper lip ... lower lip ... both lip together ... chin ... jaw ... throat ... right collarbone ... left collarbone ... right side of the chest ... left side of the chest ... upper abdomen ... navel ... lower abdomen ... right groin ... left groin ... the pelvic floor.

The whole right leg ... whole left leg ... whole right arm ... whole left arm ... the whole face ... the whole head ... the whole torso ... the whole body ... the whole body ... the whole body – a perfect system working in harmony as one.

In your mind's eye again visualise the four walls of the room and see if you can place yourself in relation to the space. Feel the rise and fall of your belly as you breathe, the expansion and contraction of your chest. Rubbing thumb against index finger, middle finger, ring finger and baby finger. Flex into the hands and feet. Maybe reach the arms overhead and stretch the body out just as you do first thing in the morning. Taking your time to make your way into a comfortable seated position. Eyes still closed or with a soft gaze .. Finding length and extension in the spine, dropping the shoulders away from the ears, as the hands gently rest on the knees or in the lap.

Taking a moment in your seated position to draw awareness to the physical state the body finds itself in now. Notice the beating of your heart as it naturally follows the lengthened flow of your inhalation and exhalation. Every inhale a reminder that we are enough and perfect exactly as we are and every exhalation releasing anything that does not serve a purpose.