

## *Homework for Week III*

### *Open Heart Meditation*

### *March 31, 2011*

Dear All,

We will continue to keep the Listserve active for the next two weeks, so please do send any questions or comments and I will answer them.

Please continue meditating for 15 minutes a day. I suggest that you practice the breath/heart/hamsa and space between the breath practices. Choose the parts of this practice that feel especially strong for you. It's fine to experiment and alternate, but you don't need to do all of these aspects of the practice at once, unless that feels natural and right.

You may consider any of the heart practices we have done this week to be core practices, and continue meditating with the one that feels most powerful and intimate for you. To review, we did a mantra practice: Ham sa, the mantra of the breath, which is described in the last homework assignment. We also practiced breathing in light and breathing it through the body, as well as several ways to practice entering the heart. Any of these ways of approaching your meditation can lead you into to a deeper and deeper relationship with the Center, the inner spaciousness or gap that opens up between the breaths or between thoughts. Inside this Center, the space of consciousness beneath thoughts, is a doorway into the Self, the pure God-consciousness that is the source of our life.

Finally, any of the meditations that we have done can be combined with the last meditation we did this evening, the instructions for which are as follows:

#### *Breathing with the Presence of Embodied Spirit*

Imagine the presence of an infinitely wise and loving being. It may be a great being—like Jesus or Buddha—a deity, or simply a great light or a simple sense of presence. Feel this presence in front of you, filling the sky. Feel that this being is filled with the energy of blessing, light, and unconditional love for you.

Speak to this being if you like—saying anything you would like

Breathing in, allow yourself to take in the blessing in the form of energy, light, and love. Let the blessing move through your whole body. Breathe it out, so that you're connected to this being by a river of breath, a river of grace, inhaling the blessings, and breathing them out. Do the same with any thoughts, emotions, feelings.

Finally, feel that you're taking in the fullness of this Being, letting the blessing-filled presence fill your body—as light, as energy, as love. Rest in that sense of embodying this presence, then return to the breath.

Please do continue to work with the other integrative practices we have been doing: keeping awareness in the heart, 'naming' thoughts as 'Thought', and seeing thoughts as energy.

### *General Practice Tips*

Here, offered with love, are some general reminders about meditation practice. You can also consult my book, *Meditation for the Love of It*, or the Meditation FAQ section on my website for more on this and for answers to Frequently Asked Questions.

Three things are very important in your meditation practice:

*First*, remember that meditation is a relationship with yourself, and that the more interest and compassion you offer to it, the more that relationship will unfold.

*Second*, a playful, experimental attitude makes a great difference in your experience. Meditation is a great and powerful path, and it is also full of surprises. You don't have to feel wedded to a particular technique, because the technique is not the point (or, as a great Zen teacher said, "The finger pointing at the moon is not the moon." The technique is a door, a way of holding the mind and attention so that meditation can unfold.

*Third*, it's very good to make a habit of daily practice. Even if you're traveling and can't make time for a full practice, make a point of sitting for 5 minutes before getting out of bed or before going to sleep. The habit of checking you're your own heart will then continue to make its home in your body. Also, the heart practice can be done during small meditation 'breaks' while you're walking, washing dishes, riding in the car, or any time that you want to get centered.

### *Enjoy!*

You'll be receiving an Evaluation form which I would love you to fill out and send in to me at [sally@sallykempton.com](mailto:sally@sallykempton.com).

It's been a wonderful experience to meditate with you all.

May your practice flourish, expand, and permeate every particle of your life!

love,

Sally