

**SPEAKER:** So finding a comfortable position, eyes open or closed as you prefer. Bringing attention to the body. Bring some sense of the whole body, space occupied by the body, the weight of the body. And becoming aware of sensations arising from the body. Are there any particular places in the body where there may be discomfort? If so, perhaps acknowledging the discomfort, shifting your position to decrease the discomfort.

And also checking in for tightness or tension in the body. If you encounter any, releasing it as you're able. Bringing attention to the face allowing muscles of the face and the jaw to soften. Scanning through the neck and relaxing the neck, out into the shoulders, releasing the shoulders. Relaxing the arms and the hands.

Letting go of any tension in the legs, now through the feet. Cultivating the posture of relaxed attentiveness. And noticing the mind and any activity in the mind. Is the mind active now or is it calmer, more relaxed? The thoughts are arising. Just noticing the thoughts without getting caught up in them.

The default state of mind, when thinking occurs, is to get caught up in the thinking, to not even be aware that thinking is happening. Just getting caught up in the thoughts. Rather than getting caught up in the thoughts, seeing if it's possible to step back from them and just observe them.

Carol Brock calls getting caught up in thoughts the trance of thinking. In stepping out of the trance of thinking, new thoughts are occurring, just observing. Not treating them, taking them too seriously. When we do this, when we just observe thoughts as thoughts, just like any other phenomenon, our field of awareness, they tend to fade away.

We're just noticing thoughts, observing them, perhaps even naming them. Well, there's a thought. Not feeding them. You're getting caught up in them. And just observing what happens.

And in doing this, it's easy to get lost, to get lost in the thoughts. When that occurs, it's always possible to bring the attention back to breathing. Or to bodily sound, sensations or to sounds. Having someplace that feels natural to you to anchor the attention. Replacing the attention, whatever seems most natural to you, as an anchor or a home base.

And you're just noticing when thoughts arise. Noticing as they arise, not getting caught up in them. And just allowing them to pass away. Sometimes refer to thoughts as being like clouds in the sky or leaves on a stream. Come into our awareness. You notice them. And then they move on, passing out of our awareness again.

So if either of these images resonate, observing parts like clouds in the sky or leaves floating on a stream. Touching in with the breath, the sensations in the body or sound as needed to stabilize the attention, to bring the awareness back to the present moment. To find yourself getting caught up in the story. Getting caught in thoughts.

While we might aspire to having no thoughts when we meditate, most of the time, thoughts will arise. The mind is a thought generator. But there's no need to judge our experience if thoughts are arising. Just noticing our experience. Noticing thoughts if they arise. Observing them, not feeding them or getting caught up in them, and allowing them to pass away.

Practicing mindfulness of thoughts just as we practice mindfulness of breathing, mindfulness of other bodily sensations. Touching back into your anchor as needed. Bringing this attention now to the sensations of breathing. Noticing the flow of air into and out of the body.

And taking a deeper breath, allowing the lungs to fill fully. Breathing out. Emptying the lungs completely. Breathing in again. And opening the eyes if they've been closed as we end this meditation.