

PRACTICING CALM PRESENCE: GUIDED MEDITATION

Amidst the chaos of illness and dying, one calm person in the room can make a big difference. Practicing presence is practicing vulnerability and empathy. Compassionate presence is about a willingness to be open, loving, kind, and aware. Being present for those who are sick and dying is a skill that you can learn and practice at home, work, and at the bedside.

Begin by sitting in a comfortable posture on a cushion or chair. Let your body relax, and soften. Feel your spine straighten. It should be open in the front and strong in the back. Let your hands rest on your thighs and allow your body to settle. Your eyes may be open or closed. Use a soft gaze if your eyes are open and look a few feet in front of your nose.

Feel contact with the ground or chair underneath you.

Let go of any tightness.

Bring your attention to sitting in this moment.

Feel your feet and your hands resting easily.

Breathe. Find a quieting of your breath, your body, and your mind.

Notice where you feel your breath in your body: your chest, abdomen, or nose. Place your awareness here, and feel each breath going gently in and out.

Aware of breathing in.

Aware of breathing out.

Breathe in, breathe out.

Feel the sensations of breathing.

Notice each breath.

Let each breath nourish you. Soften you.

Let go of reference points. Stay open to not knowing. Relax. Relax into the present moment. Allow your mind to become spacious like the sky.

Be with each moment as it is. Accept whatever is arising. Return to your breath. Pay gentle attention to your breath.

Let your thoughts arise and pass, come and go. If your mind wanders, then gently bring your attention back to your breath. Easily and effortlessly.

Follow your breath in silence.

Feel your body. Feel a sense of balance and ease.

Calmly rest. Allow your mind to be calm and clear without grasping.

Be here.

Now.

Appreciate the calm peace. In the midst of chaos and confusion, there is calmness and peace.

Bring this calmness and peace to the atmosphere in the room.

You can actually do this practice at the bedside. You can sit at the bedside with things as they are.

Practice openness, awareness, and acceptance.

Calm. Peaceful abiding.

When you hear the chimes, come back and gently open your eyes if they are shut.

You may be comfortable putting your hands together at your heart in prayer position. Take a final moment to bow your head slightly, acknowledging the peace of open awareness.