



The Way of The Quiet Mind

A Guide to the Meditations

Finding Stillness Beneath the Stories

"When you stop searching for the sky, you realize you were always in it."

Zen meditation, or Zazen, is often described as “just sitting.” No visualization, no mantra, no effort—simply being. It is a practice without striving, without a goal, without even the expectation of peace. In its purest form, Zazen is not something to be guided but something to be experienced.

Yet, for many, the simplicity of Zazen can feel elusive. The mind craves structure, and the modern world rarely invites us to sit in stillness. This is where gentle guidance can serve as a bridge—not as a replacement for Zazen, but as a way to ease into presence, to settle the restless monkey mind, and to create space for stillness to arise naturally.

This guide is not a set of rigid instructions but an invitation—offering short, simple meditations designed to cultivate awareness, ease, and fluidity in daily life. Whether you are new to meditation or simply looking for a fresh approach, these practices will help you relax into the present moment with greater clarity and openness.

There is no right way to meditate—only the experience of being with what is. May these reflections serve as stepping stones toward the effortless simplicity of true Zen.

Note. There is a recording of each of these meditations that you can listen to if you prefer. They are each between 2-3 minutes long, so you can fit them in at any time of the day.

1. Breath Like a River - Letting Go and Receiving

(Inspired by the river's flow and the letting go of effort in Chapter 12: The Art of Active Waiting)

Instructions:

1. Sit comfortably, with your spine upright but relaxed. Close your eyes or soften your gaze.
2. Place one hand on your belly and the other on your chest. Without changing your breath, notice its natural rhythm.
3. Imagine your breath as a river flowing through you. Inhale: the river rises gently. Exhale: the river flows downstream, carrying tension away.
4. Let each breath be a wave—no effort, just a continuous movement.
5. When thoughts arise (as they will), acknowledge them like passing leaves floating on the water. Gently return to the feeling of your breath.

Pause and Reflect

How does it feel to breathe without trying to change anything? Can you let life flow in the same way?

2. Dancing with the Present Moment - Embodying Ease and Flow

(Inspired by the monkey's realization that life is to be lived, not analyzed in Chapter 22: The Lightness of Being)

Instructions:

1. Stand or sit, allowing your body to settle into stillness. Take a slow breath in, and exhale gently.
2. Bring awareness to the sensations in your body—warmth, coolness, tingling, or stillness. No judgment. Just notice.
3. If you're standing, gently sway or move as your body wishes. This isn't about dancing perfectly—it's about feeling the aliveness in you.
4. With each breath, soften into the present moment. Feel the ground beneath you, the air around you.
5. Smile, even slightly. There's no need to "get this right." You're simply here. Alive. Breathing. Being.

Pause and Reflect

What does it feel like to meet life as it is? Can you let this ease carry into your day?

3. The Stillness Beneath the Restlessness - Sitting with What Is

(Inspired by Chapter 28: Sovereignty in Consciousness, recognizing the space between thoughts and the vastness of awareness)

Instructions:

1. Find a quiet place to sit. Let your body settle, closing your eyes if it feels comfortable.
2. Bring awareness to your thoughts. Notice them come and go, like clouds drifting across the sky. No need to engage. Just observe.
3. Between one thought and the next, notice the pause—even if it's fleeting. Rest in that space.
4. If your mind feels busy, place your focus gently on your breath or the sensation of your body touching the ground.
5. With time, you may notice a stillness beneath the surface noise—a presence that doesn't come or go.

Pause and Reflect

How often do you identify with your thoughts? What changes when you notice the space beneath them?

Tips for Your Meditation Journey

- **Start small:** Even 2 minutes of stillness can shift your perspective.
- **No need to “empty your mind”:** Thoughts will come. The practice is noticing, not stopping them.
- **Use the stories:** Recall a favorite chapter from *The Monkey and The Way of Zen*. Let its imagery guide you into meditation.
- **Be kind to yourself:** Some days feel spacious; others feel restless. Both are okay.