

MEDITATION: WHAT IS YOUR DEEPEST LONGING?

Find a comfortable way of sitting, and allow yourself to relax and be at ease. With a receptive presence, become aware of the state of your heart. Is there a sense of openness or tightness? Of peace or anxiety? Of contentment or dissatisfaction? As you feel the region of your heart, direct the breath there, so you are gently breathing in and out of your heart.

Begin to Investigate by asking yourself, “What does my heart really long for?” It can also be helpful to ask, “What most matters in this life?” Or, “If I was at the end of my life looking back, what would be most important about how I lived today . . . this moment?” As you pose these questions, sense that you are addressing your inquiry directly to your heart.

After asking, simply listen and be aware of any words, images, or feelings that arise. Try to be patient. It can take some time for the mind to open out of its habitual ideas about life and connect with what is most alive and true. You may need to repeat, several times, some version of “What does my heart long for?” and then listen in receptive silence. As you listen, stay in touch with the feelings in your body, and particularly in your heart.

Your longing will probably express itself differently at different times. You might feel an aspiration to love fully or to feel loved, to know truth, to be peaceful, to be helpful, to be free from fear and suffering. There is no “right” longing. Sometimes you will land on an immediate intention that supports your longing. For example, you might become aware of the yearning to write poetry, to practice yoga, to help others, to engage in social activism. This would be in service of the deep longing to live a creative, compassionate, vital life. What is important is attuning to what is most true for you in this moment.

The sign of arriving at a deep longing is a felt sense of sincerity, innocence, energy, or flow. Some people describe an inner shift that gives them fresh resolution, openness, and ease. If there is no real sense of connecting with what matters, that’s fine. You might sit quietly and open to whatever comes up or choose to continue this exploration at another time.

If you sense you’ve arrived at what feels like a pure and deep longing, allow yourself to let go into its fullness. Feel the very essence of this yearning in your cells as it expresses itself through your whole body and being. Sense the longing as the calling of your awakening heart.

Excerpted from: [*Radical Compassion: Learning to Love Yourself and Your World with the Practice of RAIN.*](#)

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