

A Soft Belly Meditation

Find a comfortable place to sit and settle in there. And bring your attention into this body in which you sit. Feel this body. Let awareness come to the level of sensation in the body. Feel the breath breathing itself in the body. Sensations of body breathing. And gradually focus awareness in the abdomen. Sensations of the breath. Feel the breath breathing itself in the belly. Sensations of breath coming and going. Each inhalation the belly fills. Each exhalation the belly empties. The belly rising and falling with each breath. Sensation arising with each breath. And begin to soften the belly. Softening the belly to receive the sensations of the breath. Softening to receive life in the belly. Breath. Sensation in the belly. Received in a new softness. Softening. Softening the hardness, the holding in the belly that resists the breath, that resists sensation, that resists life. Softening that hardness.

Sensation floating in mercy and awareness. Softening. Let the breath breathe itself in the softness. Letting go of the resistance, of the fear, of the holding of hard belly. Letting go of the grief and distrust. Meeting them with mercy. With loving kindness in soft belly. Letting go. Letting go of the hardness, breathing it out. Letting in the mercy, the patience, the kindness, with each inhalation. Soft belly. Merciful belly. Have mercy on you. Softening to the pain. Softening the holding. Breathing it out. Breathing in mercy. Breathing in healing. In soft belly. In merciful belly. Softening. Letting go of years of posturing and hiding. So much holding in the belly. So much fear. So much grief. Softening. Levels and levels of letting go. Levels and levels of softening. Levels and levels of letting go. Levels and levels of healing. Softening the muscles. Softening the flesh. Softening the holding that resists, that limits life so. The armoring of the heart is discovered in the hardness of the belly. Meet this pain with mercy, not fear. Meet this grief in softness. In loving kindness. In soft belly, we have room for it all. Room to be born at last. Room to heal, to be. Room even to die in soft belly. All the fear, all the anger, all the distrust held so long in the belly. Have mercy on you. Let it go. Let it just be. Gently, in the softness. Met by mercy and awareness moment to moment. Breath to breath. Softening. Softening.

Even a single thought can tighten the belly, can reestablish separation and fear. Let thoughts come. Let thoughts go in soft belly. Expectation, doubt, confusion, harden the belly. Soften.

Thoughts arise uninvited. Let them float like bubbles in the vast spaciousness of soft belly. Moment to moment letting go. Moment to moment being in soft belly. In merciful belly. Softening. Making room for the heart. For mercy and compassion in the body, in the mind-for soft belly.

Nothing to hold to. Just the vast spaciousness. Just the mercy. Just the letting go of soft belly. In soft belly we have room for our pain and room for our healing. Soften. Letting go of the holding, of the mercilessness. Letting the universe be our body. Vast spaciousness of soft belly. There's room for it all. There's room for it all. Let it all float in soft belly. Breathing in the mercy. Breathing out the holding. Levels and levels of being in soft belly. Even if some hardness is discovered in the midst of this softness, no resistance. No hardening to the hardness. Soften. Rest in being. Let the hardness float in the softness. Nothing to change, no urgency in soft belly. Just trusting the process. Just being. Let the sound of these words pass right through you. No holding anywhere. Even to understanding. No grasping at more. No tightening. Just a gentle letting go of the pain moment to moment. Letting it float in soft belly. Letting the spaciousness of being receive it all in mercy. In loving kindness. Let the sound of these words pass right through you. Let all that arises pass through the spaciousness of soft belly, touched by mercy and awareness. Floating in the spaciousness of being. And gently let your eyes open. Let them open now. And as your eyes open, notice at what point the belly tightens once again. Even trying to understand can tighten the belly. Being anything but our own great nature tightens us, removes us from the joy of our essential nature. Fills us with mind and confusion tightening the body. Limiting the senses. Soften with the eyes wide open to the world. Notice at what point that someoneness reasserts itself and you feel a need to protect. Send mercy. Send a blessing to that someoneness so in pain. Soften to it. Let it float in who you really are. Softening to the pain we all share. And the legacy of healing exposed in this deep softness.

*From *Embracing the Beloved* by Stephen and Ondrea Levine*