

Linda Clair
Four-and-a-half-day Meditation Retreat
Cold Ash Retreat Centre, Newbury, UK
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Transcription from Audio Recordings

File 3a – Friday morning guided meditation

So take a few deep breaths into the belly. You're here, you're still here. And I'll whatever I can to keep you here. We're almost halfway through. So today, just take it moment by moment, sit by sit. Try not to expect anything. You really don't know how it's going to be in the next moment. So today, try and be as stable as possible.

Take your attention to the top of your head and feel the sensation on the top of your head, however it feels. There's no right or wrong. There's no good or bad – well, I should say good as opposed to bad. Nothing is opposed to anything. This is a place where there are no opposites. Feel the sensation of your eyelids on your eyes. And keep breathing into the belly, grounding yourself in the body, using the sensations. You can never be too grounded. Feel your mouth, your lips. Feel your tongue touching your palate, your jaw, your chin. This is about using the sensations in your body in a different way. We think they're there to seek pleasure, to feel pleasure, and avoid pain, but this is using the sensations to simply be in the body.

Feel your shoulders. Really feel them, in your shoulders, however it feels. Go to your left shoulder and go down your arm to your left elbow and feel your elbow. It's never the same. Nothing is ever the same. Then go down to your left hand and feel your hand. And feel your thumb, your first finger, second finger, third finger and your fourth finger. Feel your whole left arm. Then take your attention to your right shoulder and feel your shoulder. Go down your arm to your right elbow, then down to your right hand and feel our hand. Simply feel it. It doesn't need to mean anything. Feel your thumb and each finger. Feel both arms and both hands.

Then take your attention to your chest, and as you breathe in and out through the nose, feel the chest gently rising and falling as your body is breathing. Your body is your doorway. Take your attention down to your abdomen and feel your abdomen rising and falling with the breath. Feel your thighs, your knees, your left foot, your right foot. Feel your spine from the top of your spine down your back to the bottom of the spine. So every now and again just check the spine. You might need to gently straighten it. Feel your whole body.

You're here now, nowhere else. You don't need to be thinking about anything. But each time you realise you have been thinking – and when do that, when you realise that, you're actually in your body – really confirm that you're in your body by coming back to the breath in the abdomen,.

So that's the practice. Of course a lot happens within that basic structure. And your mind will do anything it can to try and stop you doing this. So don't fight it, sit with it. You have to prove that you'll keep sitting, whatever. And at times it is a fascinating thing to do, to see who you *think* you are, what thinking actually is, and all it is is a repetition of your personal life experiences going round and round in circles.

So this is your chance to break out of that. But of course thinking is a very deeply, deeply ingrained habit. We've been encouraged to think from when we were very, very young. So what I'm saying is that it is possible to be free in this lifetime while you're in this body. And you have what you need – you *all* have what you need – your body. You don't know how long you have this body for. But to truly realise that, "I am not just this body," while you are still in this body is the most amazing thing you can do with your life. But of course you can see why so few people do this.

But this, right now, is part of your enlightenment, a huge part of it, because enlightenment is the realisation of everything, including how you came to be in this state. And that is how you can truly help others to be free, to be real, to be authentic.

So to live in a body without the fear of death of this body is an amazing thing. It changes everything, every little movement, to live without fear. But to become free from your fear you need to go deeply into the source of your fear, and that lies in your body.

So sit and watch and feel – feel the sensations, whatever they are. Take it moment by moment. Before you know it, this retreat will be over, this precious time will be gone.