

AFFECTIONATE BREATHING

- Please find a quiet, comfortable place to sit. Position yourself in a way that your bones are supporting the muscles and you don't need any effort to remain in one position for the whole exercise. To do this, try keeping your back straight and gently supported, with your shoulder blades slightly dropped and your chin gently tucked toward your chest.
- Take 3 slow easy deep breaths to relax and let go of whatever burdens you're carrying. Then let your eyelids gently close, or partially close, which ever makes you more comfortable. If you wish, put your hand over your heart, or wherever it is comforting for you, to remind yourself that you are bringing not only attention, but *kind* attention, to your experience and to yourself.
- Now finding your breath, wherever you can feel it most easily. Perhaps at the tip of the nose, the belly, or perhaps as a gentle movement of your whole body? Letting yourself notice the simple sensation of breathing. Just feeling your breath for a while.
- Your mind will naturally wander away from the sensation of the breath every few seconds. Don't worry about how often your mind wanders. Gently returning to the feeling of your breathing when you notice that your mind has wandered, like escorting a puppy or a child gone astray.
- See if you can *incline* toward your breathing as you might incline toward a child or a beloved pet, with curiosity and tenderness.
- Letting your body *breathe you*. There is nothing you need to do.
- Noticing how your breath nourishes your body even when you're not paying any attention to it.
- Now feeling your *whole* body breathe, gently moving with the rising and falling of the breath, like the movement of the sea.
- Or, if you like, allowing your body to be rocked by your breath, back and forth, like a baby being soothed and caressed.
- Giving yourself over to your breath, letting yourself *become* your breath, gently rocked and soothed, back and forth.
- Now, take a moment and savor the stillness of your body.
- And slowly and gently open your eyes.