

5. Rest in the openness of mind.

The slogan **Rest in the openness of mind** describes a beautiful meditation practice and a beautiful feeling for life. It is a good description of Zen meditation practice, which I always think of as meditation beyond meditation. Not meditating on anything at all or trying to focus the mind or trying to calm the mind or do anything else. Zazen—Zen meditation—is, as one master says, “think not-thinking.” It’s resting in the openness of mind. Sometimes it’s called not knowing. Why would we have to know everything all the time? Why do we have to be so knowledgeable, so smart, so in control? We don’t! There’s no need to figure everything out. We can just be alive. We can breathe in and breathe out and let go and just trust our life, trust our body. Our body and our life know what to do. The problem is to let them do it, to relax and let them guide us. Of course life is complicated and we have many things to work out in our material and psychological lives. But also we can find a place of refuge sometimes—in our own life, in our own breath, in our own presence. This seems like a very good idea, to have the confidence that that place of refuge exists and that it exists in us. We don’t have to search for a powerful guru or a major meditation center or find the best book or method. We can just return right now to ourselves. To our actual concrete presence, in the body, in the breath, in the mind and heart. If we had the confidence that this were possible at any moment, then we would feel much more at ease with our lives and it would be easier and happier to take care of all of our complicated problems. We could do it with far less anxiety and stress. We would trust our life. This slogan points to that trust. Practicing it in meditation or at any time during the day can be quite powerful. **Rest in the openness of mind.** Getting used to this phrase and its meaning so that it can be an inspiration for you, so that you can bring it up at any time during the day, is a powerful advantage.

Maybe the easiest way to do this is also the simplest way: just stop and take a breath. One breath, maybe two or three. You could do this now. Take a breath and return to the openness of mind. Breathing in, breathing out, and in the feeling of the breath noticing whatever is there and letting go of it, easily, gently. Even if you are bored with yourself, even if you have some disturbing things going on in your life that produce disturbing thoughts and feelings in you, it is still possible in this precise moment (even now, as you are reading) to notice breathing, notice the body, notice the feeling of being present in this moment of time. This will relax you. This is what it feels like to **Rest in the openness of mind.**