

Practice: I Love You, I Love You

When you sit in meditation, your breathing naturally slows. Quietly focusing your attention on your breathing is a way of slowing down and settling into a deep meditative awareness of oneness with God.

Breathing out, be quietly aware of breathing out. Breathing in, be quietly aware of breathing in. Each time you realise you have drifted off into thoughts, memories, sensations, and other ego-based modes of being, simply return to your breathing as your anchoring place in present-moment attentiveness.

Your efforts in following the path of breath awareness might be enhanced by repeating a word or phrase with each breath. In this exercise I invite you to pair breath awareness with the phrase "I love you."

As you inhale, be aware of God's silent I love you in which God's sustaining love is pouring itself out and giving itself to you as the gift and miracle of your very life.

As you exhale, exhale yourself, that is, give yourself in a whispered I love you that incarnates the gift of yourself to God, who with your next inhalation is being poured out and given to you as the gift and miracle of your very life.

Allowing a few moments of quiet

If feelings of sadness come welling up within you as you sit in meditation, let your next inhalation be your way of receiving into yourself the presence of God, loving you through and through in the midst of your sadness.

As you exhale, let your exhalation be your way of giving yourself in love, sadness and all, to the infinite love that with your next inhalation is giving itself to you whole and complete in the midst of your sadness.

Allowing a few moments of quiet

So too with bodily pain, with feelings of fear and confusion, of loneliness or quiet joy and amazement that may rise and fall within you as you sit in this meditation. Whatever it is that may be occurring within you, let each inhalation be your way of receiving into yourself the infinite love that is sustaining you and loving you through and through in the midst of all that arises and falls away within you....

Let each exhalation be your way of giving yourself in love to the love that loves you through and through in all that is arising and falling away within you whatever that might be. Sit this way with all your heart, knowing and trusting that in this reciprocity of love your destiny in love is being fulfilled.

Allowing a few moments of quiet

And bringing our meditation time to an end.....we return gently to the space in which we are now, wherever that is.....opening our eyes when we are ready and seeing our surroundings with love.

You can practice this “I love you” prayer in little passing moments as you go through your day. You can practice it as you awaken in the middle of the night, letting love be your way of falling back to sleep. It is by way of this prayer that you can learn from God that love alone has the authority to name who you really are and are called to be in the midst of all that life might send your way, right up to the moment of your death and beyond.

Adapted from James Finley, *Christian Meditation: Experiencing the Presence of God* (HarperSanFrancisco: 2004), 30, 242-244.