



A Gratitude Practice for the Body

By Natasha Sagalovsky

Breath.

Doorway to depth.

Exquisite coming and going.

Lover's kiss,

healer's wish.

Lay on your back, perhaps on a rolled bolster or blanket to open the spine, and for 5-10 minutes lay quietly with your breath. Feel the movement of your ribs as you breathe, all the way to the bottomest ribs. Visualize and expand the whole of your lungs, experimenting with breathing into their various zones, sides, and areas.



Now practice lengthening your breath to a 5:5:5:0 count. This means: Inhale for 5, Hold the breath in for a count of 5, exhale for a count of 5, pause for a moment and begin the cycle again.

As you do this, the sound of your heartbeat will become more apparent to you. You will be able to hear your breath, and hear your heartbeat. After you've done this for a few rounds, let go of the counted breath and resume natural breathing.

Attune to the heartbeat now, listen to it deeply, try to see if you can travel

down into the center of the heart and hear its beating from the inside. Listen to your heartbeat, from its very center, in the center of your heart. Do this for 2-5 minutes, listening to the heart from its very heart inside.

Realize that the center of your heart is a mysterious place. What is making this heart beat? What is holding on to you, beating your heart, breathing your breath?

This heart, and its beating, these lungs, and their breathing, have been given to YOU. Not to anyone else, to YOU! And all the secrets your heart and breath hold, are the secrets between you and Life. How precious! Every moment of our lives is a precious gift, as are our heart beats and each breath. A very mysterious gift, for us to make of it what we choose.

Feel now into the rest of your organs, spending some time in each one. Feel into the liver, what does it feel like? This is YOUR liver! All yours! Breathe into it and let it know you are grateful for its work. Breathe into your kidneys now, trying to feel their shapes and bodies from the inside, can you feel? Can you breathe into them and get them to expand? Appreciate from the inside their beauty, dedication and work. Feel into your spleen, your stomach, your intestines in turn, perhaps attempting to travel in and through your intestines, tracing their pathways, clearing with your awareness any stuck energy, sending love and appreciation through every curve; appreciating the work and effort your body makes to support you, no matter how you treat it, to keep you going.

Begin traveling now through the bones, trace their edges, pathways and curves along your body. Travel to your toes and heel, and hands and finger, along the curves of the pelvis, up the spine vertebra by vertebra, accounting for each vertebral disk, up to the collarbones, the shoulder-blades, the arms. Then to the skull and jaw. Feel and appreciate the vitality and beauty of YOUR VERY OWN BONES. Yours. No one else's.

Breathe, appreciate, enjoy.

Close your gratitude practice with 5-10 long slow breaths once more, appreciating the whole system, as a whole, and thanking Life for this precious body, this precious heartbeat, this precious breath you have been given.

Lots of Love,

Natasha



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