



Olive Meditation (Judittas' original)

Before we begin you would need two or three marinated Olives per person

In a small cup or bowl next to you

This is an exercise in which we shall become aware of attention itself.

Upon opening to this exercise, if you might want to lower your gaze or close your eyes for a few seconds, feel free to do what feels right to you. Stay curious and open to the inner sensations of your mind and body as your guides for today's exercise.

(ring)

Let's begin by just coming here, recollecting ourselves, gathering our attention kindly, from all the information we have been walking through these last hours, from the outside noise, from all the doing, the must have, the worry or future plans that have been carried by us till this moment. Very necessary information it feels, and yet at times a bit too much.

I invite us to make some space for a new learning experience, just a few moments where we can reconnect with the present, being here, just this, moment after moment, with curiosity and kindness, maybe even playful awareness, which is the seed practice of Mindfulness.

Let's take one big inhalation, and one long and slow exhalation, where you let go of any tension and distraction, and give yourself permission to be here and now, taking care of yourself, and becoming aware of your body and your thoughts. (pause)





Kindly then bring your attention to your posture as it is now, no need to change or fix it. First we just notice, meet it as it is, then we can ask ourselves if this is a comfortable posture to maintain for a few minutes of practice. You might notice how the body is reacting, as an answer, does it want to move, or stay put, are you getting restless or quiet? If needed, slowly follow its re-arranging of itself.

Just notice your sitting position or your standing, and become aware of the simple points of contact with feet on the floor, your connection to the earth, your hips on the chair or the cushion. Does it feel Solid or hesitant, steady or shaky, soft or hard? Remembering we accept the findings, whatever they may be, letting judgement rest for this inquiry. Just like an artist looks at his chosen model to draw, gathering information with no need to correct. All is well, in this tiny moment.

We're practicing this ability to come back to our senses, to find a small island of rest.

Another beneficial place where we can focus our attention and help us to come back to the here and now, are the points of contact in our hands; maybe lying in your lap or on your thighs, maybe hanging beside your body. Notice the energy in your hands, whether they have an energy of heat cold or neutral, maybe you can sense their energy that comes from within, or sense the air or cloth that touches them from the outside.

You might sense some tiny burden coming off your shoulders, tickling down from the right shoulder to the right arm, to the elbow, and then all the way down to your hand, the palm, every finger and finger. Maybe you can maybe you can't, no problem, maybe this time you cannot and next time it will be easy.





Explore how this image meets you: following this move like ice melting from the shoulder to the arm, ice to water, and then water to gas on the way to the hands, and finally gas to air through the fingertips. Would you like to try this along your left shoulder - arm- elbow and hand. (pause)

Anywhere along this invitation, to gather your attention, your breath might be expanding slowly, or a sigh may appear, these could be signs of your body relaxing a bit, happy to be visited by your kind gentle awareness. Your inner sensations are our guides today.

Now let's bring our awareness to the Olives we brought with us today, choose just one,

Hold it in the palm of your hand, or between your finger and thumb. Allow yourself to take some time to really focus on it, gaze at the olive as if you have never seen one before, as if a totally new experience.

See if you can play with this way of observing, maybe as if you have arrived to this world from a far away star. Give it your care and attention, curious as to what on earth is this round green piece.

Let your eyes explore every part of it, examining the high lights where the light shines, the darker shades, the colour changes, the ridges, any asymetrics or unique features. Is it one colour or are there more colours?

Is it smooth or with signs on its skin?

Is it round or does it have straight lines, Is it a ball shape or more like a long oblong shape... Does it have any straight line, or can you sense any sharp point at all?

(pause)





Let us move now to sensing the Olive with touch, turning the olive between our fingers. Bringing awareness to the quality of softness or hardness, flexible or rigid... if you might hear judgement sentences coming up, like this is too soft or too hard, too wet or too sticky, sentences that are just normal of course, - just for now ask yourself if you can lay these down just for a few seconds, for this short curious exploration, practicing a slightly different way of being.

You might note whether it is wet or dry without adding any value or emotions to this or that, no right or wrong, just a wet dark green chubby ball. You might sense it to be juicy under its skin, it might leave marks on your hands skin and see if you can invite wonder to these. Noticing even your aversion or desire to this, curious gentle awareness, without acting it out.

Moving to smell this green or black ball, closer to your nose. With each inhalation, take in any smell, aroma or fragrance that may arise. This might bring a smile to your face, or another movement of the nostrils, note and accept that as well. As you do this notice anything interesting that might be happening in your mouth palate, throat or stomach even.

Now slowly bring the olive to your lips. Noticing how your hand and arm know exactly how to and where to position it. Notice if you want to immediately bite into it, or just to put the whole olive into your mouth. See if you can notice it without actually doing it. For some of us that love olives it might be a challenge, but I do recommend holding just a bit more patience, to cultivate these observation skills. I believe you shall be rewarded greatly for this by the end.

Gently take a bite off the plump olive, so that a nice piece will land into your mouth, without going on to chew. Just this, noticing the sensation of this piece in your mouth, just for a split of a second, and then- as you prepare to chew the olive, see how the mouth moves it about to where it needs to be for the act of chewing. Noticing the bare sensations of taste, texture, Juice, pulp, skin, as it might appear in waves in your mouth. Noting the changes over time, moment by moment.





And then, when you feel ready to swallow, (I know, you might have swallowed (smile) but if you haven't) see if you can first detect the intention to swallow as it comes up in body or mind awareness. If you are already after swallowing this first Olive, you might like to do it another time with a second olive, and this time you might be able to notice the intention arriving, and give the process of swallowing your kind curious attention, moving down from the mouth to your throat and down into your stomach. It is your decision.

(breath)

And now, as a truly final direction, I shall ask you to pause a minute and just sense how your body, as a whole, is feeling- after you have completed this exercise. Simple observations such as: Do you have a smile on your face, or a frown, is your breath slower or faster, is there any satisfaction or confusion, how is your posture, maybe some relaxation or joy can be noticed?

(pause)

Again all is well even if you feel you missed something, you can try it again later if you want, yet do give yourself a big compliment for following as much as you have, for sticking with us in this funny weird exercise. Appreciated. In a while you'll understand why I have invited you to this game.

Thank you very much for your playfulness. Thank you for your practice.

(ring)

You might like to try this when eating in other situations, even as a secret.

