

Try Gatha: A Gentle Practice for Everyday Mindfulness

Some of us have a hard time sitting still—and that's okay. Stillness isn't the only way to meditate. There are practices that move with us, that breathe with us, that meet us in the rhythm of daily life.

One of my favorite ways to cultivate mindfulness throughout the day—especially when sitting just isn't working—is through **Gatha meditation**.

Gatha (pronounced *gah-tah*) is a beautiful, poetic practice of silently reciting short verses while engaging in everyday activities. It's a gentle way to bring your awareness back to the present moment, and it offers a powerful combination of mindfulness, gratitude, and intention.

What is a Gatha?

A **Gatha** is a short, intentional verse or poem—often written in a rhythm that pairs with your breath. You can recite a Gatha silently while walking, drinking tea, brushing your teeth, or even having a conversation. It helps anchor your attention and transform routine moments into meaningful ones.

This is not about trying to *achieve* anything. It's about gently arriving in your life, again and again, with presence.

How to Practice Gatha Meditation

Here's a simple way to begin:

1. Choose a Gatha

Start by selecting a verse that resonates with you. There are traditional Gathas (I've included a few below), or you can create your own based on your personal experiences or values. Choose something simple that matches the rhythm of your breath.

2. Pause and Center

Before you begin the activity—whether it's walking, washing, or simply breathing—pause. Take a few deep breaths. Feel your body. Ground yourself in this moment.

3. Recite Silently

As you engage in the activity, recite the Gatha silently in your mind. Match it to your in-breath and out-breath. Let the words guide your awareness gently back to your experience.

4. Notice What's Here

Pay attention to your senses. The warmth of water on your hands. The sound of your footsteps. The taste of your tea. Allow the Gatha to heighten your presence, not distract from it.

5. Let Gratitude Arise Naturally

Many Gathas invite a sense of appreciation—for your body, for the elements, for the task at hand. You don't have to force gratitude. Just notice if it gently emerges as you stay present.

6. Repeat Throughout Your Day

You don't need to wait for the "right moment." Any time you find yourself in a repetitive or routine activity, you can bring a Gatha to mind. Over time, this becomes a thread of mindfulness woven through your day.

A Few Example Gathas

Here are two that I return to often:

Walking Gatha

In-breath: I have arrived

Out-breath: I am home

In-breath: In the here

Out-breath: In the now

In-breath: I am solid

Out-breath: I am free

In-breath: In the ultimate

Out-breath: I dwell

This Gatha reminds me that each step can be a return to myself. I don't have to rush. I'm already home.

Talking on the Telephone

In-breath: Words can travel

Out-breath: Thousands of miles

In-breath: May my words

Out-breath: Create understanding and love

In-breath: May they be

Out-breath: As beautiful as gems

In-breath: May they be

Out-breath: As lovely as flowers

Even something as seemingly mundane as a phone call becomes an opportunity for presence and kindness.

Create Your Own

Feel free to write Gathas that speak directly to your life. Here's a simple format you can try:

- Choose a daily activity
- Ask yourself: What intention or awareness would I like to bring to this?
- Write a few lines that match your breath—something you can return to in the moment

There's no right or wrong way. Just words, presence, and breath.

The Practice is the Presence

You don't need to "get it right." You just need to begin. Whether you're moving through a joyful season or a painful one, Gatha meditation offers a soft, steady way to come back to now. To find your feet. To return to your breath. To re-enter your life with gentleness.

Questions about Meditation and Mindfulness?

Join us in Bob Martin's Mindfulness Meet-up, a free, interactive Q&A session via Zoom with Bob Martin, dedicated to helping you begin your mindfulness journey with ease and confidence.

Session happens every first Tuesday of the month at 7PM Eastern (NY).

Register now at <https://register.awiseandhappy.com/bob-martins-mindfulness-meetup>

May your day be full of small moments of presence—and may Gathas help you meet each one with grace.

With care,
Bob