

## HAND ON HEART

### GUIDED MEDITATION FOR MANAGING ANGER

*This meditation might feel strange and artificial at the beginning because it is so unfamiliar. The gist of the meditation is holding a hand on your heart when you're angry in an attempt to feel the anger and contain it. We're used to losing contact with our heart when we feel anger, as if we have become the anger. But we still have a heart.*

*It's as if we have two stations inside ourselves: One where we feel our anger; the other where we can just be in our hearts with gentleness and tenderness. To feel all of it, we need to take some time alone in a comfortable place. This meditation differs from the others as it asks us to infuse ourselves with tenderness by making physical contact between our hand and our heart. This contrast of tenderness mixed with anger grounds and comforts many of us who don't want to leave our hearts completely when we get angry.*

Start by appreciating that you're taking this time to neutralize the destructive impact of your own aggression which includes anger-related feelings such as: irritation, impatience, annoyance, sarcasm, rage, fury. Gently place your hand on your heart as a reminder that you want to reach this part of your purity as soon as it naturally can occur. It doesn't matter that at this moment you feel aggressive. Doing this integrative practice is one of the purest intentions and prayers that a person can have.

Breathe and feel the aggression, as it is, in your body right now. Do not attempt to change it in any way. It will move on its own when it's ready. Simply suggest to yourself to

feel your muscles, as they are, starting with a scan of your stomach, chest, legs, and jaw. Pause. Notice where the resistance is most apparent in your body. Keep reminding yourself that you're in a safe place, and now is the time to let your anger be as it is. This is a place where you are not going to hurt anyone, including yourself. If you need to flash to scenes of what made you angry, go ahead. If you want to express a few words of direct anger, support it.

Keep breathing and telling yourself that it's okay to be exactly as aggressive as you are. Let yourself continue to be as aggressive as possible. The more okay you make it, the freer you can become. From time to time, return your awareness to the hand on your heart to help you recall your intention to allow anger to support the ultimate return to the purity of the heart.

For a period of time, let yourself feel the anger, and try to drop any content or thought in your mind. It is helpful to recognize your anger without a story. Encourage yourself to stay with it, to breathe and feel the subtlety of the contractions in your body. You will likely notice at a spontaneous moment, without effort, that you feel more relaxed, peaceful or strong. Don't make it a goal; simply notice how containing this vital alive energy naturally transforms itself. If the aggression doesn't change in any noticeable way, recognize that you have heightened your own awareness of these sensations, and at the very least you're practicing the art of tolerance. When you feel ready, end the meditation by feeling the hand on your heart. Feel the sincerity of your intention and recognize you have just participated in an act of peace.