

Heart: A Meditation

Richard Schwartz: I want to invite you to start by taking a couple deep breaths. Then shift your focus to your heart and your body and your chest, however you experience it. It doesn't have to be your physical heart, but it can be. So it's however you experience your heart inside.

Then as you focus on it, I'm going to invite you to get to know different qualities of your heart and see what kind of condition it's in.

And the first thing I'd invite you to notice is, how open is your heart versus closed?

How tender is it versus crusted over or calloused?

Is it congested or can energy flow through it fluidly?

And how much space is there around it? Does it feel really compacted or contracted, or is there a lot of space?

And as you do this exploration, you might find that different places in your heart are different in those qualities. So maybe the front is closed and the back is open or vice versa, or the top is tender and the bottom is tough. Maybe energy can flow through some places in your heart, but not others. Maybe it feels contracted, compacted in some places and not others.

Wherever you find that it's closed or contracted, calloused, that means that there's some kind of protector there. And if you'd like to, you can take a second to get to know those protectors, to just see if you can get curious about what they're afraid of if they didn't do this to your heart.

What are they afraid of if they really let your heart open and be very tender?

If they answered that question, you probably learned about parts of you that are very vulnerable in your heart or around your heart. Now, you don't have to go to those parts right now, but just get to know them from the protector's point of view.

And then also let these protectors know you get how hard they've been working to protect that vulnerability. And just see how they react to your appreciation for that.

And you can reassure them that we're not asking for them to change anything about what they've been doing or expect them to change. We're just trying to get to know their fears, and we want to show them a lot of appreciation.

But also let them know that if at some point they would let you go to those vulnerable parts and let you heal them, then they'd be able to relax, and your heart would be a lot more

open. They may react by saying they don't believe that that kind of healing is even possible. That's why they have to guard your heart this way all the time. But just let them know that it is possible, but there's no pressure to do it.

And then once all this work with the protectors of your heart is done, you can shift your focus back outside. Before you leave though, be sure to thank them for letting you know all this and for how hard they've worked to keep your heart safe.