

The Revolutionary Love Learning Hub

“How is breathing an act of revolutionary love?”

Breathe Transcript

Recording by Valarie Kaur, 2021

I want to spend a moment thinking about the literal act of breathing. When we breathe in, we're giving our body what it needs. When we exhale, we send out what we no longer need. When we pay attention to the in and out, the let it come and let it go, when we pay attention to that kind of rhythm, our minds are called to the present moment, not the past, not the future. Just here and now. Let it come. Let it go. Breathing creates the space and time to be present, present to emotion, present to sensation, present to surroundings, present to one another, present to ourselves.

What makes breathing like this an act of revolutionary love, right, a political act? Well, for those of us who live in bodies that are denigrated by society, breathing like this is a political intervention. So many of us—I'm thinking of people of color, women of color, queer people, trans people, disabled people. So many of us live in a world that does not value our bodies, value our lives, a world that makes it hard for us to breathe, a world that denies us the resources to be able to care for ourselves, to love ourselves. *I can't breathe*. Think about all the forces of injustice in this country that make it so difficult, literally and figuratively, for us to live viable lives or even to feel like we are worthy of breathing, worthy of love.

So. Choosing to love yourself. For me, choosing to love myself by letting breath in every day. Taking the time to breathe both literally and metaphorically, it is a way for me to assert that my body is worthy and beloved, that loving my body, loving our bodies, is the first and primal act of loving ourselves. This is how breathing becomes an act of revolutionary love.