



I was speaking at an annual retreat event, and over the course of 3 days in a beautiful lakeside setting we had conversations that turned inward to reflect on the nature of beliefs.

On the last day one of the participants, a lean lady of many years with a lived in and delicate face said, "I hope I didn't offend you with questions I asked on the first night."

**I responded easily. "I don't get offended," I said, "I can listen to anything."**

In fact I'm interested. In my early days, I thought it was more important to be heard. But at some point, I realized that being heard is really being

listened to. In order to create the space for "listening" you may have to cultivate a state of standing still so you *can* listen first:

**With a spacious mind, an open heart, a flexible body, and a generous spirit.**

**A spacious mind** has room to listen to new information, ideas, and approaches to thorny problems. It's not so filled up with the old ways or even the tried and true ways, where you can't be surprised or break through into new territories. Questions engage the mind to think outside your box of answers. Listen to your spacious mind.

**An open heart** is unconditional. Precedent does not bind it. It connects and includes opposing forces, and allows for dialogue and discussion. It shows up as a beneficial presence that leaves healing in its wake. Listen to your open heart.

**A flexible body** knows how to balance stance and energy, movement and stillness. It dances with what shows up, and is not thrown off balance by rigid responses. It breathes deeply with awareness to see things as they are. It knows when you are full, tired, energetic, hungry, distracted or pressured. It knows when you are holding your breath, and reminds you to breathe. Breathe deeply. Listen to your flexible body.

**A generous spirit** understands that beliefs are systems of thought created to guide you through your life. It questions beliefs that no longer serve you or may limit your fulfillment. A generous spirit can help wash away the stories and excuses that prevent listening. Hold your beliefs lightly, as if they rested in your hands with palms turned upward. In this way they can be examined. Listen to your generous spirit.

This week notice when you stop listening. Instead be present with your mind, heart, body and spirit. Take the stance that you can listen to anything. Declare that *you* are listening, and carefully consider before you respond.

Let this be a week of listening.

**My love goes with you as you work with this Uplifting Moment.**