

# 2001-09-27: Introduction to Meditation (Week2)

Wed, 6/17 12:36PM • 1:27:48

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

body, meditation, breath, sensation, breathing, mindfulness, happening, people, thoughts, feeling, experience, meditate, mind, physical sensation, awareness, notice, bit, feel, stay, develop

## SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

And might be a good time to take any questions or comments. Some of you were here last week and perhaps started a daily meditation practice starting on the breath. And if you have any questions or comments about how it went, yes,

constrictions around it, and I can't stand

it. So I started altering my breath. Watching I'm actually like,

tight here and trying to take deeper breaths and are you supposed to know you're just supposed to observe and watch right? My

breath is so shallow.

It's almost like somebody

could well be the, the basic instructions in mindfulness practices, just to watch just be present for it. Feel feel it as it is. sense if be present for it. But don't try to alternate or And also notice any tendency you have of judging it. This is, you know, I'm in California and California is supposed to have a long deep breath. And, and it's very important to notice these judgments we have, because they really extra, the extra burden, we add on top of our experience and experiences a lot easier to deal with. If we don't judge it. And something as innocent as our breathing and meditation. You don't have to judge that. So notice that tendency to judge and try not to believe the judging voice. Try to put it aside and not get caught up in it. And rather, focus on just keep your breath. Just be with your breath as it is. If

it's uncomfortable, that's okay. It doesn't have to be comfortable. And yeah, it's a it's a very Many of us have a strong tendency of manipulating our life. Constantly. We constantly live in constantly in reaction to things, whether we like them or don't like them. We were manipulating, kind of fixing things or trying to run away from things or trying to judge things. And, and often that activity happens in relationship to our self identity, how we like to see ourselves. So in California, so cool to have shallow breath. So suddenly, you're comparing yourself to others. And that activity of constant constant manipulation, anxious manipulation, and especially doing so in relationship to the self is, is unnecessary. And if you're using that tendency to manipulate in order to fix the problem, you're just compounding it. So where we tried to be mindful to step outside of the whole system outside of the whole game, Self building, self identity, manipulation, adjusting, you know, running away from things holding on to things, we try to step outside of the whole system, and then just simply watch it. So then watching soap is very powerful because as one popular expression these days, it's a form of stepping outside the box. So, you know, I say and some people are so sick of that term, but the idea of stepping outside of the boxes is you can, by stepping outside of the normal patterns of thought and patterns of activity. You can see your situation much more clearly come up with some new idea. So just watching is very, very radical.

Other questions before we start today

Yes, it wasn't

quite like that.

Fear, if you tend to be really sleepy all the time to

meditate really,

as best you can

attached to it.

That's a good question. If you notice that you're always sleepy, then you need to do some investigation about that and look at your life in a wider way. And it's possible that you have Sleep, sleep deficit, in which case maybe what you need is to go to sleep earlier and get up later. Taking that much more than you need to meditate. If you feel like you get enough rest in your life, enough sleep and the only time That sleep visits you is when you meditate. Every time you sit down to meditate, you find yourself falling asleep, then there's a number of things to do. One is to simply, it's very important when you sit down to meditate, that you do so with some commitment, so that no matter what happens during you're sitting within reason, if your house is burning down, you should get up. But within reason, that for that period of time that you've said, you're going to sit and meditate, that you're

going to actually sit there and be present for whatever arises and not have anything convinced you to break that period of meditation. So suddenly, you hear the telephone rang. And, you know, you hear someone talking into your message machine and you really would like to talk to that, that person, but you're committed to staying there and being present. You're sitting in meditation and your voice says, this is the right time of year to clean the garage and needs to be right now. Or maybe I should have a snack, you know, or maybe should take a nap. Once you sit down to meditate, it's really helpful for the process the spiritual process of mindfulness to stay committed to that period. So if you're sleepy, then the basic thing we do is and bring mindfulness to the sleepiness. So you can let go of the breath, paying attention to the breath, and take the same kind of focus you had on the breath, and bring it to bear on the physical sensations of sleepiness in the body. What does it feel like? There's all these sensations in the body, and you can investigate them. And then investigation will either wake you up or not. And if not, that's fine you. The trick in mindfulness is to bring your best mindfulness to bear and what's happening. Knowing that when you're sleepy, is not going to be so good the effort, but it's the best effort you can muster. So just do your best instead. In there, there are, there are some pragmatic things you can do. You can sit up straighter, you can open your eyes. Sometimes having your eyes open maybe 45 degrees to the ground, looking down, kind of not focusing on anything, can bring some more energy into the system and keep you alert. Sometimes when I'm sleeping before I'm going to meditate, I'll go and wash my face with cold water. And I'm really sleepy, or wash my face, my neck, my hands and my feet. And, and that sense kind of rouses me a little bit.

If sleepiness persists only during meditation time and the rest of the day you're quite awake, then it's possible that one of the things you need to look at is there. Is there any

Is there something that you're not paying attention to because sometimes Sleeping is a form of self protection or some kind of protection where some deep memory or extremely strong unresolved feelings are beginning to surface because in meditation, the surface mind the surface chatter of the mind that kind of keeps the undercurrents of our mind kind of at bay kind of quiets down to the surface chatter quiets down, it gives a chance for the deeper material to finally surface. And sometimes years of repressed material can bubble up in meditation. And people often think well, I feel more agitated because you know they're started meditating because it must be doing it wrong. And it might not be the case at all. It's actually a great thing to begin allowing this deeper inner stuff to surface. And but sometimes the psyche is not ready for it, and so protects itself by falling asleep. And so either you trust that process is trust the body that it's okay to fall asleep in the body will know when to wake up or you can begin looking in the corners of your experience. Is there something here you're not attending to something which wants to be expressed some feeling some memory or something.

So those are some things.

Maybe the people on the floor could just kind of sit a little bit closer. People are still coming in and so they could find space in the back.

So one of the things we're doing with mindfulness and mindfulness meditation is synchronizing, harmonizing the body and the mind. So if you've come down this, if you come to meditate, and your body is here, and your mind is still at work, thinking about some conversation you had there something you had to do, then your mind is in one place and your body's a different place. If your mind is spinning off in thoughts about the future, but fantasy, whatever. It misses what's going on here in the present moment. Now sometimes in life that's quite innocent. But often what happens with people is the mind races ahead of ourselves of our body or lived experience. So we're not limited Living in our experience, but rather we've taken up residency in our thinking about things. And so it becomes a life aboutness about what I'm going to do about what happened yesterday about the conversation I'm going to have about a conversation that happened, about a wish that I have a desire that I have. And then we race after the thoughts we have. And the thoughts can get very fast and very busy. And sometimes we help it along by starting to live very busy lives trying to multitask, for example, and dude running around doing many different things in the mind gets fed then kind of a speed speediness in the mind. And it takes a while, the mind is speeding along quite merrily on its own after a while, with very little connection to our lives, immediate experience or physical experience. So it can be surprised to some people at the end of a day or whenever to finally stop all their ends. activity in movements of their mind. And it can be surprised to discover how tense their body is. They're carrying tension in the shoulder and their stomach, or that they didn't, we weren't quite aware of the headache that was creeping up until they actually stopped. And they were surprised, oh, I have a headache here.

We want to do is to bring our mind and body together. So they're operating harmoniously together, our body carries a lot of useful information about our experience, about how we relate to the world around us how we relate to the world inside of us. If we're lost in our thoughts in the world of aboutness, then we don't have available to us information of the body. So this is as simple as if you can notice when your shoulders beginning going up in a conversation, then you can find out you can notice that that's an indication that maybe you're beginning to be anxious. And it is a little bit of information. They're available in your shoulders, or your stomach has gotten into knots. There's information there about what your reaction is inside. The body has a whole slew of, of cues about what's going on. If you feel loving towards someone, it's possible that sometimes love is confused with all kinds of wishful thinking. And then we're often lost in our heads. But if we drop down into our body, there's a whole other level of information available in our body. Sometimes that tells us is this a heartfelt connection with a person? Or is it a more of a gentle connection to the person you know, what is operating here? If we're lost in wishful thinking, we might not notice where the propulsion is coming from. The body is a wonderful part of our life. Buddhist spirituality focuses a lot on living in our body and through our body. Some so much so that Buddhist spirituality is founded on being grounded in your body. without some groundedness in your body, it becomes a little bit difficult, dangerous, maybe even unrealistic, to move into some of the more refined forms of practice that Buddhism has to offer.

So to synchronize our body and mind, to learn to train ourselves so that we don't forget this home we have in our body. So it was a New reader article many years ago, that was titled the body, friend, foe or total stranger. And if anything the Buddhist approach is to have is to discover a friendly relationship to our body to discover, you know how to live in our body in a useful way. One way to live a distance from our body is to live caught up in body image, which is a lot of what people in our society are caught up in. If you look at some of these fashion magazines, for example, and the fashion models, I mean, they're quite lovely to see how thin they can be. And, but then, a phenomenal number a number of women in America, then compare themselves so those models and then they feel bad about themselves because their body image isn't quite like like that of the models. And they haven't many of us don't notice that. That Popular body images, changes not as fast as fashion and clothes, but they go through fashions, you know, certain kind of body types or I don't know what types are going to be popular this decade hasn't obvious to me yet. But in the 90s, it was a particular kind of body type. For women that was like the right one, I guess, in the 80s was a little different and 70s was different in the 60s, it was different in the 50s, it was different. And Marilyn Monroe just wouldn't be sexy anymore. And nowadays, we compare it to that kind of body type. But I'm trying to get across here is that we often live in our body image, we're concerned we focus at our at our body, through the image of, you know, my nose is too big or too short, my hair is this or I don't have enough here. And so then we often then, more often than not, are critical of ourselves or live in the world of comparative thinking about our body. There's a whole different way of living in body, which is not from the outside in not looking at the body, like how the body see appears in the mirror, but to live in the inside of the body, feeling our body from the inside. And the chances are for most of us that once we start feeling the body from the inside how the body actually feels itself, it'll feel much more friendly, much more place like we can feel at home much more right about how things are, then if we live kind of externally looking at the sense like looking at it in the mirror. The body is a lovely place to be. It's one of the greatest delights I've had. My years of Buddhist practice is to learn how to live in my body. One more thing I'll say as an introduction. I have you know, lots of desires. I think I'm kind of a desire type person. So I have no shortage of desires they seem to become quite easily to me on a diamond doesn't And it's very easy. It's easy enough to get caught up in those desires. And then to see the world through the filters of those desires, which are often then through filters of thoughts and ideas of what I need and what I want. And if I get caught in the mental world of the desires, then I often feel kind of unsatisfied. I don't feel kind of so at home and myself. But the interesting thing is that if I settle back into my body that I can discover relatively quickly, a sense of contentment. That seems to kind of

take the power or the seduction away from the desire that arises. So for example, if I want more food if I basically you know, fulfilled, eaten enough and I'm full, I can Desire dessert. But if I drop into my body, I feel like contentment. We're actually I actually like that contentment and the desire doesn't take over. Sometimes the body is not a comfortable place to be, as you've pointed out, or sometimes the body will contain a lot will hold a lot of the conflicts that we live our life by. And they have tension in the stomach and the face and the jaws and the shoulders anywhere in the body. Some of the conflicts of our lives from attentions of our life can be resolved or it can live. And so it can feel uncomfortable to be in the body. In Buddhist spirituality, it said it's more useful to be aware and present for that discomfort

than it is to go back to unawareness. To not be aware if it's happening anyway. You're much better. You're much better off knowing it's there. Then continue your life kind of ignoring its press. Since one of the reasons for that, is that awareness is very healing and it kind of works. A little bit like this perhaps if our mind is filled with thoughts and preoccupations, you can have 10,000 thoughts you know, Mike me fragmented you racing off and all kinds of thoughts and concerns and ones. There's, the mind is very crowded. And there's no no room for the mind. For force anything to happen. But if we can create more room, in the mind, in the body, through awareness, then there's room for things to begin to unravel to relax. It's kind of like if you go into a really crowded elevator, you know, you kind of feel kind of disgust scrunched up to kind of fit in there and you don't even notice that your attends to begin with because you've been tense, even tensor going in there. But if you Go into a huge Cathedral. really spacious building, you're the only one there and just all the space and inspiring space. You can just relax you know, you can even start dancing and let things kind of go. Meditation helps us create room in the mind. By holding things in awareness and being present or things with awareness. It allows things to begin to unravel to relax. So if we can simply hold a non judgmental nonreactive way the tensions the conflicts as they reside in the body, it gives a chance for those things to to unwind, some people would say it gives a chance for them to heal. So the body is a very important place to be when we meditate. So let's do before I say anything else, let's do a little session of meditation.

So take an alert, but comfortable posture

alert and relaxed. And that means perhaps sitting up a little bit straighter than you normally would having a spine be a little bit more energetic and alive. Many of us don't pay much attention to our spine but to sit in such a way that the spine feels alert

And then take a few moments to feel your body. Perhaps as if you've never discovered you've never really paid attention to it before.

taking a few moments to explore the body from the inside. What does it feel like in your body?

There's no need to judge. There's also an or if you're judge, there's no need to believe your judgments about what you're experiencing.

If you if you tune into your body What do you learn about yourself? What information is there in your body? Without thinking or analyzing so much, just feeling directly. How is it to be in your body

Is it comforting to be in your body to be aware of it? Or is it uncomfortable? Both ways are fine.

In order in order to synchronize the body in the mind, it helps to become familiar with your body to do a little exploration, getting to know it as it is

And then to help both with the exploration of the body, but also to connect more fully with your inner bodily experience. It can be helpful at the beginning of a setting to take a few long, slow, deep breaths. Feeling the body as you breathe in, and then as you exhale, relax the shoulders, the belly, go. Have any tension

and then let your breathing return to normal. Again, there's no right or wrong way to breathe

stay connected with your body. Breathing is part of your bodily experience. And spend a few moments now exploring getting to know what your body's experience of breathing is. How does your body experience breathing in, breathing out

What part of your body where in your body do you feel the breathing most pronounced. Some people will feel it in their abdomen the rising and falling of their belly. Some people will feel the chest rising and falling of the chest. The expansion and contraction. Some people might feel it more predominantly in the air passing in and out their nostrils

in the back of the throat

kind of be curious for a few more moments of what your own bodily experience of breathing is like from the inside of the body. Kind of like you're exploring a cave in the dark and you're feeling with your hands the walls from the inside. Sensing and feeling the inside of your body if you have trouble finding your Breath. Then Then you can breathe a little bit more deeply.

As you exhale, let go of any thoughts and concerns that you might have in favor of really feeling the out breath as carefully as you can. And you really being there for the beginning of the end breath

When you notice that your mind has wandered off in thought, which you inevitably will do. Just notice that and very simply without judgment or without believing your judgments, come back again to your breathing. Begin Again with a breath

with a little effort to hang in there from one breath to the next

Staying with a body's experience of breathing, the breath within the breath

can be a sense of settling into the breathing settling into the body that breathes.

synchronous synchronizing the mind and body by having the mindfulness centered on your breathing on the breath, the experience of breathing



Now let go of the breath of breathing and paying attention to the breath and instead bring your attention to the strongest sensation that exists in your body. It can be pleasant or unpleasant, doesn't matter. It doesn't have to be that strong. Whatever happens to be the strongest sensation in your body and then very gently lay your awareness on it and put it in the middle of it. Just feel it and sense it. Take a good look at it. Not to make it go away or to judge it or push it away. Not to resist it, but very gently with nonreactive awareness. Simply feel what that experience is like in its own right.

Take a few moments to explore it, looking at it from different angles, feeling it different ways.

Notice if it changes at all as you're present for it.

Noticing the kind of sensations that make up that experience.

Notice any tendency to judge the sensation or to get involved and thinking about it, making commentary about it or any motivations to hold on to it or push it away if the sensation disappears as you're watching it, go find the next strongest sensation in the body.

Rather than getting involved in the thoughts and the judgments.

Continue to drop into the experience of the sensations.

Letting the silence of the body hold experience and then come back again to your breathing. And then for one more minute at the last minute of the sitting. Feel each breath, each in-breath and out-breath as carefully as you can, so that the whole universe is just breathing.

So, are breathing.

is a wonderful place to ground our meditation or mindfulness practice. The breath in a sense is always happening. And so the breathing is a wonderful place to connect to our body to connect to what's happening in the immediate live moment. The breath is for most of us is constant. And so it's a place where we can develop some concentration, some stability, and just no matter what else happens, we come back to the breathing and settle there. And slowly the breath tends to calm and steady, the mind, the body, the heart. And you'll find this centrifugal force of thoughts that carry us away, quiet down to some degree. Over time, as we kind of focus on the breath, body tends to become more relaxed. Some of the Buddhist teachers I studied with in Asia, said that if that, for some people, mindfulness of breathing meditation on the breath, is the only meditation you need to do to get enlightened. It's so powerful and significant in its own right. In the mindfulness tradition, we use the breath as a useful pragmatic foundation, to study the mind to develop the mindfulness on something which is always there. We give some emphasis to the breath, we kind of give it some priority, we kind of try to stay with it and get to know it and be present for it. However, the breath is not the only thing we pay attention to.



It's not the central focus. Rather, what we're trying to do is develop mindfulness itself. And mindfulness is kind of like, mindfulness is kind of like water and you can pour water into any kind of container. Music container, it's open an empty, you can pour it you know, so you can put it into a champagne glass. You can put it into a bottle, you can put it into a salad bowl, you can put it into, you know, whatever kind of container you have. And it will take the shape of the container. Mindfulness is free flowing like that it can fit into any any of your experience. In whole the experience in a way that helps develop wisdom and insight and freedom we're trying to do is ultimately develop mindfulness not necessarily become the world class experts on what the breath is like. So, what that means is that we tend to focus on the breath first we tried to develop our stability there give priority to the breathing. But once the breath once something else becomes more pronounced, more predominant, then the breathing some other experience. We let go of the breath and take the other experience up as the object of the meditative awareness. So say for example, You're sitting being with your breathing and your knees begin to hurt. If you if the if your only instruction was to stay with a breath, and your knee really hurts a lot, then there might arise in you a tension between your knee wanting your attention, and you're trying to stay with the breathing. And so you've kind of maybe a split there. There's no need to have that kind of tension. Working out what we do is we let go of the breathing and bring the meditative awareness on to the knee and feel what's there. And the knees as good a place to develop mindfulness as the breath we're trying to do is develop as nonreactive non judgmental awareness of how things are in the knee.

And if this sensation is physical pain, then within reason if you don't think you're gonna hurt yourself, damage yourself, within reason, you don't shift your posture, but you just hang out there. Feeling that sensation exploring it, seeing if you can hold it in nonreactive awareness. Many times we can't if it's paying, for example, then the trick is to simply notice our relationship to the pain. Notice that we're contracting or adding meaning to it, this knee pain must mean that I'm in the verge of losing my leg, it'll fall off if I sit one more moment, or this knee pain must mean that I probably have cancer. And I need to go to the doctor and but I can't afford to go to the doctor because I don't have health insurance. I don't have a job. And how is it that I you know, don't have a job. And you know, I keep losing these jobs, I can't seem to hold a job. And and, you know, I can't find any good jobs and I have bad karma with work. And it really begins with, you know, my parents and how they treated me and they never taught me any good, you know, work any really good work skills. And, you know, I really should maybe maybe go into the military. That's ability will teach me really good skills, you know, I can get some kind of nice job there and discipline discipline and, and all this is happening in the course of sitting in meditation, right? The mind the body is not together anymore. Your mind is racing off into some other world before you know it, you're in Afghanistan. And in almost all it's happening is you had a little bit of knee pain. So the, what we're trying to do is notice that tendency to react and get lost in the reactions. And, and not so we don't get lost in the reactions. And we can just stay and develop stability, develop the synchronization, the binding the body, on this sensation in the in the knee, feeling ethics, and we want to explore it, we want to try to get to know it better. The focus of mindfulness is always Can I get to know this experience better? Now to think about it not to get you know, anxious about it. But can I sense my way more carefully into that experience? Can I sense my into it so that the reactive, agitated

mind quiets down. It's kind of like, if you're maybe in the woods when it's dark, and you hear a sound in the distance still rustling someplace far away, you're not quite sure what it is. And your mind can start racing, of course. But if you really want to pay attention to that you might be really quiet down. You're the kind of listen to this great silence, you know, it's really to pay attention to it carefully. You want to like kind of a silent awareness, sense and feel your way into that experience in the knee. And just feel what those sensations are. And often, our physical sensations, especially if they're just uncomfortable ones look very different or experienced very differently. If we're really close to them. Then if we're far away from them, before away from them in our thoughts, they can just see as just like a pain can feel like it's monumental kind of solid mass of pain. But if you really get close to it, you find out that NASA pain really is made up of many different sensations. And, and they're arising and passing perhaps and moving around that little that part of your body. They're fascinating kind of array of tension and tightness and stabbing and burning and wonderful sensations. And, and the closer closer you get, the more impermanent they can seem, the further and further away you are from them. They seem to be very solid mass and relate to solid mass of stuff. We tend to relate it to be relating to it through our ideas and thoughts, which is not so useful for the purposes of mindfulness practice. So,

to say all this whole thing in a different way. It's useful I think, to distinguish between foreground and background of awareness. We first sit down to meditate, we put the breath into the foreground of our awareness. We let that kind of be the focal point of what we pay attention to. In the background of our awareness, there can be many different sensations, thoughts, ideas, feelings sounds around, as long as they're in the background. It's fine, just leave them there. You don't have to pick them up or get involved or just as long as the breath can be in the foreground. Just stay with a breath. And knowing that that's a principle of meditation can make it a lot easier. Because as long as you can be connected to your breathing, you don't have to worry about other things going on, particularly sooner or later. Something from the background will push itself into the foreground. So for right now, we're talking about body sensations. At some points, experiences of your body will become more pronounced. will kind of want your attention will be in the foreground. Then the instruction, just forget about the breath, let go of it. And take this new foreground as the place where you develop your meditative awareness, sensing it feeling it being present for it. If it disappears, or is no longer compelling, then go continue with the breathing. If you're with someplace some sensation in your body that's compelling. And then a new body sensation arises that's even more compelling. Then let go the first one, and go take this new one. So whatever is the most pronounced whatever most wants your attention, that's what gets your attention. Isn't that great? I think it's great. And, and if nothing particularly pronounced is happening. Come back to your breathing. Now you want to give some emphasis on your breath, some priority to the breath. You want to be interesting In your breathing. So part of what affects what's in the foreground and background of awareness has to do with what you're interested in. So you really want to have an interest in the breathing. If you're mostly interested in the stock market, then your mind is going to want to think that's really important. If you're mostly interested in I don't know what your physical comfort, then you're going to really tune in to physical discomfort, it's going to end up in the foreground much sooner than would otherwise. So interest affects what comes into the foreground to some degree. So my emphasis, my encouragement for you is to really give some interest behind

being with a breath, but not so much that it becomes a war. Just as soon as something else really feels compelling. Then let go of the breath and take that up as the meditative awareness. So that makes some sense. Between suppose to do a sense into it. Now in that meditation that we did, I would like to hear from some of you what that was like both of the whole part of all of it, but in particularly the end of it, where I asked you actually to do that to let go of the breath and find the strongest sensation in your body and just hold it in awareness. What happened when you did that? for anything else during that meditation you want to talk about Yes.

I had this really bad dish on my lip

get worse. And it's had this fear that this case was kind of like taking over

the station for me that I didn't want to look at it that that's gonna destroy the app. And I couldn't deal with it, but I stayed with it, but it was weird. It was I don't know if I wanted to like sit there and look pain. Kind of a scary thing.

pain or the itch The

more you focus on, I feel like you're gonna take me away or take control of

the you know, the our psyche is quite complex. So there's and the relationship between the body mind and the body is kind of interdependent in some way. So sometimes the way in which we will react to physical pain, can sometimes we enforce it. So for example, if you have knee pain, for example, you're sitting, if a person reacts to it, especially if it's reactions unconscious, then there's a tendency to tense around it and attend to it tensing around us can make the pain worse. Sometimes we get agitated, because some people feel that it's a personal failure to have discomfort in the body. In California, you're supposed to everybody supposed to have these wonderful supple bodies and, you know, lots of pleasure and it's not something you know, something's spiritually wrong with the universe. If you're feeling uncomfortable, discomfort is built in part of being a human being. And a very important part of wise living is learning how to actually be present for discomfort in a useful way. In order to learn how to do that you have to begin by being present for it. You have to enter into that world. And you might might be what transition time where it's a little bit awkward for you. But I'm pretty sure that within a few short while that you'll find a useful way to be present, do you find it very useful to be present for your body is so much benefit that comes from being present for your body and know a lot of people recoil from their body, but to overcome that tendency, is really useful. So you have to develop patience to one of the qualities needed for meditation.

It's gonna be one person had a strong sensation Yes. I actually has

some issues regarding the firmware and being uncomfortable. The brother was very pleasurable that I was conscious of

and my neck and my shoulders always been tight. I thought myself relax. And I actually experienced the talking as my muscles down in South Korea up I was distracted by being uncomfortable but rather I lavish in the body.

Great, very nice. The word lavish is a strong word. You know, I don't want to take take that wonderful lavishing away from you. The The, the real kind of this is what people don't like about mindfulness meditation, is that the idea is we wanted the most powerful thing you can do. develop in meditation is a nonreactive awareness. Now that's great when things are unpleasant that seems you know, useful. But when things are pleasant, who wants that? You know, then we just want to kind of indulge in it, right? So the idea you go you, you're meditating really well to have those experiences, you're probably better off continuing the experience without, I know what lavishly means for you. But many people then will hold on to it or get attached to it. And then every time they sit down to meditate, they're expecting the same wonderful feeling. And that was all kinds of videos not to have any experience, but to continue to develop a non reactive awareness what's happening now, what's happening now. But right now, what's happening is great pleasure. So that's what's happening now, as opposed to Oh, great pleasure. A little bit extra, then

Someone else? Yes, please. My back was kind of

30. That was

when I started to think about it. I don't know why but I visualized the anatomy right there. And then strangely, that went away

with it, because the first one went away and then you expect all the others will go away? Well, there's three things that might happen when you bring attention to sensations in your body. They could go away, they can get they can get weaker and go away. They can get stronger, or they can stay the same. All three options are allowable. But in is a surprise and often, more often than maybe you would expect. Simply being bringing awareness to certain kinds of discomforts and tensions and pains in the body will, will somehow allow it to disappear. But unravel, unfold, relax, the number of things that might happen. And it can be very surprising. And it's part of the healing process for some people is to have these sensations disappear fade away, and it's very helpful. The warning is don't expect it to always be the case. Because then you as you're likely to be disappointed and not doing it right. How many of you had experience with a sensation is going away as you pay attention to them? How many had experience with them getting stronger? And how many dissociation sensations stay the same? We're all right on track. How many of you to experience your sensation how many assigned meaning to it? This means how many of you didn't like it? How many of you liked it? All these things are normal.

The trick is is to continue being mindful of what's going on and not believing getting caught by any of the ideas and thoughts about what's happening.

So any questions about what I've said so far? Yes, please.

Do you mean when you say no interest

interest in reference

for how you develop an interest for the breath is very fascinating. But you know, it's difficult for anyone to hear that from me doesn't not very believable.

But I'm hoping if I simply say that maybe you'll give me a little bit of benefit of doubt. So but what why does Gil say so interesting? He's been he's been watching his breath for 25 years. And he's still interested in it. He's not bored yet. Why is that? You know, let me give it a second chance. Let me kind of,

I guess my question is more.

When you think of

interest, when I think of interest, I think of analysis. Think of analysis I think of mind.

When I think of meditation, I think

of being in awareness, and for some reason, awareness and interest. Don't jive. Okay.

Okay. Well, that's a good very good and so if your connotations of interest is analysis, then maybe the word interest is not useful. But what I mean by interest is, is Getting to know the experience more carefully finding out what's their scent by not thinking about by sensing your way into the breath. Discovering what's actually the details of the breath or the sensual qualities of the breath It's kind of like

you know if you're getting a massage if you're not at all interested in the massage but interested in you know, soap opera, you watch that afternoon and you're going over you know what's gonna happen to soap opera and who's gonna marry who and who's gonna divorce who and Whose child is that and, you know, and, and, you know, if that's what you're interested in, then you still get some benefits from the massage. But there i think is greater benefit than the massage. If you have if you're really present for that experience and let the mind becomes still and really sense and be present for it. really feel the texture of the hands and texture of the most useless hand is the Go kind of the contours of your

muscles and discover what your Where are these muscles in my body and what do they feel like? So it's more like a silent exploration than it is analysis. It's it's kind of like if you're in a like a canal analogy I used if you're in a dark cave, and you need to discover the cave, you're into a very interested in the cave, but but you kind of feeling your way through the cave, you discover it through the senses, your senses, all your senses are open, you're sensing into it. It's like putting putting a magnifying glass in your experience and letting the experience show itself more clearly. This is helping at all. That's what I mean by interest.

Yes, it would be helpful to me if you

could review the forecast in the background, as you were describing, being depressed as the format issue, that being willing to give it up. If you found that your mind is sick The way and she told the story it started with the knee and then migraine. But as I have experienced it, it slips quietly through four steps. And there I am out there without the healthcare. And if I were to really focus on that, to make that my foreground and allow my breathing to be in the background I would like to know how to bring the kind of loving kindness which you would I think, whether you're trying to migrate

meditation

or are you suggesting that you just become aware of other things?

Yeah, the practices simply become aware of whatever's in the foreground of attention. And if you're caught up in your thoughts and thoughts are in the foreground, then we practice mindfulness of thinking However, that's for two weeks from now. So you're not supposed to be thinking for two more weeks. Unless you're kind of eager for the advanced course. And, and for right now the instructions are is what I meant by that. Instructions are, if some bodily sensation, physical sensation arises for you, as you're trying to stay with your breath, and the physical sensation is stronger, more compelling than your breathing. Then take the physical sensation as the object of meditation. If you get caught up in your thoughts, or the tendency for that, don't follow those. Just notice you're in your thoughts, and then come back to your breathing. Come back to the sensation in your body. Don't try to do elaborate mindfulness of thinking for another couple of weeks. Just kind of let go of it. Let go of it, let go of it. And sorry. Yeah, that's right. You don't need Could be wise. So physical sensations can also include sounds. So if you're sitting meditating at home in the morning and the neighbor neighbor's dog begins barking one more time really loudly Oh, Jesus, you know here I finally got you know, finally got took a meditation class. Finally after years of wanting to meditate I finally had enough discipline I'm trying it out these 20 minutes every morning and I had everything set up perfectly you know, I turn off the telephone and, and, and you know, and I took a nice shower and I made a really quiet peaceful place in my house. And this dog is barking, you know, fine, you know, I'm so distracted. I can't meditate with this dog barking. And this is a disaster. I might as well clean the garage. There. The dog barking has become the predominant experience that Then becomes a meditation, and you do listening



meditation, mindfulness of sounds, hearing, hearing listening to that. And there's no need to set up the dog barking in opposition to your meditation. Rather, videos to include it, if that really becomes the pronounced experience that really is really compelling for you. Then just do listening meditation. And notice, just notice the quality, the texture, the flavor of the parking and be present for it. Notice the minds tendency to get caught up in thoughts and ideas about it. Let go those best you can just stay with the raw immediate experience of barking of sound. Usually what you're trying to do is develop your mindfulness, that nonreactive awareness for what's happening. And you can do that on anything. You'd be under the sounds and bodily sensations on the breath. And we'll talk next week about emotions and the following week about thoughts and it can be kind of a feeling kind of stuff. We are trying to center mostly on the breath still. But as you freely as necessary, leave the breath to attend to the other compelling sensations. It can be a feeling of kind of swimming through the sensations of experience. It's kind of like, oh, okay, there's a knee for a while and you can stay with a neat, maybe for a few moments for a few minutes. If it's really compelling, some sensation in your body. You might be with it for 2020 minutes, you know, for a long time, it doesn't really matter. You might get bored, you might, all kinds of things might happen. But that's just kind of grist for the mill for meditation. And the issues continue developing in mindfulness and that experience until something else becomes compelling or until it's not compelling and you can go back to your breathing kind of swimmingly, congenitally kind of allow yourself kind of, in a relaxed way to move between one thing and other as different things becomes compelling. And for now, just stay with the breath for physical sensation. Keep your meditation limited to that for this next week. So Other questions?

I'm tired of 15 minutes. And

frequently,

it starts to feel interminable I can't believe my grandma stopped. And so I need to look to see how many minutes are left. And I want to know, that should be handled the same way as physical sensations like if you can't hear.

So, so it's a regular pattern. And, yeah, I think you should stop looking. And, and if you follow the sequence of this course, then, for this week here, limit yourself to the physical sensation of restlessness or anxiety, whatever it is that comes up and just hang in there with physical sensations. Don't psychoanalyze them or you know, just be with the sensations and it might feel like the rodeo. That's okay. Sometimes we're really restless no meditate successful. period of meditation, when really restless, is the fact that we got through it. It doesn't have to be more complicated than that. And sometimes it's really hard. It's like the rodeo. It's really useful to hang in there and not to break the meditation and not to let your compulsion or your anxiety, restlessness, get the upper hand.

One more, please. My



purpose has changed now so that I can

walk around

with this

sort of feeling of bliss and joy, and it gets a bit frightening because my heart is racing a mile a minute, my arm starts to shake. And at some point,

it seems to me maybe, I'm not sure

exactly when to stop. Like,

wow, you know,

to bliss that you're experiencing is it doesn't happen always together. With the racing heart, no, sometimes it's okay.

It's like something sort of opened and inserted like this, I'm sure.

And sometimes I want to say,

I think that's gone.

The

little bit hard for me to advise you just in brief comments like that. But when people when there's an opening, and usually experiences of bliss, and kind of what you're describing, come with kind of a sense of opening and kind of going beyond the normal constrictions that we live by. It can be a transition time. And there can be a lot of psychophysical changes that result because of that, like, suddenly you enter into a much bigger room, and suddenly things have a chance to move around a little bit in there. And there can be energetically all kinds of changes is one of the ones that can happen as the heart can begin racing and probably It's going to be a temporary phenomenon probably needs to happen for a while and just consider it to be part of the transition. If it frightens you, then you can back off, either back off or come and find someone you can talk to, who will know a little bit more about it, and be reassured or hang in there with you. If these things continue for some time, the uncomfortable sensations connected to the bliss, you can come and talk to someone you can talk to me or someone and, and you know, we can look at it in more detail. The one thing you can do yourself though, is you can begin exploring, investigating little bit more, what's actually going on when that happens. So just before the heart begins racing, what's happening within you. So it could be

something as simple as when we open up when there's when there's a lot of bliss and kind of heart opening kind of feelings that happen through spiritual practice. It can be very frightening for some people, because suddenly you find yourself feeling much more vulnerable. You find yourself falling in love with people left and right and As can be very confusing and frightening. And so there might be a little feeling of fear that arises. And the fear is what's causing the racing for example. And so what you need to do is to learn how to come to terms with fear. Learn to investigate that more so that you can be wiser how to be open with the with that openness, your your feeling.

So those are some things. I don't know if they're helpful, but

so let's sit for a few more minutes.

Take a comfortable, alert posture.

Take a few moments to root yourself in your body. Feeling that contact of your body against your chair or the floor. Feeling how your chair your floor, the floor supports your weight.

And with a way that's most both relaxed and alert, sit up straighter, kind of like your dignified mountain.

In the beginning of the meditation can be used Take a few long deep breaths, connecting to the body as you breathe in, letting go as you exhale. And then let your breathing return to normal.

And it can also be helpful at the beginning of the meditation session to survey your body to see if there's any obvious muscles, muscle groups that can be relaxed, in an easy way. Maybe the forehead, jaws maybe the shoulders can be softened slightly more at ease.

And perhaps you can soften your belly, relax the stomach

and then within your body as part of your body. Become aware of your breathing. Become aware of what it's like to breathe in what happens in the body as you breathe in. Be aware of the exhalation. It's helpful if you interest yourself to the experience of breathing. In trust yourself to the breath. The breathing becomes one of your best friends as you learn to be present for it and the mind has wandered wandered off in thoughts Simply very simply matter of factly bit, notice that be aware of that's happened. And then begin again with your breathing.

To be mindful of the breathing, used to be present for the sensations, the sensual sensory quality of the breathing.

The movement

of the body as you breathe, expansion contraction,

the tightness and the release of the tautness as you breathe in and out.

If you're aware of the breath going in now through the nostrils the coolness as the breath goes in, perhaps the warmth as it as you exhale

And then let go of the breathing.

And now open your awareness to the sensations of your body in whatever way they appear. To be very relaxed, receptive. Like awareness is a sponge that soaks up the sensations of your body anywhere they appear coming and going. Some stronger than the others. Whether your bodily experiences pleasant or unpleasant holds, hold it in a friendly way. Gently. It's okay for the body to be whatever way it is.

Hold it in awareness.

And then in the last few seconds of the sitting, let go mindfulness of your body and just sit here at ease, not doing anything at all in particular, just simply here.

So as I've said, next week, we'll talk about how to incorporate our emotional life, our emotions as part of the mindfulness practice. It's a lot easier to understand, to understand how to do that. If you have a basis of mindfulness of the body, if you begin exploring and familiarizing yourself with how to be a little bit more in your body, and as you do this practice, it's going to be a lot easier to learn how to include the emotions. So now not only in your sitting practice, but also as you go about your daily life. You might find it very helpful and very interesting. To begin checking in with your body more often you do. Take finding opportunities in your daily life, to just notice what's happening. Your body, what are you feeling? When you having a conversation with someone? What are you feeling? If you're on the phone, for example, and that's looking, they're not looking at you. So you just gotta check in with your body and how you sitting, what's your posture, like when you're driving your car, when you're standing in line when you're doing your work or in any kind of circumstance at all, watching television at home, if you do such thing, just watch your body. Check in with your body more often you do and see what you can learn from your body. See if you can hit if you pay attention to what your body wants, whether it really wants to be sitting in the posture you're sitting in. Often, we do things with our body without really paying attention to what the body most wants or what's appropriate for the body. It's very fascinating to begin living as if the body counted. So that's my words what I have to say for today. Thank you Things those of you who are new might not know that we have a newsletter, and it's out there on the table, it looks like this. And it has a schedule of all all the different events that we do during the week and during the month and stuff. So it might interest some of you to look at that. Some of you I probably all of you will probably some degree in shock and dealing with events of September

11. And I think for us, as individuals and as a society as a as a, it's gonna be a long time for us to process those feelings and those reactions and thoughts and to know how to respond. And my hope is that this mindfulness practice is a great contribution for many people to learn how to be present for their experience, and really allow it to be processed in a healthy way, rather than to be carried away in unhealthy ways. Unusually, And useful ways by our feelings and fears and anger and things. This practice hopefully will make us into peacemakers to help our community. But because of this event, what I've done is I've scheduled a I think it's maybe October, October 13, a one day kind of retreat class, a class one day workshop on what the Buddha, the Buddha's teachings on peace. So what the Buddha had to say about violence, non violence and different topics like that, there are many people would like to have some religious grounding, or reference or kind of, for how to deal with these kinds of events. So that's what I could offer. And so there's some fliers out there on the table for that, if any interest any of you. And the last thing is, for those of you who weren't here last week, this A series of classes being offered on what's called dāna, in Pali and Buddhism, which means a donation basis. And there's two baskets in the hallway. One, it's has a little sign in the front that says rent dāna. And that's to help us pay for the rent that we pay the friends for the use of this building, and whoever and a few other expenses that we have like the newsletter and things. And if everyone did one or \$2, that would be fine for us. That'd be kind of cover our needs. And then there's another basket too called teacher, dāna or donation. And that's whatever donation you'd like to make for me. So I thank you all and I wish you all a wonderful week, and I'll see you next week.