

2001-10-04: Introduction to Meditation (Week 3)

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SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

So now it's been a couple of weeks that hopefully you've been practicing at home meditating and trying the instructions out. So do you have any any questions about your prat your experience or your practice or anything from last week or any comments or reports about how it's going? Before we kind of venture forth into the further instruction? It's very helpful for me if you have comments and questions because then I can have a sense of you know, what's going on and what kind of things need to be addressed.

Freeze please.

Notice that

often when meditating, those are live visual effects. Allow it to reflect the color again. And another friend of mine who does meditation says that

that can be returned to your chakras

during our meditation session, another kind of orange

Yeah, the usually in Buddhism, they don't use a shot the chakra system. So we wouldn't talk about that particularly the different appearance of different colors. Sometimes meditation sometimes comes with different levels of concentration, or some of the or has sometimes to do a certain level of concentration, and some other mental factors that come into play at the same time. Some people are more visual than others. And so certain things play themselves out through colors or through visions.

The important thing from the point of view of mindfulness practice is not to try to understand The meaning of it, but rather to use that as another other place to develop your mindfulness. If we get caught up in the meaning and analyzing it, then we'll actually step aside from the very simple practice of noticing what's happening in the present. So, so, seeing, seeing, just be aware of seeing is happening, seeing green, green, and just let it be that simple. And don't try to elaborate and figure out what it means. You can do it later. But for the point of view of the practice, we don't need to do that.

So last week, I talked about mindfulness of the body, including the body as part of the practice. Did you find that interesting or useful or difficult to include the body when you find out

Yes, please. I thought it was really great because I always have this big knot in my back and I was able to just observe it and actually make it go away. I don't know if I'll have that kind of luck every time but it was just cool because it went from being a big knot to just sensation that was kind of traveling around and if you follow it,

great.

That was really helpful. Great, thank you.

This group is ready to meditate. Okay, so let's do that. So take a comfortable upright posture

There's sometimes a tendency to think

that there's only one answer one way. So we focus on one way of being like, this is what I'm trying to do. for meditation. It's often important to be aware that you're actually trying to develop two seemingly opposite qualities at the same time. And one quality we're trying to develop is to be relaxed, to be at ease, to become in the same time, we're trying to develop the capacity to be alert, and in a certain way energized to have certain vitality in the system. If you're too calm, too relaxed, you'll fall asleep Your mind will get though the energy will kind of drain from you with time. If you're too alert, too much energy, it tends to be actually If you focus only on relaxation, then you won't reach the depths of what's possible through meditation. And what you need to do is to be aware that both of them are happening at the same time. And so while at the same time you're following the trail of relaxation and getting calm, you're also maintaining an alertness, kind of vibrancy, kind of clarity, and not losing that by kind of indulging and trying to get relaxed. That makes sense. So a very simple way to kind of illustrate this would be if you want, you can close your eyes. Sit up straight, and sit in such a way that there's more alertness in your spine. Lift up your spine and stretch it out a little bit. Not to strain it, but just so this feels more alive and alert. Maybe even happier. Happy spine

is not that kind of travel up through your neck, also the vertebrae of your neck. And you might find that making a lot more space between the last vertebrae in the skull, opening that up a little bit, even adds a bit more to that sense of an alert spinal column.

And then maintaining that alertness in the spine. As you take a deep breath in and then out again. As you exhale, lead all the muscles around the spine, the shoulders, the shoulder blades, the chest, the stomach, and all those muscles relax. Let go. You're not letting go of this alertness fine. Just all the extra muscles around it.

Taking a few more deep, slow, long breaths to establish a connection with your body from the inside as you breathe out to settle into this place, this time this body.

Sometimes when you're meditating, you can become aware of how the mind is like a sportscaster news commentator, constantly making commentary about either what's happening in the present moment, trying to understand its meaning or judging it, making all kinds of commentary or reporting about what happened before, or planning what's in the future. The commentary can be on all kinds of things. The Art of meditation is to relax the commentator, the commentary, is not needed anymore. in favor of just being with your immediate, direct lived experience

just the facts, not the interpretation.

So what is the lived experience you have of your breathing

in taking some time to become familiar with what breathing feels like within your body, the movements, different parts of your body as you breathe

the rhythm of expanding and contracting

There's kind of an alertness of the mind that allows you to be discerning about what your experience of breathing is to investigate it to get to know it. Is it short, your breath are they long, shallow or deep?

At the same time as there's a kind of alertness in the mind You can allow the breathing within your body to calm your body in mind. It's like getting a massage from the inside perhaps. Each time you exhale to relax and let go of tensions and holding in the body.

Letting the rhythm of breathing in and breathing out one after the other. Have a calming effect on your body and your mind your heart.

As you rest with your breathing, you can let your thinking mind rest also, there's nothing you need to think about the exhausted mind can let go

when your mind is drifted off into thought, and you notice it. There's no need for commentary or judgment. Just when you've noticed that, acknowledge it, be aware of what's happened. And then begin again with your breathing

if you are present Your breath while you're breathing. The breathing will help conditions. Calm settle your life. There'll be a receptive presence for your breathing. So the breathing can do its work within you.

And now, let go of your breathing, paying attention to it. Instead, let your attention notice how you're feeling. What's the basic mood or emotional state that's present for you as you sit here now

Anything is allowable, calm, agitated, happy, sad.

Content

fearful,

irritated

and then as you notice how you're feeling your emotional state, however subtle it might be noticed where in your body that the mood or the emotional state is most manifest.

In the face, the head, the shoulders, upper chest, the belly, around the eyes, the arms and the hands. Whereas the energetics of the emotional state

as you feel it as a physical state as a physical experience very quietly acknowledged The presence of the emotion, the mood and allow it to be there. Just acknowledge and be present for it. And notice what happens as you do that.

Notice if there are any judgments or reactions to the presence of your mood or emotional state

See if you can give precedence, to just feeling how it actually is. As opposed to getting interested in your reactions or judgments, let go of those if you can.

And then let go of that and come back to your breathing.

Gently, softly hang in there with your breathing for the next minute or two

I'm reminded of a friend of mine who was teaching Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction course. And there was a retired police officer in the course who had a lot of back pain. And he came, nothing else seemed to have helped. He tried all kinds of medical interventions to try to help him with back pain and nothing seemed to help him. So the doctor said, we'll try this mindfulness based approach. And so he showed up for the class. And the instructions in the class was just feel your pain. Just and he got angry with the instructor and had an argument. He spent his whole life trying to get away from it, trying to fix it, try to do anything to kind of make it better. And the last thing that he ever wanted to do was simply to feel it as it actually was. And he thought this was the most absurd instructions you've ever been given. feel my pain. I mean, it's absurd. And slowly in the course of the course, what he learned was how powerful it is to let just be present for things as they are, as opposed to always avoiding how things are. And so it certainly works with physical issues physical pain, it's very helpful to learn how to be present for it and feel it. So we can learn to use the information that's present in the physical pain, to know how to go about our life in a wise way. But also more profoundly, awareness itself sometimes allows the physical stuff to begin unraveling itself relaxing. Often when we live in reactive mode. To our experience, we tend to kind of tighten up around it contract around it make it a lot worse. And you're simply being sent to bring simple press to something is to stop that reactive mode. And even trying to run away from something is sometimes just adding to more that reactivity that sometimes will actually keep things in place or being aggressive and trying to lash out at it. There's a wonderful little story kind of a maybe fairy tale from the Buddha told and the story about a. In the kind of pantheon of Indian Gods there was a particular kind of little God or godlike being that was called the Yakuza. Jaco is kind of like a little, little ugly runt of a troll. You can imagine what that would look like. And this little runt of a troll. One day, climbed up onto Brahmas throne. Brahma is the greatest god of the indian indian pan. piano and isn't quite the Creator God of Christianity and Judaism. But you can imagine, you know, how the God of the Old Testament would have taken to, you know, some little runt climbing up on his throne. He and so it was quite a breach of etiquette in the Indian Pantheon for this little run to get up in his throne when Rama was away from the from his palace one day. So the other gods were in the court of Brahma, the lesser gods. They started getting really angry at this runt of a troll and started yelling him and saying, you shouldn't be here. It's terrible, you're in the wrong place. It's a breach of etiquette. And, as they were kind of expressing their disgust and anger at this troll, he proceeded to grow bigger and bigger, start getting bigger and bigger. And then he got more beautiful as this proceeded, and they were quite confused to the more they were yelling at him, the bigger and bigger and more beautiful he got. So finally they gave up and then went in front Brahma and explained to him what would happen and Brahma said, Oh, I know what to do. So he went, he went back to his court and he stood in front of his throne where this troll was sitting. And he said, Oh, I'm very happy to see you, I hope you're comfortable up there, and hope you've been well and, you know, just started offering his respect and his kindness to this troll. And, and as he did that, the troll got smaller and smaller and smaller and smaller and smaller, until finally, he disappeared. And then Brahma explained to the others. This troll is an anger eating troll. It thrives in anger. And as you kept feeding it your anger and it got bigger and bigger and bigger, bigger, and if you take away its food, it just shrinks.

So sometimes when we react to things, through aversion through running away through holding on to grasping onto it will actually compound various kinds of problems. Certain things that we really want to get rid of sometimes actually grow by the way in which we react in and affect it. The power of presence, the power of just raw mindfulness, really seeing things as they are, is a power of kindness of allowing things to be as they are, it's a power of respect. I like the word respect a lot, because it means literally means to look again. You look again, you look more carefully at what's there. And you don't look at it with a version you're looking at it with desire. You don't look at it with judgment, you simply see it as it actually is. And that is very, very powerful thing to do in our lives. One of the place to do this is with our emotions. So some people have never really spent time really feeling their emotions, if it's a so called negative emotion. Some people are often running away from it or acting on it. Or often there's a kind of motivational side of an emotion where we kind of want to react to things we get angry. Some people don't just simply feel their anger, but they believe that the anger requires them to act right now to say something or to hit someone or something or whatever. If you have a desire, some people feel every desire is believable, and necessary. And so, you know, it's, you know, we want to act on it right away. The Art of mindfulness is not to let our emotional life lead us around by the nose, the motivation that's inherent in some emotions, but we are there to learn how to just feel it as it is. To feel our desire, to feel our anger, to feel our love, to feel our, our aversion to feel our fear, and then feeling it stir, learn how to be independent and free of it. Learn how to develop an independent presence, independent stillness within you, unless you know how to be present for things directly as they are. So the beginning of the path of mindfulness is to learn how to recognize the emotions when they're there. And recognize in such a way that we no longer reacting to their presence. Now, that sounds very wonderful, maybe what happens to many of us is that it isn't that we're reacting to the emotion. But say that I'm sitting here and I feel a little bit impatient. And then I notice I'm impatient. I'm uncomfortable being impatient. And then there's a problem. That means is that a problem somewhere in the university I'm, I'm impatient, and it's like, put a guy up there hasn't rung the bell yet. And so you get angry at this guy. Then you realize you're taking a mindfulness class. We're supposed to help you with your anger, and feel I'm really embarrassed, I got angry. And then you're embarrassed. And then you're really embarrassed and say, oh, here I am embarrassed again. And then you feel despair, because you get embarrassed all the time. And it's really the fears with your life, then you feel really despairing about it. And after you notice it a spare for a while, you get the press, it seems so hopeless. How can you ever manage with this? And then you feel hopeless? And you say, well, it's something to do, maybe I should, I should find something, I deserve something better than this. Maybe I'll just go into a wonderful sexual fantasy. Because then I can get some wonderful, you know, desire going and, and you know, at least I can distract myself from my depression, despair. And what you're seeing here is a whole chain of cause and effect, where we're reacting and reacting and reacting to a primary thing primary might have just been a little bit of impatience. And maybe where you're really living is in the 14th generation away from the impatience and all this reactive Two things that happened all in a row. And it might be hundred and 14, or thousand 14 that we live in. The Art of mindfulness is not that you have to be any place in particular. But just at some point in that process, you wake up. Oh, I'm at 100 and 14th generation. Oh, I just allow that to be as it is. If you notice how you are, and you say, I shouldn't be there, you know, that's

not right. Or then you've added 115th. Oh, this is what's going on. Sometimes, it's because the last thing that you notice is, I'm confused. I don't know what's going on and just or just chaos is happening. At some point, we try to recognize how things are and wake up and leave it alone.

And then slowly, you can move back the generations. Until someday you'll find yourself being able to notice the arising of something of an emotional reaction. see it for what it is. And you don't have to go anywhere with it. Oh, I mean patient don't have to do anything with it. The Buddha gave a story simile of the of the arrows. And the story goes, there's a man. The Buddha, the Buddha asked his monks, he said, monks, if a man is struck by one arrow, is that painful? And the monk said, Sure, that's very painful. And then he said, if the same man is struck by a second arrow, is that even more painful? And they said, Yes, that's even more painful. And the Buddha said, basically, after this, he said, the first arrow in life, you don't have much control over. The second arrow, is your choice. The first arrow is things that happen in your course of going about living Life, things, all kinds of things might happen to you stub your toe, you get a flat tire, you lose your job, someone you know dies, there's many things that we do that happens to our life that are painful. Then there's all these other second arrows that we add to it. And the second arrow is the reactivity that we build on it. The complicated ways in which we relate to the immediacy of the experience. So we might feel, for example, some grief, someone dies, and it's tremendously sad. We feel grief. There's all these complicated ways we relate to that grief. Some people are embarrassed by it. Some, sometimes our people around us somehow give the indication that, Hey, would you aggrieved enough, get over it, and then we feel even more embarrassed, and that's a complication that doesn't allow things to be as they are, or we feel hopeless in it, do we feel there's many ways in which we complicate something like grief or something like Anger, we feel anger. And then we have all of these ideas of what it means to be angry, we shouldn't be angry, we should be angry. This anger means that x, y and z or anger means supposed to act this way or I'm embarrassed, I'm shy, I'm justified. And we have something wrong with me because I'm angry. We add all the second arrows. And what we're trying to do in mindfulness practice, is to have uncomplicated emotions. To have emotions where we allow them to be as they are. What it means is in mindfulness practice, you're allowed to have any emotion at all. You're allowed to feel anywhere you're in we sit down to meditate, you're sitting down to give yourself radical permission to feel whatever way you are. You don't have to be you know angelic when you sit in here, you can be filled with rage. filled with fear it's all completely fine. The practice is to learn how to be present for it as simply an uncomplicated Lee as you can. It's not easy to do, then the practice is to notice the ways in which we complicate the primary emotion going on what you know, follow the generations. Are you afraid of your fear? Are you angry for being there? Are you impatient because it's there? Do you feel that you're unworthy human being because you have this particular emotion and slowly, slowly you'll find the ability to have this uncomplicated emotional life you allow these things to arise through you. And you'd be on you'll be independent of the arising of these things. means you're allowed to be who you are. But you're not stuck by what you are. So maybe making some sense. It's exactly 745 I'm trying to be mindful. What did I say? And, and you'll be on. You'll be independent of the arising of these things. It means you're allowed to be who you are, but you're not stuck by what you are. So it makes making some sense. It's exactly 745 I'm trying to be mindful.

What did I say? You'll learn how to be independent of these emotions. So you're allowed to be the way you are with the practice is learn how to be independent of them. So there's a wonderful practice that I call writing out in emotion. I recommend it to all of you. Especially if you're a person of very strong passions. Like say that you have a lot of desire. And say you have to use even an addiction to cigarettes or food or could be all kinds of things. And you find that you're often compelled to pursue that desire. So addictions often very good. And the exercise is to not act on the desire but write it out. And it can feel like this, you know, cresting wave is construed as a wave that gets stronger and stronger and more and more intense. I gotta have it right now. And then you kind of maybe have to hold on to the table or your armchair and just you know, you know, just you know, the through it, whatever it takes just kind of not act on, just hang in there, write it out. And sooner or later, you'll find that the wave breaks. And you'll find it find yourself at the other side of that wave kind of sliding down and the desire will fade away. And it can be very, very empowering for people, especially people who are addicts, to learn that they have the ability to, to, to ride their emotions out. Same thing can be done with anger. Next time you feel a strong urge to be angry at someone lash out, do the exercise of writing the anger out. It doesn't mean the anger is wrong. It doesn't mean that someone hasn't done some injustice to you. But maybe there's a wiser way of responding, where you're not being pulled around by the nose. By the anger. The anger is not in charge. And if you don't want the anger to be in charge, you have to learn how to be independent of it and writing out the anger not acting on it as one way. What you do in your daily life, about your emotions, hopefully you have some wise relationship to that issue in meditation, because you're sitting here and being quiet, it's a very safe place to let your inner emotional life be as it is. You don't have to censor it or make it different. You can have tremendous bliss, and it's okay, you can have tremendous rage, and it's okay. Everything is okay. When you sit and meditate, it's relatively safe, because you're not going to lash out at anybody or whatever. And you select a course through your body and bring presence to it. That make some sense. So now it's your turn. So we set sat for about 20 minutes before the end of the sitting near the end, I asked you to pay attention to your to notice what you're feeling your emotional state or mood. So I'd like to hear from some of you what that was like what happened when you did That. Yes.

You mentioned about any desire, particularly negative desire, when we write it down, is going on for what to highlight a positive desire, you know, for example, desire of learning how to approach that.

Writing, I've never done that writing, so I cannot qualify, writing it out. Right without I'm sorry, writing it out. Oh, you can do it with anything. Anything that feels compelling. Anything where you feel a compulsion, if you have to act, then see if you can ride it out. Hang out with it, surf it, but don't give into it. If it's don't give in to the compulsion. If there's no compulsion, that seems like a nice, healthy, good desire to have, go ahead. Except in meditation, and meditation, don't don't let there be any excuse to interrupt your meditation you might sit there meditating, and you think you get the idea for the next great American novel. No one's ever thought about this. If I can just it's really important to write this down because if I don't write it down now I lose it and American culture for the next 500

years will not have the benefits of this wonderful novel. And, and so Okay, so a break your break you're sitting to write it down. The can be creative bursts and meditation, the surface mind surface chatter falls away. And a little bit of relaxation concentration that comes with meditation, can give birth to wellsprings of creativity, and can be very tempting to chase after that, either writing it down or just simply get in dough indulge and thinking about it and following those kinds of thoughts. The Art of meditation is not enough with anything else, except mindfulness. have the upper hand dedication is to be mindfully still for what's going on, and not to give in to anything. So in meditation, don't give into, just write it out even the desire to not answer your question. So I was curious to hear a report from some of you, please.

Usually when I go into my emotions,

it's never one emotion. I'm dealing with this sort of like feeling

as I get through one.

Do you have anything? Is there anything that I should know, going from one to the other?

I don't know what to say. Sometimes when people have done a different kind of meditation. There's an old habit of doing that way. And sometimes it takes a while to break the habit so you can really be fresh and enter to mindfulness in an easy way. Sometimes there's all kinds of comparison comparisons person might want to make, Oh, that one that way is faster or I do the guided meditation have a different kind of experience. Or with guided meditation, I always get really calm. When I do mindfulness, don't always get calm, you might understand more what's going on with me, but like a calm, so maybe it's not as good or there's all kinds of comparisons that person might want to make. And you want to be very careful that you don't get caught by those. And, you know, don't have a wise relationship to those comparisons. Some of the comparisons might be valid, but we tend to interpret much too early and quickly. I

felt the need lately to use the guided meditation because I've been going through so much.

And it sort of helps me get present more quickly or settle down more quickly than, you know being on my own which is

Yeah, so as a final thing to do, then if you find that helpful for you, you might also sometimes not use your guided meditation and see what happens if you bring presence to mindfulness to the course or complicated or agitated emotional state you're in. Because there might be some very important lessons to learn there. And if every time you short circuit it and calm yourself down, then you might actually not actually learn some of the lessons that are available in that state itself. And those in that state, it might actually be more useful one to follow the onions down. If you get calm, you might

actually be bypassing some of the entry points to understand what's going on with you admit what makes you tick. So at least sometimes I encourage you not to do the guided But well, there's many kinds of guided meditations so I don't know exactly what he's talking about the kind but guided meditation usually means you follow a sequence, either someone is guiding you to pay attention to them. Pay attention to this, pay attention to this or imagine this or visualize this or you've memorized a certain sequence of things pay attention to. And so in mindfulness practice there is it's more free flow. It's more choiceless. We don't we don't, we're not direct the mind is not directed towards a particular sequence of things, but rather is open to open to how things actually are. So I still haven't had any reports so much about what happened that sitting when I asked you to pay attention to your feelings and emotions. It's hard to believe no one here had any Yes. Same breath that you

You have to be very respectful of the momentum. If a person spent a whole day being very busy rushing around and rushing around in their head, when you sit down to meditate, it takes a while for that momentum to unwind. You can't You can't just turn it off like that. And, and one of the one of the ways that people suffer extra meditation, they sit down to meditate, and then they made us think, you know, if not completely clear and pristine and calm, immediately, something's wrong with me. You know, I should have the ability just turn off all that momentum right like that. And you can't do that that's an unrealistic and part of it. Part of the meditation is learning how to be very accepting of the state you're in. And then that acceptance will allow for things to come down. But in feeling all that chaos and all that kind of tornado. What was your emotional state in the middle of that

You're hoping for that. There's no hope in mindfulness practice.

Well, I could congratulate you the first stage of mindfulness meditation, of meditation is to realize the mind is like a classic description. His mind is like a waterfall. But maybe more like a tornado or hurricane. It's better to realize the mind is out of control is the first stage because and it's and rather than feeling discouraged by that a person should feel Oh good, I'm making progress. At least now I know how I am. As opposed to continuing and of semi conscious or unconscious about all that and going about living a lifespan of semi conscious and just kind of noticing how out of control the mind is, it's much better to know the mind is out of control than it is to have a mindset of control and not know it. So congratulations. And then be patient it'll it'll change. Please.

situation. I was I was very surprised and almost

It was so busy. I didn't

realize that I was busy until I sat down and I like her I wanted to relax.

And instead there was just this whirlwind and I thought

the I like to think of meditation sitting down to be still mindful of what's happening in the present as being a truth teller. A kind of way of finding At what's really going on. And there's all these ways in which we don't really pay attention to what's really going on, we distract ourselves from ourselves. The other thing is,

this is very interesting to compare meditating early in the morning in bed, meditating and near the end of the day, because in the morning, we tend to be much more fresh. And by end of the day, we've accumulated all this stuff, you know, its momentum and all this agitation or all this something. And then it has to be let go before you can become more concentrated again. For people who don't have any way of letting go of the accumulate attentions that build up, those tensions will slowly accumulate over days and months and years. They might, you know, like, go 90% or 99% of it when you sleep at night, for example, or when you do various things, but you it's very hard to get rid of all of it. And meditation is one of those weird claims. In life, that allows us to get really deep into the process of relaxation letting go. And so that momentum that accumulated momentum can can really kind of begin to be empty. So not only simply the stuff from the one day, but sometimes there's stuff from a decade that we carry with us. And sometimes it's great surprise to realize that as a surface chatter begins to calm Calm down, the old stuff that you thought was long since finished, kind of bubbles up, because it's accumulated in there has never been really been really been finished the process and so stuff comes up. It's kind of like some people think that when you fast, you do kind of food Fest, that after a while, all these toxins and different things in your body begin being released, and they come out and various kinds of interesting things might happen to you if you fast long enough, as this purification process occurs. On. Meditation is probably not a very good analogy. But meditation is kind of like a mental Fest, where we no longer are taking in a lot of food, of thoughts and reactions. And that in the mind becomes still and quiet and empty to some degree compared to your maybe normal. And then all this other stuff begins to bubble up. And the purification process sometimes mean it's stuff that you know, is not comfortable bubbles up. If you think the meditation is a linear path from going from wherever, whatever state you're in now to becoming calmer, more blissful, more spiritual, and just kind of a steady, slow direct, you know, linear path, then you're, you're asking for suffering. It's a spiral path. And so there are times of great bliss and calm and subtleness times when that doesn't happen at all. And sometimes it can go years and years and years. Here's where it's very difficult, very agitated, decades sometimes, but the with the dedication to be honestly present for how things are, it's very helpful. Sometimes it can be years of great calm and great bliss or maybe your neighbor you know person sitting near you is just every time you talk to them, they talked about how the great bliss of meditation they seemed like a floating off their cushion, you know, and you say, Well, why couldn't that happen to me. And then after a few years of that, they get hit over the head by something that they never paid attention to, which is bubbles up and, and you kind of amazed at how difficult it is for them. Certainly, it's a spiral path, you never really know what's going to happen. The dedication is to be honest with what's happening in the moment. Not doesn't really matter what's happening to you, what really matters or you're honestly present, for what's happening, and trying to find that place to be nonreactive to what's going on. That's what really counts. So I'll try one more time for someone to talk about their experience. Yes.

You ask

your body I realized that I feel I need to meditate many, many years.

Maybe so, what's really uh, it can seem very daunting to us that the task that that's can be done, but the process of changing ourselves happens much faster than happens amazingly fast even though it can seem very, very slow. If you think of all the seconds you've had in your life, to be filled with fear or desire or anger, craving to have a distracted mind you kind of lost in your thoughts. Know that the momentum of that is just phenomenal. And it doesn't take a long time to begin making some inroads on that. Bye, bye, drops, the bathtub is filled with water. It's almost you know, it's almost like there's a 10,000 to one ratio. That one moment of honestly being present for how things are now helps resolve 10,000 moments of being mindless. It might still take a long time to get through the process. But it makes you know that the benefits and the power of mindful presence is really strong. Even though it might be lost to you in the day to day living on it. Yes. Well, I

was reading You're

angry, but I was I did

that it didn't feel so personal. Describe that day well,

it made me feel

like it was possible to

sit with those emotions without shoving them away.

Great. You said a number of important points. One is that sometimes identifying and labeling the emotion can help us not take it so personal or not to define ourselves through that emotion. One of the ways we complicate an emotional emotion is define ourselves by it. Oh, this is my emotion. This is my anger. This says something about me being angry. It's a lot easier if you just notice it as anger and don't necessarily take ownership of it or personalize it or anything. Just Oh anger is here. And then said Still in the middle of that anger and naming the naming and emotion can be very very helpful for that. They kind of the ancient stories fairy tales is if you name the dragon, the dragon dragon loses its power. And sometimes it works that way if you can name the emotion, it loses that power. where that comes from are defining ourselves through that emotion by identifying with it. And the word emotion is interesting because the word has the Latin means for E for emotion, emotion. prefix means out. And motion just means motion. So, the word the etymology of the word emotion means to move out. All emotions want to move, there's something in process, they're in motion, unless we freeze them,

unless we hold them still. So for example, resentment is frozen anger. And there's all these kinds of frozen ways if we freeze our emotions. To be a certain way, the task of mindfulness is begin to loosen them up again and let them move through us. And the more mindful and more honest, you can be about it, the emotional presence, probably, the more quickly you'll notice that it moves through you. changes do so in mindfulness practice, in mindfulness meditation, we begin by bringing our attention to the breath. Trying to be very simple. With a breath, try to develop some concentration, continuity, some mindfulness of what goes on when you breathe, letting the breath kind of settle you. If something becomes more compelling, in your experience in the breathing, then you let go of the breathing. And you let the mindful meditative awareness settle on this new event. So last week, we talked about we talked about physical experiences in the body. If strong physical sensations arise pleasant or unpleasant or strong sounds or visions that you might have. Then the more compelling the breath more predominant, then you just let go of the breath. And notice, bring your attention to those parts of your body. Name them, feel them, be present for them, explore them. See if you can develop that nonreactive awareness, allowing awareness, their meditative awareness, be calm and present for how things are. If an emotion becomes predominant, becomes compelling for your attention, then you can let go of your breath again or let go of the physical sensations that you're paying attention to. And now let the emotion be the place you cultivate your meditative awareness. So the emotional feeling you're having doesn't have to be a distraction from your meditation. It becomes a meditation and there's you're allowed to have any emotional, any emotion that can pass a human being can possibly have your luck Have a meditation, there's no need to censor it or judge it or do anything about it except try to feel it carefully and mindfully noticing the ways in which you complicate it by reacting to it or judging it or personalizing it, defining it herself with by defining yourself by it. And the idea is to be very simple, with the emotion, very simply present for how it actually is. So it can be kind of almost like a silent mind or quiet mind or ease for mind. Oh, I'm feeling this way. Just kind of try to be tried to be that way. Or if you can't be that way, then just notice how you are. You might be the 14th generation 114 generation it might be pure chaos, it might be tornadoes, if it's tornadoes, and a lot of things happening at once. Don't try to identify any particular thing, any particular emotion. Just try to identify the whole catastrophe just it's a mess in here. It just be really honest boy, it's a really a mess. I'm sitting In a mess, and then feel was like to be a mess, to the chaos in the energy of that. It's not always so easy to recognize that you're having a strong emotion. I know that for me when I was younger, I had a self identity, where I was not an angry person.

So when I got angry, I didn't see it because it wasn't didn't fit inside the definition of who I was. And sometimes the anger would have to really hit me over the head before I really noticed or admitted that I was angry. Sometimes it can be that way. It's hard to recognize an emotion that's very compelling or very powerful within us. It's very important to learn to recognize these things when they arise. After you've recognized them, it's important part of the process is to learn just to allow them to accept them. acceptance in meditation doesn't mean that we condone them. It doesn't mean we justify them. Just simply means that we allow them to be there without any further complication. Just let them bubble up and be as they are. And then it's useful to label the emotion to name it. I remember once when I was feeling yucky, I lay down to kind of be with myself and be with kind of heavy feelings I was feeling. And

I feel my chest was kind of was extended. And as I exhale, I couldn't really relax my chest all the way. I just kind of feeling how I was feeling being with my sensations, my body feeling how it was. And then I recognized in one moment that I was depressed, and I said, are depressed. And as soon as I said that my chest released. Sometimes being able to identify a name and emotion is very, very helpful, helping us not be so caught by it. And you might want to name it kind of repetitively, whatever it might be, and then you want to investigate It cannot just simply be present for it. You also want to look more carefully what is this experience? What is the physical side of the emotional experience, all emotions, most almost all emotions will have a physical bodily component aspect of it. If you get afraid, you probably find your stomach may be tied to your shoulders kind of curling over. Or if you're angry, maybe your your fists clenched or your stomach again or your chest or your jaws. Or if you're really filled with love. Maybe you find this great relaxation and just, you know, softness that happens somewhere in your chest and sense of openness and vulnerability. Somewhere in your heart center or something. There's a whole range of places we might feel our emotions in our body. It's very helpful to drop into the body and feel the emotion as a physical experience. One of the reasons for that is that then we're less likely to get caught up in the story that's connected to the emotion being present. We, you know, we tend very easily to get lost in the story, the ideas or thoughts. So we get angry, and we get lost in the conversation of what I'm going to tell that guy. The story is not important for meditation how you're feeling is. So one of the ways to stay present for direct feeling is to find the physical anchor for that emotion in a place in your body where it is, and just hang out there. A friend of mine who went on a long retreat, had a lot of fear was going to fear Thai person. And he used to panic when his fear came up, until he recognized that his fear was a lot of tightness and contraction in his chest. He said, Oh, I can hang out with that. It becomes much less frightening for him just to feel it as physical sensation. And also, as soon as you feel something physically in your body, then the somatic somatic processing that can happen happens much more easy. If there's awareness and mindfulness of what's happening in the body. So you want to recognize that you're having an emotion, you want to accept it, you want to label it, and you want to investigate it feels in your body, be with it there. You want to be careful not to make it complicated. One of the ways to make it complicated is to want it to go away. Another way to complicate it is to want it to stay. Another way to complicated is to have a time frame for when it's to go away. I've been with it now for five minutes and hasn't gone away yet. It doesn't matter how long it stays. Mindfulness is not about what you're experiencing, or how long you're experiencing. It's about how you develop your mindful, meditative awareness of what is happening. The practice has more to do with how you see things than what you see. And we're cultivating that ability. To see things with his mindful, acceptance, independent presence. And after, after you've been with something for 10 minutes, but it's not going away. And you say, shoot, it's not working, it hasn't gone away. At that moment you lost your practice, you lost the mindful, allowing awareness of how things actually are.

So all this makes sense. I hope it doesn't seem too complicated. The idea is to be very simple about it. One or two questions about this instruction? Yes. Right. Yeah, it's different. This practice is difficult, just in general, but it's also difficult to distinguish our concern about the cause and In the emotional reaction itself, and with practice, you'll learn to distinguish between those two. And often we think is the cause is not really the cause. Sometimes we think what that person said to me is the cause. That

person said, Can you believe what that person said, that person had said that it wouldn't have happened, that person is the cause. If you got angry, that person is not the cause of the person's condition for your anger, not the cause, you know, where the causes it's with you. And part of the part of the process of mindfulness is to be still enough and mindful enough to begin seeing actually where the cause of things is. But we're not looking for the cause. We're just trying to be present for where things are. And then as you do that, the cause will show itself not analysis. You know, looking back That address your thing more or less your comment. Right. And that's why I dropping into the body and feeling the semantic physical aspects of the emotion. Because what what's happening your body is always happening in the present moment. The cause happened some time ago, usually, the way we're preoccupied with thinking about it. So one of the ways to or if we're planning the future, then, you know, that's not happening in the present either, but the body is always in the present. So if you're planning the future because you're worried and afraid, if you drop down into the fear in your body, and feel that fear in your body, then you know you're in the present, you're no longer concerned about the preoccupation or not as much at least. This

last one we've been talking about how to deal or address

exactly the same,

you Nope.

And you don't try to assign meaning to it and say, oh, finally, um, you know, I hope everybody notices What a great meditator I am or, you know, or this, this means that, you know, this means that, you know, you know, it's all these we do the same thing. And, and some people have beautiful, blissful meditations and wonderful joy in their body and meditation, and they get really afraid, you know, they're Irish Catholic. You know, it's, it's, it's really a challenge. Because, you know, physical pleasure is just not, you know, it doesn't go with a program. And, and sometimes if, if very well, anyway, the idea is to continue The practice of mindful awareness of how things actually are without trying to hold on to anything, react to anything, resist anything, make anything better, make anything stay, pick anything go away, just how it is. And it can be a lot easier to want to do that if things are uncomfortable. Because then, you know, if it's uncomfortable, if I do this practice really well, then it won't be so bad. But when things are really blissful, and meditation, then there's very little motivation sometimes to do the practice. I mean, if this is great, why don't you know, why bother doing it, I'll just hang out here forever, you know, or I'll just hold on to this. The real strength of the practice comes when you take refuge in the practice of mindfulness, no matter if it's pleasant or unpleasant experience. And if you really want to learn how to be independent, have this great independent presence that you can bring to all kinds of things. of your life. You want to be sure to do this practice, even for the pleasant experiences, the pleasant emotions. So I've talked a lot today. Let's end with a short sitting.

Now sometimes when I begin meditation periods, I do a little guided preparation. You breathe deeply. Sit up straight, relax like go. Mindfulness does And requiring any preparations, you could just begin immediately noticing how you actually are in the moment. So you might since we're talking about emotions Now, you might begin immediately to notice what is the emotion, emotional state, the mood, the attitude that's present for you.

It might be very subtle, it might be course.

Try to recognize it. Accept it, give it permission to be there.

Name it a few times, label it, you're unsure what it is. Then just label it emotion

and then spend some time noticing the, the physical aspects of it. This is sensations in your body that let you know that this emotion is happening.

Physical physicality of it is not a story. It's not a reaction. What happens if you just hang out for a while with the physical aspect of the emotion, the mood, the attitude

Sometimes the body can be a container or the emotion that the body kind of hold whatever you're feeling as if it's a soft receptacle soft container within which the emotions can bounce and flow and move.

And then trying to be as accepting of yourself as possible as you are right now. It's okay to be just the way you are

Become aware of your breathing as if your breathing is in the very center of who you are. Not to ignore or deny or push away who you are what's going on. Just at the center of gravity of who you are, is your breathing. Hang out there with your breath.

So hopefully as you do the practice at home That incorporating including your emotions as part of the practice will make it easier to stay present. Because if you don't include your emotions, and when they become strong and compelling, it might just actually carry you away easier kind of propel you out from the present. And you might also begin paying attention to your emotional life outside of meditation. It might be very interesting to discover what it's like to be mindful of your emotions, as opposed to reactive to them. So, next week, we'll continue with the instructions to include thoughts thinking, rather than having thoughts and thinking, being a distraction or being a hindrance for practice. There's a whole art of learning how to bring mindfulness to our thinking life also. It's very helpful. So Thank you and I wish you all a happy week.