

2002-01-17 Introduction to Meditation: Physical Sensations (Week 2)

Fri, 6/19 10:30AM • 1:27:50

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

sensation, meditation, preferences, attention, happening, breath, breathing, feel, body, people, noticing, sensitive, experience, mindfulness, mindfulness practice, commentary, mind, ideas, hand, life

SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

To the second class, second week of the five week introductory course. And so those if any of you might be new, I'll be going over and over five weeks, the basic instructions for mindfulness meditation. And last week I talked about the basis of the foundation of posture and sitting, sitting posture, and also using the breath, the breath being one of the most central aspects of meditation. But it's not the only aspect and the other is what do we build on today we'll be talking about our body in mind, mindfulness of the body, how to use our how our embodied experience is a really important part of Buddhist spirituality. So Can you all hear me okay? So working today without the speaker and we left one of the heaters on the quieter one. So if you have trouble hearing me speak up at some point and when you Turn off the heater. I'll speak up louder.

So I'll start with a short story and then we'll have our first city teaching story that I tell often at the beginning class.

Some time ago, I was watching football on a with some other meditation teachers on television who are watching on television. And as all sensible people do, I think, when the commercials came on, teacher had the remote hit the mute button, so we wouldn't have to listen to that sound. And then we just kind of had this conversation talked about things whenever people talk about during commercials And then at some point, the game started again. And the meditation teacher who didn't have the remote, who had the remote, didn't unmute the television. And since this was a mindfulness teacher, even years and years of mindfulness training, I figured that he was mindful of the fact that we went to Washington game without any sound. And that he probably knew a little bit what he was doing. And I thought, well, this is interesting. And since I had some background in mindfulness meditation, I knew that one of the principles of mindfulness is investigation, being interested in what's this What's it? What's this? What's this experience like? So rather than rushing in with my opinion, and my desires

and preferences, you know, I said, Okay, let's This is very interesting. This is unusual. And let's just continue with this for a while before I say something for I know, Jim. And what I discovered was how different it felt to a different experience was watching football, without the sound compared to how it was watching with the sound. Without the sound, I could follow the game somewhat. I mean, I knew these guys lined up and they fell down. You know, every once in a while, I could see that some guy kind of broke loose and I was really happy he was going down the field because, you know, it looked like he was going to make it to the goal line and I could see that and then I could see some guy running off the side kind of look like he was gonna tackle him. And lo and behold, they got tackled, I didn't make it. And, you know, it was pretty obvious what was going on. But the, and then my friend hit the mute button again, and the sound came on. And then the difference was that we had the commentator, the sportscaster talking about the game. And I found the experience of watching the football game was very different, that maybe the job descriptions of the sportscaster is to pull you in emotionally into the game, by the way, they talked about it, and he had a certain level of excitement. It wasn't just simply I was watching some guy running down the field and you know, just kind of, but the excitement of the sportscaster having almost the edge of my seat, you No, all excited and yes, because when he talked about it, and the experience of watching with the sound without the sound with the commentator, not the commentator, made the football game very different. Generally, when we watch television, we don't distinguish between the commentary. And the game. For example, we don't distinguish often between the canned laughter or the mood setting music, from the actual thing that's happening on the television. Sometimes the joke is not that funny, but it will be contagious. It seems funny because that is canned laughter, or the music, it sets a certain mood and we get pulled into it. Just some guy driving a car down the road. But then the music makes it seem maybe ominous. You know, something's about to happen to the sky, driving this car. And so, you know, the experience is different because of this overlay. And we don't distinguish the overlay from the actual thing that's happening. The same thing happens in Our own life. We have our own commentator, in our own brains in our minds, that's often making commenting on what's going on, or maybe not what's going on maybe what happened, or what you think is going to happen. We spend a lot of time planning or remembering, or fantasizing or repeating conversations, or just maybe we are commenting, what's going on here, being judgmental, for example, what's happening around us. And what's interesting is that we don't seem to have a mute button. We would be nice if we had one. But what's interesting also is we don't distinguish often, or the actual experience we're having from the commentary that we have about the experience. And part of the function of mindfulness practice is not to necessarily stop the commentary, but to make a gap between them. So we see the commentary, the interpretations, the opinions, The projections and all this stuff that we do is different from the experience itself. And that in that gap, we can find a lot of freedom. When those when those when there's no gap and we're entangled with a two, it's very difficult to find our freedom because we believe that our experience is the way we think it is. We don't realize that we're experiencing our life through the filter of our beliefs and ideas and emotions and feelings and all those things. And all those things are fine.

meditations are supposed to stop those things, but to make a kind of like a gap or kind of like a pause or kind of like, help us see the difference between them. So we can learn to rest in the direct

experience. So if you're sitting in meditation, and you're being with your breathing, which is central aspect of meditation, and then the commentator starts Oh, that's what In the very good breath, you know, I'm supposed to administer cannabis. I'm Inight Meditation Center. And I've been doing this for a while I supposed to have a very deep, long, slow spiritual breath. And that was shallow, fast, and how could I be breathing that way and I never breathe, right? And, you know, I'm such a lousy meditator and lousy at everything I do and, and maybe I should go into therapy and get fixed with all that the therapy is so expensive, and I can't do therapy and maybe I should, you know, take up meditation that's a lot cheaper and then you wake up and you realize, wait a minute. I am meditating I was. And then you can only be critical of your breath. That's not the right breath. And then that filter of the opinion and judgment about the breath affects the way that we experience the breathing. And so it's almost can be a times of self fulfilling prophecy. Oh, that's a bad breath. And then it breath kind of mid, how would the breath feel if someone said you're a bad breath, you kind of feel kind of bad. But the breath is very different from our opinions about it. And what we're trying to do in meditation is to stay with the direct experience, stay with the breaths, own experience of itself, and learn to train ourselves to rest more in the breath. Then we rest in the commentator, the commentary, the thoughts and judgments, interpretations and what this means and what this is about and all that. So it makes sense. So let's do it. And as you do this, you might be a little bit sensitive to noticing when you've taken up residency in your commentary, when you're filtering your experience. Through the thoughts and judgments and interpretations, versus when you're actually resting with the immediate physical sense of what it feels like for the body to be breathing, what's the body's experience of breathing. So take a comfortable, alert posture.

Softly Close your eyes.

And sometimes it can be helpful at the very beginning to notice if there's any predominant attitude or interpretation or commentary. Feeling which exists, that might be coloring your experience during this meditation.

And then at the beginning of a period of meditation, it's good to take a few long, deep breaths. As you exhale, let it all go the best you can. Your thoughts, your ideas.

As you breathe in, breathe in deeply so that you feel a connection with your body, your torso The breath helps establish that connection

and then let your breath returned to normal.

The idea is to feel the direct experience of breathing which means to feel the way the body experiences the breathing

It's also helpful beginning of a sitting to let go of any obvious tension in your muscles might be easy to let go of. Maybe each time you exhale to let there be a softening the most the muscles of your face

perhaps your shoulders

Perhaps you can soften your belly at your stomach hang forward, relax it

And then within your body as part of your body, becoming aware of your body's experience of breathing, not your ideas about the breath, not your visualization of the breath, your judgments about it. But the raw simple way in which you happen to be breathing.

You have a tendency to comment on everything you pay attention to and in doing so, entangle yourself between the experience and the commentary.

Perhaps you can put to rest a little bit, the commentator in favor of just being with each breath, experiencing it in and of itself, as if each breath is precious or unique or each breath is allowed Be as it is revealing itself to you

Each time you exhale, let go of any thoughts or concerns that you might be caught up in so that your mind can become simpler and perhaps calm

being with the direct experience of breathing

Noticing if you get caught up in commentary, either about the meditation or what's happening or about something unrelated

It's fine for that to happen. It's what your mind does. But whenever you notice that that's happening, gently let it go and come back to the direct experience of breathing in its simplicity,

letting the commentary be in the background or not there at all.

our attention is one of the precious aspects of who we are. Do you let your attention be pulled around by your thoughts? Caught lost in them or can you allow your precious attention to be free from the commentator and to be perhaps lovingly devoted, gently connected to each breath, one breath after the other

And then in the last few minutes of this sitting, stop paying attention to the breath. And now instead, let your attention go to the strongest sensation in your body. It doesn't have to be very strong but whatever happens to be the strongest sensation in your body, let your attention go there

and see if you can have an allowing presence, allowing attention feeling it directly as it is, without being filtered through the comment theory and interpretations and ideas, reactions you might have about it.

If this sensation goes away, then go to the next strongest sensation in your body. If the sensations persists, hang in there with it, get to know it better. Feel it more carefully investigated, but always with an allowing attention. It's okay for it to be there.

And then come back to your breathing in just for the next two or three breaths, just rest there in the rhythm of your breathing.

In its simple description, mindfulness practice is a noticing, practice. It simply noticing what's happening in the present moment as it's occurring. In being a noticing practice, we know what we often encounter discover is how difficult it is for us to be in the present moment. The mind has a very strong tendency to hijack the attention into thinking about the past, that planning the future, thinking about the future, going into fantasy, or sometimes it can be in the present moment, but it's sucked up into interpretations and judgments and ideas for what's happening. in its simplicity, it's a noticing practice that allows things to be as they are. And a lot of the training of mindfulness practice is a training in learning how to have the capacity, learning how to develop that capacity to be present for things without reacting to it all the time. We're always being forward against it, pushing it away or holding on to it, but let it be kind of a sacred pause. So people might say kind of a, an allowance, sacred allowance or openness or presence, that at least for a while, just lets things be as they are. And meditation training is very, very much a training to discover that capacity to leave things alone. While simply noticing how they are in a very simple way. As the noticing gets more concentrated and calmer and more peaceful, we tend to notice some of the subtle ways in which we get entangled in their lives in subtle ways in which we react and respond. That might not be obvious when we're not very quiet. And that allows us to let go or simplify that and becomes kind of a path then, of greater freedom and release from all the entanglements of reactivity. And so tremendous peace and joy can arise from cultivating and all pervasive allowing attention to what's happening in the moment. We do that meditation to some degree, we can learn to do that in daily life. In life, we also have to know how to act and respond and react in a sense, but the, but if you can develop if you have the capacity to know how not to automatically react to be an automatic pilot, then you probably respond more appropriately and wiser in the things that you do in the world. Then if you always coming out habitual reactivity, so the training of Meditation is very helpful for living a much more stress free life.

Some people don't appreciate how simple the mindfulness practice is. And we have all these all these agendas and ideas, interpretations, commentary, but what meditations really supposed to be like, I'm supposed to get calm, I'm supposed to get peaceful. Suppose we get filled with joy and bliss. I'm supposed to get concentrated, I'm supposed to all be supposed to. If only this wasn't happening to me right now, then I can meditate. If only the if only attitude. It's really unnecessary. The mindfulness

practice is simply noticing what is actually happening right now. So one of the things that's happened to us is our bodily experience. And learning to pay attention to our bodily experience is important part of mindfulness. Practice. And in fact, it's important part of living wisely. because much of our body, much of our human life is processed through the body. And if we're disconnected to the body, then we won't actually feel much of what our life is about. nor will we be very sensitive instruments to perceive what our life is about around us, within us around us, like our bodies, like this great antenna that can pick up so much what's going on, within us and outside of us. But if you shut off your body, don't pay attention to it. If you're always in your thoughts and your business and ideas and plans and things you have to do, and you don't really pay attention to the body, then this tremendous antenna, this tremendous instrument of awareness is not available for you to provide you with it's it's service, it's help it's, you know, doesn't really help us and in fact in Buddhism, the mind body are considered to be a unit that work together. Sometimes in some philosophies, they separate the mind in the body as being two different things. In Buddhism, the two are interdependent are in closely connected to each other. And so what we say is that if you don't pay attention to your body, you actually lose touch with part of your mind, you actually lose touch with a wider part of your psyche. And if you want to really open up to the fuller aspects of our whole psyche, you also need to open up to the fuller aspects of your body. So the body then becomes a very important way of developing Buddhist spirituality. Because there is no freedom, spiritual freedom in Buddhism, without cultivating some degree of embodied freedom in our body also. Now the way that the body comes into play with mindfulness meditation is that we sit down and we give ourselves to the breath to develop concentration, stability. To help the breath of e commerce little bit. But then if some, if there are other things in the background of attention in the foreground of attention, you can keep the breath there. In the background of attention, you're aware of sounds or body sensations or thoughts or whatever, as long as they're in the background. That's okay, just leave them there. And let this stability continue to develop on the breathing. Sooner or later, something from the background will come into the foreground. And then you don't have to then then if it's in the foreground that you stay with a breathing, there might be a tension between your attempt to stay with a breath, this other thing which is kind of compelling, kind of wants attention. So the mindfulness practice then is to let go of the breathing and let that meditative awareness, settle on that new thing which has come into the foreground, and let the breath recede to the background. So if I'm sitting here Mining my own breath. And at some point my knee starts hurting sitting here. And it's kind of a strong compelling sensation in my knee. What we do then is we would let go of the breath, and I would let my attention settle on that sensation. And he just let that be the place where the meditation occurs. You need need meditation and being able to be very sensitive, whether I'm experiencing that knee through the filter of my commentary, reactions, attitudes, interpretations, or whether I'm experiencing in and of itself as it actually is, because I know that if I experienced it through my

interpretation of it, I'm much more likely to feel suffering and much more likely to contract around that experience. So I'm sitting here My knee hurts. And rather than just being there with the simplicity of the knee hurting, My mind goes, Oh my gosh, I'll never sit through the sitting. And this is terrible for my knee to be hurting. And if I'm sure that if I sit any longer that something really awful is gonna happen to

me. And in fact, I don't know what kind of maybe it's cancer. It must be something like that in my knee. And how can I be sure? And why doesn't that guy up there bring the belt in the sitting because Don't they know that meditation shouldn't be more than five minutes and it's been 15 minutes now and so off the mind goes galloping away. It's been hijacked by the thoughts, interpretations. And as in one of them might be as I can afraid of it. They're angry that's there. And as these reaction reactions take precedent, it often causes me to suffer cause me to be anxious and sometimes causes me to cry muscles to contract around that pain maybe, and actually can make it a lot worse. We're trying to cultivate in mindfulness meditation is the ability to rest the attention there. As opposed to let the attention be caught up in interpretations and ideas. And so to training to learn how to do that, so bring the attention carefully to the knee and feel the sensations there, explore them, get to know them, being sensitive to how we're relating to it so that it doesn't trip us up. Maybe getting kind of more precise, in what is actually the sensation of pain. Because pain is an abstract label. It can be made up of many different sensations. So part of mindful stand is to go and find out exactly what it is. Is it tightness, is it stabbing, is it pulling, twisting, burning Siri There's all kinds of sensations that might be induced to really go in there and feel it. I hope it is not pain that you that pulls you away. But sometimes that's what happens. One of the interesting things about meditation, or any any any practice, I think mindfulness awareness practice that helps you relax is that if we're chronically tense, there's a way in which the muscles go numb. And then as we become more aware and relax a little bit, it tends to reveal how much pain is stored in that numbness. And so sometimes the process of relaxation involves a period of actually feeling the tense and painful shoulders for example, rather than going back into a numb state. So part of developing a mindfulness meditation and really being able to relax deeply is learning how to Then to allow for that. And now to make it worse by our reactions, and simply bring attention to that discomfort and learn how to cultivate that nonreactive awareness. So just this in its own right. So if there's some strong body sensation that's more compelling the breath, the practices, let go the breathing and let the attention go to that strong body sensation. It might. Sometimes we pay attention to a sensation that goes away. How many of you felt you found that you pay attention to strongest sensation in your body? It went away as you pay attention to it. Yeah, how many fans out there look up stronger as you pay attention to it. And the rest of you I take it it was the same thing happened at all to it. But right. Those are the three options what could happen and I'm noticing practice our job simply notice what happens to it as we pay attention to it without Any agenda, what's supposed to happen. So, if there's a strong body sensation, and then some other body sensation becomes even more compelling, then we'll let go of the first one and take up the second one. If there's a strong sound, which is really compelling, then we just matter of factly, let go of the breath or whatever else we're paying attention to, and do listening, meditation hearing, hearing. So the sounds that you hear during meditation don't have to be seen as a distraction. They're just another way of the other place to develop this allowing awareness, meditative awareness of what's happening in the present moment. Is this making sense? So do you have any questions? so far? What I've talked about

Yes. Well, if a scorpion, you should probably you should probably maybe choose what the wise course of action might be. But if it's a fly or flee or mosquito, the usual way in Buddhism is just be treated like

anything else. And you just are an H, for example. And you just, it's very compelling. We bring your attention there to feel it, but you don't squander it away. And what's interesting about most insects like that, or itches, is that you're not going to die. So that's a horrible, and so even, but it can be very compelling. And very, it can be very aversive to it. And so you get to work with all those aspects in a voluntary way. In a situation where it's easy to kind of, maybe, maybe shoo it away. And but here, you get to voluntarily look into it situation. It's relatively safe to deal with aversion and irritation and patience. Whereas it might be in daily life, that it's not so easy to do that so it's like a laboratory here of how learn learning how to not get caught by aversion, and how not to be led around by your nose by the aversion. So it's a great training area. It's also one of the, probably one of the secret, maybe secret practices of Thailand. More More meditators have developed really deep concentration than any other meditation practice, is the mosquito meditation. You're sitting there and minding your own breath. And suddenly you hear this. So you get to do you get to do listening medication. And then you all the reactions that come up and you try just to let go, those would just be with the simplicity of listening. And then you feel it landing on your cheek. And if you really develop your mindfulness really well you can really feel what it's like for mosquitoes are walking around your cheek. So walking around and walking around and you can really It's very compelling. It's very, you know, it's, you know, all your fantasies and all your planning, but future it's all kind of tends to go away really easily. You know, you're really in the present and you realize how easy it could be, and he feels walking around walking around, and then you don't feel anything. If you've done this enough times, you know what that means. And that means that it's poked, it's probably made, you know, a little bit and then you hear that it goes away and then you know, that few moments or minutes later you start feeling the sea. And it's had its had its meal and it's going off someplace else. And by time all that's done, you're really concentrated. You're really bright there, you're not anywhere else. You're not in the past. Are you really there for that? Now, most people would think if you're if you said here's what you're doing, and I think you're kind of crazy. There was a friend of mine who taught Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction, his practice in this in kind of a clinical setting. And he would tell people when they had physical pain, that's what you should do is pay attention to it, bring your attention to really focus on it. And people will get angry with him. I came here just to feel less pain to suffer less. And you were supposed to help me how not to feel the pain. You know, give me a pill, give me anything you know, so I don't have to feel it. And it's a no no, this is really the path to feel less pain is to really study it and be present for it and learn not to be reactive to it, and not to how to compound it. And to understand what needs to what you need to do take responsibility and make some adjustment through the pain and learn the message of the pain. Rather than kind of feeling I'm not responsible, the pills gonna take care of things and I'm just going about my life, whatever way I want. So, but sometimes when you sit and strong bodily sensation arises might be a very pleasant one. My feeling wonderful tingling A warm pressure and your cheeks are some bubbling joy someplace. And then you to the meditation teacher says, well, you're supposed to pay attention to that is a great, that's what I want. That's like a good practice. But you know, when a teacher says, you know, pay attention to the painful sensations? And who are these people you want to, you know, why is he telling me this, and we have very strong preferences. And actually, in order to become free, which is the purpose of mindfulness meditation, you have to establish your attention outside of the realm of your preferences outside the realm of

whether you like what's happening or don't like what's happening. And that's one of the reasons why this practice can be very, very radical for people very transformative, because most of us can often be led around by our preferences and likes and dislikes, and discover that ability not to be led around by them, you still have them, but define yourself independent of them. So you're not acting an automatic pilot is very, very freeing.

Other questions? Question? Yes,

we're talking about

studying

how is that different category? It might in a very, very rudimentary way. There are kind of levels of cognitive activity of the mind. So if you simply recognize something as heat, even the mind might even use the word heat or something, then that's pretty innocent. And is it keeping you in the present moment? But if you are saying, Oh, this is heat, and this reminds me of the time I was in the beach in Hawaii, and you know, in fact, reminds me of how wonderful wasn't the beach of Hawaii. And I think I'd rather be in Hawaii right now. Then, you know, it gets increasingly abstract and you know, distant as we can make associations, and then we get lost in the present moment. So some very innocent rudimentary cognitive behavior might be going on. But it doesn't have to be. So for example, you might feel a warm breeze against your cheek. And you're not thinking about it. But 30 seconds later, someone says, Did you feel a warm breeze? So yeah, I felt it. But you weren't engaged in it, you know, in terms of thoughts and ideas. The sensation was spoke for itself in a sense, to investigate or study is to allow these since the, the sensations to speak for themselves more by having a very keen attention on that place. And kind of, you know, kind of obvious, for the most part, what it might be. So we'll do an exercise now, and to speak to this and after the exercise, we'll all stand up a little bit understanding meditation in case you're getting restless from sitting so much, you know what's coming. So you Not to get tax commentary. You ready? Okay. So just put your hand in front of you put your hand over it actually put your hand facing up. You can either have hold it up or put it on your lap and then close Close your eyes

and then become aware of the sensations in your head.

As if your hand is an organ of perception they can become more sensitive. Let the attention sensitize you to what's happening in your hand. Just the sensations

on the palm of your hand. What are the variety of sensations you can feel on your palm?

tingling pressure. pulsing warm, coolness,

pressure

Justin you Palm itself, this sensation here aware of, do they move around? Do they arise and pass to the change? Are they constant

sensations of your fingers?

The back of your hand.

Is there any tightness in your hands any feelings of relaxation

by tuning into your hand more and more carefully how subtle Can you be aware of sensations there? how sensitive Can you make the hand

and now compare it to your other hand, which is most sensitive and alive and energetic, energized

and then you put your hand down and open your eyes.

So what happened to some of you as you were doing that exercise? Yes. Hmm

handing

the rest of the structure in

So your sensation in your back of your was more compelling, who's stronger, maybe more pronounced. And so you kept being pulled there.

Your mind or your speeches brain back to my hand.

Okay. Was it easier to stay with the concentration of the hand

held up?

Then the exercise before just trying to feel the worry? Did you ever since any experience of your hands becoming more sensitive over time as you watched? Were you surprised by how many sensations you could be aware of in your hands? Now, did you manufacture those sensations? Or do you think some of those are always happening? Are you just tuning in more sorry, always happening and for the most part, unless you were kind of straining with holding your hand this way, the there's there's a tremendous sensations, range of sensations happening all the time in the body. And mostly

we're unaware of it because we don't pay attention to it. We're paying attention to something else, usually our thoughts and ideas and what's happening around us. But it's possible to develop our sensitivity to the body or mindfulness of the body. So the body, the whole body, embodied experience, is much more vital and alive in presence and sensitive. And it's a wonderful, it's wonderful healing and holistic, healthy, to be able to come to life in the likeness of our body, rather than in a sense, the two dimensional world. They're just our thoughts and ideas. It's kind of like if you go running For example, do some exercise sometimes afterwards you feel really alive because of all the load and everything is flowing. With attention you can get the same effect. But just wait awaken the attention from the inside. So there's a lot to discover in our body. So now, let's stand

and then have your feet kind of hips distance from each other

in close your eyes

Let your knees be a little bit relaxed slightly so they're not locked.

In feel the weight of your body against the floor. If need be, adjust your yourself little bit so the way it is even throughout the feet at leaning forward or backwards to the side

and then bring your attention to the area of your head in the same way in which we became sensitive to the hand by focusing on one hand, allow your whole area of your head your face, scowl neck temple area just kind of let it become more sensitive by in a very straightforward way, becoming aware of the sensations in your head

noticing any tendency to comment on that sensation, so how you're doing or in the value of the exercise, see if you can be instead with the simplicity of the heads experience of itself. Whether it's pleasant or unpleasant, doesn't really matter. Just let the sensation speak for themselves.

And then move the attention down to the neck and shoulder area and do the same thing there.

The idea is not to judge your experience, but let it speak for itself as sensations letting your shoulder and neck area become more sensitized.

And then continue down into your chest area. ribcage, front rib cage and back rib cage in your own easy way that the attention move around the torso area, letting that area become more sensitized, more awake.

And then you Same thing with your arms, upper arm, elbow, lower arm and

see if you can discover a greater range of sensations. Thank you turning into that part of your body.

And then let the attention move to the area of your diaphragm and belly. abdominal area, your waist, mid and lower back.

Then the whole area around your pelvis the pelvic area pelvic cavity, the butt but in the genitals

And then down into your hips and upper legs,

then knees and then lower legs. There's no there's no right or wrong thing to feel. Just let the sensation speak for themselves as if they have a right to be there. Then you yourself become more sensitive by tuning in

and then down into your ankles and your feet.

And then if there's any obvious ways you can do with relax your whole body, just feel for a few moments. Your whole body's thought it's the whole body's organ of perception.

So in a few moments, I'm going to ask you to sit down. And because we're going to be changing your hair will be changing your posture. The tendency for a lot of people is to use that time or to do that. During that time to pop back into their thoughts and their ideas. And see if instead of doing that, you can now very quietly sit down, but stay connected to the whole by your body, what's happening on the inside of your body the sensations as if the body's a sensitive Oregon. You're gonna stay in touch with as you quietly Sit down. Okay? Close your eyes. Take alert, relaxed posture.

Then take some moments now to feel your body from the inside, if your whole body's sensations are speaking to you, or any live in and you as if they have a right to show themselves through maybe pleasant sensations and unpleasant sensations. It doesn't matter for the purposes of meditation. Your job is to allow them all as if each of them have a right to be there. Your job is to simply be aware becoming more sensitive to them, sensitizing the awareness of the body

and then see if you can notice what the strongest sensation is in your body. Doesn't have to be very strong or whatever happens to be the strongest unless you're a Attention rest in that part of your body and simply directly become more sensitive to what that part of your body is really feeling. Not what you think is going on, but directly and immediately as if there's a whole world which can open up for you. If you simply tune in to that part of your body.

Perhaps you can allow the mind thought To become quiet in favor of becoming more sensitive silence sensitivity to what's happening in the moment in your body.

If you find it helpful as a way of keeping you on track with your body, you can very softly whisper in the back of your mind, a label or a naming that experience you're paying attention to.

naming this sensation of hardness is hard, hard pressure or tightness. tightness, tightness, pressure, pressure.

It's like using a very rudimentary thought to help keep you present as opposed to your thinking mind being free to do whatever it wants.

If what is the strongest sensation in your body changes and let your attention change to the new sensation. Sometimes it can feel like a dance of sensation sensations

And then let your attention now move to your breathing to the way in which your body experiences the breathing

You can name each breath if that helps you stay focused in, out or rising, falling

And in the same way that you got more sensitive to the hand as you tuned into it and paid attention to it, see if you can become more sensitive to what the body feels when you're breathing. The sensations of breathing within the body to places in the body that feels the breathing

Each time you exhale let go of any thoughts and concerns which have crept in that might be hijacking you

So then to repeat the instructions is that in your meditation practice, continue making the breathing the primary anchor for your mindfulness. Give yourself some devotion, loving devotion to the breathing. The breathing is perhaps one of your best friends you could possibly have to really be with it, breathing in and out one after the other. But if some bodily experience in your body or hearing some sound becomes more pronounced more compelling than your breathing. Can you let go of the breath and develop your meditative awareness on that physical experience. If that experience is no longer compelling or it's passed away, no longer there, then you can come back and begin again with your breathing. If you're with some sensation, it stays for a long time is compelling for a long time, it's completely fine to let a whole meditation session be sensation of meditation on one sensation of your body. If that's what's most compelling your body changes, then you can let your attention can gently flow and move from one to the other. As you do it develop a greater sensitivity and awareness to your body. Like your body kind of show itself to you reveal itself to you what it has the body store And holds so much of who we are and what our past has been. And sooner or later the body can help us process that. material that stuff for life. Now, I encourage you for this next week for you as you go about your daily life. Begin paying attention to what your body's experiences of your life. If you're if you're at work and you sit at a desk or computer, tune into what your body's experience is like doing your work. Your

body is something you look around and ignore and if he doesn't feel abandoned by you, or kind of just kind of oppressed by you as you sit there and bad posture. How does it bother you? How does your awareness of the body sensations about a change in different circumstances? How does your bodily experiences change with different emotions as they arise? Sometimes your emotions are in the stomach, sometimes chest sometimes in the face, start becoming aware of the life of the body, as if the body really counted was important. And what you'll find as you do the mindfulness practice over time, is that you can trust your body. And the body has a tremendous capacity to help us find balance and wisdom and healing in our lives, if we trust it. And often when we use we don't trust it by instead of being some kind of we don't necessarily talk this way, I think this way. But de facto, we're kind of trusting our thinking mind, our mind can figure things out and sort things out. And often, our thinking mind is like a closed loop. We just kind of spinning and spinning and spinning and a way of stepping outside of the box over loop of thinking is to begin trusting our body more and being with the bodily experience what's happening, and see what you can learn about yourself and the world around you by being more in your body. wonderful things like love and joy, I believe can only be experienced fully. If we the body shares in those experiences, the body is the vehicle for those expression of those feelings. If we're not paying attention to our body, that present for it to some degree, not living in body life, joy, love, peace, compassion, are so much more difficult to access or let them flow through us and be part of who we are. So for this next week, I'd encourage you as much as you can get to know your body Even if you think you know it well, I don't think we can know our bodies well enough. And that investigation, in our bodily experience both in meditation, daily life will be a very important and useful foundation for next week, we talk about how to bring mindfulness into our emotional life to our emotions.

So that's the tasks. Is there anything that? Yes?

Sorry, do you want to add any more?

So your last week I suggested you said if you're new to all this, that you meditate 15 minutes a day as a way of kind of getting this under your belt so you can try to apply what you're learning here. And what I recommend is now you increase that by five minutes, so rather 15 minutes you sit 20 minutes each day and I think you'll get The most out of the instructions and teaching here during the course, if you're applying if you're trying to apply at least the best you can at home, or during your lunch hour at work. Yes.

Yeah, I would, I would, I would prefer you make it 20 minutes in one sitting. If your life is too busy, so as impossible, then I'd be very happy with two sessions of 10 minutes. But if, if you can, at least for the duration of this course, to follow the way I'm instructing you, I think you'll find more benefit from it. Then afterwards, you can decide to vary it in some way that works for you. Better. We can take maybe a minute or two for you have some questions. Be clear enough today or comments, commentary. There is another question.

When you get more aware of life around you or your body.

Well, I have a feeling that it's very overwhelming because you're starting to notice things you didn't notice before.

Yes, it can be, yes, sometimes it can be too much. So we have an overstimulated society. But sometimes the stress we have from being overstimulated is not from the stimulation itself, but rather that it's as if we have all these hooks or buttons inside of us. And the environmental experiences are hitting these hooks these buttons, and triggering things within us resistance, fear, anger, aversion, all these things. And the reason why we sometimes get exhausted or stressed or overwhelmed by it, is because of what it hits within us. So part of the function of mindfulness practice is not to kind of shut yourself off from the world so you can feel good, but rather become aware of those buttons. The mindfulness include those so you can become free of those buttons. And then this happens in the world scroll right through you, in a sense, it'd be very sensitive, very open, very present for things, but it doesn't stick anywhere. It makes sense. Teflon mind, Teflon heart. I don't know if that's good. Dr. But yes. Yeah.

In to the air intake, and I'm quite comfortable. Now here. When I tuned into the breath, I get that feeling.

before when I go from radical to the breath, because they seem to escape and when I use a word, and I use the word mind and channel that and I'm wondering

Keep coming back to

the eye that's very interesting and happens to a number of people. It's not not uncommon. And if you're willing, I think maybe the best route with mindfulness practice is simply to go along with that. And not to make it a problem. But to continue develop your mindfulness of what that sensation feels like. It could become studied so well, you could write dissertation and what it feels like to not get enough air. Would you probably find if you really allow for it, and really be present for it fully, it'll resolve itself in its own way. If you're trying to control it and fix it, you probably be kind of stuck in that loop forever. So just be very patient for it and just allow it to be there. More pragmatically. You might see if there's any place you're holding, and I've known some people especially women who report what you reported. And often they are holding your stomach. They're not really relaxing a diaphragm in their stomach. They've been taught growing up, the women supposed to hold her belly in or something. And sometimes very relaxing that sometimes you can feel more breathless or fall and easier. That Yes. Yes.

Like, when when do you honor your preferences and when do you not?

Because I mean, that's part of being human is to have Sure. And I think that preferences without being totally attached and driven by them.

For them, it almost

seems like a contradiction in

terms to not have preferences at all should not be

I think I think that you're not expected to have no preferences. I think that you, that'd be a problem if you had no preferences at all. But if you were led by them means that you kind of, you feel compelled by them, you're driven by them. What I want has to be the way it has to be. And Get out of my way, you know, just ask, you know, you know, I don't want that. So, absolutely can't be, there's no freedom. But if you have a preference, and you can take it or leave it, then you can wisely see Oh, and you have a much more choice about whether you pick that up or not. And then you might have the wisdom. See what that preference if I do that right now, is not for my benefit. I mean, happens to be I have a lot of preferences. I have a lot of desires. They're like a dime a dozen. They're really easy to have And sometimes I would prefer to have you know, coffee 11 o'clock at night. You know, but I'm not compelled by that. It's just a thought that pops up in my mind or somewhere. And I have a preference, but I don't have to, I'm free of acting on it. And then I can evaluate. Is it really useful for me to have coffee at 11 o'clock at night? And I find it's not. So I can, I can easily let it go. It's okay. But if I if I can't let it go, then I'm not free. I think

often, it's natural to have a preference, perhaps a kind of person.

Sure, in which case you have

a greater affinity towards one person. Another,

then how can you

How can you still feel the same amount of love or compassion for all people to have a general affinity towards

It's a good question. The I don't know, if we're expected to have exactly the same kind of love for everyone love is kind of multi dimensional. But there is a kind of love which can be universal, which exists outside of our preferences. And so part of the value of learning not to be led around by our preferences is then we have a chance to open up to something which is more universal. So you sit down to the next to someone who, who you prefer actually not to sit next to this person. This person is

just, you know, not a very pleasant or unpleasant people in the world. They're unpleasant because they haven't bathed for three weeks or, you know, they behaviors really unusual and unpleasant. I mean, there are such unpleasant things. And if you're always a slave to wanting pleasant and unpleasant and reacting always to what's unpleasant or holding on to what's pleasant, then you can you won't discover this wonderful thing that can happen when They can happen kind of independent of pleasant or unpleasant. And I've been around people who are unpleasant. And I have to go, I have some ability now not to live by my preferences there. And it can actually be quite wonderful. And a certain kind of love can flow to that person, they wouldn't have been possible if I was, you know, always going with my preferences. You might be different, some different aspects or even qualities of that love, because they don't feel an affinity to that person. But there is something more universal and wonderful. And it's often sometimes you will gift we give to people, when they really feel that we're willing to meet people as you know, kind of equally fully, regardless of our preferences. You've been to kind of parties where, you know, people don't prefer you, you know, you know, it's like, it doesn't feel good. You know, it's nice when you meet sit down with someone someone's really there and willing to, you know, you know, just be with you as you are

How do you know

when to be there? In spite of their hygiene? When you want to respect your preference of

being with someone who smells better?

Well, some of it has to do with some idea, you have the consequences of what's going to happen. If you feel the consequences for it, there's a whole range of things that could actually come into decision like that. But consequences one of them the cause and effect relationship. So for example, you might say, you might recognize this person, I think, I think it'd be really helpful for this person. If I gave this person a little bit of time and a smile and people know most people don't give this person the time of day. It would help this person a lot if you have human contact with someone. And that's of greater value than my preferences. You know, my own Life what I want and don't want another time, you might decide that if I stay with this person anymore, I'm going to be so reactive that I'm going to start acting out in all kinds of funny ways and get a headache. This is not useful. So you can start controlling how do you use your best ability to evaluate situation decide what is most useful to do? But it's, it's it's easiest to decide what to do if you develop the capacity to not be led around by your preferences. Good luck. Okay, so thank you all very much, and I wish you a wonderful week may discover the great love that's possible when you're not led around by your preferences.