

2004-11-17 The Four Noble Truths (Part 1)

Wed, 7/29 1:54PM • 46:42

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

mindfulness, practice, breathing, hindrances, meditation practice, meditation, ease, breath, thought, feel, mind, life, sense, expresses, form, faculties, person, breathe, medicine, concentration

SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

So, while we're waiting for people to come in, any of you have any questions you'd like to ask the start off the evening? Yes, please. Yes, the meaning of putting it all together. It's a variety of things. It's a form of greeting. It's a form of greeting with respect. That's kind of the basic one. Some people infuse that gesture with other meanings or other feelings. A common one is feeling of gratitude. Sometimes it's infused with a feeling of reverence for for buying too many people in the West know it by the by the Indian Hindu name, Sanskrit name. Namaste, namaste. Ah, Mr. MST, which means it's kind of means or can mean people interpreted to mean You're vowing to the divine within you. So you put them, you're bound to something divine, you balance that divine, that divine aspect of the other person. That's kind of all come from in Hinduism, and Buddhism, respect, greeting, hello. It expresses something different than a handshake, a handshake, or a way Hi there, or you know, or a handshake, you know, certainly very significant forms of greeting, acknowledging of someone else, but something else is expressed this way, can you put your hand in front of your heart or in your head and expresses something and for different people expresses different things. For me at the end of the sitting, I often like to do with mostly as expression of gratitude. I feel very grateful when I say sort of, kind of give expression to that gratitude. Sometimes I bow out of respect, out of appreciation for the person I'm bowing to. Sometimes I feel some real real appreciation for people. So Bow to the person who vowed to that which I appreciate. Last week,

the five faculties one of them. One of them, though was itself was a self mindfulness. And yet I thought that these were five things that sort of supported mindfulness. So I got a little confused that it was included in the things that support itself.

They might have said that maybe that's a little bit contradictory than the five faculties or the five, five capacities of the mind, that come into play when someone meditates or comes into play when someone's engaged in any activity. And when someone's engaged in meditation practice, they come into play just as they come into play. And when we meditate, one of the things we do is practice mindfulness. But as we practice mindfulness, the other four come into play, for support that are coming to play, also You can't practice mindfulness without some degree of confidence. You can't practice without some degree of effort or applying yourself. So they work. They work as a system together to help

maybe as a group of five they support meditation vectors support any activity, and we can apply them to mindfulness to meditation. When when the meditation when the meditation practices mindfulness meditation, then maybe strictly we would say the other four, then support the mindfulness.

questions before we start. This might be your only chance tonight. Yes, They're

thinking about this on the way up here driving, whether there are any situations where obstacles to clear seeing when we're not one of the five hindrances, and I couldn't think of one.

So I just wanted to know if that's true.

The I haven't never thought about too much, but the my tendency is to think that there are there are other obstacles in the five hindrances to clear seeing. So for example being there are certain kinds of attachments being attached to your opinions that don't necessarily fit so smoothly into, into one of the five hindrances or being attached to a sense of self

I actually labeled those as attraction or his desire. It depends how broad you want to make some of these categories. One of the interesting ones is where does fear fit in. And because if fear is very powerful for many people, and it's not listed as one of the five hindrances, and the usual way of, of what usual way of taking care of fear is a slotted into as a form of aversion. The second hindrance interestingly enough, boredom is also sometimes explained as a form of aversion.

Everything else has been crystal clear in your meditation practice, sudo exactly what to do and you're completely content and sailing away. Yes.

Last week when you spoke about concentration practice as repression practice, that really struck me in it. I think I've been repressing a lot. So currently in my meditation practice

I've been doing more mindfulness, but sometimes

sometimes I don't know what component is. I feel like sometimes if I'm just still and I don't know what I'm contemplating, really, I feel like in the beginning, I don't know where I'm not concentrating on the breath or really being super mindful of stuff, but I don't know what the component of me just being still and not even thinking about anything yet. He said in. I'm wondering how you know, he said for people who live busy lives, that you said receptive awareness is often like, a little bit more adaptable or? I don't know. I don't know quite what my question is. I've been having difficulty in my practice because I have a very busy life. And I'm like is this even meditation practice is sometimes just for like sitting and not doing anything, but just being erect and not even like being conscious of anything.

So there are many different ways of meditating. And, and little bit, you can think of medicine as being a meditation as being a medicine. And so you could apply different medicines, different meditations for different illnesses, different situations. Some people who live very busy lives are very active minds. Find what's most useful in meditation is to do concentration practice, in order to still the mind quiet, bring calm and steadiness back to the mind. So People find it's more useful to do mindfulness. Some people find useful to do both. in daily life, it might be more useful to do mindfulness. And then some people find meditation, it's good to do some common practice. So they can go with some modicum of calm back into their life where they do mindfulness. Some people prefer not to do either mindfulness or concentration, but do a practice which can be called the being practice just to be and not to make any effort at all, knowing anything or paying attention, no effort at all to get concentrated. But just to kind of, kind of kind of unconditionally let themselves just be as they are. not try to stop thoughts. Don't try to stop feelings or anything just to be with whatever's going on. However, in that being, not to interfere not to get involved. So a thought arises, the person doesn't get involved in that thought, doesn't react to it. So just to kind of being with what is and some schools of Buddhism, like Zen puts a big premium in that

practice to beautiful Practice to be done. And sometimes people who are too technique oriented in my first practice, they're always always all about doing and trying to manipulate and figure out and no, no, no, are good, it's good for them to kind of take a break for a while and just do a being practice don't do anything at all, like go have any attempt to do anything, including the doing of getting distracted. And, and that can provide a very different perspective on our life and a great refuge a great source of peace. And then and then at some point, C being practice can only take a person so far, at some point it becomes a dead end. And at some point, then you have to go further. The person has to add back in the knowing part of the mind the cognitive part, the mindfulness part is mindfulness which you can which can take you all the way to liberation. So depending on what the medicines needed, sometimes you might do concentration, sometimes mindfulness sometimes just being practice. Sometimes you do loving kindness, practice the variety of things. And part of a discerning spiritual life is to have the discernment to know what is the appropriate medicine for you at any given time. It makes some sense. Now each each of the schools, each of the each, each kind of meditation in Buddhism has associated with it or tends to have associated with a, a, a religion, the Buddhist religion. So like is it like just being sometimes is associated with Zen zen, it's a whole philosophy and metaphysics around how that's the ultimate practice has to be. Other schools put tremendous emphasis on concentration have a whole philosophy to support that. Some schools have emphasized mindfulness as a whole religion that just kind of champions mindfulness. And in a terrible tradition, we don't particularly champion any particular form of meditation, but see them all as tools that are quite adaptable and use them as appropriate. Use them according to the view and medicine at least. be addressed. That makes some sense.

Okay. So we're gonna sit for a while. So if you'd like to stand for a moment so that your legs are limber, loose for the next period

So, taking a alert posture,

gently closing your eyes

and one of the guides for meditation practice is our ability to sense or feel or experience ease. So as you sit here, feeling your body let yourself be at ease

Either pushing anything away or holding on to anything, just at ease with what is at ease in your body. At ease with your thoughts and concerns. At ease with your feelings

at ease with whatever unease you might be feeling

And perhaps as a way of bringing more ease and presence to your experience, you can take a few long slow deep breaths. So you stretch your ribcage a little bit, stretch your area, your shoulders and shoulder blades. Gently feeling a greater presence here in this body and as you exhale to settle into yourself more letting go relaxing

Deep, gentle breathing in to oneself, here you are here

and then letting your breath return to normal without any special effort to breathe in any particular way. Take a few moments to become familiar with what it feels like for your body to be breathing. As if you've never noticed your breath before. Feel your breathing explore it. Feeling it from the inside from the inside. breathing.

And then as you are familiar with your breathing, still maintaining a natural breath. See if there's some really simple and obvious ways to adjust the way you're breathing so that it's more comfortable or more pleasant even. It says if the range of a normal breath as if there's a range to normal breathing, that allows some small adjustments that keep it still easy, natural so for example, maybe just breathing in a little bit more fully, or perhaps breathing out a little more completely. not forcing or pushing, but like just hanging in there with the out breath a little bit longer than you normally would.

Or perhaps by relaxing the belly. softening your belly, maybe that it's more comfortable to breathe.

Perhaps by breathing a little bit more or a little bit slower. Little bit faster. Maybe it becomes more comfortable to breathe.

Perhaps it can be a little bit more comfortable. If before you breathe in again, you let there be a instant of a pause. not forcing a gap but letting just kind of linger for a very slick moment. So you don't breathe in immediately after breathing out. Maybe that's what adds a little comfort.

The more comfortable the breathing, the more likely it is that the mind wants to stay with the breathing.

There are times when the breath doesn't feel particularly comfortable or pleasant and that's okay. And there are also times when the breath and feel intensely pleasurable and then becomes a lot easier to stay present for it

is possible enjoying your breathing

Perhaps enjoying the simplicity and the stillness. So just being here with no demands, no one asking anything of you except to be present, to be still and be quiet. In the midst of that, enjoying the simple act of breathing, breathing in and breathing out

being present for the in breath and noticing what it feels like when you switch over from breathing into breathing out. noticing what it feels like when you switch over from breathing out to breathing in

If the mind keeps wanting to wander away, you might very gently say to yourself here, here now does a command. But as a reminder that this is where you are hears a human being. Here is where you find what it's like to be a human being in the present moment. Just here, here's a human being was thinking or feeling or listening.

Not to be in conflict with any of your experience, but rather to be present in the midst of it here using the word here, to encourage and train yourself to be present with the lived experience if possible, entering into the world of breathing. Breathing in and breathing out

And as you're sitting here, be attentive, that you're not in conflict with anything. Not struggling against anything or judging anything negatively. No need for any conflict, letting things be as they are in the midst of the present experience. Breathing breathe the end and breathe. out, not pushing anything away, but letting the breath be the center of your universe.

letting yourself be at ease, not pushing, not straining not being in conflict with what is put at ease. In this simplest meditation instruction is as follows. Let yourself be at ease. And then notice, whatever it takes you away from that

if possible, let go of the forces within you. The thoughts, the beliefs, the feelings that somehow diminish your sense of ease even if you're uncomfortable can be eased with physical discomfort. The mind can still be quite easeful. Let yourself be at ease and let go of anything that gets in the way of these

Staying with the breath allowing the breathing to help you let go of anything that gets in the way of your ease. Mind when one goes away in thought. Let go as you exhale, each exhale relax the thinking mind

noticing the movements of the mind away from ease or to any greater sense of unease and see if you can let go of that movement coming back to the present, coming back to some form of these peace

Oh, we'll sit for another two minutes or so. And then last couple of minutes sit back in your mind and review what this city was like. What was your experience? What was your practice like

when you learn

Can we review little bits about the presence of the five faculties or the five hindrances Are they strong or weak?