

# 2007-09-16 Meditation and Knowing

Fri, 7/31 5:51PM • 29:12

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

dog, knowing, problem, calm, happening, innate intelligence, stronger, snarling, bit, holds, day, people, meditation, qualities, bigger, sense, meditate, occurs, feel, notice

## SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

Yesterday, a friend of mine told me that she goes into the prisons state prison someplace in New York to teach meditation to prisoners. And one of the first things she often says when she shows up especially for new group, she says to them, the state has your body, but not your mind. And when she says that they will sit up there, then they're interested in spark wants to know what's there. And she says, Well, you know, in terms of the mind, you know, I'm I can be just as much in prison with the mind as you can be with yours. And she says, establishes a commonality. You can't say that she's in prison with them physically, but mentally the mind the mind is powerful. So to get interested in your mind, what is the mind And pay attention to it and take care of it. What is it to be in prison in your mind? What is it to be out of prison with your mind? So a story that is a participatory story, if you like, because the way story's crafted, it talks about you. So you live in a neighborhood where every morning going to where you have to go to work or school or wherever you need to go. You have to pass by a an empty lot. big empty properties overgrown with weeds and stuff. And one day, this young dog is just a wild stray dog appears there and not a lot and it's still a bit too wild and untamed. And it comes out onto the sidewalk when you come by and it kind of a little bit barking and snarling little bit. Not so bad. It's not so scary. Exactly, but it's a little bit concerned. So you kind of shoot away. One day you kind of actually kick us a little bit. Other days, you throw sticks or rocks there just to get it away, kind of don't like this with pest of a dog. And, but then you notice that the dog actually as it gets bigger, stronger, you know, adult adulthood. It gets meaner, and meaner, and more, you know, comes out with great ferocity and viciousness, you know, when you walk by and it becomes a real neighborhood problem for you. This dark, vicious, dangerous, looks like certainly going to bite someone soon, if not you. And so you get really involved in solving a problem with a dog. And so you call the police and they try but whenever the police comes, the dog has to disappear. You talked to the owner of the property and with great expense An effort, great fences built between the sidewalk and a lot and the dog lock was the other side that lasts about a week before the dog finds a way out, pushes open the plank fence, there's a dog again you get a really nice technical go through the input with a really big stick kind of big stuff. So whenever the dog comes, you can hit it and push it away. That was a real problem. And you figure out you know you talk to neighbors and city council members about this problem this dog problem this thing it's perfectly reasonable. You should address this problem because it's a neighborhood nuisance. It's a danger to you and to the people walking by who knows if your dogs rabid and so we know something issue that really has to be addressed and somebody needs to do it. And if those elected officials don't do as soon you're gonna vote him out of office in those places, write letters. And you can start getting really angry not only at the dog, but also at the community. It's not doing enough for that dog. And then for causes and conditions come together in such a way that you get introduced to meditation. And so you decide to meditate one morning and you feel kind of calm after the meditation. And after that, you still have to go down the street and walk by that block that dog is, of course you walk on the other side of the street, and have enough sense to be further further away. And the dog comes out and dogs

snarling and barking but the dog actually stays further away. It's not quite as adamant. That's interesting. You may get where you're going to go. Next day you get up and do meditation and you still feel kind of calm, maybe a little calmer even and the dog comes out, and it's still snarly but not as adamantly his dog was before.

You begin wondering, what's this thing about? I wonder if there's a relationship between the being calm and how the dog is. This is interesting. So you can do an experiment. So the next day you don't meditate. And you notice that as you approach the street, you feel the anxiety and some anger bubbling up in you, somehow starts getting filled with the upper hand. Not so calm anymore. And sure enough, that dog comes out and the dog actually come for applicants nipping at your heels. So you give it a good kick. And the dog backs off for that day, but the next day, more vicious. So that's interesting. I do that experiment and just go back and meditate some more. See, notice the next few days and meditating you notice that you're kind of calm, you're going to sweet calm for some exotic There, but the anxiety somehow doesn't grab you. Some of the calm is stronger. And you see the dog doesn't quite, you know, dog starts every day starts getting a bit calmer, more subtle. And then they're not as vicious. You sort of think well this is interesting seems to be a relationship with how the dog is how the dog appears. And how I am I thought it was just a dog problem to fix the problem out there but there you know, there's opportunity here I could actually do something with me and seems to have an effect on the dog. So then it occurs to you to now become meditate before you go down the street. But one day an event occurs to you to bring a dog

and it occurs to you You shouldn't do that because the dogs the problem, you don't want to reward if we have any kind of problem dog in the neighborhood and you know, sometimes we They fix the problem there. And you know, and you know, offering some kindness to the problem. That's not good. You should be disciplined. But then in case you bring the dog biscuits, you've meditated really good that morning. The dog does come out, little bit snarling, but it's kind of stays down the street and kind of looks at you. The dog even has little curiosity, the size of the snarls. So from one side of the street to the other, you throw that dog. And the dog is pretty happy with that. No one's ever fed in before. And so you realize that somehow the dog is affected by how you are, how you are in relationship to the dog. And if you're calm, if you're kind if you're generous. And then as you keep doing this quote on the streets, you realize that, you know, that's actually you don't have to walk across the street near the side of streets anymore. You can Walk on the same side of the sweetest dog. And if you stop at the edge of the empty lot, the dogs actually kind of scared kind of angry anymore snarling but those scared they just kind of stand there and offer your presence offer you're just next day you do the same thing but you actually bend down on your knees and kind of hold on to your hand open hand gesture, universal gesture, you know, I'm not holding weapon safe. After a few more days, the dog comes over and looks your hand. But then as you continue his process of understanding what's going on there, you see that some days you'd have a hard day challenges of your day and you actually forget to meditate or even meditation doesn't help and you're kind of grumpy. And somehow there's a real this seems to be like how your mood is, seems to have little effects on the dog. You know, you're not quite willing to stop and put out your Or you go by in a huff and the dog kind of frightens the dog see someone going by in a huff seems interesting relationship between how you are in the dog. And then a really interesting thing happens. You get really interested in how you are and you begin noticing that, you know, when you're calm, you know when you're anxious. You know, when you're in a hurry, you know, when you're upset, you know, when you're feeling generous. There's this knowing of how you are the beginning of the story. You just knew the dog was a problem. You Didn't Know yourself at all the problems out there but now you're getting to know yourself but more important to know yourself. If this thing happens, you know that you know, you know that you're calm. You know that you know that you're calm. There's this real sense of knowing that's there. And the sense of knowing becomes stronger or clear, or more

dominant. feels it feels more fully defensive. Oh, yeah. And then knowing that you're calm is different than the calm knowing that you're anxious is different than the anxiety the knowing that the dog is there is different than the dog being there. And you start being curious for this knowing, just knowing about sheep, she's trying to pay attention to knowing when you realize you can't notice the knowing unless you know something.

So you know, okay, so I'll have to keep you don't have to know what's going on. So you kind of notice what's happening here in there, but you notice that you do that, you know that, you know, Have you ever been in a crowded people? Maybe everyone's kind of frantic. You're not frantic, some reason you're calm. And then you look across the room and there's one other person who's calm, who's not caught in the fray in the drama at all. And you look at each other in each other's eyes, and you say, you kind of get a sense feeling. Now, where, you know, not only are you both not caught in the drama, but you both know that you're, you know, you're meeting of is knowing that, you know, kind of a spark or something, there goes on some little bit more energy, a lightness. That happens because you share that you notice, you know, you know you're not caught together. So the knowing becomes very interesting for you. And perhaps you make the analogy. Sometimes when I'm really clearly knowing what's happening, walking on the streets, in the dogs there and all this stuff, and then knowing the next Like I'm sitting in the car when I'm going through the carwash.

And you know, when you're sitting in the car when you're going through the car washing machines taking you through all those buffers and sprays, the water and the suds and all that. It is kind of dramatic. But it's really, certainly dry inside the car. Remember the windows closed it's dry, and you feel pretty peaceful, right? It's kind of it's very peaceful. We're still inside sort of busy outside the contrast makes it feel kind of still safe, peaceful perhaps. And then going has a quality. There's a sense of safety being at home these still it's right here. It's bigger than your body and knowing clarity. You know, as you're calm, you know you're angry, you know, the dog is there, that there's something going on knowing If I tune into it, the sense of knowing something, this is a clarity that seems to be bigger than your body bigger than your head. Maybe kind of like the being in the car is bigger than your body. That's stillness in the car. But maybe some of you you know, even that in the car feels claustrophobic. You know, this drama of the carwash?

So you take away the carwash. Maybe you're in this room here. This room is pretty amazing. There's many, many years of people sitting meditating this room has a high ceiling. Here the traffic sometimes outside, sometimes it can be very still in this room. I would say if you're in the knowing this room is always still In the sense of knowing that stillness, that clarity can be as big as expensive as this. But if that's claustrophobic for you, then you can take away the wall. And that sense of knowing can be bigger than even this room, even this building. This is a strange way of talking perhaps, the experiential sense that there's a knowing sense of knowing or awareness or registering, you're taking in that kind of whatever you experience, whatever goes on for you. Is not out there. Whatever is happening to you has to be mediated through your senses has to be mediated through your way that's experiences you've registered in the eyes and the ears and the body and the brain. So, you know, physically, we don't know anything at all out there. We only know what's being being processed here. As soon as said You know that what's happening out there is happening within physically it is this sense of how we experience it. But then the sense of knowing that sense of clarity your can at times feel very expansive, pretty inclusive. Everything's included within it. And it isn't so much that you know particular things. Though that's important part of it. It's almost as if there's a field of knowing or clarity or peacefulness of knowing so it's a calm or peace within which the knowing occurs within with experiences and things like so you're walking down the street and the dog comes in there was a problem out there before becomes something that occurs within that field of knowing the dog is not your sense separate from you are

separate from that field. Now that might be scary, because it will be intimate. If you don't have a clear boundary clear back, no, here I am the dog. The problem is out there, then what's going to follow through and take dog home with me? What happens? What happens then if I just kind of if awareness knowing embraces, the dog holds the dog. And one of the things I think happens is that the sense of separate reciprocal relationship becomes clear. earlier on, you realize that there is a reciprocal relationship. If you throw stones at the dog, the dog gets angry or if you're kind to a dog or calm or on the dog that seems to have an effect on the dog. And I think that has this sense of kind of a wider openness, clarity, calm that holds it all together. includes it all that allows it all to be there within it occurs. I think that sends the reset prosity neutrality is stronger actually. And one of the ways that stronger is is also kind of stronger on us, affects us.

I've noticed that if I'm present for what's going on, sometimes I'll have a thought arises. It arises that something else should be happening. And if I, if I get onto the bandwagon, notice something else should be happening. It actually takes me away from really being present here. And it kind of shatters that sense of being no Presence disquiet or presence awareness here I am there's a lot of things that will shatter it a lot of things that will not make it possible. If you get caught up in, you know, future planning too much or you get caught up in anxiety or caught up in defending yourself or caught up in you know, being being critical or something but me I've noticed recently is that something different should be happening that's been going on. And one option with the dismissal see myself getting distracted by the start, something else should be happening is I could treat it like the dog condition. I could dismiss it, push it away. put up a wall to come back and say, you know, what's really going on? As if thinking about what should be happening isn't what's going on. And then the very interesting thing happens when when rather than dismissing anything is to fold it in to into the knowing into the awareness, this is also happening in the field. And then in the situations I found recently when I did that, then when I said, Oh, this also was happening here, he kind of held it within it, then actually I can do some extensive totality of a host this I got a sense of the bigger picture than what's going on. And then it was really easy to come back and be present to the task at hand. It wasn't a struggle wasn't like I had to push something away, was a way of including it. So, this so I think mindfulness practice is a lot about inclusion. There is one opportunity and mindfulness practice and to include everything within the knowing.

And just as as, as there can be kind of reciprocal relationship with Can you the dog, there's a reciprocal relationship between you and the capacity to know this field of knowing the sense of clarity or calm. And as things are included within it as you'd be present for things as they occur, and you allow them to come into them, not just not just kind of your normal reactive mind, the small mind but his big mind is bigger activity. It actually helps or fosters or nourishes some really beautiful qualities inside of ourselves. And just like when those prisoners were told the state has your body in your mind, they kind of got interested that kind of set up straight you know the beautiful quality to suddenly pay attention and have energy be attentive, you're suddenly some beautiful gifts or you know their radio listen to the radio include. So there's knowing becomes strong and usually becomes a bit bigger part of the life is inner these inner qualities that could be called a variety of strengths are in there. capacities get stronger. And, and there's a variety of for a whole variety of things that can get stronger, there's stronger sense of energy kind of alertness, presence, there can be a stronger sense of curiosity or interest, investigation with what is this. There can be a stronger capacity actually to focus, be attentive to be kind of be really present for something. There can be a greater sense of intelligence in relationship to what's going on. intelligence has many different qualities, some that some people might call some of its intuition, discernment, differentiation, clarity what's going on. There's qualities of joy that can arise. strong sense of joy can bubble up well up in this reciprocal relationship with another We can get into into this knowing capacity field. Happiness. One of the really beautiful things that can arise bubble up is great

sense of equanimity. Very equanimous very ease, very kind of nonreactive in a way that feels very satisfying, but very present.

So all this is learned by walking down the street. And first The dog was the problem out there. And some of us have dogs in our lives, like you know, there are problems out there. And some of the problems out there are not really out there, you know, external from us with the dogs are in here inside of us. And we walked by that particular neural connection And something inside of us comes out bites. And then we bite back in this neutrality, this relationship and those neural connections get more and more vicious because you're vicious to it, or something. So sometimes we treat inside of us as the problem. And at some point, hopefully there's this shift of orientation to really appreciate that how we are in relationship to the problem to life actually has a big impact on how life is the so called problems. And there's beginning taking responsibility for how we are and not being fixated on the problem out there. Or the problem inside here. That's where it is, is it has to it has to be fixed. Take responsibility for how we are in relationship to it how we are. And that becomes an interesting process then of understanding who we are what's going on mindfulness of ourselves. Then as the mindfulness gets stronger, sometimes occasionally is beautiful thing happens that the senses and knowing that you know, become stronger and stronger. The knowing, you know, is really different than anything you know. It's not about what you know, it's about how you know, the field that holds it the awareness kind of habit. And you realize that that knowing that you know that wider knowing is not your ego. And you'd want to get rid of your ego trying to get rid of anything. Because there's this thing which is not personal. It's not even some people will call it transpersonal. Any attempt to claim it as yours is just another activity within it. You can't claim it as your own. It has wonderful qualities. Certainly being calm, expansive or clear. seems to come sometimes with these wonderful in other qualities of energy and joy, equanimity or calm tranquility.

And then it's very different relationship to the problem, the problem of life, very different, kind of can become almost like a sea change. When you realize that great mutuality is reciprocal reciprocity that happens when we we live in a world that's mutual we live in a world where we influence each other. And that one of the beautiful ways of participating in this is to have fold everything into the knowing fold everything into the awareness or to have the awareness to be the knowing be so expansive and hoping that everything happens within it.

Even even the fear to be open and intimate happens within it as opposed to fear happening and you get Velcro to the fear. Fear arises. But there's this thing which is not fear, which is not you even knows it all it holds. And it's really something. It's really an amazing thing to begin exploring what happens to you when you rest in the knowing of big knowing. It's really it's really helpful. It's really interesting. It's really a wonderful thing. And it can be disorienting, a little bit 16 slices like you know, you get on a on a ship and I seen the first little bit hearty Your balance a little bit hard to get your balance sometimes is beautifully and personal knowing can go on.

And in my experience, it seems to off off, give give birth to give rise to make space for something I called, I call it innate intelligence. When there's a problem out there that I have to fix, then I have to use my assumed intelligence to fix the problem. My portal and girl has to kind of problem solve. There's still problem solving goes on, but there can be a feeling of something something beautifully. Maybe you don't maybe we're too impersonal, not nice for people, some people, but something that's not some problem solving that comes from the innate intelligence. Something that just kind of some people would call it intuition. Maybe. What is it to trust your innate intelligence as opposed to your effortful intelligence. So, if it happens, that some of you encounter a dog in your life, one of these months, one of these years, something that we could call the dog problem. It might happen.



And if it happens, maybe maybe you can think about the story and see if the story can show you a new way. So that's what I have for this morning. That's all came out of my innate intelligence. Sometimes there's a limit Yes, complete. So thank you