

# 2009-04-03 The Five Hindrances Restlessness

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### SUMMARY KEYWORDS

restlessness, equanimity, talk, group, mind, body, people, restless, experience, dissipate, exhale, breathing, babies, working, minutes, hospital, woman, hunter gatherer societies, give, energize

### SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

While we're waiting for people to come back, we have a couple of minutes. Maybe it'll take. Do you have any comments or questions you'd like to ask at this point?

Yeah, Katherine. See, this is a good topic for me today.

I am very drawn to equanimity. And I'm wondering what the tie in with ruts, restlessness and equanimity are if there is one, if you could talk a little bit about it.

Okay, so the question is, what's the relationship between equanimity and restlessness? I mean, probably a lot of things to be said. But what occurs to me is that the restlessness has to have has to do with having too much energy and too much reactivity to things and, and so there are different For different factors that bring about calmness or stability, so concentration, equanimity, and tranquility, calmness, are the three primary factors that tend to be balancing to having when there's too much energy is not working. Maybe you do a little louder. Is that better now? that better? Everybody else, it's better now. I don't think it's any lower than it was before. That's good. So there's a classic instruction to work on those three in order to settle and over settle down and over energize mind or heart, you know, over in your system. So that's one thing just says brings balance. The other is that to the degree to which restlessness comes from reactivity liquidity is crucial because equanimity is when the mind is no longer in a reactive mode. It can be responsive but it's not reactive, reactive being automatic. So learning to have that balance of mind that comes with equanimity is very helpful.

Okay, yes.

We will make some more because later in the break, people were supposed to take it now.

You can dissipate some of the physical tension. I carry a lot of physical tension by habit. Night. I have trouble sleeping at night sometimes and there's nothing specific going On upstairs but holding all this tension in my body and I was just wondering if I know that guided relaxation and body scanning and those things are breathing

any other thoughts on that?

Without we just so little information about it, I feel very shy but giving advice because it could be a variety of things can be causing something like that. It could it could have a psychological source, it can also have a physiological source. You know, I don't know about you, you're not old enough yet, but some women go through menopause will find it. They have symptoms like that. And just part of the scene part of the deal. Patients seems to be one of the antidotes and, and, and who knows, you know what's going all the reasons, but if it's been a common experience for you for a long time Then one of the things you might want to consider and if you've done a fair amount of meditation know that that hasn't somehow helped is you might consider doing something some of the explore some of the body based forms of therapy, psychotherapy. There's a variety of rather than talk therapy, therapy really uses your body goes into your body, how to use your body as a guide to kind of find out what's going on. Because sometimes psychological attitudes or experiences are all kinds of can be really deeply embedded in the body. And they're almost almost operates subconsciously or unconsciously, and can affect our energy and our mind and all kinds of stuff in a way that that, you know, can interfere with our life. And it's not really accessible so easily through talking or even through thinking, you know, What what's actually going on? Sometimes there's even pre verbal trauma that people have either really young babies that could still get stored in their body. There was a woman I met recently who give example of kind of like, early trauma. she, her parents worked at a hospital. The father was a doctor and mother was a nurse. And the hospital is going to do this is some 70 years ago or so, was going to do metabolic research on babies, you know, metabolic system of babies to measure and whatever. And so just and also, because of the family situation, it was just easier for everyone concerned. If the this woman this girl baby was left at the hospital for the first six months of her life. And so she's lived there and you know, and the parents would visit occasionally and, and so she had trouble breathing. You know, as a seven year old. She did. Because, you know, and so we don't know what the connection is, but it could well be that there's just kind of something happened very early on that affected you know, something was stored and held in her body that way. So sometimes body based therapies effective way to get in get in there and hope hopefully one that's not too invasive but when this kind of gentle approach so that's what occurs to me. But some other time you can give me more details and we can explore some more. Okay, so let's do a little sitting

after lunch, sometimes the problem is not restlessness. But rather sloth and torpor, what we should have done is we should have done to the to these two days you know sloth and torpor day and versus we should have done. restlessness in the morning and both days. Illuminati divided it up. So you need to see what you do to make yourself restless so that you can stay up, stay awake. So, one of the ways to help stay awake is to really focus on your posture to have an alert to posture, sit up straight. And perhaps take a few long, slow, deep breaths. Energize, energizing breaths. The exhale tends to be calming. The inhale tends to bring energy. When people are energized, it can be helpful to emphasize the exhale, relax with the exhale. If people are really tired, sometimes it's helpful to emphasize the inhale. Breathe in more fully feel the upwelling feelings. Come with breathing in, let those upwelling feelings kind of linger. And as you exhale, don't let the upwelling energy feeling of breathing and dissipate, and just let the in breath kind of just keep bringing more alertness to you. So we'll come back from lunch and some people came arrived at lunchtime. So welcome. Those of you came. Those of you who weren't here this morning, we spent morning, mostly meditating, I talked a little bit about some guided meditations that somehow try to address this topic of restlessness, different ways. Now, we're going to continue with exploration, some other ways, non meditative ways now, and I have a couple of things in mind. One is I thought it would be nice to have Do one of our group discussions and form groups of five. And if the morning has been so quiet for you, you'd rather not be part of a group. You can sit quietly if you wish to dissipate, but but from groups of five, and to have, I'm going to ask a very open ended question, a very kind of somewhat vague question. And the question is, what has been your experience with restlessness in meditation practice, in the context of meditation practice, what's

been your experience of restlessness and, and what you have to say, is kind of like an offering to your other four people in your group. And the idea being that to hear from five different people, the variety of flavors and shapes and experiences of restlessness, just to kind of fill out the picture a little bit more, and then your own particular version of it and And so what's been your experience of restlessness, and then very, very briefly, judiciously, you can add after you talk about that. Something that you found to be really helpful for working with restlessness and dealing with it and coming to terms with it. But we went that before that party really brief, because I don't want you to kind of call it giving forth. You know, what everyone else she's, she was supposed to be doing. Just a little kind of thing. So I thought we would take 20 minutes for that. So it means that the each person, we go around the circle, each person has about four minutes to talk. And you're not the of course you don't use the full four minutes, but you can, then you can go around again, in your group. So I do please do that.

So, so we'll, so we'll take a short break and a few minute couple of minutes. But before we do any, we can have time for a couple of comments about what that was like. For my sake, I wasn't in any of the groups any comments that settle everything

should have been part of the groups. Yes. Here's one of the one of the interesting things that came up in our group was one of the interesting things that came up, Sarah is me. I wasn't holding it. Close enough. was how restlessness is linked to the feeling of safety of either planning or being preparing for something kind of vigilance for either kind of external stuff or even internal stuff, being arrested, restless, prompted by the desire for safety, looking forward trying to make it happen, right for me there extra potential external or internal threats. Great. Thank you. Um, piggybacking on that, we're talking about restlessness, someone in our group mentioned that, you know, it's a natural thing that restlessness and worry because, you know, it's kind of evolutionarily beneficial, you know, the people, you know, back when we were wandering the African plains, you know, who weren't, you know, restless and vigilant, you know, they didn't live to procreate. So we're descendants of those WordPress there. It's interesting I read it I read a study of people have attention deficit disorder, we call it attention deficit disorder nowadays, but that tendency of the mind is 20% of my 20% of the people in hunter gatherer societies have this condition. And they're in there in those hunter gathering situations. It's quite, they're quite, they worked quite well for them. They work really well. So they think that is probably was a we were adapted to have 20% of the population have this, this so called thing because it was so useful, but only 20%. And so this thing, it's probably good. For overall group it might be useful for 20% to worry

But we don't, but we also need we also need 20% to know how not to worry. So that's where we're, we're working on that. As a society, our society needs us to do it. Okay, thank you for those comments. And I have one major exercise still to do this afternoon, but I think it's best if we move into it with some care or silence. So do you guys feel a need for a bathroom break? Yeah, I think so. So let's do a 10 minute bathroom break in silence. Let's keep it in silence in here. And we'll come in just 10 minutes. So if use the bathrooms and do what you need to do, and be ready to start