

Practice Note: What Needs Acceptance?

Transcribed and edited from a short talk by Gil Fronsdal on February 24, 2010

One of the primary tasks of mindfulness meditation is to arrive in the present moment. And so what does it take to arrive here? It's often like a journey to get where you are, because the mind is somewhere else, or involved in other things, or reacting to what's here; it doesn't want to be here.

There are many approaches, many practices to help us arrive here. One interesting one that I offer you today is to ask yourself the question, "What needs to be accepted so that you can be more fully here?"

So, for example, there might be a distracted mind. Your mind's wandering off a lot, and you think, "Well that's not really the practice; the practice is to not to be distracted; it's to be here. Keep coming back to the breath; keep coming back to the breath." And what needs to be accepted is in fact that the mind is distracted. Once you see that and accept it – you don't accept it like you just agree that you can just continue being distracted – but you don't struggle against it. You don't fight it; you don't oppose it; you don't ignore it.

And then in that acceptance there can be a clear, stronger presence of mindfulness recognizing, "This is what's happening now." There might be strong feelings; there might be a lot of sound in the room and you think, "If only those sounds weren't there, then I could really be present." And so what needs to be accepted is the sound. The sound is happening in the present moment.

So it's an interesting question to ask yourself, and to help you arrive and to be more fully here, to be attentive: What is it that needs acceptance, right now, so I can be present?