

Practice Note: How Am I?

Transcribed and edited from a short talk by Gil Fronsdal on November 9, 2011

To offer you some approach that might be helpful for today's meditation, I'd like to say that one approach is to see meditation as an opportunity to ask yourself how you are. Don't think too much about the answer, but feel, sense, look, and really be present for how you are now. The answer to how you are is not from what happened before, but how are you *this* moment. What are your feelings? What's going on in your body? What's going on in your mind?

How are you? Ask that question of yourself, and then perhaps ask it again, and again, and again. How are you? And see if you can meet that with open, receptive awareness. See if you can meet that with kindness. See if you can ask, "How are you?" without being aversive, or full of expectations or judgments. Just see how are you right now, as if you're a respected person who is allowed to feel just the way they are. You're going to be a friend to yourself – How are you? – and receive and be open for it.

When you have a good sense of how you are – having really checked in with yourself – then perhaps as you tune into your breathing, you can just breathe with that and breathe through that. If you do walking meditation, walk with how you are without thinking about it. Just be, feel, and be present with how you are. Be as you are. Then, perhaps ask the question again, "How am I?" And be with that, walk with it, and breathe with it. Periodically, relax – How am I?

"How am I?" is a wonderful question to bring you back to the moment, and hear what your experience actually is now. Then answer the question with a receptive, open, relaxed, nonjudgmental awareness. "This is how it is now," and then breathe with that, and walk with that. After a while ask again, "How am I?" As you ask that question repeatedly, you might be experimenting or find slowly a useful way to be receptive, and aware of how you are – simple, ordinary, kind awareness. This is how you are now.

I hope you enjoy the morning. Thank you.