

Practice Note: Put Aside Instructions

Transcribed and edited from a short talk by Gil Fronsdal on May 1, 2013

If you have had any meditation instruction before, it is interesting to consider that whatever instruction you've had can get in the way. Sometimes, it is nice to put aside your ideas of what is supposed to happen in meditation, or what you are trying to make happen, or what you are supposed to do when you meditate – so that you can better notice what is happening in the present moment, in the simplest, most ordinary way possible. And then do it again. And again.

This is what is happening now in my body. This is what is happening in my ears, my thoughts, my mind, my heart. Keep it really simple, so that there is no judgment or commentary. It is a simple recognition that this is what is happening.

If you can recognize what is happening in this simple way, then a second step is to feel it more fully. Let the felt sense of the physical experience of whatever you're experiencing register more fully. If you are having a lot of thoughts, then what is the felt sense of your mind, body, and head with the energy of thinking? If you have a lot of emotions, how is that felt? If you are preoccupied with what is happening in the room, such as sounds, what is the felt sense, the energy connected to your body? What does it *feel* like?

Cultivate a simple acknowledgement of what is happening, and then let it register more fully. And then, in its own time – no hurry – see if you can soften or relax around what you've been experiencing and feeling.

Recognize what's happening; feel it more fully; then soften or relax. These three steps might be helpful once you have forgotten about your meditation instructions.

I hope you enjoy your morning. Thank you.