

Practice Note: Simple Noticing

Transcribed and edited from a short talk by Gil Fronsdal on May 22, 2013

As you are practicing, it is sometimes very useful to keep in the forefront of your mind that the practice is best done when it is simple. Keep it simple.

One of the simplest things you can do is to just notice what is happening as it is happening. Keeping it simple and noticing what is happening protects you from trying to make something happen, or from some agenda you have, or some shoulds and shouldn'ts that are operating, and which might get in the way of your being free and at ease with what is happening right now.

So, just notice what is happening. Some of the things you notice might be very important, rather than being a problem. One of the things you might notice is that you make things into a problem. You might notice that when you sit and notice what is happening, you have a lot of ideas that crop up: "This shouldn't be happening. This is bad. I should be doing something different. I should be concentrating on my breath. Anything else doesn't count."

You might notice that your mind wanders off in thought a lot. You might notice your feelings or emotions, or what is going on in your body. Then, you might notice that in addition to all of what you notice, you add things on top. You don't stay simple. You have judgments, expectations, agendas, aversions, desires.

Always come back to the simple idea of just noticing: "This is how it is" – not succumbing, not pulled into all the ways the mind might want to go.

One of the results of this simple noticing is that you start to understand yourself better. As you understand yourself better, then the process of becoming calm, peaceful, focused, and concentrated arises, not as a conflict with how things are, but more in *harmony* with how things are.

The difference between a practice in conflict with reality (with what is going on), versus a practice in harmony with reality is an important distinction. Both ways of practice can work in some ways, but I think that in the long term, a better way of practice is to be in harmony with what is. It doesn't mean that you are just going along with whatever is happening. But it does mean that you are not in conflict with it, as you find your peace, freedom, and understanding in the midst of it.

As you practice today, you might experiment with this idea of staying simple – so simple that the primary thing you're noticing is what is happening here and now.

It's nice if you can enjoy yourself as you do it.