

# 2013-10-09 Practice Notes Awareness

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

awareness, breathing, breath, aware, sensation, attention, imagine, sense, fill, shape, zen teacher, absorbed, thought, eagle, paying, sponge, fluid, suggest, zeroing, people

## SPEAKERS

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In terms of the Dharma practice, when we do mindfulness, we're using our awareness, our awareness practice. And awareness is a very fluid phenomenon. It can shift and change because it's not really clear. Awareness doesn't have a shape of its own doesn't have a color doesn't have a way. And it's a way of using the multitudinous capacity for attention. We pay attention to many different facilities were paying attention, they come together and so because it's not a thing in and of itself, lends itself to being shaped in a sense, by how we conceive of it, how we think of it. So some people when they you know, you tell them pay attention to their breath, they'll use They're somehow there. They're up in the control tower wherever that is. And they use the inner imagination of seeing and they look down at their breathing, as if they're up here and the breath is there. Someone else you tell them to be aware of the breath. And they think of awareness as they relate to it more as something you feel with your body. And so they drop down and they feel the senses of it. And rather being up above watching. They're down there in the middle of it. Some people, their sense of being aware is very much tied to their thinking about things. Because you tell them to be aware of their breathing, they'll immediately start thinking about it. And other people or think about it, think very much in images. And so just be aware of your breath and connect to the breath in some way. And they have images in their mind of what the breath is like, and sometimes they're quite creative. Remember one Zen teacher who would imagine The breathing would be like the great wings of an eagle and she'd be soaring in the sky and as she breathe in and out to be like the wings kind of gently flapping and, and that was kind of her imagery that was connected. Sometimes she posted be aware of the breath and people kind of zero in on little spot. Like some people do the nostrils the tip of the nostrils, and awareness becomes very fine and small. Some people you say be aware of the breath, and they just relax it open the awareness up, and they become aware maybe of the sensations in the torso as they breathe or full torso and it's a very broad and open awareness. None of these are right and wrong. But what I'm trying to point out is that people, when they hear the word awareness, they understand it differently for themselves and other people do uniquely their own way. And maybe they think that's the way that's what the person is meaning. What I want to suggest today is that because awareness is so fluid, kind of like water, it takes the shape of the container you pour it in, you can adjust the shape of the what the how your awareness is, it's a very good, sometimes you can imagine just getting really close to something and really be close and intimate. Sometimes you can have use awareness and be far away from it. And like imagine you're in a hilltop far away, looking at the distance, being Eagle looking down. You can do all these different things you can do. So what I'd like to suggest one way today, then you can play with it and see. So rather than when you're aware of anything at all, beware of your breathing aware of your steps as you do the walking meditation, rather than you being kind of the control tower watching it. Or being the agent who's involved in being aware. And you're kind of like going to the thing to be aware of it. You wander off and you come back to the breath, you come back to your steps like you and you kind of apply the attention there. When you use your awareness receptively not actively. So when you're going to be aware of the

breathing, don't bring your attention to the breath. Let the awareness that the breathing come to you. So if you notice you're drifting off in thought, just kind of reset by kind of letting go of your, your thinking. And then kind of like invite the breath and the breath back. Open in a sense, to allow the breathing to come to you. May you know if you'd, if you're someplace with your awareness, that imagine the breath comes to you rather than you go to the breathing. And in that way of kind of letting things come to you come into awareness. Imagine that your awareness is like a big big container, a big room almost. And that your whatever you're going to whatever you're allowing to come into awareness. Imagine that you imagine or allow it to fill your awareness.

So if you're Doing breath meditation. Imagine whatever sensation whether experience or breathing you're having. See if you can imagine let it flow into you and let it arrive and be received. elated feel your awareness. When sometimes we talk about having one pointed awareness just completely be absorbed in whatever you're paying attention to. And sometimes people try to have that absorption by kind of narrowing down zeroing in being a laser, which sometimes works nicely. And here I'm not suggesting being absorbed by letting it fill your awareness, like to feel whatever the awareness is you have. So you really let it register like take it in really big. So rather than the awareness being like a laser, maybe awareness is more like a sponge and everything so you experience sensation, spirits or breathing, gets absorbed into the sponge and fills it out. See if you can kind of just so your thoughts, your preoccupations, other things, let it just recede in the background. See if you can let whatever you're paying attention to in a moment, let it fill you fill the space of awareness. Makes sense. So, you might experiment with that today when you do your stepping, walking meditation, but the sensations of your legs and feet and feet, absorb into you like to receive and let it feel you let it let that be your unique little universe. That's the universe in which you kind of like to feel your attention for the time being. So thank you.