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SPEAKERS

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For a mindfulness practice, we are utilizing our capacity to be aware. And awareness is a quite a flexible, fluid phenomena activity. And it can, in a sense, take different shapes, it can be utilized in different ways. And one of the ways that sometimes it's very useful for meditators in particular to do is to have awareness be quite broad, like a large container, a receptacle that receives our experience, as opposed to a laser or an arrow that we direct towards things and kind of, you know, fixate on and appropriate or do things with. They'd rather that awareness is a little bit like the sky in that it's quite open and doesn't interfere with the birds and the clouds. That Go through as opposed to being you know thicket of jungle where you have to kind of use machete to get through to keep the mind kind of open rather than claustrophobic or tight or preoccupied, to make space in the mind to hold things and awareness has the capacity to hold whatever comes into awareness. If there's space in the awareness base in the mind, if we have a lot of overgrowth of, you know, the jungle, it can be very tight and claustrophobic and some new thing arises and it just makes it even more crowded to make it make our way through. But if the mind is not crowded with thoughts and concerns and emotions and feelings, and it's kind of conceived as kind of a big container that can hold it or receive at all, then it's a lot easier to be economist a lot easier to be nonreactive to the things that arise and that sky like mind sort of think of awareness as a large receptacle. One of the interesting questions that sometimes is asked, it's these kinds of circles is, we're in this room right now. So are we in the room? Or is the room in us? Because there's a way of understanding that, of course, we're in the room, no doubt about that. But the experience of the room only occurs within inside of our senses. We take the senses take in the sights and sounds of what's going on in the room. And we goes into our brain and we reconstruct it into an image that we live by. And so is the room in us or is there is there are we in the room and if you think of it, if you think kind of imagine the rooms that the rooms in you because awareness is so broad or the mental processing is so big, inclusive, you know? all encompassing, then we start living in a more intimate world and more, a different kind of world. Then if we the world's out there, and subject object, and I'm gonna, you know, relate to the world, whatever way I relate to it, but if we have a sense of the worlds in us in, in this field of awareness, and if we have the capacity in that field of awareness, to be nonreactive, non judgmental, not to act from desires and aversions to what's there, but allow things to be in the field of awareness, then it can be quite a delight, quite a profound thing, to to live in the world and be part of it and be connected to it. So one of the things that's required for this is to practice to relax. You can't have a broad open big mind with a mind that's tight or tense or preoccupied. But as we relax and then to tune in to how we use our awareness. What do we do and we pay attention. We do being mindful. Some people are there's a lot of doing. Some people, there's an all the doing gets in the way of being relaxed and open and receptive, receptive to what's happening, allowing to what's happening. Some people are immediately judging what's going on. Some people are measuring themselves based on what's going on. Some people are trying to fix what's going on, or some people are trying to gain and get something. And not necessarily anything wrong with all those approaches.

But more often than not, those approaches will constrict or narrow the scope of awareness, and puts us into a relationship with things which is okay sometimes, but when we're in if we're actively relating to what's going on, it's hard to kind of rest in a large open kind of receptacle like awareness or mind, big mind.

And so one of the ways is meditation instructions some sometimes get that is to practice in an in a non judgmental way nonreactive way, whatever arises in awareness, make space for it, allow it to be there. Don't get involved in fixing or changing or being goal oriented. Just let it all be there. And, of course something shouldn't just be allowed to be it's like we're supposed to go around accepting everything. But some things need to be changed in their life. But it doesn't mean that we have to exclude them from the open awareness. So we might with our hands clean the counter because the counters dirty or wash the dishes because the dishes are dirty, but in our mind, the mind can stay open and an unreactive open and agitated by the dirty dishes we see there. There's a kind of come into the kitchen, dirty dishes, and the mind stays open and can receive that into this open, spacious mind. And then the wisdom says, you know, it's think it's time to wash the dishes. So the hands wash it, but the mind doesn't in a certain kind of way is accepting or allowing or holds it all in a very open broad way. So, to allow the mind to be ready to receive experience, rather than the maker of experience or the one responsible for experience, or the one who reacts to the experience just allow is a very profound thing because it allows for the deeper movements inside of us to unfold in their way. our emotions, our thoughts that we have many different things, our bodily sensations, our tension we have in our body. There's a lot of the human system kind of moves towards homeostasis and moves towards freedom, if you get out of the way and so moves towards healing and So, to have this open awareness that receive and allows things to be there, allows the things that are there to unfold in the way they need to unfold. So if there are emotions that are bubbling up the emotional piece of who we are, it kind of knows what needs to happen if we get out of the way, and just allow it to unfold, you know, the tears to flow or whatever needs to happen. You know, the remarkable thing that the scientists are now saying, are psychologists now saying that emotions don't actually last very long. They only last a long time because we keep reinforcing them. And but if we leave them really alone, they say something ridiculous like they'd last a minute or something. And, and so what does that mean most of our emotions that last longer, we're involved in somehow retelling the story we're reacting to or something. So this receptacle open awareness is a very respectful thing for us because it respects what's there and respects the natural and Folding and needs to happen of things, we get out of the way. And one of the reflections that I found useful is that who knows better, what I need myself or the Dharma. And you generally the Dharma wins. And you generally the, the, you know, what is the deeper wellsprings of understanding of processing of healing whatever that's kind of in the system here has a better understanding of what's needed. Then my little mind can ever possibly know the analogy I like to use is like, you know, if you if I cut my hand I know it needs to heal. I'd like to heat get it up to heal. If I then with my little brain, little cut thinking mind, start engineering, the healing of my hand. I can't do it. That bye. biochemical healing process, the logical process of healing is an amazingly complex phenomenon, you know, with you know, our whole, but our body knows how to do it. You know, nobody knows how to create the antibodies and send the proteins and send more blood and make a scab. And you know, it's a complicated thing that has to happen.

So the body knows how to do this complicated engineering feat. Probably if humans don't even know all that's entailed, let alone You know, knowing how to direct the show if we could. So just like we can't do that, with, you know, the healing of the hand, the hand knows what to do with you. All Your job is to keep it clean. Your job is to let the healing process unfold, and the way that the body knows how, so many times for our psychology and our mind and our hearts, our job and using mindfulness to get out of the way and to allow the process to unfold the way it needs to unfold And so in this in that's in this way,

having awareness, be receptive, have awareness be like a, I sometimes imagine like a large container largest the room here or bigger, that can hold it all. And whatever happens comes in. There's lots of room for whatever is going to happen. If I'm preoccupied and reactive and concerned and judging and trying to figure out and second guessing what's going on, then it gets kind of claustrophobic and tight in my little brain, mind. And then the more claustrophobic it is less room there is for things to move and to unfold. But if I make the mind the awareness, quite broad and spacious and open and receptive and allowing things to arise and all this space, there's lots of room and, and I'm much less likely to take it as a problem. It just stuff arising. But if a mind is crowded and claustrophobic everything's a problem. Everything's too much.

So awareness doesn't have to be done as this big spacious, open container. But if you've never experienced that you might try you might relax and sort of open up and try experimenting with a receptive awareness that doesn't try to make anything happen but to receive a lot of things to come in to you and the big mind Okay. Thank you.