

2014-08-18 Mindfulness of Body

Tue, 9/15 2:00PM • 41:43

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

subjective experience, body, world, noticing, feel, discomfort, awareness, settled, experience, people, unpleasant, attention, deeper, life, mind, good, pain, meditation, mindfulness, breathe

SPEAKERS

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Good evening. And let's do a sound test here. Okay. Everyone's just with that little bit of talking, you can know. A little bit louder. Let's see. Is that it a little better still? You can hear now. Okay, thank you.

So this evening, I'd like to talk a little bit more continue where I, what I was talking about last week. Last week, I discussed the very beginning of the instructional instructions the Buddha gave for for mindfulness practice. And it was just the beginning. In fact, the way it's worded. It's that precursor for doing mindfulness. And what I described was That. What I said was that the instructions are, there pre instructions are to put aside greed and distress for the world. And that seems like a tall order. Some people come to do the practice because of their greed and distress. And they're told to put it aside before they came into the practice, but the practice was to help you put it aside. So catch 22. Right. And so I offered my interpretation, that what this means is that we put aside our fixation on the external world of objects, the things that we can want a lot and the things that were distressed or upset or angry with, and that it isn't that we stop being desirous or stop being distressed or stop being angry. But rather than folk but what we do is we turn the attention around 180 degrees. So the our attention, what we pay attention to and get interested in is our subjective experience. And if we're if we're angry or full of greed, then we're interested in this subjective experience of anger or greed, as opposed to continuing to think about what we're angry about, or get think about what we want, or distressed about. And so you're allowed to feel and do what you want. But it's a shift of perspective of what you look at what you pay attention to. So in a way, there's a turning back to yourself, to really experience here in this body of yours, what your own subjective lived experiences like what it feels like for you to be in this body, and this mind and this heart, having the feelings or thoughts, the desires, and motivations that you have. So there has to be that kind of turning and so With that turning mindfulness, the mindfulness practice in this instructional manual goes through four different domains or areas. Sometimes it's called foundations on which we develop and heighten our awareness, develop our capacity to be here in a very lucid way. And those four areas can be seen as a path to go deeper and deeper inside, to come in, settle in, progressively letting go of our objectification, our thoughts and our concerns, and really developing a high quality attention to our subjective experience. And there's a journey kind of you can take through this. So these four domains begin in a sense on what can be considered more that outer part of the subjective experience, which is the body Their bodies is the course basic experience of being in a body. And once you're in your body connected to your body, that gives you the opportunity if you settle in and relax, to start noticing that in that body of yours, that all everything that you experience, mind body heart occurs somehow within this domain of the body. The subjective experience of experience. And as you kind of settle into that full experience. The next stage next domain, is to notice something very simple about your experience that is often overlooked. When we have the complex relationship to something we have stories and ideas and desires and aversions and identities and things connected to it. And then we notice that things are or the experiences we have

generally fall into being pleasant or unpleasant. And sometimes there are neither of those two, but don't. There's just that's the criteria. It's very simple and, and it can be as kind of a, you know, a no inaccuracy ecosystem. As you pay attention. You can at the same time almost you can be aware that one part of your body feels uncomfortable and one part is comfortable. So noticing where the discomfort is, or where the comfort is.

And these are very important stepping stones to go deeper. Then as we go deeper in and really allow ourselves to feel that massage or be present for the pleasant and unpleasant not to shy away from it, not to grab on to it, but really be present, accompany yourself, be a companion to yourself, breathe with yourself, as you experienced the pleasant, unpleasant domain of this inner life. There's something very powerful about opening up to what the body is really feeling and letting it take its course letting it unfold the way it wants to. As we do this, there starts we start noticing something deeper the journey Knees inward ever deeper. And what's deeper I mean, you could argue with me maybe some of you don't feel it's deeper. But what's deeper in this journey is, is kind of the inner quality, of being the quality of state of mind that we have. And the quality of the kind of the attitude of how we live at the moment. And we can have attitudes or moods or states of being that are primarily characterized by greed, by desire, wanting something really badly. We can be characterized by having ill will aversion hostility, we can be characterized by being diluted and lost or characterized by fear a variety of different things, or we can be characterized by opposite states. It can be an inner inner life can be characterized by being loving, compassionate, generous, wise, understand It's not just like, it's like an attitude you feel this clarity of these states. And then as we settled in the, the state of the mind can be noticed when it's contracted and tight, restricted, caught up scattered. We talked about memories scattered mind. But to collect ourselves before we can do something because we're so scattered. You can notice these things. And as we're as we're looking at the quality of the mind, we're talking about something which is more intimate to ourselves more important to us than the body perhaps even more important than whether things are pleasant or unpleasant. So that's why I like to call it a journey inwards, what's more important and as we get familiar with this world, the inner world of the mind and the attitude and how we are, then we get into what's much more primary and maybe deeper inside and that is the operating system of how we operate. What we're actually doing the little choices we make tiny, tiny choices may be invisible to the ordinary street mind walking around. When when your mind gets really quiet and settled the meditation, you start seeing the subtle choices the mind makes to get involved in certain thoughts, certain emotions. You can notice how certain attitudes and emotions and desires, color and shape and affect the mind, we notice how we've been noticing kind of the inner workings of it. And that inner working is where we have the most choice to make a difference for ourselves. And that's that and that inner working is where the domain of freedom and liberation that Buddhism focuses on, is that we it's, but it really requires being settled and intimate, really present for yourself in a deep way. So often, it's seen as a path of meditation doesn't have to be living minute to meditation. With this it's a kind of a journey inwards. And as I tried to say last week I tried to is that sometimes it's very helpful to go in the opposite direction we want to go in life in order to go forward. So I talked about sometimes you have to crouch before you leap. You know, you got to go up and you want to go up, right? But you bet you bend down first, that you can make a good jump up. And there's many circumstances in life where we do something that seems like it's narrowing us, but it actually opens us up in the process. So, if you you can, you can go look at a small little circle of glass glass window, a little glass lens, and if it says connected to a huge telescope, you certainly layer narrow the focus of your, what you're paying attention to. But through that lens and the telescope, you see a vast cosmos, you see something really big Or if you watch another example like that, where you go, kind of narrow go in, and then you can come out and really wide. So you this is what happens in meditation practice.

There's a way in which we go into ourselves, we kind of the traditional languages, you seclude yourself from the world around you, when you close your eyes, you're not paying attention to the external world. And so you seclude yourself. And people hear this sometimes say, these Buddhists, you know, they're aloof, they're disconnected. They're shutting out the world. I want to be in the world and present everything and that's, you know, these Buddhists. And, but in fact, what happens is that if you go in this way, in in in, there's a clear eye clearing that goes on a housekeeping that goes on in the inner mental life, that experience literally is the mind becomes big and wide. That rather than rather than the mind getting in a more more contracted and narrow, the mind opens up. And it turns out that many people's minds when they're going around in ordinary life, when they're caught up in desires and aversions and preoccupations, and fears, they might be connected to many things in the world and paying attention and looking and wanting. But if they really noticed the subjective quality of their mind, the mind is actually very narrow and tight and limited. Even though they're kind of paying attention to the stuff out there, right? Sitting, close your eyes and get settled and centered. You're not noticing much in the world. But the mind gets wide, expansive and clear. And it's settled settles out the muck and the preoccupations and concerns. And that literally the experience sometimes can be in becoming the mind becomes aware or their awareness becomes a very, very spacious, expanded and open Sometimes it becomes so spacious and expanded, that it doesn't make any sense to call awareness yourself, or like it belongs to me, it's mine. As soon as you say it's my awareness or I'm the awareness or anything, it's just like trying to take your watercolors. You're a great, beautiful artist, you've been practicing for years and years. You're one of the great world experts in watercolors. And so you're, you're asked to make a beautiful watercolor. on this, on this, there's a frame, but instead of having canvas on it, it's just nothing. It's empty frame. So you have to make your water cooler on air. Right? You take the picture, it doesn't work, right. So the same thing with the mind is really open and free. You know, just, you know, you try to say I'm guilty or this is my awareness or I'm great. Or I'm terrible or whatever you want to say. But yourself it just doesn't like doesn't compute. It doesn't work. You know? Because awareness is so free and so spacious. And so we go in, and then we come out and then we've Can we open our eyes. After meditation, it's possible to carry that with us into the world. And it's not uncommon for people to feel much more intimate with the world more connected to the world, more available to the world. Because they're calmer and more relaxed, less preoccupied than they were before they meditated. So meditation is a way of going to go in, not to disconnect from the world, but you go in so that when you come out, you're you're present in a much higher better way in a higher quality way. So your connection to the world is actually better and improved. make some sense. So these four areas of practice then our product can be seen as this journey in that then brings you out in a nice way. And it begins by the subjective experience of being in your body. And I can't underscore enough this importance of the subjective experience. And I'm not sure what in philosophy or English language its objective really means but I'll try to explain. What it means is that we don't think about our experience because we think we're objectifying objects we're in we're in the world of about what we do is we feel the subjective experiences is what our felt sense experience how it actually feels through our body.

So if you are angry, you can you know, you don't think about yourself being angry. You the subjects experiences what it feels like to be angry. As soon as you're upset that you feel you feel yourself and you get upset. You don't get upset unless you objectified your back into you know, thinking about it. Say very simple Just feel and just feel the subjective experience. So, the first thing that Buddha said about the instructions was feel the body in the body. So, beautiful instructions to feel the body in the body. Some people say this means to feel the body in and of itself to allow yourself to feel your physicality the physical felt sense experience of being a physical being without adding anything to it, without commentary or judgments or should have better be or you know, all kinds of we add stuff just to be keep it really simple. Come back, be here, be here. Some people say that to experience the body and the body is to really go inside the inner experience where it's actually feel like from the inside out. So

why don't some of you know that when I give a guided meditate Instructions. I'll give the instructions. I don't I don't say I won't say now watch your breathing. You know, as if they're your the control tower watching your breath, I'll say, What is your body's experience of breathing? Or what if it's about the body? What's your body's experience of itself? How does your body experience breathing? And I say that in the hope that people then will get kind of a little strange way of saying it, that they get curious and interested while the body the subjective experience, how does a body experience it? Well, then we're in it, then you're in your body, the body and the body. It's Oh, it feels this way and that way. And then, and then stay with that. So experience so you've experienced your body, your breathing, the breath in itself, the body in itself, the sensations of the body. And I find that remarkable things begin to happen if I sit down and get quiet, and really kind of feel and sense into the subjective experience, the felt sense of feeling of my body, but again, not in the control tower, like I'm watching it. I'm external from it. But almost as if I am it, I'm in it, the awareness is in it, giving a loss of permission for the felt and the experience of the body to show itself. And it's not uncommon like to happen today when I sat down with you to meditate. That one of the things I quickly became aware of was I was uncomfortable in my body a little bit. There was places of comfort and places of discomfort. And I've been busy today running around I went to Berkeley and I was moving things out of my mother's storage unit. And in you know, it was kind of complicated stuff and back here and then here I've been there for not being here at work meant that emails piled up. People wanted responses. This and that you can Anyway, I've, you know, I in my family, this and that. So I sat down, and my sitting down here was partly a chance to check in to myself. And I discovered that there was a band around my ribcage, just kind of above the solar plexus, where when I breathe was a little bit uncomfortable, kind of, you know, a little bit unpleasant, kind of like I couldn't quite breathe fully, like I was held in it a little bit tight. And so lo and behold, that's the consequence of how I live my day today. I you know, was running around doing things in my head trying to get things done, and I didn't take enough time to really just settle in and unwind until I came here and I felt this contraction. So what I didn't do was said she you know, I'm a bad person.

You know, and here I am in meditation should have been doing this for 40 years meditating. And, you know, and this is rather embarrassing, I should be used to always kind of like floating in law and clouds and eating, just eating lights and you know, whatever, you know, some. And I certainly Why don't want to admit it to all these good people that I should feel uncomfortable comfort sitting down. But in fact, that's what I felt. And I've learned to trust that it's fine to feel that way. I didn't make it a big deal. But I've learned that it's really great. To stay present for that discomfort to breathe with it to open to it to allow it to be there. There's a radical difference between having discomfort versus having discomfort and offering it quality attention. It's almost like to have two different bodies to always breathing right. And maybe sometimes you Breathing, contracted unlimited or whatever it is, but to have to breathe versus to breathe with conscious awareness. So you're breathing into awareness fully aware, it's like two different it's like radical different universes, it's really something. And so to offer your awareness over to whatever's going on in your body to feel that so in this case, I felt my discomfort and I just trusted it, I breathe with it, I let myself be with it. I used it as kind of the focal point of my concentration just to be with that. And then I became after a while became aware that it was diminishing, and then around it in other parts of my body started to feel more comfortable and more relaxed. And after a while, that contraction discomfort I had in my ribcage went away. And I was much more aware that what was left in the body was much more pleasant, not dramatically, so much. So at first require me to be in my body, to experience the body in and of itself. As I did that, I became aware of the comfort and discomfort to the pleasant and unpleasant. And I stayed with that. And then as I started to shift and change, especially as the discomfort went away, then I started noticing what I talked about earlier, I started noticing the quality of my being quality of my inner life. And it started to feel kind of nice, not dramatically so but I started to feel more expansive and open, the boundaries of my body didn't seem quite so defined as I had earlier. And I started feeling some some delight, which is pretty cool to sit here

and just breathe and do nothing and it's very nice. So this was a journey, you know, so you're up. So come into the body feel what's there feel the feelings, it opens up to this beautiful inner quality of our being as it is. So the subjective experience, the felt sense, the feeling of the body, the way the body experiences itself, to come back to that over and over again. It's very, very important because some of the it provides a reference point it provides very important information about our lives. I would say that some of the most significant experiences of our life, most people, not experiences externally in the world. But the greatest experiences of happiness, of peace, of love of compassion, are closely connected to, you have to be proud you have to be present in your body to really feel them, let them mature and to grow. If you're lost in your head, lost in your thoughts and your preoccupations. There's not much room to feel peace and joy, love compassion, because those kinds of emotions arise through our body with our body. That's how we really know that they're there felt sense experiences. So as we drop into our body And start noticing the quality of what it feels like to be alive in our body. We get a reference point or a data point information what's really going on for us so I could have easily not come and meditated here with you this evening and gone running around and more emails to do you know, and more people to call and more things to run around and more dishes to wash and my son's starting high school tomorrow morning and I learned that they have zero period and local high school zero period you know, I used to have six periods like in the six periods in high school right and that was planning with me so lucky as zero period was it was zero period means is that there's so many kids in local high school now that they can't fit them all in the class, you know, in the regular. So zero period is this period before first period, so he has to be at school at 730

He got assigned to zero period. And so I could be home and I he was making to make his lunch now and you know, and he wants me to make breakfast he has a particular plan for breakfast. So I could, you know, I could have been home doing all this stuff, right? happily doing it. But I would not not have noticed the contraction and tightness I had in my chest. And people spend a lifetime not noticing what's here. Now, some people will notice what's here. I mean, so I could note artists uncover its own uncomfortable, I feel tight and contracted. And this must mean I'm a failure as a human being in a certain way in California ever since esslyn, deep, deep, deep breathing, you know, supposed to have a deep breath in California, the relax you know, so I've really not you know, so, and I could feel like I don't like on the disk uncomfortable and this is bad. And so, you know, a beer would be a good thing. Boy, a lot of laughs television would be a good thing, turn it on and, you know, or, you know, or, you know, one of the great ways, you know, it certainly must be great. Originally frequent ways that people seem to choose is I can just get angry at someone you know, just snap. There's good ways, you know, you know, dealing with these things. Or, I could sit quietly and feel it. And I've learned that feeling is really significant. So it can feel the discomfort, but the opposite is also very meaningful. And that is it as we relax and start feeling good subjective experience. The subjective experience of being contented, fulfilled, satisfied, not intellectually, but from the inside out through the body through the heart, feeling at peace in the body. There's a beautiful feeling of the heart. I call it the heart at home. In itself, the hearts at rested itself. The hearts not anxious is not caught up. It's not searching, but wanting is not dissatisfied. The heart is at peace with itself in itself. These are subjective experiences that you can feel. If you don't have that habit of the subjective experience of your life, you won't know that your heart is finally settled and at peace in a deep way. That's a subjective felt sense experience. As we start feeling familiar with a subjective experience, what it feels like in our body, and we'd have access in the experience of higher quality subjective way of being that becomes a reference point for what's possible. That becomes a reference point to see when we deviate from it. So we can study that and learn from it and maybe make a difference and change it for the better. We can start to validating and appreciating how precious and valuable It is to feel really nice from the inside out.

And this is now I'm going to tell you what I think is maybe the most challenging teachings of the evening. As we start having a rich, better inner subjective life here this is more valuable than anything you can have experienced in the external world. No matter what happens in the world out there, however beautiful the sunset is, how beautiful the people are that you love or whatever. Nothing compares to the rich richness. The wealthy Buddhism calls it the wealth, the real wealth is in the inside that comes out. And why that's so radical is that many of us are so easily seduced into being preoccupied with the world out there, what we want to have and get and not have and avoid and fix and deny and go into fantasy and all kinds of things. And he can seem so compelling and so meaningful that world out there. But it's not it's more valuable here. That's where the greatest thing is. And then if you protest and say, Well, here we go, which is Buddhist again. going in and there's these Buddhists are so selfish. Buddhists are not selfish, and they're not self centered. But they're, they're, what's it called? They're not self centered, but they're situation centered, which means They're centered in the situation and their awareness radiates out from here to themselves. We don't lose ourselves. We don't you know, we empty in a sense, but we radiate outwards our awareness, or say in different way. As we begin to become the caretakers of good subjective experiences, experience of deep sense of inner satisfaction, fulfillment, peace, compassion, love, happiness. That that then we open up into the world and connect to the world through those feelings through that way of being, which is a much more satisfying way of being in the world than being disconnected from ourselves and in the objectifying the world and trying to fix everything and move things around. So we come back here feel here. So when I go through my life when I'm doing when I it's my intention is my effort. My practice to when I'm with in the world, dealing with the world not meditating, I tried to keep a lot of my attention in my body. Probably when I tried to I had this idea that should be 5050 if I'm talking with someone 50% of the tension here, 50% attention there. There's a spiritual teacher that I respect a lot, who he says that he likes to do the 80 20 80% of the tension here and 20% of the tension in the world around him. And it might seem like it's selfish, it's preoccupied is disconnected. But I argue the opposite, that even only 20% of your attention is still left for the world. The quality of those 20% is maybe 1000 times better. When you when you gave 100% of your attention to the world that makes sense the map the degree to the quality of your 20% that you have left for the world, this is so good that people will think that you're fully present for them.

So your body so I'll tell you a little story. So this I had read the sub i read. So it probably happened once upon a time. God was in the process of creating the universe. So for six days, she was busy, right? doing all the things. And then then came to be end of the six day and so she was in a hurry. She wanted to finish the project in seven days. And so but she, you know, so it's time to make the humans and since you know, God had never done anything like Before she called in all day, some of the expert angels, they were angels who were social scientists, angels who were psychologists knew a little bit about political science, you know, and economics and, and, you know, many of the social study fields, you know, different angels are specialized in those and brought them together and asked the she asked them to please make, you know, figure out how to make a really good perfect human and, and so they went off to discuss this among themselves and since God had never done this universe thing before, didn't understand about committees. And so it took a long time for the committee to come back. So the whole project of being finished in seven days, you know, it didn't work out so well. But after some months, the committee came back and with a long list of how to make the perfect human and how they be emotionally sensitive and have good intellectual capacity and be curious about things and have moral values and, and in all kinds of things, social intelligence, and God listen and for a while and was silent for a long time and said, Well, it sounds really good what you've come up with, but I think something is missing. And they all know we got to go back and spend a few months in committee wondering what's God think is missing? That's a while ago, I think what's missing? What do you think would be like if you gave them bodies it hadn't occurred to them that they should have human beings

use our bodies. So we have bodies, you know, physical bodies. Your body is not something just lug around. It's not just something that's a vehicle to carry you from one place to the next. It's not the kind of the channel to go from your brain to your thumbs as you work your cell phone. Your body is an organism, your body is an ecosystem. Your body is a temple, your body is one of the greatest resources you have. Or the you know, it's the greatest entryways. It's like the doorway into the temple doorway into different, very different life, a radically different life. And so this the four foundations of mindfulness that the Buddha taught, the first doorway into this realm is the body, to be with your body to experience your body. And in order to really be with your body and experiences in a deep, thorough way. You have to do that 180 degree turn, I talked about. Turn, turn away from thinking about the world out there, the best you can and come around and let yourself feel what's Hear. And you can even do that with thinking if you can't stop thinking. Then what you do is you try to feel the subjective experience of what it's like to be human being who's doing so much darn thinking. So be curious, interested, what does it feel like in the brain and the mind and the jaws and the neck? What you know, what is the subjective experience like all this thinking that I can't stop? And if you ask that question, you begin shifting the emphasis, you're shifting where your attention is, and something will begin to unfold, you're coming back to yourself more. So your body so what I'd like to do is to encourage you for this week, those of you interested, that try to make your body a theme for the week. Kind of not so much. You don't think about your body so much. Because we start thinking about Your body then your bodies to notch this not enough that there's always problems, right?

But don't think about your body, but rather feel your body. Get into this, close your eyes even a lot just through the day and get curious. What's your body's experience? How's your body experiencing whatever is going on? If you're if everything's experienced through the medium of your body, if that's like the door into a deeper experience, even a social experience you're in, what does it feel like to be in your body? What is the reveal there? What comes to you? So I'd encourage you to make that a frequent practice this week. I think you'll find it very interesting and very meaningful. So we have five minutes before the usual end. If anyone has any comments or questions about that they'd like to make, we maybe have time for one might be interesting to hear your response to what I had to say.

You're all in your bodies 99% in your bodies and 1% with me great. Okay, so yes.

So someone who are in severe pain that's a that's a difficult one depends on the situation. Sometimes there's serious fear pain, they should take medication, which I learned when I had my tonsils taken out a few years ago. I that I you know, I don't really I can deal deal with him with anything and I was a little bit full of myself. And, you know, I'll just cut out I don't like taking this pain medication. So I'll just kind of like I won't take it doctor said take it this this this time, right? There's a very particular way to take it. What I didn't know is that tonsillectomy causes a lot of pain. Because I've never had one before. And the other thing I didn't know is that it takes a while for pain medication to work. So I started seeing so much pain that I started to shake. And then then I took the pill. And it takes a while to work. I kept shaking. So yeah, sometimes, you know, it depends what you have a severe pain. But I'll tell you a true story of a woman I knew who had very severe pain wasn't actually hospitalized because they had severe back problems and misses live. in terrible pain for a long, long time and, and there was nothing that doctors seem to be able to do for her. That's why she was in hospital. And then there was a Vipassana teacher by the name of Shinzen. Young, who has an audio lesson on working with pain. I knew about it but it was a cassette tape. So it's been around for a while, but now as you can probably get it downloaded somewhere. And he would call her in the hospital every day and work with her and guided meditation. And he had directed his the woman's attention to her body. But what he did was he said, Go find where in your body there's pleasure. There something pleasant and, and then she what you found was inside of thigh, she found a little square centimeter of pleasure, the rest of her body was

in pain. And she learned to focus on that. And that provided a different atmosphere for her mind. And that opened up and that's pleasure and the body began to grow. And that gave her relief that way she'd never had before. So that's an example of someone used the body. I know a lot of people who protest when they're told to go experience their pain, because it's painful to feel pain. it's counterintuitive, but I found that it's actually by going into it and feeling it. Only then can they get the information about how to relax with it, how to open up how to walk or live in such a way that not to aggravate the pain. But the higher your attention in going into it, the wiser you can live with it. So there are times to avoid it and be very careful. But the whole mindfulness movement that said such a big impact on our clinical world pain and stress management has a lot to do with going into it and feeling it, but doing it in a wise way. So it's a really good thing to do. But without knowing the person and what the particular severe pain is, you know, you know, it's it has, you know, it's a little hard to know exactly. You know, generic advice is not always the best best advice. That makes sense. Okay. So I hope that whether it's pleasant or unpleasant, that your body becomes your temple this week. Thank you.