

# Practice Note: Yield to the Present

Transcribed and edited from a short talk by Gil Fronsda1 on March 4, 2015

If you drive into Spirit Rock, the Vipassana meditation center in Marin County, on the long driveway going in you come to a yellow diamond caution sign that says: “Yield to the Present.” The idea of yielding to the present is a very good one.

The famous 13<sup>th</sup> century Zen master in Japan, Dōgen, defined ‘delusion’ as taking the self and moving forward into the world – whereas enlightenment is letting all things come to you. Sometimes when people practice mindfulness, they take their self as the one who’s going to do it. They direct and make the effort. This is not a wrong way of practicing, but making a lot of self-effort can often trip you up. Another way of practicing is that you are not trying to penetrate, understand, or get concentrated on something. But rather, you are trying to yield to it – to let the present moment experience come to you and fill you, so you can really register it. You can let it come.

If you are trying to listen to a faint sound, you might lean in the direction of the sound to hear it better. But you can’t do much to make yourself listen better, or listen harder. You have to *yield* better to the sound – to receive it more fully, to let go of the distractions, thoughts, the agitation of the mind, and to get some more space in the mind to receive and hear a subtle sound.

So, the idea is yielding to the present. Rather than trying to focus on the breath, what happens if you yield to the breathing? Let it come to you. Let the breathing do itself. Rather than focusing on your steps in walking meditation, what happens if you yield yourself to the steps? Yield yourself to receive, take in, and be filled by the sensations of the feet and legs walking.

So, receive, and register, and let it fill you. Let things come into your senses. Rather than using your senses to focus on something, let things come to your senses. Then tune in, so you can hear, see, smell, and feel it better, whatever it may be – yielding to the present.

You might experiment with that this morning if you’d like. Sometimes it’s a nice practice to do. Very little is asked of us here. Sit quietly; walk quietly. Nothing much is asked. So yield to the present and see what happens.

Thank you.