

Practice Note: In the Moment with Your Umbrella

Transcribed and edited from a short talk by Gil Fronsdal on January 9, 2016

Just keep walking; keep doing the practice; keep being mindful. Keep doing it step by step, breath by breath, moment by moment. Just keep staying in the flow of practice. What you'll often find though, is that something will happen, and you'll start thinking about it, or negotiating with it, trying to figure it out, or analyze it, or do something. And then, you are no longer continuing into the next moment in a fresh way. Rather than being there for the next thing, you're likely to be lingering with what just happened, or with what happened yesterday, or what's going to happen tomorrow. You've interrupted the flow of mindfulness – the flow of staying with the present moment as it keeps unfolding.

The present moment keeps showing up: a new present moment, and then another new present moment. The idea is to always be there, to be available to meet the next moment. There is no need for retrospective thinking, no need to stop and wonder, "What was that?" – because then you've missed the next moment, or the next step.

An analogy I like for this, is that of an umbrella. You can stand outside in the rain with a big wide umbrella, and as long as you have the umbrella open above you, the raindrops just wash right off, and never touch you. The raindrops keep coming, but they roll off, and you stay dry.

In a sense, your mindfulness practice is your umbrella. All kinds of thoughts, feelings, and experiences will occur, and they are all to be respected. They have their place. But if you stay in the flow of mindfulness practice, you just recognize them, and let them wash off. *Recognize and wash off.*

When it rains, it's not the same raindrop that keeps falling on you, but they're all kind of similar. Some things that occur are repetitive in nature. They look like they're the same: the same kinds of thoughts arising, the same kind of feelings. Just keep letting them wash off. Stay with the practice; be aware of this; stay with the breath, and let everything else do its thing.

You don't have to get involved. You don't have to analyze, or figure it all out. Just recognize it, and let it roll off. Stay in the moment, and then the next. Aim for a continuity of practice of just staying in the moment, and staying fresh for the next moment. Stay, and ask, "What's this?" And if you have any doubt about what you're supposed to be doing, you can just ask, "What's happening now?"

Be content with that – with whatever shows itself – that's it. Or just come back to your breathing. Be with your breath, and let breathing be your umbrella. Or as you do walking meditation, let the steps be the umbrella, and let everything else just fall off from that.

If what I've said makes sense, that's great – now try it. If it didn't make sense to you, just let it wash off your umbrella.

I hope you enjoy the day.