

# 2016-03-30 Practice Notes

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

discomfort, uncomfortable, reactions, automatically, meditating, mindfulness practice, learn, reactivity, responses, knee, kinds, opportunity, wednesday mornings, sit, breathe, gut reactions, knee surgery, talk, attack, part

## SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

So in these short middle to three minute talks that I give, this time on Wednesday mornings, you know, there's really only time to mention one thing. And there's so many things, so many different aspects of mindfulness practice. And there's certainly things that people prefer to hear about maybe the kind of things which are inspiring and nice and point towards comfort and ease and relaxation, and happiness and joy, all kinds of wonderful, you know, ecology stuff. But you know, if you're going to cover the full range, then different days, you have to pick different topics, you know, and just focus on one thing. So with that, as an introduction, I'd like to talk today about the importance of discomfort. And that it's a very important part of meditation practice mindfulness practice, to be uncomfortable. And one of the important reasons why it's important is that will be uncomfortable and life is guaranteed, sooner or later. And for many of us, it's sooner rather than later, it'll some kind of discomfort will come along, it could be very mild. And but when we feel discomfort when we're meditating, it gives us a great opportunity to start looking at what is our kind of gut reactions to discomfort, what is our responses to it, are habitual ways perhaps in all kinds of ways. And some people immediately get angry, some people automatically assume that something is wrong, and, and that this is something that needs to be fixed. Some people conclude when they're uncomfortable, that they're failing and something that's, you know, if you're doing meditation, you're supposed to be blissfully floating on a cloud. And otherwise, it's not really like you're not really, you know, you know, having the same experiences, everyone else here certainly must be floating on less than clouds, right? That's kind of. And so all kinds of reactions and responses, comparing yourself to others and our ideals, comparing yourself to ideals we think are supposed to happen. We have our reactions to it. Some people pull away, some people get afraid some people assign a lot of stories to it. You know, that my knee, I have a twinge in my knee, because I'm sitting this way. And this certainly must mean that I need pretty soon I'm going to need knee surgery, knee replacement? And then who's going to take care of me when I'm recuperating? And will I be able to do my job. And this is going to you know, and maybe I should look for a new job. And so the mind kind of goes off, right? So that's one reaction, some people recoil from discomfort. And some people attack. I have a friend of mine who when he had knee pain, he would always push back on his knee to get it back, get back at it. And so you know, it's kind of silly, right? But that's what he did. And he ended up having to have knee surgery. So you know, that attack, the pain, the discomfort. And so one of the advantages of stopping and looking at the discomfort when we're meditating is we get to study our reactions to it and what goes on with it. And some of them may be our useful responses. And some of them show us kind of habitual reactivity, which may be, it's not something that we want to automatically act on, when we're out in the world. We miss a lot. We miss it, we don't understand ourselves, we don't understand the situation. And sometimes we don't get underneath the surface of our life, what's really going on, in a deeper way if we don't stop and are willing to be uncomfortable. And the second thing we can learn by being uncomfortable we met with meditate is be willing to be uncomfortable.

And as I say many times, we're not really free, unless we're radically free if we're only free when we're comfortable. So you know, to learn how to be free, while you're uncomfortable as has to be there if you're really going to be free. And so what does it mean to sit with discomfort and be at ease, to sit with discomfort and breathe and relax and open to it and not have any automatic reactivity, anger, blame, fear, attack, you know, whatever we do, story making, but just stay very simple. And just be there and breathe and relax and make space for it and open to it and see if the mind can be very spacious. Just allow one of the things to learn to do with discomfort have learned to breathe with it. So there's the rhythm of breathing, the massage or breathing sometimes can help us kind of from getting locked into our reactivity, and just be there with be there and just be present. So those are two in this simple things. Very important things we can learn. If we're willing to be uncomfortable When we're meditating, if you mean you're gonna go get uncomfortable, rather than automatically changing your posture rather than automatically getting up and going to Starbucks, right, you know, or going into a fantasy or whatever you do. When you find a situation where you're uncomfortable, don't try to fix it right away. Unless you're damaging yourself, don't fix it. But see it as an opportunity to understand yourself better. So be curious, how is that for you What's going on, and an opportunity to learn how to be economists or relaxed or calm or non reactive and just allow it to be there without identifying so strongly with it without being connected involved with it or entangled with it. It's just it's just discomfort and it's like a sound outside. It's just part of the big picture of what's happening now. As opposed to this thing happening now. So if it should happen this morning, that perhaps of the that you feel uncomfortable, you're prepared. I hope you take the take the advantage, advantage of the opportunity. Thank you.