

Foundations of Mindfulness Part 2 - Breathing

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So good evening, and now is the volume loud enough for you with me? Good. So the plan for this beginning of the year is for me to give a series of talks on at a Buddha's teachings on the four foundations of my mindfulness. And whenever I'm here, I'll pick up. It's a particular discourse, a wonderful discourse that is the source for mindfulness teaching and mindfulness practice. So on this Martin Luther King Day, to continue with that theme, normally on Martin Luther King Day, I like to give a talk that's related to the topic of the day.

It's my favorite holiday, because of what it represents. Martin King represents his work, and what he represents, what he focused on, what he is. Values had he lived are quite dear to me, and I would like to believe is dear to Buddhism: civil rights, and fighting against racism and economic inequality, and opposing the amazing tendency humans and countries have to go to war with each other. And it may be a little unfortunate that, fifty years after he died, that what he represented, and what he taught, and what he acted on, is just as relevant now as it was back then. So we have to stay, but I'm not going to do that topic. And perhaps the liberation that Buddhism teaches through mindfulness.

I know what leads to the same thing, but it prepares people to be able to be sensitive and aware and alert to a lot of the suffering of the world and the injustice of the world, and to be able to encounter it in and work with it hopefully and in transformative ways. The teaching and practice of mindfulness can be seen as a preparatory practice or practice that brings us to a preparatory state, a state of preparation that prepares us to be able to have wisdom and a particular kind of wisdom, the wisdom that's liberating. And it's bringing us to a state of a certain kind of heightened sensitivity, heightened alertness, awareness, that is productive or capable of triggering some deeper insights. So what is this kind of awareness that not only

helps us to be present, but more than that, helps us to have an open mind, helps us to have a receptive mind, helps us to have a sharp mind that allows us to kind of take in and be present and experience and see and understand what's happening so that we can be changed by it. Now, one of the things it requires is a desire to, a willingness to be changed, a willingness to take something in the world and take us experience in and be changed by it. In the teachings of the Buddha, there's many different forms of change that comes from doing mindfulness, and some of it is ethical, that there's something, again, about this practice of mindfulness, the awareness that comes, that is said to uproot or destroy—powerful language—destroy unhealthy, unethical behaviour and ethical activities that people have.

So it's, you know, also a very powerful statement about mindfulness. Mindfulness also is said to be protective in nature, that one of the other functions of mindfulness is something about the awareness of mindfulness that the way we are mindful, the way we can notice things, that's also said to be deeply protective, primarily protects us as we go through the world. And it might be that what it protects us most from is ourselves, which is pretty good. This Discourse of Four Foundations of Mindfulness is, I don't know, many pages. It is maybe twenty pages or so in this big book, The Middle Length Discourses. I've been reading it, I've translated it, studied for many, many years, thirty years now, and when I've looked at it and been totally bored because I've known it so well, just seems kind of dry.

But in the last decade or so of looking at it, it's certain to come much more alive. And I don't see it as dry any more. I see it as it's quite a radiant text, a kind of a powerful text that kind of is structured, is written. And almost, in a way, that supports the message. It's probably the most constructed, most carefully constructed, one of the most carefully constructed texts in the early Buddhist canon. It's very unlikely the Buddha just sat down and gave this sermon.

The evidence that exists suggests that it was actually put together gradually over time, and different elements were added and constructed. So it was an editorial process. But in that process, it became a text that is very orderly. It has a kind of ordered, orderly, straightforward kind of message that, for me, when I read it now, kind of brings a certain kind of represents and brings a certain kind of uprightness, a certain kind of sense of like, if you go into a very clean room, then an ordered room, it tends to make us—idea in the best sense of that kind of room—makes us kind of be a little more alert and present, and we care for things there as opposed to a room that's totally a mess and chaotic, and maybe it's fine to live that way, but you're less likely to kind of treat the objects there with the same kind of care as you would if everything was nicely put and cared for and paid attention to. So this text has that feeling to me, and what it does when I read it now kind of inspires me to be that way, to be in a

certain kind of way, not orderly exactly, but to organize my inner life so that there's a clarity of purpose and dedication, and a sense of onward leading, and a sense of importance of being present in a careful—I don't know, I'm not quite sure the language—but careful, systematic way. Anyway, I hesitate. The very text is almost like a text is of any sort as very carefully constructed.

And in that care, it represents a certain kind of deliberateness and intentionality and purpose that is inspiring for me. And one of the ways it is constructed is that it goes from a kind of the surface of our life and steadily goes down to more or more subtle areas of our life. Scholars talk about it goes from the gross experiences of life, coarse experiences of life, to the most subtle. And that's a momentum of moving to deeper and deeper areas of our life, into our heart and depths of our life. Is one that could be said brings us home. When the Buddha taught one way, one of the ways the Buddha talked about mindfulness, or actually literally the four foundations of mindfulness, was through many analogies. But one analogy is he said that, you know, he wandered around northern India, and I guess there, I think he was referring to some place on the foothills of the Himalayas where there are jungles, forests, and there are some places where if you go up the mountains, it's so steep and jagged, and that it's even too difficult or dangerous for monkeys to live there.

But if you come down into the forest, where it's still pretty steep and jagged, and trees, monkeys can live there quite nicely, but hunters can't go there. So the hunters are safe. But you come further down to where it starts getting flat, then the hunters can come, and then the monkeys are no longer safe. And so the Buddha called that middle section where the monkeys are safe: their native land, for the monkeys, their native country, their home country. And if the monkeys leave their home country, they're not safe. And so the Buddha said, mindful, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness is our native land. It's our home country.

And so the idea of the practice is to come home to that. So both to the safety that's there, but also a tide of being home, some place that feels very comfortable, very cosy, very appropriate, where we feel kind of we can be ourselves and maybe free from dangers and restrictions and all kinds of things. So too, and it's, but you know, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness is practice of mindfulness is not a place. So it isn't like you go there. It's more like you bring it with you everywhere you go. So there's a way that you become at home, you in your home country, wherever you go, by being somehow grounded and sensitive in your in your this domain, these areas of mindfulness.

And there are four areas of mindfulness, domains of mindfulness that are emphasized for this purpose. There is mindfulness of the body, mindfulness of what's called feeling—feelings or

feeling tone. It's a particular meaning. And then mindfulness of the states of our mind, and then mindfulness of the activities of our minds. And as we go through this, there are more subtle and also more important. The activities of the mind are the most important ones that either cause us harm, the very harm we protect ourselves from, or gives us freedom. And so we were finding our way to that through these four foundations is this path.

The first one, mindfulness of the body, begins with an expression that is very peculiar. And if you know me because I've read this so many times, I still find it inspiring, so that the description of mindfulness of the body is a kind of general one sentence description is like this: A practitioner abides observing the body as a body, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. So when it abides observing, so by the word abides or dwells has connotations of a certain kind of ease and relaxation, like you're at ease and resting. And from that space you kind of observe what's going on with some clarity. And we observe the body here. He translated body as a body, the little grammar of the ancient language. It's a body in the body.

And what most people think this means is to observe the body, be present, be mindful of the body in and of itself, in reference to itself, without comparisons to other bodies, to ideals, to thoughts, to associations, to value judgments, to, you know, plural of kind of abstract thoughts we can have about the body, but just how it's almost like to be aware of the body as the body would experience itself. So an example of this that I like to give, especially do this on retreats or sometimes in the intro class of meditation, is I take some part of your body and often use a hand, and maybe I could do it as an exercise rather than just telling you about it. If you close your eyes and then I will do it this way, close your eyes and then put your hands together palm to palm, and gently, you know, touch your palms together, and feel the temperature there of the contact. And maybe you can feel the softness of the contact, or the hardness. Maybe there is vibration if you, maybe you feel the pressure, or maybe you can push just enough so you feel pressure. And as you feel your hands this way, our chances are that your attention of your palms, of your hands, probably to some degree, moves around your hands.

Sometimes you are aware of the contact of the fingers. That may be the bottom of the palm, the top of the palm, you know, different ways. Sometimes it's pressure, sometimes it's warmth, vibration, different things. And so take a few moments more and just feel those sensations that are there. And if sometimes, if you just really just feel the sensations in and of themselves, even the idea of the concept and the image of a hand might drop away from the mind, and it's just particular sensations that are floating in space, that are in contact,

that appear there. So staying this way a bit longer now, you could, oh, you know, feel the hand here. And then you could start having these kinds of thoughts.

The first you might think about, the chances are that most of us have a dominant hand, the one we write with. So that means you have a non-dominant hand. So the non-dominant hand, you know, doesn't do a good job writing for most people, and it's kind of a drag to have this hand that doesn't write very well, because you know, something might happen to your dominant hand, and then you have to write with your non-dominant hand or type with it. And it's rather unfortunate. You haven't really trained yourself up over the years, and you know, and it's not quite up to snuff. And what you need to do. So you start having thoughts like that, and you can get into it and spin out and come up with all kinds of reasons why this non-dominant hand has problems.

As you start having these kinds of thoughts, what happens to the contact, the sensations, the feelings of the hands touching? Chances are you started to lose touch with it, unless you just, you know, thought I was in too silly and ignored me. So you can put them down and open your eyes. So that's perhaps a little silly thing they do. I was just trying to make this point that it's possible to have a certain kind of attention, awareness, sensitivity that doesn't rely on a lot of ideas and thoughts and complicated, you know, judgments about what's there. But it's just two hands, the sensations in and of themselves very, very simply.

So this expression here, the body as a body, or the body in the body, or the body in regard to the body, is to learn to develop as an awareness and attention to the experience of the body that is freed up from a lot of the complicated or sometimes even painful, even harmful thoughts and ideas that we carry about our body. You know, many people spend an inordinate amount of time concerned with their body, their looks, and feel bad about their body in some ways, all kinds of ways. And some people get very depressed. There was a woman who I was speaking a few last week, and said that when she was, she thinks she was ten, and she put on a little bit of a sweater, a little bit tight, I guess, and she had it. She looked at herself sideways in the mirror, and she saw she had a belly, and that kind of, she started to have a tremendous amount of shame. And she grew up then, from the age ten to some point later in life, and with a tremendous shame about her body.

And it's not uncommon for people to have a shame about the body, or problems with their body, all kinds of things. And if we experience our body through the lens of the judgments, the stories, the ideas, the internalized messages we've got in society, all kinds of things, that's a very different experience than experiencing the body in itself. To have this protective awareness, to have this awareness that's primed for wisdom, to have this awareness that puts us

back in our home country, we feel at home and centered in ourselves. It's really important to be able to put aside all these complicated thoughts and ideas that we have, and begin tuning in and being sensitive to how the body's actually experienced in and of itself. What's the body's experience of itself independent of all those ideas? So that's partly what it means, this idea of observing the body as a body, or body in the body.

And then it goes on to say to do so ardently, with full awareness and mindful. So this idea of ardency is interesting. Many people come to meditation because they want to de-stress. They want to come and be quieter, and not be agitated so much. And so a strong association many times is with relaxing and not doing. And that's valuable for people who are overdoing or over-stressed for sure to do that. But at some point, hopefully, as people keep meditating, the issue of using meditation to de-stress stops happening, and then the meditation can really begin being used for what it was designed to be used for.

The Buddha didn't design meditation just to help us de-stress, just for that, but rather to have a relaxed body, a relaxed mind, in order we can go further with the practice. So then the idea of being ardent, to be determined or dedicated, to actually give some good energy, like really apply oneself—this is important. When this is what I am going to do, and then with here, the word is fully aware, that the literal meaning of it is with comprehension and *sampajañña*. I like the translation clear comprehension. There is a clear understanding of what's happening as we do mindfulness. That's an important part of this mindfulness practice. And then the third word in this sequence is mindful.

So these are the three kind elements that are at the heart of applying ourselves to mindfulness practice. There's ardency, there's a cultivating clear understanding of what's happening, and there is this—the awareness itself, the mindful awareness that's present. So that's got at the goal, or that's the description, or then it says one more thing. It says when one puts away, having put away covetousness and grief for the world or distress for the world. And how I understand this is that to covet something is to want something out there. To have distress about the world or grief about the world is to have distress or grief about something that's out there. It's not like the object out there is something you think about. You can see out there if you close your eyes in a safe, quiet place.

If we have, if we're caught up in desire about things in the world that other people have, or caught up with any kind of grief and distress in the world out there, which might be reasonable to experience, but it's a way of being involved with the external world. The mind is being projected outward, as opposed to really centering itself here on itself. And since that's the purpose of mindfulness, is to come home and be centered here, be so centered

and connected here as a way of finding this, coming to this, a very useful, productive kind of awareness. It really helps if, at least temporarily, we've learned how to turn the attention around to really be here, and so we're no longer focusing on the concerns we have about the world around us. So I like to think of it as turning our attention a hundred eighty degrees around from being concerned with objects, things out there, and really turning around, and being much more intimately connected to the subject, to the subjective experience, how we actually are.

This is not the end of the story, like we're supposed to be that way all the time. But this is a preparation for being able to then return to the world in a very different way, in a hopefully in a more healthy or useful way in the world. So abiding, observing the body as a body, ardent, clearly comprehending, mindful, having put away covetousness and grief, distress, for the world. So that's the first foundation of mindfulness. And then the text goes on and describes how that's cultivated, how you do such things. And it begins with mindfulness of breathing.

And to do that, it describes how one prepares oneself to meditate on one's breathing. And that is described this way: a practitioner. And how does a practitioner abide observing the body as a body? Here, a practitioner gone to the forest or to the root of a tree or to an empty hut sits down having folded the legs crosswise, sets the body erect and establishes mindfulness to the forefront. So that's how one prepares oneself. And it's kind of a little bit, kind of, you know, it represents that you cannot get yourself ready for mindfulness. Remember, this text, I said, is a very consciously, intentionally composed text, suggesting perhaps that when we sit down to meditate, we don't do it casually, but we do that also kind of intentionally, consciously, and we do it in a way that really kind of supports us, that this is what I'm going to, this is important, and let's get the conditions right so that I can really be here and be centered.

So here he describes going to a place that's quiet. There's not going to be a lot of disturbances. The phone's not going to ring. Maybe your device is not going to be that. Someone's not going to come necessarily. Maybe a little bit isolated. And as you know, back in ancient India, it was to go into the forest, or the foot of a tree, or an empty hut, some place a bit away from people, so that a person could really sit and be quiet, and be left alone, and do this inner work for us. You know, maybe it means going to a quiet room in one's house, or to meditate at a time when you're less likely to be disturbed by other people or the things of the world.

So some people like to meditate early in the morning for that purpose. But to go some place—I like, I love this idea of an empty hut—on, you know, hopefully sit and meditate some place

where the objects in the room are not going to be enticing for you, you know, is probably not a good idea to set yourself down to meditate with your laptop right open, right in front of you. You know, every time someone sends you an email, the light goes on, and you know you've got to kind of put things away so you don't have to use them. So again, remember the focus is to turn temporarily away from the world and focus on there and not be distracted by it. So you can really turn inward and be with this whole experience here.

And then it goes on to say this idea of to establish mindfulness to the forefront. And this is a kind of peculiar language to establish mindfulness. The most likely meaning for this word *sati* translated as mindfulness is awareness. One establishes awareness. Awareness is not something we do. We don't intentionally do. Awareness is a natural capacity we have that's always here. We sometimes forget about it. We're distracted from what we're kind of pre-occupied. But to be aware is, you know, it's the function of consciousness, of our sensory apparatus. To be aware, and so is not so much we have to do, but something we have to allow for or re-establish or reconnect to.

And this idea that what we're relying on when one's practice is less is not a doing activity, but an allowing or establishing or connecting to a capacity that's always here. But we all often overlook or often don't recognize in a heightened way. We're so caught up in our thoughts and ideas and all that. So this idea like, Here I am, let me kind of establish myself here and aware, attentive. It's almost as if it's almost to be. To establish awareness is almost not a matter of doing something as it is undoing. It's kind of like putting aside thoughts. It's kind of like, almost like, it's like listening in a few—if you're in a quiet, somewhat quiet place, and you can try to listen to sounds. You know, it's not hearing. We don't strain to hear, to listen. We open and allow and open our sensitivity to listen.

So this to establish mindfulness is to call upon a natural capacity that's always here, because that's what we're trying to build on or use. As we do this practice, it's hard to stay there. Some people can momentarily connect to being aware for a moment. I know now this works. Maybe it's silly, and you'll forgive me, maybe. But sometimes I hear this teaching this way. I'll suggest to people or give people the instructions to stop being aware. You stop. Cut it out. No, don't be conscious. Come and stop. And most people, when they're given that instruction, simply can't do it. And it's a little bit of a kind of reverse psychology thing, because, you know, people would try to be aware in meditation, try to be aware, and the mind goes off all the time and wanders off, and, you know, they wish they could be aware. And then as soon someone sits here, and I stop it, you know, you try to stop it, and you know, you just like it won't go away. You know, I and a cause. So it's something that's always there, that we're

relying on. But then to stay there is the art of it. Stay there is what we're trying to develop, to stay in that field of awareness, so that field of awareness becomes its productive, useful place to be.

So the text, then, the first real exercise of the text to begin cultivating this heightened awareness and to keep at present and ongoing way is done by meditating on breathing, mindfulness of breathing. And there are four sets of instructions or four steps for how to practise mindfulness of breathing that's given here. It says, So having established mindfulness to the forefront, ever mindful one breathes in, mindful one breathes out. Breathing in a long breath, one understands, I breathe in a long breath. Or breathing out a long breath, one understands, I breathe out a long breath. Breathing in a short breath, one understands, I breathe in a short breath, or breathing out a short breath, one understands, I breathe out a short breath. So that's the beginning. I'm going to go on a couple more steps.

And here that's talking about a movement: first being aware of a coarser breath, a long breath, and then becoming aware of a short breath. And what this is describing is going from a more ordinary agitated state and becoming calmer. And generally what happens is that breath becomes calmer as well, more subtle. The breath becomes shorter, and you know, and sometimes they get so subtle you hardly recognize it's there. But if you are agitated, if you're stressed out, if you just did a mere thought or something, you're going to be breathing a lot, heavy breaths, big breaths and all that. And as things calm down, the breath comes down, and it gets shorter and shorter. And so what we're doing, as I hear, is we just begin to tune into our breathing, being mindful of it, and recognizing a clear comprehension of something very simple about the breath. The simple quality of whether we're breathing coarsely or subtly, and we watch the change as we settle in.

Part of the reason to do this is to simply develop concentration, the steadiness of the breathing. The more you can follow the rhythm of breathing, stay with in-breaths and out-breaths, the less energy goes into our thinking and the more we can kind of take the energy that goes into thinking and distractions and preoccupations and put over and give it over to our breathing. So there's a fullness of attention, of breathing. And that's kind of the art of this mindfulness thing. Mindfulness practice is to discover and experiment, find how to have a full awareness on the thing we're paying attention to. I'm quite capable of being on my breathing a little bit and be thinking about something in me now I'm concerned with and kind of multi-tasking. And I met one person who said, told me, I was kind of amazed. I don't know. Maybe people can do this. Maybe I, he said, he claimed that he could think about seven different topics at the same time. If it said, you mean very rapid succession is not like multi-tracking.

So that was quite impressive, I thought, and that would even think that. But even if it's not literally, you know, simultaneously to be juggling seven things kind of continuously together, that's quite a fragmented mind. And that maybe he's productive, but the point of mindfulness practice is to gather together our attention. So the full attention is there on what we're paying attention to.

And this is where we come back to this idea of the hands touching. If you take your two palms and touch—you, not to do it now—but to have both hands touching fully, and really let the fullness of contact be there. As opposed to taking, you know, you're told to put the hands together and just do the fingertips touch lightly. Or you take one little finger and just touch the palm of the other hand, and you know, and then the hands, you know, not really full, but to bring our full attention to the experience of breathing is the art. And that's not an easy thing to do. But every time we notice the attention is not with the breathing, that means that it's not fully on the breath. And slowly we gather up the mind, slowly we gather the attention, slowly we learn what it's like to take all the energy of awareness or attention and have it fully there, not split, not multitasking, just with the breathing.

So the simplicity of just being with the breath coming and going does this. Some people find just doing that is very calming. Some people find it a tremendous relief if they're able to do that, because it takes them out of the ruminating mind, which has been said now by psychologists that one of the leading causes of depression is rumination and other, you know, difficult emotional states. And to be able to kind of step away from or turn off the ruminating mind, and just really bringing attention to the breathing—for some people, it's really health producing. It's very helpful. So as so to begin there, just focusing on the breathing, simplifying our experience, just coming to, coming down to the breath, learning to do that, learning to let go of the distractions, come back, learning to kind of not just come back in a mild way or half-hearted way, but to come back with a full-hearted way. So there fully there, as fully as we can. And then we stay with the breath, tuning into the breath, watching it, seeing it change over time.

Then it goes on to say this mindfulness of breathing. It says, And now the language changes, and now it talks about training. One trains oneself. One has, one is. Training isn't more than just practice. Training has to do with developing something, a skill or capacity. One trains one's self thus: I shall breathe in experiencing the whole body. One trains oneself thus: I shall breathe in, I shall breathe out experiencing the whole body. And this idea that at some point, as we settle into the breathing, it's not at some point the awareness that becomes full. It stays full. But it can become a little spread out a little bit more, and become aware there's

a peripheral awareness. Perhaps become aware of, say, one of two things: either the more the full body, what's going on in the body, or the full experience of breathing.

So for example, you might first become aware of the breathing in the chest, but as you settle into the breath, then the whole experience of a breath throughout the body, the torso becomes more sensitive, more attentive to it, the belly, the front rib cage, the back rib cage, the nose, you know, much more. The fullness of breathing becomes more evident. And for some people, it's been beyond that. As the mind gets quieter and more focused, there is a heightened sensitivity to more of what's going on in the body, and so that opens up to this wider experience of the body. But for a very interesting purpose, this is the last exercise for in mindfulness of breathing. One trains oneself, I shall breathe in relaxing the bodily formations. One trains oneself, I shall breathe out relaxing the bodily formations. And so this expression bodily formations is an interesting one. It means that experience, that the experiences we have are our body, either connected to just breathing, or our whole body that are there because of how the mind is, what the mind does.

So a bodily work may be clear if you sit and start getting, you know, start quieting down. It's becoming aware of what goes on in your body. And you notice that your shoulders are tense and tight and sore. That's there, maybe because you've been anxious all day. Those sensations in the shoulders are there because what the mind does, the anxious thinking, sinks in preoccupation. If you are angry and your stomach is hot and tight, those sensations in the stomach are byproducts, or kind of a byproduct, you know, there because of what the mind does. It turns out there's a fairly high percentage of sensations in the body that are there because of the momentum of how we've been using our minds. And so that begins to catch up with us as we start meditating, and there can be layers and layers of this kind of physical attention that we carry in the body that are there because of how we've been living our lives with our mind. That's called the bodily formations.

And what the Buddha instruction, the Buddha gives as we settle in, after we can settle in, getting more fully there with breathing. As we develop a little, heighten more sensitivity to what goes on the body, and start noticing these tensions in your body, relax it. So as you breathe in, relax the bodily formations. As you breathe out, relax the bodily formations. So sit down, establish awareness. With that awareness, start becoming aware of your breathing in and breathing out. Notice in a simple way, the qualities of that breathing, long or short, coarse or subtle. And start using the qualities that characteristic your breathing as a way to gather your attention, to be more fully here in your body with your body breathing.

As you do that, then at some point you'll start becoming more attentive, more sensitive, more

aware of what's going on in your body more widely, something will start aching. So you feel attention, something began happening, and feel that for a while. As you feel, after a while, and you felt and got to know it, then as you breathe, you're allowed to relax it, soften. Don't do it aggressively. Don't do it rapidly. Don't relax rapidly. Don't overdo it. And try make a big project out of it. That's counterproductive. But within reason, try to relax, and you know you're relaxing just enough, just right. If it helps you be more present, if it helps you to be settled into your body more, and helps that awareness thing, the awareness, to be a little bit stronger and more present, and then you can do that over and over again.

I've been doing this for decades, and I find that I just love this practice, mindfulness of the breathing. Then, you know, you think that you do the same thing, you know, three or four breaths, and you kind of figured them out, right? That's it. And it just opens up a whole world, a fascinating inner world, like a door into the inner life, and to all these different states, and all these different healing qualities and wisdom qualities that come from mindfulness of breathing. And so to spend time developing and cultivating, I know, a stronger and stronger awareness, present moment awareness, to focus awareness, a full awareness, to cultivate the capacity of that ability with the simplicity of just with or breathing with the breathing, with the breathing. Come back, be with the breathing. If you're bored doing it, your attention is not fully in the breath. If your attention is fully with a breath, it's impossible for you to be bored. Some people get bored when there's aversion, resistance, when they're living a little bit too abstractly in their thoughts and ideas and expectations and everything, and they're kind of removed from the experience. Boredom, as some people say, is a sign of being removed from your experience. So the I is fully present for it.

So kind like when your hands touched together, fully have them touched. When your awareness is with breathing, have the awareness fully touch the experience of breathing, or have the experience of the body breathing fully touch awareness, have them be fully there. There's no room for boredom. And so if you do feel bored, what I hope is what I just said inspires you. Do not believe the boredom. Not be pushed around or ordered around by the boredom, but rather say boredom. You know, going to give myself over more fully when I really make contact. If I really be here more fully, really make the effort, be inspired to really give you full awareness, full contact. And this might be all that's needed. A meditation teacher and Zen teacher in Japan said that everything you need to know about Buddhism can be discovered through mindfulness of breathing.

Then the Buddha goes on and describes this, gives what's called a refrain that follows every exercise it's given here. So as we cultivate this mindfulness of breathing, it brings us to this

next level, which includes a kind of bringing the mind to a certain kind of loose state of lucid awareness. And that I'll talk about next time, because we're another time, and this is enough. So what I hope this talk does, because I think this is what it does for me when I read this text, is to maybe kind of inspire or evoke an interest, to become curious and interested. What is this animal, this thing, this wonderful capacity of awareness? What is it? And how is it can? How can you use it? How can you make it come alive for yourself? Why is it protective? Why is it what's it? Why is it bring you into a place of being prepared for wisdom? How is it can bring you home in some way? How is it that it can be coming and settling and focusing? What is this thing awareness for you? And what is it to rely on it, or settle into it, or apply it, or something simple of the breathing? I'll be curious, be fascinated, enter the world, and see what you discover. And then when I come back next, I'll continue this series of talks. Maybe next time I'll talk about the refrain, and I and then the next exercise I have to do, but bring the mindfulness into daily life. So that makes it very practical. And that'll be in two weeks. I won't be here next Monday. So thank you all very much. And enjoy your awareness.