

## Foundations of Mindfulness Part 9 - Mindfulness of Mind

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Welcome to IMC, and I mean to continue this journey on the mindfulness journey, going through the ancient text called a discourse, usually called the Discourse on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, which is kind of taken to be the source text for the Buddhist practice of mindfulness. Some of the secular forms of mindfulness nowadays also will trace themselves back to this text. It has at least a symbolic value of being kind of the origin for it all. And it's a very important text in Buddhist meditation practice because it lays out a variety of ways that mindfulness practice can unfold, or how to do it. One of the remarkable things about it, as I see more and more as I read this text—whether it's there or not, I'm not completely sure—but you see it's laid out with the idea of movement, that there is a movement going on of practice unfolding, a development, and an evolution of practice.

I like the metaphor of deep. So it kind of goes deeper and deeper as we go through it. It begins with this statement that, in my mind also, it begins by kind of evoking the idea of movement. In this translation, it says, There is the direct path, there is the direct way, there is a direct vehicle that, so this idea that there is a path to walk, and to this very direct it goes some place directly, and so there's movement along a path. In a variety of different ways, what you see appearing in the text reinforces the idea. Meditation is not a static, unchanging thing, but there is a deepening, a growing, a movement of insight, of understanding, of mind states that change as meditation deepens.

Most people associate that with meditation. Meditation is something that you start with. Your everyday mind may be agitated, everyday mind. As you meditate, you get quieter and quieter, or more and more concentrated, or calmer and calmer, or the mind becomes clearer and clearer. So the study of movement that goes on, and important in this text, is the movement of insight to see and see progressively deeper ways or clearer ways. As we've gone through

this text, we now come to the third of the four foundations, third of the four foundations of mindfulness, which is that of the mind.

*Citta* is the word, and some people will translate *citta* as heart. There's some idea that in places like Thailand and Burma, what we would call the mind—and we point to our brain—in those countries, they would call the heart, and they point to the chest. So that's the place where the mental operations are operating. Maybe it doesn't matter that much except that the heart feels a little more embodied. That's kind of a nice idea, that that's where the centre of operations is. But sometimes I get that feeling, but my sense of operation is higher than that.

I think that I have a strong identification or recognition in the head, maybe because of the acculturation of many decades in the West. In any case, the third foundation is the foundation where we turn and look at the *citta*, and sometimes it's translated as mind. As I said, to understand this, I'll make it easier. It might be better to understand it as mind state, the state of the mind, and our mind state can change over time. It can be agitated. It can be calm.

It can be angry, or it can be peaceful and happy. It can be greedy and, you know, filled with—you know, no state is that I don't like—a momentary moment of anger or greed, but the whole kind of fabric or texture or the atmosphere of the mind can be very strongly influenced by a different disposition, different ways of being. You take a deep look at your mind state, and you say, Well, you know, I was really grumpy all day, just like nothing worked. I was aversive and in an aversive state, you know. Just whatever I saw, I saw through the subversive atmosphere of my mind. Or it could be love, you know.

Some people, you know, have occasion to fall head over heels in love with something, someone, and everything the person does is fantastic, you know, and everything is seen through that filter, that mind state of infatuation, perhaps, or something. So the general mind state of the mind, and the mind state is a little more unstable than a particular moment of anger or particular—now someone says something nice, and we feel happy for a moment. So it's not just a particular, you know, activity of the mind. It's more like the mood that the mind is in than the particular activity. Here we're turning the attention to notice the mind state. One of the salient features of this way of knowing the mind state is it simply says to know or to understand.

It doesn't say to understand or recognize the mind state and judge it. It doesn't say to recognize what it is, and if it's undesirable, push it away and get rid of it. It just says just to know it, just recognize it's there. For people who do mindfulness practice, at some point, there is kind of an aha moment that can happen where it becomes quite remarkable to appreciate

the power of simple recognition—that just to see something for what it is. I think of it as being very respectful, because when you see something, you're not interfering with it directly. You're not trying to make it go away.

You're not judging it as being bad or good. It's just clearly seeing: This is what it is. When I was first introduced to this practice in England, I was given a little meditation hut at the edge of the swamp, the edge of the monastery, and I had to go across it on these planks of wood across the swamp, and I had to walk across the planks to get little steps going up to my little hut on stilts. One room probably, I don't know, eight by eight, or maybe ten by ten. I'm not sure how big it was, and I was sent out there to meditate, and meditate all day by yourself. Every day I would go see the abbot for an interview, and he would give me more instructions, and send me back to my little cabin in the swamp, and I would do my sitting and walking there.

Right near the swamp, kind of the next side of the cabin I had, was a grave, and that was a kind of cement thing that was above the swamp. I would go to my walking meditation there, back and forth, because that was the place, the closest place to do it. Then I'd go back and meditate a little. It was kind of cozy. So I was, you know, I was doing my meditation every day, and one day I don't know why, but I decided to go for a little walk around the monastery, which meant I wasn't meditating. Having been a good Zen student, you know, you follow the schedule, and I was told all day to sit and walk, sitting meditation, and walking all day, all day, with a schedule.

That's what you do, you know, all day. But for some reason I decided to go for a walk around the monastery. And lo and behold, who should be walking on the monastery at the same time? But the abbot. My feeling was busted. I'm supposed to be meditating and serious, and doing it here, walking on, being a goof, going off, getting off, and walking round the monastery.

We could walk ninety degrees to each other. So he was walking ninety degrees to me, and as I was walking towards him, he just walked by. But as he walked by, I was maybe twenty or thirty feet away. He turned and looked at me, and it was really clear that he saw me. There was no doubt about it. I really felt seen.

At the same time as he felt being seen, I felt like he saw right—not through me, like he saw what's going on inside—but like I was transparent. He was seeing through me to the other side of me somehow. That was the kind of feeling. What struck me was that he was just seeing me, and there was no flicker of, What is this foreigner doing here? You know, walking round the monastery, you should be meditating, and he's not no longer doing the schedule, and

he's goofing off. There was no, there was no kind of—you know, I felt seen, not judged, not criticized, not categorized.

I just felt like I'd never been seen by anybody like that before. It was kind of liberating. It certainly liberated me from, made me very aware of all the self-consciousness I had—you know, being right and wrong, and how what can be seen. It was a kind of important moment, but the sense of just being seen, just being recognized, Oh, this is what's there, and that we can do the same thing for our mind. I talk to people, a lot of people, about their minds, and it's amazing how many people have a difficult time with their minds. Not that they're angry with or critical of it, they feel like somehow it's flawed.

There's something wrong with them. So they don't just see what's in their mind. They see what's wrong in their minds: This is wrong. That's wrong. I'm doing it wrong and all that. To be able to kind of see what goes on in the mind and see it with that same kind of clarity of really seeing it that the abbot had, but without any judgment, without being right or wrong or for or against, is a remarkable thing to do.

It can be very healing because it allows what's in there to unfold in its own way. I've learned through all these decades of doing this practice that there's a kind of self-healing momentum. Sometimes I call it a self-liberating momentum of what's in us that if we just get out of the way well enough but recognize it, we are to see it. We can't just kind of go off and, you know, daydreams—we have to really be present. But we get out of the way and don't limit anything. Don't inhibit anything.

Don't push it away. Don't try to hold on to it. Don't try to reinforce it. It's good. Just really see it. It seems to kind of like—it's kind of like giving it breathing room so it can unfold and evolve, and that's true for you in many mind states.

This morning I went for a hike up in the hills here, and I had occasion to be angry. As I was doing that, my walk, I said, Okay, that's what's happening today. So I said, Okay, let's angle. This is a good place to be angry. I just went along for the ride, and I made room for it, and I didn't have any idea that it shouldn't be there, or was to work on it and get rid of it, or, you know, or that mindfulness teacher, I should not be angry, you know, all these things. I just kind of, Okay, this is what's going on, and I just made room for it, and recognized it, and I went for my wide, great walk, and my mind did what it does.

By the time I came down from the hill, mountain, I could feel at the tail end of it now. Then by the time I got my car to drive on, it was gone. That was kind of very nicely, you know. I thought I was supposed to get self-conscious, and, you know, make it a problem, and, you

know, if I'd made it a problem, and poor me, and, you know, I'm getting angry of all people. I shouldn't be angry, and I shouldn't admit it in front of all these people here, you know, then, you know, it just stays and festers and grows, and, you know, just, you know, becomes—then it becomes a problem. But it wasn't a problem.

I just had occasion to be angry. I was angry, and recognized it, let it be there, and it self-liberated itself, healed over time. So it's a powerful thing to just be able to see clearly. It has some of the qualities of what Buddhist practice is aiming towards, which is liberation. To be liberated is to be able to live our lives and be present without being in the grip of our attachments, not being caught up in everything that happens. We are constantly referring it back to ourselves.

What I like, what I don't like, what I prefer, what I don't prefer, what it means about me. I'm right. I'm wrong. It's right. It's wrong. I like it. I don't like it. All this complicated stuff, reactions we have. To be liberated is to be liberated from all the attachments that have to do with that, and to be able to not be in conflict with anything. It doesn't mean we give in to every impulse. I wasn't going to give in to my anger today. I wasn't giving in to it, but I wasn't making it a problem either. To be liberated is to be free of all these, you know, that attachment. So we can just be present for our precious life in a very full and clear way.

The practice of mindfulness in this way that it talks about here is very similar to that. It's kind of like, almost like we were beginning to practise liberation as we move the mind towards the possibility of being liberated and practising liberation. But just recognize, just seeing how—This is what's going on. This becomes particularly significant for the beginning parts of this, where it says, When the mind is affected by lust, one knows the mind is affected by lust. Occasionally there are human beings who have lust. Sometimes they use the word greed instead of lust, you know.

Some people feel bad about it and feel it's wrong, and some people think it's the best thing going, and they jump on board, and in all kinds of things. But, you know, it can be a complicated relationship with the world of lust people have. Here the instructions are: when that happens, just know it, just see it clearly for what it is. Again, I am repeating myself, but it's such an important point. It just sees it without being for or against it, without trying to fix it, without suppressing it, resisting it, without condemning it, without affirming it, celebrating it, justifying it, defending it. What's wrong with lust? You know, these Buddhists, you know, they are always a party pooper. A little bit, a little bit, a little bit, of lust, you know? It's spice in life. And you know, these Buddhists don't know what they're talking about, you know? So we get carried away in all these things. The art here is we're not condemning, and we're

not celebrating. We're not defending. We're not offending. We're just seeing it clearly. It's a phenomenal thing to do, to have that ability—just this, just this is what it is.

Then it's the same thing for a mind affected by hate. So if there's hate, arises, ill will arises. That's one that—it's much easier for some people to be critical of and feel somehow it's wrong to have that and have a complicated relationship with it. Here what we're being asked to do, the exercise, is to have an uncomplicated relationship with it, meaning just see it. That's the extent of the relationship. Just, Oh, there's hate here.

I think for some people it can be very hard to do that. It's a heavy thing to recognize hate in oneself. The third one is when there's a mind of delusion, recognize it is that—it's delusion. Just see it: Oh, that's delusion. Some people think it's particularly hard to see delusion. That's the nature of delusion, that you're deluded. You don't see that you're deluded. But you can sometimes see it. You can clearly see so. The advantage of mindfulness meditation or strong mindfulness is you can watch the birth of a thought, a birth of an interpretation of something. Sometimes when you can see that, the first arising of it, before it's integrated into the structure of our mind state, structure of how we think, I'll look at that. That's not necessarily true, and you can see it. Or that's, you know, you know, that's, I think, that's delusion.

Then it goes on to say that when a mind does not have greed, when this mind state is non-greed or non-lust here, this translation, then know it as a mind that has no lust, a mind state of absence of lust. When there's the absence of hate, know that there's a mind state that's absence of hate, and when the absence of delusion, know that. Some people say, You're supposed to go round noticing these things whenever they're absent. That's a lot of work, because, you know, chasing all the absences. But mostly it's if there is lust and hatred and delusion that's been there for a while, then it's gone. That's a particularly good time to see—while it's gone now, and we feel what that's like. That's nice.

Also, in this ancient tradition, the negative form of these states implies a positive opposite. So the mind that's not lustful is one that is content, one that is maybe peaceful, one that is maybe generous. Lust has a feeling of wanting; generosity is a giving, so it's kind of the opposite. Then the opposite of non-hate mind is a mind of love, of *mettā*, and a mind of non-delusion is a mind of wisdom. So we're recognizing the presence of these other states, and just seeing those being there. It's actually very important that the way it's worded is in the negative: non-lust, non-hatred, non-delusion.

I didn't realize this until, you know, for many years how important this little passage is, because I think lust and hatred and delusion are relatively ordinary states, and they're not par-

ticularly, you know, spiritual states. They're not lofty states. They're not like these dramatic, wonderful things that a meditation promises to experience, perhaps. So it's kind of like these Buddhists that keep talking about these things, these down-to-earth stuff. But it turns out that this is actually a very important insight that is emphasized in Buddhism. The reason why it's very important is that the definition of full liberation, the definition of a state of mind that has tasted *nibbāna*—in the Pāli language, *nibbāna*—liberation, is defined as a mind that's fully eliminated. They use kind of disturbing, powerful language sometimes: destroyed lust, hatred, and delusion, so that the absence of lust, hate, and delusion is right in the middle or right at the heart of the very goal of what this practice is about.

It makes it very human and understandable, but just doesn't sound very lofty. You know, you kind of would like to have cosmic consciousness, or, you know, oneness with emptiness, or, you know, there's all these wonderful things you can state, and so it's kind of humble, the side. Just simply know—you go to your flock party, and so sit. What are you practising? I'm practising the ending of greed, hate, and delusion. And that's the end of that conversation. You know, I feel so sorry for you, really. That's what you are about.

The Buddhist analysis of this is that these—lust or greed, hatred, and delusion—are really, they're called the roots. They're at the very root of all the forces in our minds that cause harm, that bring us suffering. The suffering that we experience inside, the ways in which we harm ourselves, the ways in which we harm others, all have their source in the Buddha's analysis, in these three forces. If they can be eradicated or diminished, then they're not there to create more suffering. In fact, so the total elimination of these, it's synonymous with the ending of suffering, the psychological suffering that Buddhism is trying to focus on, to finish and end to it. That is a beautiful thing, a profound thing to be free, to be healed from this suffering world that we all kind of struggle with, suffering minds that, you know, that we want to be free of. It's not a mild thing to do; that brings a tremendous mental happiness, well-being, and peace.

When you're free of suffering and have this profound peace that comes with it, it doesn't really matter any more whether it's cosmic consciousness or oneness with emptiness, you know, it does that silence. That's like, you know, you'll take what comes. You know, if cosmic consciousness comes, that's fine, you know. But, you know, rainy day, sunny day, it's all good. The other thing is that because that is so—greed, hate, and delusion sits at a source for all the ways in which we cause harm—these are actually very important ethical teachings in Buddhism. To be able to really see when the operation of lust and greed and all its variations, ill will and hatred are operating in all its variations, delusion and confusion and all its

variations, we really see it operating, really see it in ourselves in deep ways and subtle ways. This is one of the primary ways to start living an ethical life without having to kind of follow ethical rules or commandments or something.

We really see in ourselves the suffering that comes with these states, and as we can no longer buy into them, then we're not going to be a catalyst for causing harm in the world and intentional harm—ethical things. So this ability to start tuning into these three pairs—lust, the absence of lust; hatred, the absence of it; delusion, the absence of it—is an extremely important process in this practice, in this tradition. It just may be hard to convey it in one—well, have I conveyed it today?—that the power, the value, the importance, the benefits that come from this kind of study. But then the practice goes deeper. This is kind of like the beginning, because as we get a sense of the difference between these two states, these two sides, it shows us that one side is better than the other, that it's actually much more enjoyable, pleasant, liberating to not be caught in greed, hatred, and delusion and be involved in the others. It begins to allow the mind, and we see that we don't no longer—the mind no longer wants to keep reinforcing its tendency to get caught up in greed, hate, and delusion, these attachments, and goes in the other direction where there's no preoccupation, no compulsion any more. That allows the mind to begin to meditative mind to settle and deeper.

I started this talk by talking about how it's a journey. So the journey of beginning to settle the mind and be able to go into deeper states of meditation, it begins—something has to settle away. Some kind of way of being caught up in the world, caught up with our preoccupations, has to settle, and the brilliance of this. It says, Take a look at where the mind is unsettled, creating delusion or states of agitation. Take a good look at it. See it for what it is. But just see it, just know it. That begins a process of settling, of calming. Then it allows the mind to kind of—the meditative mind to settle in further.

As it settles in further, then to be able to go further, it has to kind of make its way through the mind's tendency to get to what's called sinking mind or getting agitated mind. We get calm, and then we get over, we sink and get kind of stuck. Or we get—the mind gets a bit more agitated and start thinking too much, and we're not really settled any more. It's also here they describe a process by which the mind becomes contracted and distracted. Sometimes the mind sinks into itself and gets tight and narrow, and sometimes it gets distracted as we don't—in often thoughts, and there might not be much greed, hate, and delusion, but we're still kind of wandering off. The mind kind of follows it, chases its thoughts and stuff like that. So we start seeing that. We start seeing how the mind is distracted. Oh, that's a distracted mind for meditators, new meditators. That's often a time of frustration, often a time, if I mean,



I'm not doing it right, I'm doing it wrong. This is too hard. We get really bothered by this. But here the instructions are very simple, but I think I would say a radical thing. When you are having trouble with your meditation, just know it is trouble. The word isn't trouble here, it's when you find yourself getting contracted. Just see it as contracted. When you feel you're distracted, the best of your ability, just see it that way. That is very settling. That begins changing the inner atmosphere, the inner ecology of the mind to do that. That allows the mind but is no longer troubled by what goes on in the mind. But just keep seeing it. It allows its journey to continue, and the mind begins to settle further.

So there are eight paired instructions here, and so now we've done the first four pairs of lust and non-lust, hatred and non-hatred, delusion and non-delusion, contracted and scattered. These are kind of mind states that can belong to the ordinary world. As the mind goes further in, then we start entering into some of the meditation states that this practice is meant to move into. The first one is, one understands expanded mind to be an expanded mind, and one understands an expanded mind to be an expanded mind. The word expanded here is where it is actually great, and then they talk big mind. So say you don't understand. A big mind is a big mind, and a mind that's not big is not big. What this refers to is, as people get settled and concentrated in meditation, and as their preoccupations in all their different worldly struggles begin to diminish, the mind begins to feel larger. Awareness becomes more spacious, and there seems to be a lot of space in the mind for everything. A preoccupied mind, caught up in all its concerns and everything, feels contracted, feels narrow, feels claustrophobic at times. You know, just a little space in there. So settle and relax in the mind. The awareness starts being broad and expansive. One of the wonderful things when awareness starts is it's no longer preoccupied and caught by things. It feels like the awareness gets so spacious that it can hold everything. No matter what the thought is, the sound is, the sensation of the body is, the pain is, the pleasure is, whatever the feeling, the emotion is, it can just—there's lots of room for it. If now we have, we like, so big in a sense that we don't—we don't have to get troubled by anything. So this feeling, this expansiveness of the mind, it's one of things that happens as the mind gets more settled. Here, it's a natural process. As this recognition practice deepens and deepens, just recognize, just see, just see. This is what's happening. This is what's happening.

Then it goes further, the journey. One understands, and this is a kind of unusual language, a surpassed mind, a surpassable mind as a surpassable mind, and an unsurpassable mind as an unsurpassable mind. What this means is that as meditation deepens, the mind state becomes more settled and more concentrated there. One can recognize, at some point, you

know, the mind can get even calmer or more pristine or more clear. The idea that there's further we can go means that you can surpass the state that you've attained. So you reach one state of concentration, and you say, Well, that's good, but actually I can feel that I can actually get more focused, even more settled. Sometimes you can almost feel like there's a path forward, or there's a vision of there's still a little bit more agitation here. That can change. At some point, the mind gets so steady, so subtle, and so concentrated that you realize it's not going to be surpassed any more. I kind of reach, you know, a pretty high, stable place of concentration and stillness, of clarity. This is unsurpassable. This is good now. This is really good.

Then it goes on to say one understands a collected mind, or a steadied mind as a steadied mind, and an unsteadied mind as an unsteadied mind. In this translation, I didn't reread—actually, it says here, because here it says a concentrated mind. But the Pāli for this word is not so *samādhi*, *samāhita*. I think it refers to, I mean, something that's been placed or steadied well. I think what's being referred to here in this journey of deepening practice, at some point, the concentration is so deep and steady that the mind is poised for a kind of deeper letting go. This word *samāhita* apparently is related to the word for kindle, like for a kindle for a fire. It's a mind that is so steadied or so readied for a spark to happen, the spark of liberation. Sometimes you can really get deep enough in meditation, you feel, Oh, you know, I just like—you feel the readiness of something's going to happen here, something's going to release or let go, and the idea is not to get excited, not be for or against it, but just understand that of the mind. This is how the mind is. This is how the mind is.

Then the end of this journey, this—the eighth of these pairs—one understands a liberated mind as a liberated mind, and an unliberated mind as an unliberated mind. This reinforces the idea that what I just read before was, What is a state just before being liberated? Then there's this liberation that happens, this freedom, this letting go. It's very hard for us to see into the black box of our suffering, our stress, of our distress, dismay, and depression, and all kinds of things we have. It can be hard to get—kind of times like a mist, mysterious. Sometimes why we feel these ways that we do. This process of going deeper and deeper and more settled lets us kind of begin seeing or touching some of the deeper operating principles, deeper places of attachment or holding. That's the genesis of these more complicated emotions that we might be feeling. To get quieter, stiller, and just see, and just see and just see and see and see. As we just see, do this, recognizing, Just see. This is what's going on. That's what's going on whenever we're doing it. That simple. We're not stirring the pot. They say that if we leave muddy water alone, it settles and becomes clear. But if you keep stirring

it up, it stays muddy. So this idea of just seeing, Oh, that's a greedy mind. That's a hateful mind. That's a contracted mind. That's an expanded mind. The seeing is kind of just letting the water alone so it can keep settling. But if we are for and against it, judging it, criticizing it, then we're stirring the mud. So this process of doing this just recognition practice allows the mud to settle. The mind gets clearer and more peaceful. At some point, we go through this kind of journey of the mind deeper and deeper and deeper until something at the depth of it lets go. The mind has to be prepared for that letting go. It has to be soft and ready and malleable in all this, and steadied. That's the second to last stage. Come to that. Then we don't liberate ourselves. It's not only we do. It's something the mind does on its own when the conditions are there. Again, that's why it's so important, again, to—just simple recognition. Just see it because we want to get out of the way and not, you know, complicate it. Let the mind do its own thing, the self-liberating capacity of the mind.

So a couple of things. I want to reinforce it. I said, I think this is a very important exercise. It starts helping us to see clearly some of the deeper operating principles of the mind, about how it operates around greed, hate, and delusion, and the opposite. It is a training in learning to get out of the way while we clearly recognize what's there. Now, it's a hugely important part of *vipassanā* practice. It's learning that ability just to see and leave what's there alone. I think of that as a kind of form of respect. We respect whatever's there, and we just get out of the way to see it, just see it. It's not easy to do. It's a training to do it, to learn how to do it and get out of the way and just see. But to get the hang of it, it's like beautiful, just like—who'd know they should teach this in schools?

It's not a static process, but it's—as we give room for the mind to do its thing, as we settle, it settles more and opens up in particular ways. I like to think of the mind on a journey, and we're allowing that journey to unfold, and that journey at some point begins to be clearly—feels like a journey to liberation as the mind gets expansive, as the mind gets more and more concentrated, as the mind gets ripe, kind of ripe in this kind of steadied space, and then lets go of itself. So this speaks to something about mindfulness, fairly common and even secular forms of mindfulness, to emphasize that mindfulness is non-reactive awareness, non-reactive attention to things, and which is kind of what they're saying here in this text. But what this text is kind of pointing to is a deeper potential of doing that. It has a deep potential of liberation and freedom if we allow the process, if we give enough time and dedication and devotion to this process, and really give ourselves over to allowing this natural process to move and develop. So that's the third foundation of mindfulness. Next week we'll do the fourth foundation. We'll begin the fourth foundation. Here it gets even more interesting, be-

cause now we don't just look at the mind states, but we also start looking at some of the particular operating systems in the mind, and how these operating systems also kind of can either keep us bound in suffering or be liberating.

So we have about, I guess, five minutes or something. If anyone would like to ask any questions for clarification about what I've said, and if you could wait for the microphone, then thank you for that insight. So the question I wanted to ask is, we discuss several mediums or tools that we can be mindful of. I talk about breath, thoughts, a state of mind, sensations. Is there one specific duality that you think fits everybody, like one specific tool, like a medium, like a technique, yet it works? Everyone—you have not a technique, but a medium. That would be applicable to everyone? Or is it community? By medium, you mean one thing to focus on, pay attention to. Yes, one object of attention. You: Is there one medium that you know fits everybody? Or, Well, what urge? It's a nice question. I'm actually not so sure how to answer the question. Different things are going through my mind. So I could say what I'm about to say in a flip way, but I mean it seriously. So I'll try to not be flip. That is that maybe what works for most people is—a, it's one of the ways of doing the possible practice is—a, the right object for attention is whatever is in front of you. That is a very abstract answer. What I'll take it in, what it is meant to be opposite to abstract, and that is that you pay attention to whatever is salient in the moment, whatever is the most prominent, compelling experience of the moment.

Is that true for, you know, for every moment, or just when you are actually meditating, like, Is the tool different when you know that the difference between meditation and everyday life is kind of arbitrary? So it's kind of good. It's a good practice. I find it—I found it a very good principle to bring my attention from—if I'm going to focus my attention, to bring it to the experience which is most compelling at the moment. Then we have to use our wisdom and discernment to know sometimes that's not what's needed. You know, I really want to be cooking dinner, and really here to cook dinner, and just me and dinner. That's what's happening. But the baby is crying. What should I do? Is it the dinner or the baby, and you know, so I might be wanting to do the dinner. I might want to do, you know, something else besides the baby, but the baby is crying, you know, in distress. So sometimes it takes some judgment to know where our attention should be and what's useful. But I think, as a general—especially in meditation, about meditation, daily life, and in meditation—I think that's a wonderful laboratory to just practise. One way of practising mindfulness, be patient, is just whatever is the most compelling experience of the moment. Just connect to that, see that, and that will unfold and change over time. To keep it that simple, and then maybe outside you have to

do, you know, use your wisdom a little bit. So it's a good question, and we're just about out of time. But there must be something behind the question for you. It must be something you're thinking about, or something that your point you want to make, or something. So I'm curious if you want to say a little bit. What's behind your question?

So I was just curious if—I've heard a little about different strands of Buddhism, why different techniques, that different interpretations. So curious if what we practise in insight meditation falls under one of those branches. But I didn't want to go into yet. There's many, not necessarily many branches of meditation in Buddhism. There's also many branches of insight meditation, and, you know, I think I like to prefer to think they're all good, and now they're just different avenues to reach the same goal. So in different people, for different people, different techniques, different approaches are useful. Some people prefer very body-based practices. Some people really prefer just breathing. Some people prefer this mind state—this is really well for some people and can make it very uncomplicated. Some people, you know, others—all—some people like to have a very formalized, structured way of doing it. They do these body scans that just go through the body over and over again. Some people like to have it unstructured, and different minds prefer different ways. So there's not—I don't think there's one shoe fits all people. Also for me, what I've learned over my many years of doing this is that I've learned many ways of doing this. When I sit down to meditate, I do the one that's most appropriate given what's happening. When it's rainy, I put on a raincoat. When it's hot, I put on shorts, you know? So, you know, the same thing with my mind. When I meditate and my mind's agitated, I do one thing; if my mind is peaceful, there's nothing else, and so I just do whatever seems appropriate to respond to the circumstance of the time. OK, so maybe you'll look at your mind states and enjoy them. Thank you.