Practice Notes: Being Intentional

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To say a few words about the practice before. If you want to go on a walk, maybe to get someplace, and it’s important to get there, it’s a long walk, you might set off to walk deliberately. Like, this is what you’re doing. It’s like, no questions. Like, okay, I’m gonna walk. And, and there’s a deliberateness to, to your walking. And it might be very peaceful walking, it might be relaxed, you might enjoy it. But there’s a deliberateness, you’re not kind of getting sidetracked by store fronts with interesting things to buy, or by the movie theaters you go by, or, you know, anything, you’re just kind of like, you’re just, that’s what you’re doing is walking.

And the sense of deliberateness is kind of clear in the body and your stance and how you’re doing it and how your attention is. And it might even be quite enjoyable even. I’ve gone for wonderful hikes in the mountains here, where, you know, sometimes there was a very strong sense of deliberateness that this is what I’m doing. And, and I just love doing it. Just kind of my world got kind of simplified into just the walking, the being in nature, just being here. And the clarity and the simplicity of there’s one action, this is what I’m doing.

Maybe, I hope some of you have had that experience cleaning your home. Okay, we got guests are coming over, and this is what I have to do. Okay, I’m not going to get distracted. This is what I’m doing. But maybe there’s still plenty of time. And so maybe it’s enjoyable to kind of organize things, move things around, do the cleaning. There’s a deliberateness to it.

So that sense of deliberateness can be brought to meditation. Like, okay, I’m here to be present. To be present for my present moment experience, maybe to be with my breathing, to be with my body, just to really be present here. Not to be sidetracked by whatever thoughts, the storefronts in the mind, or the movie theaters in the mind, or, you know, that might be there. You’ll still go through those, go by them, but you don’t stop for them. You just kind of like, okay, let’s just stay, let’s be here.

And so this intentionality, this deliberateness of meditation, not as a strain, not as a pushing, not as filled with expectation of what's going to happen, not as a way to beat yourself up if somehow you do stop in the park and sit on the bench for a while and look at the kids playing or something. But then you remember, oh, I’m supposed to be walking. So you get back and then you start deliberately again.

So that sense of deliberateness is very helpful for doing meditation practice, doing mindfulness practice. And the art of it is to do the, this is, like you’re clearly make a decision, this is what I’m doing. This is what I’m engaged in. There’s a choice. Okay, this is my choice. I'm doing this. And if you don’t make that choice, if it’s not deliberate, it's all enough. It's a good idea. Mindfulness is a good idea. I should
do it. I’m going to sit down and I’ll get around to it eventually. And yeah, I know it’s a good idea. And yeah, I should do it. I’m thinking about something really great right now. So I’ll get to it. I’ll just finish thinking about this fantasy and then I’ll get back, get serious.

And it’s very easy to be too casual when you sit down to meditate or do walking meditation. So there is a way of, only you can do it. Like if you have to walk downtown in order to do something there, if you’re the one who has to do it, you don’t send someone else to walk. You do the walk, you have to do it. So only you can do this practice. So see if you can experiment with a kind of healthy, inspiring, maybe even nourishing, a sense of deliberateness in what you’re doing.

And not a deliberateness you can be disappointed at. Like because you forgot about it for 10 minutes. Just when you remember, just okay, let’s start again. Let’s start again. But see if you can kind of gather yourself together in a little bit more composed with your whole body, around a sense of this is what I’m doing. Deliberate. See if that supports you and helps you kind of enter into and relax into this moment here.