

Insight (8) Conditionality

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Hello, and welcome to the next talk in this series on insight. This week I'm talking about five different categories of insight that can be experienced that fit into this, at least for the Buddhist idea of insight. The first day was personal insight. Yesterday I talked about seeing the difference between appearances and the recognition of the appearance, the naming of it, remembering what it is. Now, one has a little bit more to do with the senses, the sense doors, the sense contact with the world. The other has to do with how we understand the sense contact, how we recognize it as something.

If we have these two completely joined together as if they're the same thing, then we can't see either one clearly. Things become kind of solid and have kind of a solid existence. So if some food appears in front of us, someone offers us food, and so we see food. But we don't just see food, we see an offering. But we see it through the lens of, oh, this is something I don't like. This is one of my least preferred dishes.

Now the whole thing is tangled up together as one big knot. Of the food, the offering, not my favorite food, I don't really want this, they should have known better. And how am I going to deal with this? What am I going to do here? And it becomes this big knot. But if we can see each step along the way, oh, there's an offering, there's food, and the recognition of food.

There's an offering, recognition of offering. There's a rising of not preferring this. There's that thought. And then there's that impulse to want to do something about it. And then we see that impulse clearly. Because we see it clearly, maybe we don't do anything about it.

We don't grimace. We don't show our distaste. We just kind of gracefully maybe just receive the food. So to be able to see the component parts of what's happening, the experience and

our relationship to it, that's more of a mental world, gives us a lot more freedom to be wise and careful with what we do. The next insight is that can happen sequentially. It really is highlighted because of our ability to see a difference between a sensation and recognizing what it is.

Experience and then the relationship we form to it is to see conditionality. Insight into the conditions. How one thing arises and something else. That's a condition for something else arising. I've sat minding my own business in meditation very quietly. I don't know why at the moment, but there's maybe some thought arises.

I'm sure it arose because of previous conditions I didn't see. But a thought arises, and now maybe it's concerned about something that was difficult with someone, and I can feel fear arise in my belly. That thought arose, and that was a condition for fear in my belly. So then there's no mystery. If I didn't see the thought arise, I just feel the fear in my belly, and I just kind of keep ignoring it, then after a while I don't know what the original condition was that stimulated it. It can go in the other direction.

Sometimes there's a sensation in the body. So I had a little tinge in my back this morning. That was a little bit of pain. I've had back problems before. I could see that based on that, there started to be thoughts about how do I be careful with this? Do I have to do some exercises?

Do I have to kind of go through the day a little more carefully here? So there was a cause and effect relationship. This arose, then that arose. At some point when the mind gets quite quiet and settled, and the mindfulness gets clear in the present moment, it gives us a vantage point. It gives us a vantage point, a vista point, to gaze upon the present moment and being able to see the simplicity of a condition and what arises from that condition, what that condition evokes for us. Things aren't a mystery anymore.

Things aren't glued together, entangled, caught in knots. We see that nothing has some inherent existence. Nothing has some permanence or weight just because it's there in our mind, which it tends to have if everything is knotted together into a big ball of judgments and fear and concern and history and past and present. It all seems to be kind of in a big knot. But to see, oh, with this comes that. With this comes that.

Then there's more space to leave it alone, to not act on it, to not take it on as a truth or as a something that has to be dealt with. It's just we can see more clearly. Some people, when they come to this state, this form of insight, it's not required exactly, so we don't go looking

for it. It really comes from being settled. But some people found it's really eye-opening for some people. They feel tremendously empowered.

They feel tremendously like now they can imagine what freedom is like. Because they see the space between a stimulus and a response. They see that stimulus is one thing, response is another. A stimulus doesn't have to go into something else. Because at some point, as we see these things arising one after the other, one condition leading to another, at some point we don't participate in it. We don't get involved.

We don't act on it. We don't come under its influence. So this morning when I felt my back pain, I wondered about it and spent some time thinking about it. The condition for those thoughts was the back pain. Then I thought, you know, I don't think that this level of pain, which was very slight, warrants much concern at this point. So I think I've done enough thinking about it.

I think I'll put it down. If the pain is there again, I don't know if I need to really get involved in those thoughts. I might want to think about it, but I have other things to think about. Or I'd rather just be present for what I'm doing at the moment. So I just leave it alone. This is called insight into conditionality.

To drop into it in a deep way, it's kind of like entering into a different world. A world where nothing is really solid. Nothing is absolute in our direct experience. We can even see that the impersonality of certain things, that a certain sensation arises, and with that comes a thought. The thought wafts up like the cloud I saw in this kind of being formed in the sky and then disappearing. Or as a rainbow appears and then it disappears.

There's a sight of a bicycle that's kind of shiny and new. That's the sense experience, more or less. Then with the mind there's a thought, "Maybe I should get a new bike." We see that the seeing of the bicycle conditions the arising of the thought. If I hadn't seen that, then I might have just galloped off into thoughts about the new bike. But because I could see so clearly the thought, "Should I have a new bike?" I could just leave it alone.

My wisdom could operate and I could say, "You know, I don't need a new bike. I have a perfectly good bike. And let's not gallop off. Let's not get swept up in those thoughts." So there's a sense of freedom there. The thought, "Should I get a new bike?" That is almost like not my thought.

It's almost like I didn't plan to have that thought. It wasn't my wish to have that thought. Why exactly that thought arose from the different conditions in my psychology, I don't know. But

I don't have to take ownership of it. I don't have to make me out of it. There was a seeing a bike.

There was a thought about, "Maybe I should get a new bike." It comes and it goes. It's just like a cloud in the sky that comes and goes. A rainbow that appears and disappears. Things come and things go. Then life is a lot simpler and easier.

As I said before, for some people this becomes a very clear and strong insight. They feel, "Wow!" Some people even start feeling that this is so clear and powerful that they think that now they have tremendous wisdom. They must even be enlightened. The clarity by which they see this. They kind of begin seeing everything through the lens of conditionality.

X arises, then Y arises. X occurs and Y occurs. But the condition for it, for this really to go strong, is the mind is deeply settled and concentrated. This is why *samādhi* is so helpful in supporting that we drop into a deeper *samādhi*. Stillness and capacity really be here in the present moment. Content and happy and full.

The distracted mind is no longer operating. Now we're just in this vantage point of ease and relaxation. We're just watching the experience coming and going. One of the things that insights then is this insight into conditionality. This sets up the stage for the next one, the next insight. The next one is called comprehension or insight which involves understanding.

That'll be for tomorrow. I also feel that this entry into insight is seemingly more intellectual, more conceptual. Some people associate meditation so strongly with the experience of getting calm and settled, maybe *samādhi*. That's kind of exciting. But this maybe now seems too heady and all that. But remember that the purpose of *samādhi* is to be able to see in a new way.

These are the new ways that people see. To really do well, it's not intellectual. It's not in the head. It's really the opposite. It's to be really centered here. These become revelations.

This is what gets revealed to us, not something we have to think about or figure out or even remember. So the insight into conditionality is phenomenally important in the teachings of Buddhism, in all forms of Buddhism. For in our practice, it becomes an insight. It's something we see clearly. It's not a philosophy. So thank you very much.