

Mindfulness of Stimulus Response Reactivity

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Good morning, everyone, and welcome. Can you hear me all right? So this morning, I'd like to talk about a very important kind of concept in mindfulness in general and give a kind of a Buddhist take on it, and that is the difference between stimulus and response. People who teach mindfulness often emphasize this distinction, and so I will as well, with emphasizing the wonderful opportunities that are available in really knowing how to identify this distinction and kind of in what's in between the stimulus and the response.

And in the process, discover something about equanimity. The angle to understand equanimity and how to have it. So, as I understand it, the usual teachings on stimulus and response is that response is different than a reaction. A reaction is something that happens kind of as a habit, kind of an automatic pilot. There's a stimulus, and then without even any reflection, any consideration, there's automatically some kind of activity we do called reactivity, meaning the activity that's in response to something we're acting.

So that could be we say something that we later regret. We just came out of us like that. It could be an expression of an emotional expression that comes out of us so quickly that, again, maybe later we regret it. And it could be that it's something that... In activity we do. We do something we do impulsively with our actions. We push send on our computer.

When we saw that there was this lovely thing to buy, and the fact that we don't have enough money in the bank account for that, doesn't matter, just, you know, this is going to be the solution to my and the world's problems. And so, you know, it's a kind of automatic pilot, and it's working on habit. Addictions are often this way. And sometimes the reactivity is within ourselves. That our mind reacts in such a way that we create an interpretation. Further thoughts, further judgments, further bias comes into play.

And so the mind might spin out in stories and ideas and create universes of interpretations that happen very quickly in rapid succession. Sometimes it can be so quickly, we don't really even see the little steps that go in, go into this creation of interpretations, ideas, and all that. When I was practicing in Burma, I'd been practicing on retreat for some time. There was this very simple little experience that I had that was a big aha for me. And that is that when I went into the meditation teacher's little house cabin that he had for my practice discussions with him and meetings with him, I had to go through the front door, and just on the right going in, there was kind of an alcove that was usually filled with Buddhas and stuff.

You know, it wasn't actually an altar to bow at or something. It was just like, I don't know why. It just kept a lot of, it looked like Buddhist kind of things there, statues and stuff. And so for, you know, many days I just walked right by and gave it almost no thought at all. And so I was, been practicing for, I think, a few months by that time. My mind was very quiet, very still.

Mindfulness was very strong. And I walked in, and I looked to my right, and as far as I could tell, I think there was a new Buddha there. I saw it as a Buddha. I saw as a very distinct movement of the mind that it was really pleasant to look at. Okay? And then I saw, as a distinct kind of event in and of itself, I want it.

In the past, maybe the I wanted would have happened so quickly that it had authority, it had meaning, it had like this was the way the universe should be or something. I never gave in any thought. I was just like, that was suddenly there. But to watch the sequence of recognizing what it was, and then having a sense of experience of it being pleasant. And really what I could see, what I wanted was more of that pleasant, more than I wanted the Buddha statue. And so then I said, wow, it's possible to have this freedom of in this sequence.

It's possible to see these stimulus, reaction, stimulus response so clearly that I didn't have to respond. I didn't have to act. So usually in the stimulus response distinction, the way I like to think of it, in one hand there's reactive responses, and the other there's considered response. There's wise response. And so the idea is there in that Buddha, I just, my response was, wow. And I just left it.

I didn't think about it again for a long time. Until I discovered that someone had actually bought it for me. And it left it there for the abbot to bless or do something. Yeah. And so then many months later was handed to me. I didn't say anything to anybody about this little event.

So I have it at home now. And so in the way that this funny way the world works. So mindful-

ness has a lot to do with adding the pause between stimulus and reaction, between stimulus and response. If all you do is something happens, say that it's something as simple as you breathe in. And maybe the inhale is unpleasant. And I've had an unpleasant breath.

And immediately had a judgment about it. It's an automatic, this is the wrong breath. I'm a bad meditator. It shouldn't be this way. And there's a whole cascade of these automatic pilot kind of thoughts, which are kind of a drag to have. But I can be so caught in their mesmerizing, enchanting, you know, truth of these kinds of, you know, judgments that I don't even feel that it's unpleasant.

But it's actually, there is unpleasant, but it continues to have each of those steps and judgments is just kind of draining, kind of a little bit, kind of impactful in a negative way on me. It's unpleasant, kind of experience each step. And so it just makes it simple as, as, you know, an unpleasant breath. The alternative is to feel the unpleasantness of that breath and take time to be mindful of it. Give everything time. It could just be two seconds.

In mindfulness practice, we give everything time. We give everything a chance to be there before the reactivity, before the judgment. So we would train ourselves, we develop a capacity to feel the unpleasant breath and really feel it. Take, okay, this is an unpleasant breath. Let me just feel it before I judge it. Let me feel it before I'm pushing it away, before I'm trying to fix the problem.

So feel it, or let me observe it. Let me just observe what it's like to have an unpleasant breath. And maybe because it comes and goes so quickly, that pause is extended, where maybe for the next 10 inhales, I keep looking at what is this like? What is it like to have an unpleasant breath? And become the world expert in 10 breaths of what my unpleasant breath is like. I discover things about it.

I discover where it's unpleasant in my body. I discover maybe where there's a holding in my breathing and tension. I might understand there's an underlying fear that's operating that's part of that holding. I start discovering so much by taking time to know it, to observe it, be with it. And then I can decide wisely. What's my response to this?

And one response I have to noticing I have an unpleasant in breath is I think of it, you know, it's just a massage. I'm just massaging the unpleasant. I'm just massaging the place where I feel held in my breath where it's tensed, tight. And I'm a little contracted or I'm up my chest. It's just a massage. Let's just hang out.

Let's just let it be there. Let's not fix it or do anything about it. I'll just, every inhale, I'll feel

where the attention is, where the holding is in my inhale, again and again and again. And I found that this is really a wonderful thing to do, to not make it a problem, but just to kind of meet it, be with it, care for it this way, and to allow something inside to unfold, relax, unravel on its own, rather than me having to be the doer. And sometimes the reactivity that I have, like just something as simple as the unpleasant breath, is I'm operating kind of in this automatic pilot that I'm the one who has to take care of everything. I'm the victim of everything and I'm the one who has to address everything every moment in my life.

But I've learned slowly that I don't have to do that. It's kind of a lot of work to do that every moment of your life. And it's good to kind of take a vacation. And mindfulness meditation is a time for a vacation from being the one who's in charge or thinks they're in charge of every moment of your life. Like you're the victim, you're the person experiencing things, you're the person who has to do things and fix things and make something happen and prove yourself and have a good experience to show your neighbors. Right.

Look, I had a good experience in meditation. I went on retreat and boy, did I have a good experience. Some people are experienced collectors. Just, you know, all these things. So as we pause, take time to be with something, it's just nice in itself. It makes room so the reactivity doesn't ride so close to the stimulus.

And in that time, there's time to discover something that's going on. Find out deeper what's happening. What's going on? One of the things we might discover is the nature of the reactivity. So it might be, it takes a while to discover that it's unpleasant breathing. And there's a second unpleasant thing that happens, and that is the idea that it's wrong to have it happen.

The reaction of this is like California... Buddhist California, where there's so many Buddhists and to have a good breath, looks like deep, relaxed, and it shouldn't be controlled, there should be no tightness, and this is some embarrassment to Buddhists everywhere. And so I'm right, so I have this unpleasant breath, and the reactivity immediately in my mind is these kinds of judgments, these kinds of ideas. So then the choice is Let's take time with that. Pause. Let's hang out with that.

Let me see that operating. Let me feel what it's like to have those thoughts, those judgments. Let me see them operating. Let me see them bubble up. And maybe they're constant, but chances are they're not constant. They might look constant.

Chances are, they're happening for a while, and then I'm thinking about lunch. Or I'm hap-

pening for a while. Then I feel my exhale. Okay. Which also is not right. And so then I have different thoughts about that.

And so, but after a while I just see, wow, that's a judgment. It takes a while to just see a judgment as a judgment. And as I see judgment as a judgment, I no longer believe it automatically. I don't have to live under the yoke of that judgment. I don't have to invest so much importance in it. Let me just let it float up.

Maybe it needs time. Maybe it needs to, maybe it's lonely and needs to be seen. So let it just float up that judgment. Come and go, see it, and I'm leaving it alone. And then slowly, maybe that relaxes. Maybe slowly I see something about that judgment.

Maybe I see that that judgment comes from some kind of beliefs that I have. Maybe so that judgment comes with a certain kind of self-understanding that I'm carrying about myself, how I'm supposed to be in the world, I'm supposed to be a perfect Buddhist, whatever that is. And so there's a whole universe of things that start being discovered in that pause, in the taking time with things. And so mindfulness is a practice of pausing. Not necessarily in the activities you're doing if you're going about your day of life, but something inside of you and giving yourself a little bit of time to know, to feel, to observe what's actually happening without laying over on top of it. Judgments, reactions, wanting it to be different, fixing it.

Just let's get to know it. Let's be with it. So just that, it helps with equanimity. Just that allows you to not be... Equanimity is the ability to be present without being an automatic reactivity, automatically kind of getting worked up and... But just kind of have a steadiness.

Okay, let's just be with us, without getting caught in the reactivity. And... So I mentioned two things that are important, I think. One is that we start seeing what's happening more clearly. The second is we come to a place where we can choose how to respond. One of the responses is to choose to be mindful of it rather than being reactive.

Let's take time with it. Let's get to know this. Let's investigate this. Let's discover this further. Okay. So this is all very nice, and it can make for much wiser life.

It can make for a much life that we really start understanding ourselves more and more deeply. And one of the things I've seen of people who do a lot of mindfulness meditation, mindfulness practice, they grow in self-understanding because they start seeing how these things operate, the operating systems. And the more we can see and understand, the less likely we are to be working on automatic pilot. More likely we're able to kind of step back and have more choice on what we act on. And so freedom has a lot to do with having choice. And

so we're giving ourselves choice by pausing and knowing and recognizing what's happening inside.

And then there's an opportunity for wisdom to make wiser choices of how to live. And maybe this example of breathing, unpleasant inbreath, is such a minute, mundane, silly kind of example. But I chose it for that because it is a very small, ordinary, everyday kind of thing. Most of you are breathing in all the time regularly. Right. And so it's an ordinary thing, but even right there, there can be a developing, growing the capacity to have this mindful pause.

Mindful take time to really know something and feel something. But let alone when you're driving. Driving is the thing where in the freeway is that not a few people have reactivity to what happens around you. Some people are driving reactively. Because they've already gotten in this mode. They have to hurry, have to get somewhere.

They're already upset with everyone else. And so the very way of driving is driving tense. And so they're already kind of ahead of themselves by this force of some reactive decision that they have. And so even there we can say, wait a minute, I'm tense. I found it fascinating to watch sometimes my right foot. Waiting for the red light to turn green.

My right foot, I blame my foot. It has this kind of like restless energy, like, you know, let's go. Judging my foot and blaming my foot is just one more way in which we don't stop and look more deeply because it's not the foot. There's something deeper in me that's gotten attached. Right. Or afraid or eager or ambitious to go somewhere, need to get someplace quickly.

So I'm living in the reactive mode. And most people are doing that much of the time. What mindfulness does, it gives us time to pause long enough that we can think, we can consider, and we can see where there's choice. And then we can hopefully choose wisely, because we know something different. So this is all fine and good. Maybe this is kind of ordinary teachings on stimulus response.

But there's another possibility that this allows, and that is in that space between stimulus and reaction, and even a growing possibility of a space between stimulus and response, where we leave things alone, there's an opportunity for something to settle inside of us. It's an opportunity to some begin to feel... something deeper about ourselves that arises from some depth inside that reactivity does not. Exactly where reactivity comes from inside of us is maybe different people experience it more differently. I often think of it as being kind of surface reactions. Sometimes it's from the neck up.

It has a lot to do with, of course, on the mind and thoughts and ideas. Sometimes I think of it

has to do with the muscles, the muscular system of who we are, where reactivity is like, want that, get that, push away that, make something happen in the world. And so it's kind of more the surface. And when the reactivity is strong, it blocks our awareness of something deeper. If we're constantly living in reactive thoughts, kind of living a swirl of thoughts and concerns and fears and angers and resentments and betrayals and all this kind of world, it kind of fills the attention. So there's no space in the attention to feel or sense something that's deeper, that's shy, that's not screaming for attention.

So this opportunity to have a space between stimulus response allows for some deeper connection to ourselves. Where in Buddhism, in Buddhist teachings, is the location out of which wisdom comes. It's location out of which love comes. It's a location out of which peace comes. It's a location where a sense of deep well-being that's very nourishing can course through us coming from some deeper place rather than these what I call surface kind of places that. And it takes time to settle in, to relax.

Some of it has to do with relaxing the tensions we carry in our muscles. The tensions we have in our body, I would propose, are all products of the reactive mind. And the more tense we are, the less we can feel that which is below the tension. Less we feel, or less we feel, how those muscles feel when there's no tension in them. There might be tautness in them sometimes, but there's no contraction, no tightness. They're not held in place.

And the muscles then can start being part of a system of nourishment, of feeling nourished, feeling goodness, feeling warmth, feeling kind of like these deeper wellsprings arise from within that feel like they're feeding us, supporting us, in these good ways. And this is one of the miracles, I think, of mindfulness. Yeah. Is that mindfulness makes room for some deeper sense of being alive to bubble up inside that feels like just to be alive is enough. That feels like this is deeply satisfying in a way that a life of desire, a life of fixing it, a life of getting ahead, a life of... conceit, life of trying to prove oneself, or get ahead or get behind or whatever we try to do, it will never do for us because those kinds of ways all too easily are like, are never going to be satisfying.

If we live always wanting something, if that's the habit of mind, we can get something. But the habit is still there. As soon as we get it, we want the next thing. We want the next thing. They want the next thing. They want the next thing.

And it's kind of like what I discovered sometimes if I stay too much surfing the web. I'm just minding my own business, kind of reading a few websites. You know, I'm innocent. But I've clicked on enough clicks. That I can feel that now there's a kind of a drive, a desire, an urge

to click for the next thing. I don't even know what the next thing is, but there's kind of an automatic kind of wanting to do, do, do.

So even if we succeed, sometimes it can still be unsatisfying. To build up, to be preoccupied with... conceit is one of those things that limits this deeper place inside that can well up, that can't well up if we're somehow caught in the world of self-preoccupation. So this stimulus response allows for this upwelling of something which I feel you can't really appropriate as your own. I mean, it's not anybody else's. But the very movement, this is who I am.

You know, let me show you who I am. That doesn't work because that is this kind of suffocating or this tightening up, recovering over of something which doesn't really lend itself to being claimed as mine. It's not anybody else's. But you can go along with it. You can be supported by it. You can be guided by it.

You can choose to feel it and know it and tend to it. You can choose to know it and study it. Find out when it's wise, maybe when it doesn't seem wise, when it's appropriate, when it's useful. So the stimulus response distinction when it's really lived out in practice, when mindfulness allows for these longer pauses, before even a response, something really precious can happen. And that's one of things that can happen in meditation, for example. And one of the great values of meditation is that in the minutes that you're meditating, it's one of those few times in life when, hopefully, you don't have to say anything to anyone.

You don't have to decide what to buy. You don't have to move your body. Decide, you know, you don't have to... There's so many things you don't have to do... You don't have to plan your menu for your meals for the next month. You don't have to solve the world's problems.

You just have to be there. And that allows you the option to let the gap between stimulus and response be forever. And what that means, we trust just being mindful of what's happening, pausing and knowing it without needing to respond. So if I have my uncomfortable in-breath, I would just feel the uncomfortable in-breath. That's all I need to do. If there is a thought that this is a bad in-breath, this is the wrong in-breath, I just can see, because sometimes these reactions, some of these automatic pile things can just happen on their own anyway.

But I can just see that. Oh, okay. And with time, that ability to have this extended pause doesn't necessarily stop some of the automatic ways in which the mind might react to things, but it takes the power out of it, there's strength out of it. It's just like, just this thought bubbling up. Oh, this is a bad breath. This is a bad in-breath.

It's just like, you know, it has as much substance as a hologram or something. It doesn't really

exist. It just kind of comes and goes. It's a cloud that comes and goes empty sky. And it feels like I don't have to get involved in it or do anything with it. I just have a long pause in which whatever happens inside of me doesn't require any response, doesn't require any judgments and it has to be any different.

Just let everything be liberated from myself. We free everything what happens within us from our reactivity, our judgments, or what has to happen, doesn't happen. We're just there. But if there is choice, it might be the choice of how to continue being mindful, how to continue to be aware, to feel, to sense what's happening as opposed to making anything happen, fix anything, without thinking about things and analyzing things. Just being present, just being there. So meditation is a time to learn that.

The more we can extend that time, the more there's a possibility to start feeling something deeper inside show itself. There's a deeper relaxation, deeper calm, deeper subtleness that happens, that brings us to a place that's below or very different from the place of reactivity, the place of automatic reality. Pilot that many people are living. In Buddhism, they glorify this kind of way of being by calling it being awake. And the other way, they sometimes call being asleep. Even though reactive people sometimes are hyper awake.

Hyper alert, you know. But they're not really here and present for our life in a full, embodied, clear way. And it's a world of difference to live a life that comes from this deeper response inside, which is not the response of me, myself, and mine. There's this deep wellspring inside that can respond to the world that is not planned, not thought out, not connected to our usual understanding of who I am, not connected to our fears and our ambitions. We have layers and layers of wise responses that can bubble up from inside that can help us find our way through this world. That helps us be equanimous because we start seeing that the alternative to that is not so desirable.

The alternative to this resting or being with or connected to this deeper wellspring inside diminishes us. It narrows us. It brings tension to us. It brings tightness. It brings suffering to us. Agitation to us.

And probably not a very good basis for wise choices about how to live this life. But if we're settled in this deeper place, a place where it's almost as if we're not the one responding, but it's wisdom that's responding. Chances are we will make much better choices for how to go through our life. It'll feel much more, have much more integrity to it, much more sense of being connected, something more holistic within us, than we can ever do from the surface reactions that we have. So to end this talk with, you know, to again to say that there's this

very important distinction between stimulus and response. And what we're doing in mindfulness, at least in mindfulness meditation, is letting that gap between stimulus and response become longer.

How long it is depends what you're doing. If you're driving in the freeway, it probably shouldn't be very long. But if you're sitting in meditation, maybe you can actually give a lot of time. And the advantage of that is then you discover more about the depths of you who you are, that you can't if you're always responding, even if you think it's wise. So those are my thoughts for today. And now, it's your turn to respond.

How would you like to respond? Do you have any questions or comments? On now, right? Okay. So as usual, you've been a fly on the wall in my house and delivering just what I need to hear. I don't know how you do that.

Because in certain ways, we're kind of the same. Yeah. We'd so much of how our minds operate is a lot of... But I so much want to be unique. So... How does this work in a conversation? Because when I get triggered or reactive, it's often when I'm talking to somebody else.

And I was trying to imagine how to pause. Without looking like I was not understanding, had gone to sleep, rude, whatever. I just couldn't imagine how this works in a conversation, because that tends to be where I am frequently triggered. I see. It seems like an important issue. I think I'll have to think about that for a moment.

Let's... Could you say that again? You know, I'm a shrink. We're always saying to people tell me more about that. But I'm not talking about those kinds of conversations. No, no, I mean, yes.

So maybe for you, the danger for you is you start sounding like a shrink. But there are ways of slowing a conversation down that people don't feel like you're going slow and... It's probably, you know, just say, even just a nod and say, oh, yes. And people will allow you a few seconds, and you can ask, you know, can I pause for a minute? And then if you can't, if you have to respond with something right away, I don't know, you say something inconsequential. So you have a chance to somehow, your system to process it.

Okay, I'll try. I'll put in a plug for a mindfulness teacher named Orange J. Sofer. He wrote a book called *Say What You Mean*, and he has a couple of classes that you can do asynchronously, but you can get a partner and practice bringing the mindfulness and the nonviolent communication and things like that into your conversations. Soren, yeah. Sofer is great.

What he does, he's made a real specialty of mindful speaking. Yeah. And probably one of the things that's been most, it's very hard to practice mindfulness and speaking. So that I think it's often very difficult, you know, it's a difficult place. And so I don't want to... give the impression that it's easy. But probably the one thing that's been most important for me in learning to do it is to stay connected to my body, mindfulness of the body.

Feel the impact it has in my body. Feel the impact it has in my emotional life, my emotional body. And give time to really know that because to speak without being in touch with myself is often not so useful. Thank you. So a kind of thing, general thing, of how I like to live my life, is to have 50, if I'm a conversation with people, is to have about 50% of my attention on what the person's saying, my partner in conversation, and 50% on myself. And I've learned that if I have 100% attention to the other person without tracking what's going for me, I don't really listen that well.

I'm listening for sure, but I'm not processing it because I don't see what my reactions are, my emotions. I don't see the filter through which it's going. And if I have 100% of myself, which happens more often I'd like to admit... I'm like, I have my, you know, someone's talking and my mind goes off into thought. Then I'm no longer, I have to say, can you repeat that, please? Because I wasn't tracking.

But the idea of 50-50 to really be there, and then to also to heal my body, to my emotional body, to see what thoughts arise, the beliefs arise, to track both at the same, more or less at the same time, I think has been invaluable for living a wise life. So this 50-50 guideline. I also wanted to share something briefly. I taught a four-week mindfulness course online as part of a program, and my cousin lives in Boston and drives for ride shares and was saying he was struggling with getting angry and reactive and driving. And so he was practicing some of these type of mindfulness of that and non-reactivity. And he said it was really great and that he saved a lot of gas money.

I've got a... Yes. Gil, during your talk, I found myself remembering I cannot... count how many times in the past I've in conversation with other people when I feel like I've been at my best and when I feel like I haven't been and And the ones times when I haven't been I find myself going over and over and over those occasions like how could I have said that better or or been more? You know, um more like a mountain post instead of leaning forward. You speak a little louder. You begin to beading away.

Thinking over and over again how I could have said things better instead of leaning forward or leaning back. We're getting some feedback. And so, but the one thing I want to say is when

I've been at my best, I'm a lot happier and when I, haven't been at my best, you know, I'm just not happy. So maybe recognizing that kind of happiness will be, is my teaching moment on how to be. Yeah, it sounds great. And mindfulness practice has a tremendously important role for when you're at your best and when you're at your worst.

Both are great times for mindfulness. Thank you. And everything in between. Yeah. So is this on can you hear me okay so I find sometimes I get very reactive as you say in daily life when you're interacting with people and when I sit I don't feel anything or there's this big ball of stuff you know and I can't figure out what the underlying thing is and you're probably going to just tell me to keep sitting with it okay Or not. You know, what you're raising is a very important topic, and it probably deserves more attention, more understanding, than it's appropriate for me to give an appropriate response.

And, you know, to say something that quickly just sit more, seems premature without understanding a little bit more of what's going on for you. But... Generally, the kind of generic, kind of one generic kind of way of responding is that whatever it is, including the big, sitting quietly and not when nothing's happening, the reactivity is not there, but a big kind of swirl of something amorphous is maybe there's something there for you to discover. So to bring a deeper attention to that or what's happening there and And it might be that if you feel your way into the emotions that are present, that that might be a doorway to understand something deeper about you. Thank you. Gil, thank you so much for this beautiful invitation and reminder.

I'm struck by how many times... I have heard or I have offered a teaching like this to sit with reactivity, to notice it, to invite the opportunity for response. And yet this morning felt like so fresh like the very first time I'd ever heard this. And I just, I wanted to say how beautiful that was and to thank you so much. Great. That's nice to hear.

Yeah. Nice. Thank you. Thank you for that talk. And I just have a question. So sometimes when I recognize a reaction, emotion, especially like anger, for example, I can sit with it and try to just be with it.

Sometimes it becomes... a rumination. What? Sometimes it becomes a rumination. Rumination, yes. So how can, what kind of, what suggestion do you have to, to avoid, you know, to be able to sit with the different reactions and emotions, but not turn it into a rumination?

Yeah. So it's a, I might not be responding to you in the way that you asked the question. Or what you're hoping to hear, but I was struck by your use of the word rumination. To me, that's

a very significant word. It's what cows do. And for you to identify it as rumination means that you have a certain insight.

You have some clarity or some wisdom about the particular kind of thinking that you call rumination. What is the wisdom? What is the benefit of seeing it as rumination? Right. Because you seem to identify that's what it is. So what benefit comes from having that kind of clarity?

I'm going to have to think about that one. But the futility is one of the things that came up. I think futility is one of the response that came up first. So I'll leave that for you to discover, but I want to say that for you to have enough self-understanding to recognize it as rumination, you're seeing that way of thinking is not useful for you, futile maybe even. And that's a beginning of wisdom. That's actually a good sign that you're seeing it that way, if it's in fact not useful for you.

And maybe to appreciate yourself, rather than focusing on the rumination as being the problem, it is something to address and to learn about, but begin appreciating yourself as the one who's now beginning to be mindful of it and beginning to kind of separate yourself from it a little bit and beginning to see it. And maybe we want to emphasize that movement in you rather than trying to deal with the rumination, which is what people want to do, means you're still caught in it. But let's just appreciate, have you appreciate what's beginning to happen to you. The very fact that you can recognize it as rumination and recognize that you do it a lot and recognize that you're caught in it, you're beginning to separate out and becoming freer. Let's emphasize that movement. So you begin feeling what that's like for you and do more of it and more of it.

And the day will come, two things will happen maybe. It can happen. One is this, the movement of freedom of awareness, the mind, this clarity, the freedom of mindfulness of rumination is so strong. It's more dominant, more living thing in the moment than the rumination. And in a sense, you're living in the awareness now more than living in the rumination. And that feels good.

The other is, if you use the metaphor of the hand for this movement of, you know, first you were caught, and then you started to become a little bit separate, it's separate until you were free of it in the sense. At some point, you can go like this and take that ruminating mind and just hold it gently and see what happens. And maybe then it begins to relax. Thank you. Great. So it's time to stop, and I'm happy to stay up here and if you want to come up.

And if you're willing, you don't have to do this. But if you want to say hello to someone next to you, that would be nice before you leave. Some people might be new here today. And then, you know, but thank you for being here.