

Practice Notes: Meeting of Opposites

Gil Fronsdal

July 02, 2025

Keywords: mindfulness, duality, walking meditation, calm, agitation, uncertainty, certainty, wholesome, presence, multidimensional

Some words for practice this morning. As you probably know, sometimes we human beings have a strong orientation to evaluate things as either or. It's one way or the other. So in meditation, either you're calm or you're agitated. Or you're at ease and peaceful, or you're tense and troubled. Or you're happy or you're sad, or you're in pain or in bliss.

You know, all kinds of... It's either one or the other. What's most interesting in meditation and this path of mindfulness is to consider it. It doesn't have to be either or. It can be and. And it's the meeting place of the two sides of these kinds of dualities where it gets really interesting.

So if you are agitated, but you might have a little bit of calm, it's not one or the other. You should be calm. You should not be agitated. But rather you look for that meeting place where calm meets agitation, where agitation meets calm. If you're feeling somehow sad, maybe there's some other feeling that you have. Maybe you're a little bit content or happy.

Maybe there's a place of little bit of peace, some calm or something, where the mindfulness practice is to find that meeting place where you hold sadness with happiness, with calm, with the subtleness, with presence. It's the meeting point of things. So it's not necessarily to get rid of anything. You don't have to be actively engaged with what you think shouldn't be there to try to find and figure out how to make it go away. And it's not about keeping something really great. I'm going to keep this. I've finally gotten calm. It's taken me 30 years. And I'm finally a little bit of calm. And this is great. I'm going to hold on to this.

It's not about holding on to anything. But it's this wonderful meeting place where we see that we're actually as human beings, multidimensional. There's many things happening at once. And can you find that meeting place where what's wholesome, what's good in you, what's

going well, can meet what is challenging for you? And see what happens in that meeting place. So right there, what happens there?

So if you're doing walking meditation and you feel like it's not going well, I don't know what to do, this meditation I've never done it before, and this is confusing, I don't know, Kevin gave nice instructions for me, but what was, I don't even remember what he said now, and what am I supposed to do, left foot first, or what happens here? So the confusion and doubt, fine. Can you find someplace inside where there's no confusion, where there's no doubt? There's certainty. I am certain that... that I'm standing on the wooden floor. I am certain I'm here on the gravel.

Now, where do those two—uncertainty and certainty—meet? There's both are in you. Can you call on both and have them meet each other right there? What happens then if you walk, do a walking meditation in that meeting place of uncertainty and certainty? So, if you understand what I said, great. If you don't understand what I said, great. Great. Have the two meet. Thank you.