

Practice Notes: What's Happening and How We Relate to It

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July 09, 2025

Keywords: mindfulness, relationship-to-experience, aversion, ease, meditation, attitude, engagement, welcoming, resistance, awareness

A few words about the practice. I find it useful to have this orientation or this understanding that there are only two things ever going on. And that makes it really simple. You know, not a lot to figure out. There is what's happening and then our relationship to it. And ordinarily we're relating to something.

We're involved, engaged in something. And it's possible to ask the question, how am I relating to what's happening? So if you're thinking, maybe the way you're relating is that you are, depending on what the thoughts are, is that you are leaning into them. You're knotted up and tangled in them, like trying to figure something out. It could be you're not happy about what your mind is thinking. And so you're pulling back, you're resisting, you're aversive to it in some way.

If you're sitting and you have some nice, calm feeling as you're meditating, that's what's happening. What's your relationship to it? You're trying to pump it up, you're eagerly in a hurry to become more calm. And so you're kind of engaged in it that way. It could be that you are just very nice. It's nice and you're very welcoming to it.

This is nice. You're neither leaning towards it or pulling away from it. You're just welcoming. Oh, it's calm. It's good. Maybe you're feeling knee pain.

Maybe there's aversion to it. Maybe there's the mind screaming. Ring the bell. Maybe there's all kinds of things, restless, anxious, you know, agitated. Okay. All that represents somehow a way in which we're relating to it.

There might be other options than what you're doing. It might be the option to welcome that, just like you welcome the calm. Oh yes, okay, you can be there. I'm not going to be troubled by you. I'm not going to be for or against you. I'll just allow you to be there.

Or you can't allow it to be there. And so then the mindfulness would be to be mindful of why. How are you relating to it? What are you believing? What's your attitude? Why are you triggered by the event so that you're for and against it, trying to fix it, trying to make it go away?

You're judging yourself because of it, judging it, judging the room for it. Why are there so many people wearing socks that they know that themselves self-respecting, at least a Zen center. You don't wear socks when you meditate. And what kind of place is this? And so now you have all this kind of uproar in your mind about the inappropriateness of socks. And you're in mind writing a letter to the president of the IMC board about just too many socks here.

So you're caught in something. You're involved. And so that's the relationship as opposed to Wow, wow. There's a lot of socked people here. That's all. It's very simple.

There's no engagement, involvement with. The relationship is very free and very open. So two things are always happening. What's happening and your relationship to it. And to think of that as actually half of the picture is a huge thing. Because you have some role of adjusting the relationship, finding a healthy relationship.

And you might not be able to fix what's happening, but you fix half of the whole situation, but just relaxing around the relationship, being at ease. So may you study or recognize that you're half of the, any given moment, the way that you're relating to what's happening. And may you find a meaningful, easeful, simple way of relating that allows you to feel at ease in this world. Thank you.