

Practice Note: Widening Awareness

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So to offer you some options for how to practice this morning, we have this kind of language or way of describing meditation. The mind wanders off and you bring it back. The mind goes out, then you have to bring it back. You return to the breath. Keep returning. The metaphor of movement...

And that can be quite fine and it works quite well, and people can get settled and relaxed and concentrated by just coming back and not giving themselves over to their thinking and pre-occupations, kind of giving themselves over to the meditation over and over again. Another way of doing this, which is interesting, is don't return, never return. If the mind wanders off someplace, I don't know where the mind goes, but if your mind wanders off, let your awareness follow it. So your awareness holds that. It knows that that's what's going on. So there's a very clear knowing that this is a thinking mind.

So rather than letting go of it, just open up and almost like your awareness is a field, like a window that opens, and it's bigger than any... thought that you have. And so you can have a very generous open way. You know, oh, this is thinking, this is what it feels like. And then in that kind of, even awareness is even bigger and more relaxed, it just knows, this is thinking, this is feeling, this is an emotion, this is whatever it is. Then in the middle of that, let there be the breathing. So it's not returning to the breath.

It's just you have a sense that you're resting or you're established here in the middle of it all as if everything else is kind of this big, round, concentric field that's included. And so there's no returning. It's just being in the middle of this wide field that becomes as wide as it needs to be to include wherever your mind goes, wherever your feelings take you. So that you don't get caught in those. You're not lost in them, you're not, but you're bigger than them, or you see them clearly for what they are without needing to move the mind back and forth or this way and that way. Just, oh, this is what's happening.

Now I'm here with that. And now in the middle of all this, kind of like in the middle of all that thinking, that now you're not so caught in or participating in because you see it rather than be it. Then you can just center yourself or recognize it. The center of it all is breathing. Center of it all is the body sitting. And then continue with the practice until you have to do that again. So thank you for being here.