

Practice Notes: Let the Practice Come to you

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A lot of what we're doing in mindfulness is staying present for our direct experience. And so it's a lot to do with what's happening in the moment for us. And what's happening in the moment, not in a story about the moment. But when we're meditating especially, it's about what you can know very simply that's in the way it's occurring in the present moment, not how it's occurring as a continuation of your life story or where it's going to go in terms of your future life story. Just right here, right now. So it's meant to be very simple.

So as I'm sitting here, my direct experience at the moment is I feel my vocal cords moving and as I speak. I feel the contact of my bottom against my cushion and it feels a little bit hot and a little bit sharp, the sensations there. It's very clear. And so a lot of it has to do with the sensations of the direct experience. How are we feeling? What's the sensations of it all? And here and now.

So with the breathing, that's the focus for the meditation practice, being with a breathing, with a direct experience of breathing, without any need to compare each breath with you, like just maybe yesterday you had the perfect breath that you've ever had. So you compare to yesterday, why isn't it like that? Or certainly the people next to you have breathing better than you are, and so, you know, but all that is irrelevant. It's just like, what's your own sensations that come alive are active as you breathe? So it's a direct experience, especially the sensory experience, or the direct knowing. So what you're thinking about is not important. What's important is that you know that's a thought. Look, that's a thought. So it's that clarity. Right. And keep it really simple.

So something, in the simplicity of it, something can settle and calm down. A lot of the ways in which we're activated is by not being in the present, but kind of looking at some bigger story of our life and activity and reactivity. So in that direct experience, then, there are two very

different ways of being present for it. One is that we're the actor, we're the agent of attention. We take ourselves and we direct our attention to be, for example, with the breathing. And the other way, it doesn't have to be either or, it could be, so there's a middle way maybe, but the other way, just for the way of pointing out something very different than being the director in the control tower, watching, knowing, feeling, is to switch it around.

So rather than being watching and relating to the experience, it's the other way. You yield to the experience. The experience is happening, and you let it, you get out of the way for it so you can go through you, so you can feel it, you yield to the experience. So with the breathing, for example, as your body breathes, yield to the sensations, the feeling of breathing. Yield to it. As opposed to attack it with the awareness, or penetrate it with awareness, or analyze it with awareness. Yield to it. Let it inform you. Let it show you. Let it register in you.

Make room. Keep opening up and make room to let the sensations come to you. So if you're doing walking meditation, one way I do that represents that is that kind of a little bit lightly. Imagine that my soles of my feet, my feet are sponges. And just like a sponge, you would absorb water if you put the dry sponge on top of a little puddle of water. So my feet absorb sensations.

So I'm not the one directing the experience. I'm the one receiving it. I'm the one making room so those sensations can be absorbed. So the direction of experience is receiving rather than going towards. We're receiving our experience. And so you might try that today.

Keep it simple, stay with sensations, and stay with the present moment, and yield to it. Yield or receive it or allow it to inform you, allow it to come into you in that direction. Right. And it goes along with the traffic sign they have at our sister, our sibling meditation center up in Marin County called Spirit Rock. They have a long driveway. You go into the property. And as you're driving in, there's a yellow diamond sign for caution. And it says, yield to the present. So I try it today. Yield to the present experience. Thank you.