

Practice Notes: Tranquility

Gil Fronsdal

June 26, 2024

Keywords: mindfulness, tranquil mindfulness, tranquility, calm, ease, Buddha, meditation, borrowed tranquility, in-breath, out-breath

So to say a few words about the practice. It's a common, you know, we're a mindfulness practice is kind of the core practice we do here. And it's common to, to add a descriptive kind of like adjective in front of mindfulness, characterize how we're mindful. And the kind of the adjective I'd like to put in front of it today is tranquility, tranquil mindfulness. That we are looking for how to be aware in a tranquil way. Not in a forceful way, not kind of engineering ourselves into tranquility, not to override ourselves in some way that's artificial, but to give ourselves time to be attentive to what's happening now.

To not be in a hurry, to not be trying to, you know, have a to-do list in being mindful. You know, like I got to check off every in-breath and out-breath in my to-do list. And like, as soon as I check it off, I'm ready for the next task. The idea is to take, like, you have all the time in the world when you do this practice. Like, sit down to meditate. Just kind of like, whatever attitude you'd have, like, great, now I have all the time in the world to do this.

Do walking meditation, like, I have all the time in the world. And even if you only have a few minutes, that's kind of like this tranquil attitude. How could you bring that along in a way that's realistic? And one of the things to look for then is how might you already be tranquil? Or how might it be possible to find some calm? Bring it about because it's kind of close by.

It's not a difficult thing to find, maybe. Because the Buddha said that tranquility is the food for growing tranquility. Certain things, when you notice them, allows them to kind of develop and become stronger. And tranquility is one of those. Calm is one of those. So to the degree to which you can recognize that you're calm when you are calm, or even when you're agitated and the mind is spinning around, there might be some part of you that's calm.

Or there's also something called borrowed calm, borrowed tranquility. Maybe you sit here and meditate. You might not be tranquil, but maybe the room is tranquil. You might not be

tranquil, and the room might not be tranquil, but there's a person sitting in front of you in middle hall, and they seem to be sitting really tranquilly, peacefully. And so you can borrow it, what you see around you. And how this works is that if you recognize tranquility outside of you, in a location, a place, in a park, under a tree, if you notice it in some other people, something inside of you knows what tranquility is.

You wouldn't recognize it unless you knew. And that's what recognizes tranquility. It's on its way to tranquility. It's like that's a little piece of it for you already. You know. You know what it is. So then, borrowing it and then being reassured, okay, I know what it is. I don't feel tranquil, but at least something inside of me recognizes it. And the recognition of tranquility, even if it's outside of us, is a way to cultivate and reinforce and nourish that part of us inside.

So, for this morning at least, maybe that can be a theme for the morning calm or tranquility or there might be other words that you prefer. A word that I like is ease. Sense of ease. It might be peaceful. So, whatever kind of works for you, but may it be a calm morning as you practice. Thank you.