

Guided Meditation: Seeing Non-Clinging

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Hello and welcome. I'm sitting here in Redwood City, California at the Insight Meditation Center and the Meditation Hall. It's nice to have you along in this virtual way that we practice here. To introduce the meditation: seeing is the primary kind of metaphor and activity that's used to describe mindfulness meditation. The *anupassati* means to see clearly, or the *passanā* is to see clearly. But there's a variation of this, which is to have vision.

Vision in English can mean to have some sense of what's possible in the future, and certainly that's relevant for Buddhist practice. But there's also a vision that we acquire over time in practice, which is a vision of what's possible because we see that possibility in the present. So it's more like seeing a small, like a small degree. Seeing something in a small degree and knowing, oh, this is possible to grow. It's possible for it to be fully present, 100%, not just 1% or 10%.

One of the visions that comes as practice develops is the vision that one does not have to cling. One starts having a sense, a feel for, or one sees, one knows some characteristics, some qualities, some feeling, some sight of the space of non-clinging, the absence of clinging, the open space where there was clinging and now there's not. It might be in a very small way. It might be there's still clinging, lots of clinging present, but there's something in our experience that is a strong reference point for non-clinging. It might be that while you're sitting meditating, maybe there's no clinging to the color of the ceiling of where you're sitting. You probably wouldn't have been thinking about it even if I hadn't brought it up.

So maybe in relationship to that color of the ceiling, there's no clinging. Or maybe it's to the characteristics of the end of the inhale or the beginning of the exhale, some aspect of breathing. Maybe some place where we experience breathing. There can be very subtle or not so subtle attachment or reactivity to breathing at times. But then it might be specific to a

location, and there might be some location where the sensations of breathing occur, where there is no clinging. So maybe the back rib cage, maybe if the shoulders are moving up and down ever so slightly, it might be someplace in the front chest, it might be in the belly, and to feel, sense, there is no clinging there.

From that, have a vision that more non-clinging is possible, that vision that that can grow. That it's healthy, it's for our benefit to release the tension, the stress of clinging and expand. So we sense and feel in the present moment some degree that creates a vision for what's possible. Rather than straining and tensing to attain the full vision of what's possible, it's more like we settle into that vision as a way of being more wholehearted in the mindfulness, more full, more embodied, more breathing into the possibility.

So to assume a meditation posture and to gently close your eyes and to begin taking a few fuller inhales and longer exhales, feeling as you do so, where in your body there's clinging in the form of tension and holding, and where there is non-clinging. Maybe as you exhale, there's some aspect of that long exhale that allows you to relax and not cling, not hold on, not resist. Then letting your breathing return to normal. Continue in a very simple, simple way to notice where in your body, mind and heart there is some holding, some tension. To know that without any clinging. To know clinging without clinging more.

Instead, on the exhale, allow there be a softening and opening and allowing to relax. Okay. Allowing that feels like no clinging, no expectation, no demand. Just allowing the whole system to find refuge in relaxing. Then lowering yourself, settling yourself into wherever in the body's experience of breathing, it feels like a refuge or a settling place. With the exhale, let it following the breathing to the very end of the exhale, to the grounding place, the settling place deep inside.

Then seeing if you can have as a reference point for a vision of non-clinging, is there some sense of non-clinging that's available, non-attachment, non-resistance? Not holding on or having tension or pressure in your mind or heart, that is present as a reminder or as an inspiration to move into greater non-clinging with every breath. Having a vision of the possibility of not clinging to anything, where awareness doesn't cling, awareness doesn't resist. Where awareness is not for or against anything, awareness is available or can be available for anything. To know this is possible, even to, in a very minor degree, can provide a vision of a direction to go, what we're practicing into, with mindfulness and awareness, is allowing to grow.

Then coming to the end of the sitting, to whatever degree you're now a little calmer or settled, whatever degree that you have a little bit more embodiment settled here, to whatever degree

you know yourself a little better, can that provide a vision, a pointer, a reminder for how to be free, free of clinging, free of grasping, craving, free of attachment, a vision of freedom. May that vision of freedom be understood in relationship to our social life, how we are with others. May we have a vision that it is possible to live with others, be with others, without imposing on them or spilling over onto them how we cling, how we crave, how we judge and criticize. May we have a vision of giving others freedom from how we view them, hold them, close our hearts to them. May through this practice, may we give vast open freedom to others. Freedom from our entanglement.

May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. Thank you.