

## Tuesday Dharma talk, week 2

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**September 09, 2025**

**Keywords:** Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, citta, dukkha, sukha, craving, ill will, delusion, mindfulness, bhāvanā, non-clinging

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So today we move into the third way of establishing awareness, and it follows this very large, important transition in the second way of establishing awareness through sensations, and in particular starting to become attuned to the *sukha* and *dukkha* of sensations, the... the way that sensations are pleasant and unpleasant, the way that they carry with them particular kinds of pleasure and unpleasant and unpleasant. Some of them are happiness, comfort, ease, joy, happiness. And some of them are more the unpleasant sign, which I'll trust you know all too well. So I don't have to remind you of the list. But the big transition is not to sensations which are very much associated with the body, but the transition to the profound, the deep sensations that are associated with the quality of our inner life, how the depths of our inner life is touched, moved, influenced, or... by how close we live to it, how in harmony we live with it, how we care for it, tending to our inner life, because it's something that really no one else can do for us.

Each of us is the caretaker of our own inner life, and the inner life can be characterized by forces which... are quite unpleasant, bring unpleasant to it. And there are ways the inner life can operate that brings happiness and well-being. And so to start being attuned to this inner life becomes the movement in the rest of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, the instructions. And it moves in the third foundation to establishing awareness with the mind, awareness of mind. And the word for mind is *citta*, C-I-T-T-A.

It's for people who've been a lot of time in Theravāda Buddhism and with suttas, this word is used a lot. It's very evocative. It's often used in very suggestive ways that sometimes be quite inspiring. And exactly what it refers to is not so clear, but it should be okay because the English word mind has the same issue. It's not so clear what it refers to, though many people might think they know. The way that the mind is treated or taught or referred to, talked about by the Buddha, is quite interesting.

One of the ones that I find very interesting is that one of the ways the Buddha describes awakening is not by some grand metaphysical, supernormal, out-of-this-world kind of experience. This is something that I think we can all understand and relate to in some way, even if it seems kind of difficult. He refers to liberation, to awakening. As a liberation of the mind through non-clinging. The liberation of the *citta* through non-clinging. And I kind of find that quite inspiring.

Kind of like, I'm not the one who's going to be liberated. It's the mind. Maybe I get to follow, you know, tag along. You know, part of what we get liberated from is the excessive preoccupation with self, me, myself and mine, the kind of orientation towards Buddhist life where certainly it would make your life a lot easier if we can just give you a badge if you get liberated. You can wear it all the time and people are going to appreciate you. There's no badge. It's not you that gets liberated. It's the mind. It's the mind. So it's a kind of evocative idea.

But the mind is also something which is the Buddha refers to as being quite fragile. Can be fragile. Can also be quite strong and stable. The mind can be, can obsess, an obsessed mind, preoccupied. Mind can be confused. The mind can be unconfused. There can be clarity of mind. The mind can be wise, the mind can be free. So the word mind, what it's referring to is some inner part of our inner life, that we might call the mental life, in some broad way. Maybe it's an abstract way of saying the totality of the working of our inner life, the totality of the working of our mental life.

So there's some translators for this *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* who like to translate this foundation, this area, as mental state, mind state, state of mind. With the idea of a state, it's kind of a wide field, a wide atmosphere that characterizes or penetrates the whole mental structure, the whole mental world. by a particular state. I've seen people that you can kind of tell from a distance. It's not just their mind that's in a state. Their whole body, mind, feel this state.

I've seen people filled with hatred, and you can just see it oozing from them. It was a state they were in. I've seen people filled with greed and... I mean, I have some of that when sometimes when I come home from a day and before dinner and I come into the kitchen, my wife is cooking and she tells me, Gil, you have that look. I think it's a look like I'm hunting. We might see someone who seems... very safe and peaceful. They seem to ooze kindness or friendliness, joy. It's not just a particular activity of the mind, it's more characterized as the whole flavor of the mind.

So something about the word *citta*, that mind state, that something large, it's the state of the mind, the quality of the mind, the way the mind is experienced. And that can be experienced in many different ways. It's almost like the state of mind affects how we experience the mind.

If the mind is really preoccupied intensely around some big concern, it can actually feel the mind has gotten small and tight. The mind is very relaxed, peaceful. No preoccupations except looking out across the... Pacific as the waves come in and listening to the seagulls and enjoying the pelicans skimming along the top of the surface of the ocean and the waves.

And the horizon is so far away, the sky is so high above and it's cozy and comfortable. And a person might feel like their mind has gotten huge, expensive, open. Because it's kind of variable what this is, this state, this quality, the way it's experienced. Sometimes the mind is referred to almost as being synonymous with awareness. Awareness also something that's not clearly or easily defined like the mind. But the awareness itself, for some people, can feel like the mind, a field, a broad expanse of receptivity, of consciousness.

So sometimes the mind and awareness are considered, are treated synonymously. But in whatever way that we kind of know our mind, that's an area of mindfulness. Oh, this is how the mind is. This is how the inner life is. This is what would characterize the kind of gestalt, the sum of the mental activities going on in my mind. Sometimes we can experience our mind is tired and fatigued.

The way some people live their lives for decades is with so much mental effort that there's a deep layer of fatigue deep in the mind. That no amount of physical sleep can touch. So then in the third foundation, it begins, one knows a mind with cravings as a mind with craving. So here the emphasis is no longer sensing, but really to know. And certainly you can sense the mind, you can feel craving. It's invaluable to do that. But here is the simplicity of knowing. This is a mind with craving.

And the really important word here is the word with craving. with craving, with greed. Because it implies that the mind, whatever the mind is, here it's not defined by greed. Greed is just there, just a piece of it. It's kind of a part of it. And that's partly because at this point in the process of *Satipaṭṭhāna*, the awareness is pretty well established. pretty well to be just generally present, mindful, aware, sensing, knowing, that it's almost as if there's a field of awareness that's strong and stable, clear and open. And one knows that craving is present. But one is not defined by the craving. One is not identified with the craving.

The craving is not the primary... mood or atmosphere that characterizes our inner life. And that makes a world of difference to be able to see craving as just a phenomena that's occurring within the field of all the other things happening. Just one more thing that we don't define ourselves by. We don't identify ourselves by. We don't say, wow, look at that. I think I'm the the best, most successful craver at IRC. I can't believe anybody's as good as me. I'm going to apply for the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's most successful craver

or the most amount of cravings per minute. And if it's not fast enough for the Book of Guinness Records, I'm going to sure pump it up and crave even better because I'm a craver.

There's no need to have this generalization. These abstractions, these big concepts that we lock onto and hold onto, define ourselves in this way, identify ourselves by this we're holding on. There's something simpler we can do, and that's this movement of simplicity in this practice. What's actually happening below these abstract ideas? And one abstract idea is, the activity of the mind identifying this is who I am. It might be accurate. You know, it's kind of accurate, probably, pretty well, pretty good to say that I'm human. Thank you. But for me to go around and telling myself, reminding myself, proving to myself that I'm human over and over and over again. Okay. It's not needed. It's exhausting. It'd be kind of like maybe even a waste of time.

So there's a way the mind gets simpler in this process of establishing awareness because it has something else it's doing. It's not identifying. It's not grasping. But it can, as the mind opens up, becomes clear, more relaxed, more, without its tensions... a mind without tension, can see the arising of craving, can know that it's there as part of it, not denying it, not condemning it, not taking it as right or wrong, but this radical simplicity of knowing a mind with craving as a mind with craving. I just love the simplicity. It's kind of... Almost, I don't know if it's deceptive, but it's easy to overlook how radical this is. Some people think they have to be good Buddhists and not have any cravings. So if craving comes up, it's a disaster. It means we're not a good Buddhist, successful Buddhists. There's shame and embarrassment or disappointment. Or there's a feeling of aversion. This should not, shouldn't be there. But it doesn't say any of that. It doesn't say, if there's a mind with craving, condemn it. Take it really personally. It just has this amazingly, I think beautiful, amazingly, in its simplicity, its clarity, its peacefulness. It says, when there is a mind with craving, no, this is a mind with craving. With is the important word. It's just with it. It's just accompanying. It's a piece of the home. Don't make it more than that. Don't build stories about it. Don't build self around it. Just keep it that simple. And if you can, and then when you can really see it with that width, oh, then maybe craving loses a lot of its power over us.

Craving is all the different forms of grasping, attachment, clinging. I like to consider or think of it as being a... has a quality of compulsion in it. And that's partly why it's suffering, partly why it's so challenging, because of the sense of pushing, compulsion, insisting, coming with authority. But remember, we're here now in the third foundation. We're here now in maybe the ninth day of the retreat. We're in a room, meditation hall, those of us who are here at IRC, where there's a lot of silence, stillness, certain kind of spaciousness. And if I have craving,

it's kind of like, oh, this is a room with a teeny little bit of craving. If it was in my mind, it might seem like a lot, but in the space of this great space, just a little bit. Our tendency is to identify so much strongly with me, myself and mine. It's happening to me in that little bit of real estate that you think you have inside your skull. But this wonderfulness about awareness becoming expansive and open, it has room for everything. So everything can be included. And there's something about this simplicity... of knowing a mind with craving as a mind with craving. It means we're staying grounded, staying centered, staying abiding in this wider space of awareness, this wider room of the mind, in such a way that it highlights that freedom of awareness, that openness of awareness, that spaciousness of awareness that doesn't collapse around craving. doesn't get caught in craving, doesn't get preoccupied with it. So it's one place for establishing awareness, which is what we're doing here. Establishing so it's possible to kind of feel like we're abiding in awareness, abiding in the present moment without having to do a lot of work to be here.

So then it goes, and then it then goes on, And says, one knows a mind without craving as a mind without craving. One of the advantages and one of the reasons you should, I hope I would like, like I suggest, that if you discover you have some craving in the mind, who knows, it could happen accidentally. you're minding your own business, and you don't know why it's there. But there it is. There's some benefits to having it there. And rather than seeing it as unfortunate, having this practice of seeing it clearly, oh, this is a mind with craving, sets up a contrast that you can see what it's like to have a mind without it. That is important. We're not only paying attention to what is present in the right way, at the right time. We're noticing what is not present. If you're going to notice everything is not present, you're going to get really busy. So don't spend a lot of time with that. But these important things like craving... If we're caught in it for a while and then it's not caught, take time to register that. Really know that. Oh, this is a mind without craving. Sense it, feel it. Take it in. And be nourished by it. Appreciate it. Ah, this is possible. Because then when craving arises in the future, maybe it doesn't have as much stickiness. It doesn't have as much seduction. because you know there's a better option. And I think every person is going to feel what that feels, sends, know, recognize a mind without craving what that is like. But some of the kind of maybe general ways it might happen is it might be peaceful. It might be spacious. It might have some relief in it. It might be more room in the mind for awareness. The awareness might be unruffled or unagitated.

And then it goes on and says, One knows a mind with ill will has a mind with ill will. So here's the same thing, idea. Rather than becoming filled by ill will so that every pore and cell of

the body is characterized by ill will, it's just a phenomenon of ill will that arises. Look at that. Yep, that's ill will. That's hatred and... No commentary needed. No involvement needed. No ill-will towards ill-will needed. Just knowing that this is a mind with ill-will. And then, with both the craving and ill-will, you can't expect it to just go away just because you know it. But sometimes then it's good to practice... *Satipaṭṭhāna* with it. Sense it. What are the sensations of craving? What are the sensations of ill will? Is there tension and tightness that can be relaxed? Calming of the mind. What are the feeling tones? Is there pleasant and unpleasant? Is there happiness and unhappiness? What does it come with? What is it? And is it of more the surface mind, or does it come from the deep mind? Does it come from the yoni, this deep, healthy, or place garden inside where the wholesome grows and develops? So it's possible to kind of feel it, get to know it more. Partly just keep strengthening your capacity for awareness of mindfulness. Okay.

And then one knows a mind with delusion as a mind with delusion. One knows a mind without delusion as a mind without delusion. Some people are perplexed. How can you know delusion? I think the assumption is that if you're deluded, you wouldn't know how to recognize that you're deluded. I think that certainly can happen. But I have lots of delusions that my mind still produces. I know it really well. There it is, Gil. The simple one that happens, I do a fair amount of writing. And by the time I finish the first draft, I'll tell myself, it's done. It's clearly done. I'm ready to send it to people. And I've learned that this is delusion. And I know it's delusion, but my mind still does it. I don't seem to learn. It's an instinct or something, instinct to have that thought. So it's possible as we get more and more mindful to get wise, wise up to the thoughts that to see that thought, that belief. You know, there's no basis in fact. It's just made up. It's a story I made. It's deluded. It's confused. It's ignorant. Sometimes it's almost unconscious. You know, this... One of the delusions that we can live under is that we might... We're smart enough to know that this... If someone asks us, we're not going to say this is permanent, whatever's happening. But if you... kind of pay attention to the attitude. Sometimes it's like the attitude is, no, this is going to continue forever. This is it. Someone says, no, no, it's guilt, it's impermanent, it'll change. It doesn't feel that way. In fact, there's a repulsion from that idea. Leave me alone in my permanent misery. Okay. And sometimes it gets popped. You know, sometimes if someone tells us that, you know, you've had this yesterday too, but it didn't last very long. Oh, that's right. I guess I'm just caught in this idea of permanence, continuity. Remember one day when we were having a... At least as parents, we were having a lot of challenges with our first son. And... And I was having a hard time with it. And I remember we were kind of in our little apartment, and her son was between us, my wife and I. And so we looked up at each other. And she said to me, we're having one of

those days. And as soon as she said that, my delusion of permanence evaporated. I was really operating under the assumption, Gail, this is going to be this way forever now. But... I'm always going to be this way. Like I told you the story, right? Where I was going to... I came to the conclusion that I... After a wonderful summer, I would never be depressed again. That's the delusion of permanence. Never. Always. So it's possible to see delusion. See thoughts which are not accurate, not useful, that are beliefs... stories that we make up, and to see it as such. This is a mind with delusion. And as soon as we have the idea, so the mind is with it, then we're not making it this big thing. We're not caught in it. The width is so important. It's just a piece of the puzzle, just a piece of the whole. Let's not forget the whole. There's much more going on here. Let's hold it just as a piece. The ability to hold in awareness, to hold in our love, to hold in our heart, that is a phenomenal capacity, because it means that whatever we're holding is only a piece of it. And that's a wonderful way to strengthen awareness, strengthen mindfulness, is to really feel, wow, this is good. To hold it, to have space for it, to allow it just to be there. and not be defined by it, not be pushed around by it. Just see it.

So that's all good and fine. But then the drama begins in this *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*. The next little instructions has no wit. Oh, put on your seatbelts. No wit. Sometimes we get so, mind gets so caught in itself or wrapped up in itself, or that there's no space almost. But it's possible to know it, and that makes a world of difference. When knows a contracted mind has a contracted mind, when knows a scattered mind has a scattered mind. So sometimes the mind really feels like it's just kind of like all tight, congested, contracted. It might have good reasons for it, but still it's painful, contracted and tight, and it's possible to know it. It doesn't come with the benefits that come with its spaciousness of saying, oh, it's just a mind with craving, but it's better to know it. And the knowing is a stepping stone to becoming more aware. Knowing it is a beginning to make space for the mind to expand again, to relax, to soften, to let go, to calm down, to know it. But how is it, why is it that knowing can have this be so useful if you know calmly, if you know in a pleasant way? Right? If you know kindly, how you know, it's possible to know with the opposite of all that. And then the mind just gets more contracted. But we're training ourselves here in being careful with how we know, how we feel. So it becomes a strength, it becomes a, I almost want to say habit, becomes a strength, becomes a real skill we have. And then it makes a huge difference. When the mind is contracted, one knows the mind is contracted. One knows it kindly, one knows it calmly. And that calmness and kindness kind of begins softening, brings a softening element to it.

So sometimes the mind is contracted, and sometimes it's just scattered. It's just like all over

the place, jumping around, restless, overactivated, jumping between things, not being able to settle down, which has maybe a centrifugal force outwards. And so the idea here is, when the mind is scattered, know it is scattered. Know this. And here, the calm knowing is kind of a gathering point for where the scattered mind can start becoming calm. Like the story I'd like to tell when my son was... my hyper-hyperactive son was in nursery school, preschool. And it was a wonderful preschool. And probably one of the best educations that his parents could get. And we were invited to come in, be there in classrooms sometimes, with the kids. And there was a lot of running around and playing and screaming. And sometimes there were kids, you know, two, three, four-year-old kids were just having a riot. And this wonderful teacher, he would stand in the middle of the classroom, peacefully, quietly, stand there, the kids running around him. And he'd start speaking in a very soft voice, telling a story. And you could see that in the next two minutes or something, the little kids started kind of noticing and gathering and sitting by in front of him. And within two minutes or something, the whole classroom was still and quiet, wrapped in the story he was telling. He didn't yell at them. It's story time. Sit down. Okay. If you don't come right away, I'm going to be angry one more time. You guys don't listen to me." He just started telling his story calmly and the kids gathered. So in a scattered mind, to know it calmly, maybe almost like you're telling yourself a really good story, because it's really good to know. Maybe tell yourself the story of how good it is to know. And maybe then the scattered mind will gather and sit there with you. Okay.

So that's half the instruction for this third way of establishing awareness. It's one of the ways to directly care for the quality of your inner life, to know it with this kind of clarity or pristine quality of knowing that's possible, a simplicity of knowing that is not a small thing, incidental thing, not a boring thing to do. Because the quality of the knowing, the freedom of the knowing, the freedom that comes with knowing, the pleasure of knowing is so compelling, so wonderful. Can you define that way of knowing? For the uninitiated, unpracticed, knowing might seem like a boring thing to do or an uninteresting thing to do. Matter of fact, does no good. No. But how you know makes all the difference. To know as if you have all the time in the world to know. No hurry. You're clearly taking the time to know. Like you've noticed something in the mind, there's craving. You don't rush to know it. There's no rush needed. Take a moment to... Kind of prepare yourself to know, oh, this is craving. And I love the idea that each act of knowing is a beginning of a journey, not the end. It's not the period at the end of a sentence. It's the, I love it that I think it's in Spanish, right, where they have a question mark for a question. They put it both at the front and the end of the sentence. I love that. Yeah. because then you kind of prepare to be open for this wonderful questioning attitude. At least that's what I think. So knowing is more like that question. I think it's upside down,



isn't it? I have no idea why it's upside down, but maybe it's just to really help us like not know. Do you open for something new? And... And to, so the knowing is kind of like the beginning of the sentence. Not that you're going to tell yourself a whole sentence, but the beginning of the journey. Like, craving, what is this? Craving, what does it feel like to know it? Craving, what's its flavor, what's its texture, what's the sensations with it? So it's kind of like, so it's not the end, like, okay, I said knowing and I said craving and like nothing happened. You know, now they want me to say craving again. Gee, you know, this is just, maybe I'll just do it faster. But just craving. Like you want to get to know it. You want to know it as part of the mind. This is the mind with craving. What is this? How is this? Where is this? When is this? Step forward, let it register, be with it.

There are things that nourish the mind and things which denourish it, famish it. Things like craving, lust, desire for sensual pleasure. For all the pleasure it might bring, it's also a way to denourish the mind, the inner life. But there's something about how we know, how we're present, how we attend to, how we sense, how we care for our experience. That can be nourishing. And so this, you know, recognizing, oh, this is a mind with craving. It's possible to feel... The knowing of that does something good, does something warm, does something beneficial. It allows something to grow, which I said at the beginning of the retreat is what we're doing here. We're not practicing anything. We're growing something. *Bhāvanā* to grow. So how we know, establishing awareness, for how we're aware, So awareness is nurturing. Mindfulness is nurturing. So the mind is nurtured with something, nurtured, nourished, with something beneficial, something that we contribute. What do we contribute? Giving care, kindness, compassion, to how we know. Or to let there be care in the knowing. Here is a mind that feels hurt. A mind with hurt is like this. Let this mind that's hurt be known, be heard, be recognized. There can be where that there's a mind with fear, anxiety. Let this mind that's with anxiety, let it be known, let it be accompanied by a warm, friendly knowing. Anxiety, you are known. Not only are you known, but... There's respect here for you. The respect where the word respect means to look again, where respect is that. This is the beginning of a sentence for us. Here there is a mind with fear. What is this? How does that know and experienced? There's a way of knowing that is healing, that is nourishing, that is supportive, for our inner life. Don't be mesmerized. Don't be caught in the fact that you have attachments and craving. Don't be caught by and seduced by the ill wills of the mind. Try to become familiar with your mind's capacity for delusion, at least the ones that are repeated. Try to know them with a knowing. ... that you would hope your best friend would sit with you, to know you in your field when you're caught in some difficulty, to listen to you, to care for you, to just know, to recognize how you know.

So finally I'll say that the meditation we did this morning was trying to point you to some experience or feeling for a mind that has no clinging in it, mind awareness that has no clinging. The less clinging there is in the awareness, the mind, the easier it is to see a mind with craving as a mind with craving. The easier it is to know ill will and delusion. And the easier it is, maybe, for knowing to be caring, caring, knowing, to know with care. And may this reassure you, and help settle your inner life for this profound work of mindfulness.