

Wednesday sit with instructions, week 2

Gil Fronsdal

September 10, 2025

Keywords: Satipaṭṭhāna, dukkha, mindfulness, simplicity, craving, aversion, awareness, beginner's mind, breathing, inner life

Because the *Satipaṭṭhāna*, as we move into mindfulness of the mind, it does so with a new reference point that's maybe been there all along. And one way of understanding that reference point is simplicity. I think it's useful to consider that you're always a beginner. But as an experienced beginner, you know the value of simple knowing, simple sensing. And rather than focusing on attaining anything, the orientation is not making it worse. To the degree that you have a choice, don't add anything that brings suffering, brings *dukkha*, tension, clinging, trust, the simplicity of presence, of being alive, and this orientation, or this recognition of the goodness that's not of the flesh, the sensations that are part of our profound nature.

Let that be a support for being simple. Let it be a support that helps you recognize when you make it unnecessarily complicated by wanting anything at all to be different, to get caught in the web of craving and desire, to be caught in the force of ill-will and aversion. To know that of course we will do that, but it's just a small piece of the whole knowing, craving as a piece of the mind, piece of the inner life, and as such, do not make it worse by condemning it or condemning oneself, by picking it up and getting involved. Stay simple, or it's enough just to know, simple knowing. Sometimes how we make it worse, how we get caught in thoughts, gets fed, gets reinforced by trying to fix it, and judge it and be concerned with it. It's enough to know, and then let it be on the periphery, if possible.

Doing the equivalent of standing in the middle of the classroom and being calm and quiet, so all of yourself can gather around to be together here, in the calm, in the quiet. Always a beginner, always ready to begin again with the breathing. Maybe there's a place in the body where the breathing is felt, sensed, where the body and the mind meet in the sensations, a place in the body. Maybe where we center ourselves in the sensation of breathing, a calm, steady intimacy with those sensations as a way to leave other things alone, as a way of not

making things worse, as a way of knowing simply, maybe knowing non-verbally, knowing to leave things alone, the knowing that knows... without any extra, without any strain. The knowing that returns to the centering place with breathing in the center of the vast clarity. A centering on the center of breathing, the grounding spot, the settling spot within the sensations of breathing, abiding with the sensations of breathing, with what is pleasant, content, to make it simple, being simple, a gathering around the center of breathing, some sensation in your body connected to breathing, which becomes the gathering place, the resting place, so the mind can relax and grow the vast space around it, almost as if the mind is space, is silence.

Where the practice is more characterized by allowing a receptivity to sensations than a directing the mind to sensations, and where knowing has no pressure in it, knowing has no pressure. Sense of being either receptive or directed. It has no weight, has no shape, has no tension. And without any tension is almost like doing nothing. Knowing is almost like the air that we hardly feel. Almost as if knowing floats and disappears for an experienced beginner. There's no need to attain just the care, not to stain the mind, the awareness. To be tense in any way is to make it complicated. To be tense feeds more tension for the body to relax so you can feel the nourishment of calmness in the body, the calming of the mind. So you can feel some of the nourishment of a calm mind, relaxing into a simplicity of being, being careful to not be centered in thinking with its accompanying tension and pressure, contraction of the mind, rather rest.

In the sensations of breathing, in the gathering point, as if everything gathers around the breathing, and beyond just space, openness, vast clarity. A simplicity of awareness that can include everything within it. Nothing needs to be outside of awareness. We can know awareness with thought, awareness with craving, awareness with love, awareness with aversion, awareness with tenderness. Awareness is a radical simplicity within which all things can be known, can be felt, can be observed. Where a silent awareness has room for all things. A simplicity of being where it makes the most sense to be careful not to make it worse. A simplicity that feels as if it gives space for what is beautiful, sweet, wholesome to grow. Give space for what is *dukkha*, for what is a strain to evaporate. An experienced beginner has nothing to attain.

Simply knows not to stain the mind. An experienced beginner knows to care for the quality of the inner life and knows that there is no need to diminish that quality. There's never anything that's worth sacrificing yourself, making worse the quality of the inner life. However you find it, don't make it worse. And we make it better by being simple. Let whatever is difficult be

simple, be simple with it, so that it's simply a part of the whole. Mind, the awareness always has space to not make it worse, to allow what's good to grow. May and this day may simplicity nourish you and guide you. Thank you.