

Friday Guided Meditation

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Beginning your meditation, sitting quietly. And here, here in the present, in different ways in which we attend, experience, know and feel the present moment, can include many things. It can include the contact of your body against your chair or your cushion, can include my voice speaking and the silence between my words. It can be the contact of your clothes against your skin. It can be the temperature of the room, the temperature of your body. Even with your eyes closed, there might be some awareness of a play of light and darkness, light and shadows.

You might be aware of movements in your body. Maybe there's ever so slight swaying, rocking, oscillating of the body. There's different ways of being aware of breathing. Could be the movements of the belly. It could be the changing soft pressure deep in your belly at the base of where breathing begins and ends. You might be aware of the back rib cage or sensations in your spine, the sensations of air going in your mouth or the nostrils.

You might be aware of your general mood or emotional state. You might be aware of thinking, thoughts occurring. We might be aware of the state of the mind, contracted or expansive, quiet and still, or activated and agitated. And that could go on and on. There's so much happening in the present moment that all the different sense doors, all the different ways we can be aware. At any given moment, whatever you might be clinging to, whatever you might be attached to, is only a very small percentage of all the things you could be aware of in the moment.

There's probably more things in the present that you're not attached to than you might be attached to. More things that you're not fixated on than what you might be fixated on. There's a vast panorama of present moment experience that might arise and linger and maybe pass away, or you can sense and feel that with that there's no clinging. Or you might discover

that the very way that you're aware, the very way that you're mindful of anything, it's the awareness that it contains clinging, pressure, a forcefulness, a tightness, a strain. And even while you're being mindful of something, with some fixation, there are other sensations that come into being on the edges in the background that you're not really focusing on. It appears without any clinging to them.

Can you notice where in your experience, towards what in your experience, you have no clinging, no reactivity, maybe no commentary? Becoming aware of where, how you're aware without clinging, to what are you aware without any clinging, and what does that non-clinging feel like? If non-clinging is an absence of clinging, how does awareness travel through that absence? To know and sense what's happening. Might you sense and feel what it's like to have awareness operate without fixation, without distraction, without any clinging, any strain?

Mm-hmm. Is centered in your body. Is there some way that embodied sensing, sensing of the body, can occur without any clinging to it? Or if there is, expand your awareness to notice where it's not. In any given moment, there's more things we don't cling to than that which we cling to. The consequence of clinging is to prioritize something, to think that something's important enough, important enough to be stuck to.

And in doing so, we lose sight of the wider panoramic way in which we can be aware of other things without clinging. If awareness comes to rest on something like the breathing or anything at all, centers itself somewhere, can that centering of attention be without any clinging, without any fixation? Awareness which is centered gently moves around the center, whatever that object is, gently caressing or being as soft as a gentle breeze, going around under and above, and through whatever is being known. Awareness that doesn't cling allows things to be as they are in the suchness of each thing that arises. There's no need to make anything of it. Beyond the edges of preoccupation is the absence of preoccupation.

Beyond the edges of clinging is non-clinging, beyond the edges of thinking is non-thinking. And as awareness moves through the absences, awareness might feel spacious, awareness might be very still and soft, awareness might feel silent, quiet, as if the absence of clinging is the open space of a path forward. Allow your mindfulness, your awareness, to move towards there where there's no clinging. And from there, knowing everything else, knowing it without clinging. And after these minutes of sitting here, maybe staying close to non-clinging, non-fixation, non-grasping. Oh, might that be a reference for you? Do not give it up for the sake of what is unwholesome.

Might there be thoughts and things that come up for you that are easier for these moments here to say no thank you, no need to get involved in those. As this period of meditation comes

to a close, very beneficial reflection, contemplation, is that when you feel some degree of ease, some degree of calm, some sense of non-clinging, and you start feeling tense or uneasy or caught, preoccupied again, to stop and reflect, what is it that's so important that you're willing to sacrifice your ease, your calm, centeredness, your the peace of non-clinging. What are you willing to sacrifice it? What is it? What happens there? Contemplate that, question it. Get to know it. Begin understanding how you get pulled into the world of clinging, stress, agitation. So when you feel some ease, pay attention to how you lose that. And then stop and reflect at what happened. Try to understand. And in doing so, maybe you'll be wiser next time.

And if this exercise interests you and makes sense to you, you can try using it now as we end the sitting. Thank you. So mindfulness practice is not just a practice of being mindful, being aware of the present moment. It's also a practice of becoming wise, to have understanding. And one of the ways to be your own teacher and find your own way is to have the reference point of the goodness of the practice, the way you're calmer, more centered, more connected, the way that maybe you're more cognizant of non-clinging. And notice how that's lost. Notice how you sacrifice it. It's a powerful idea that you're sacrificing it. But what is doing inside of you, what is happening inside of you, that you're willing to get busy in your life. Get up and get busy, do something, pick up your old concerns and get wrapped up in them in your mind, or get tense in how you go around being things fast, whatever it might be.

Just kind of take time to see how that works, understand the tricks of the mind, to understand it better what's going on for you in that transition, out of meditation, out of any time that you're centered, and understand it, spend some time contemplating it, spend time sometimes going back into meditation to really feel better. What just happened? What is happening? And this is one way that you become your own teacher in this practice. So today...