

Restarting Fresh

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So one of the things that people who do mindfulness begin to appreciate more and more—sometimes it takes a while, maybe, sometimes they can be understanding it right away—and that is, when you're practicing mindfulness, there's a way in which you can always start over. You can always start fresh. You don't have to necessarily carry with you into the next moment the baggage of the past, how you were in the past. You're given kind of a permission and the forgiveness in the context of this practice to not carry the past into the present. And in doing that, start like feeling like, okay, I get to start fresh. Now, what's here?

So, meaning, for example, when you're meditating, perhaps accidentally you spent more time than you needed to thinking in meditation. And you say, oh, I'm not supposed to be thinking. Maybe you think that. Not realizing that when you think that, you're thinking even more. You can just start over. Begin again.

Begin again. Don't have to carry the burden of having been a thinker for too long. Oh, I'm here with this next moment. You might start thinking again, but then maybe you can start over, starting over. And perhaps that's the primary skill that really supports you over long term in this practice, is your skill and starting fresh, starting over. And maybe that's all this practice is: starting over, starting over, showing up.

And what that does is that it interrupts the momentum of your preoccupations, the momentum of your attachments, the momentum of your judgments, the momentum of your stories, momentum of your... whatever it might be, there's some kind of pause, interruption, beginning again, where you're not continuing to feed something that you're doing that's not so healthy, not so good for you. For that moment you're not feeding it. Okay, and starting over might be that you compose yourself, take a deep breath, let go, relax to some degree. Okay, here I am. You reorganize yourself. You orient yourself.

You do something to make a transition. Okay, here I am. Here. Now, okay, this. So you might actually do something even physical. Take a deep breath. Adjust your posture. Feel your, if you're sitting and meditating, feel your weight on your chair or your cushion. Okay. If you're standing in the supermarket checkout line, maybe take a deep breath and feel the weight on your feet. Okay, here I am.

And you might not be successful to clear out everything, like the windshield wipers clearing up all the rain on your windshield. But you might actually make an adjustment that you're more like made a transition into a little bit different way of being. And so what I'm offering today is an idea that mindfulness by itself, just simply noticing something, noticing you're drifting off in thought, noticing you're caught in something, I'm supposed to be mindful. Okay, what's happening here and noticing? It might be not enough. Okay.

It might be kind of the momentum of the mind to be preoccupied, to be spinning, to be multitasking, to be over-preoccupied with too many things. Mindfulness, the effort to be mindful, just one more of those many things. One more of these multitasking, one more of... And the mindfulness comes along, carries with it attitudes, carries with it fears, carries with it all kinds of the ordinary kind of momentum of your life. There's something to be said about a ritual, a transition, a grounding, a centering process, a composing oneself, orienting oneself to this moment, to now. That is something like taking a deeper breath and relaxing, and here I am.

Something like just organizing your mind. You might, if you start being mindful of what a thinking mind is like, you might find that sometimes your thinking mind is spinning or agitated, or it's like a popcorn maker in there. And it's like all the stuff is going on maybe at once. And you might be able to close your eyes or just look down. And there might be some way of taking an exhale that settles something in the disorganized mind that kind of gets it organized. Like it would be if you were in a very difficult social situation, lots going on, it's chaotic.

Right. And there's someone there who, like maybe it's like, I'm thinking about chaos in the nursery school playroom. It can be pretty chaotic. And one of the kids has now scraped her knee and she needs a band-aid. And so you organize yourself, you focus. So she needs it and all the stuff around you. It just continues, but something about you just gets composed, gets organized. This is the task to do, to really be with her, because she's scared too, to be with her and put the band-aid on. You're really there. You organized yourself.

You gathered yourself. You focused yourself here for her. So one way or the other, maybe you can do that to start over. And not just me, I just casually start to be mindful again, but actually

create a transition in your body, in your heart, in your mind. Okay, now. And eventually you'll become an experienced practitioner, which is no more ambitious, no more grand, than forever being an experienced beginner. You always get to be a beginner. And you just get more and more experienced in how to be a beginner, to start over, begin, start fresh. Okay, that was then. Now I have to live with the consequences of then.

Let's just be here now. Let's make a transition, some really present, open. And in doing this, you might have certain values or certain understandings or certain dispositions that you really value. Okay? And that kind of making that transition, making that grounding, maybe then it's like, I really like being open and available. So they're standing there in the checkout line. You say, okay, let me start over again. And you kind of like take deep breath, here, let me be open to this situation. Or maybe you like kindness or compassion or love. It's what's needed at the moment.

Or maybe the value is you need to be strong and courageous. And so, okay, let me start over and let's kind of settle here and find my courage. So there's a lot of different things we might call upon, but you're allowed in a moment's notice to start over and in starting over to do that with some kind of transition, some kind of movement, some kind of something. Something that helps you, okay, here I am. So hopefully this inspires you to appreciate the possibility of starting over, starting fresh, and starting over in a deliberate way, a clear way that makes you more likely than to really show up for your life, for what's here, for what's next in any given moment. May you transition into the fullness of your life. Thank you.