

## Guided Meditation: Clinging AND Freedom

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Good morning, everyone. Yesterday there was a request for captions, and we put them in place. I didn't know how it worked. But one of the consequences of captions is that there has to be more latency—it's what YouTube calls it—and more delay between when I speak, when it's being videoed here, and when it appears for you on the screen. I think I'm not sure exactly how long it is, but it might be close to a minute, 30 seconds or a minute, so that if I'm looking at the chats, then there's quite a delay between what I'm speaking and what I see there. But that allows YouTube to have enough time to do the captions.

So, one way of understanding the Buddha's teaching about insight is that it is possible to see—view—the... It is possible to see or view how we're caught, how we're attached, how we cling, how we get preoccupied, how we get swept away in thoughts and ideas, to see it simultaneously as seeing the possibility of freedom, or say it more clearly, as simultaneously as seeing there's freedom here too. It'd be almost like maybe seeing a shadow, and simultaneously you see the shadow, and you see what is still in the... if you're out walking and your body makes a shadow with the light from the sun, then you see simultaneously the shadow and you see what's around the shadow, which is where the sunlight falls. So this idea that right in our attachments or right next to them, there is freedom from attachments. The two arise together. They occur together because attachment—suffering from attachments—is not universal experience.

It's not like filling the whole universe. It's not even filling our whole mind and heart. That if we have the capacity to see clearly, if we have the capacity to have an open awareness of what's happening, that right there in that knowing, we could know freedom as well. We could know peace as well. We could know calm as well. And this is a remarkable thing to see both, so that we're not caught in that trance, or caught in the trance of our preoccupations, our attachments, our thoughts, our fears.

There's fear, and then right next to it, right there, because we're clearly aware, there's freedom. One of the ways the Buddha describes this, he says that it isn't that we're afraid, which—say, "I'm afraid"—kind of becomes a universal statement. But this is a mind with fear. This is a heart with fear. This is a mind with attachment. This is a mind without attachment.

This is a mind with preoccupation, not "I'm preoccupied." So there's a switch of language that allows us or supports us to see freedom here. Now, right next to, right together with our not-free. So assuming a meditation posture and gently closing your eyes and taking some long, comfortable inhales and a long exhale where you let go and relax into your body. Letting your breathing return to normal, and scanning through your body to see where on the exhale you can soften your body. Relax.

And then to also do that for your thinking mind, feeling any tension, tightness in the thinking mind. And as you exhale, relax the thinking mind, and then letting your awareness settle into your torso, your body. To feel and sense the body's experience of breathing. To be aware of your breathing, the body breathing. To be aware calmly, as if you have all the time in the world. To be aware calmly of your body, of your emotions, your thoughts.

Whatever is strongest for you, whatever comes into awareness, know it calmly. And in being calmly aware of whatever, calmly aware of any suffering or stress you feel, any ways in which you're caught, preoccupied, calmly know it. This is a mind with suffering, with preoccupation. And right next to your suffering, your discomfort, your stress, your preoccupation, attachment, there's also freedom. The two can coexist where you don't identify yourself with either one. Calm and the calm awareness, that which is agitated, exists right next to what is calm.

As we come to the end of this sitting, to feel and sense whatever subtleness you might have, whatever way you're more subtle or calmer than you were at the beginning, maybe whatever way that you're more grounded, and that you have the ability to know and feel and sense from a calm place, a grounded place. So as you gaze upon the world, imagine the world of people and activities that you move into at the end of this sitting, that whatever ways that you become anxious or concerned or excited or right next to that is also a calm awareness, a settled, grounded place, being agitated, being concerned, being excited, can coexist with a grounded, calm awareness. In whatever way you're afraid or angry or disagree with people, maybe from a calm, grounded place, you can also have an open, caring heart. You can also have a friendliness, an empathy, a care for the people you're with. You don't have to accept everything about the people around you. To at the same time, right there next to that, to have goodwill.

And may we be grounded and settled enough to stay close to the goodwill that can also be there. It's not either or. Letting goodwill be the end. And there's goodwill. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free of suffering. And may each of us contribute to that possibility. Thank you.