

Dharmette: Five Precepts (4 of 5) Not Speaking Falsehoods

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So hello and welcome to this fourth talk where I connect the instructions, basic instructions in mindfulness, with the five precepts. And today the instruction is around mindfulness of thinking, and the precept is to refrain from speaking what is false. And these are closely connected because in some way our thinking, whether verbal or images or other ways, is a way of talking silently to ourselves. It's a way of reflecting kind of inner conversations, inner stories, inner ideas. And so it's closely connected to what we're saying privately to ourselves. And the idea is that not to tell ourselves falsehoods applies to ourselves in meditation.

But what is it that's false in meditation that we want to avoid? First, we want to avoid the false ways in which we relate to ourselves with hostility, with animosity, with shame, with ideas that somehow we're wrong or not doing it right. This is a way of losing ourselves, of shutting off parts of ourselves, dividing ourselves, the one who judges and what is being judged. The idea in meditation is to heal the divides, heal the separations, the tensions between different parts of ourselves, so that we can include all of ourselves here in the practice. Not that we give everything free rein, but we give everything permission to be felt and known, not necessarily acted on.

And so what happens when we get preoccupied in thoughts during meditation? Two things. One is that we often can lose touch with our lived experience of the moment as we get pulled into thoughts that are not about the present moment. They're about the past or the future, something in other places not right here now, or about fantasy that has nothing to do with anything, really, but just the fantasy. And if we really look carefully at this kind of way of thinking that's not connected to the present moment, it's not really so accurate.

It's not really referring to something that's actually, and if you use the word kind of lightly, real in the present moment, something in the direct real experience we're having here and

now. The mind, if it's thinking about other things and other times, the mind is telling a story, it's constructing something. It has ideas, interpretation, judgments, images. It's a selective presentation that we have inside of ourselves. And that's not the full picture. Thinking is never providing 100% accurate.

In a certain kind of way, when we spend a lot of time thinking, we're telling ourselves certain kinds of falsehoods. Or if not falsehoods, we're not connected to the full real experience of the present moment, where the deeper aspiration, deeper motivation, deeper upwelling of understanding and connection and motivation can reside. And so to not then condemn ourselves for breaking the precept, the fourth precept, in the way we think, but just appreciate that we're not really as fully connected to ourselves as we could be. And the path of mindfulness is to enter into a full connection, a whole connection, a unified connection, to be settled, be at harmony, be connected here, kind of to all of who we are. This is where what's real and true is to be found.

And as we find it here in the present moment, as we settle more and feel relaxed and at ease and in harmony here with our lived experience of the present, breathing easily, including all our feelings and emotions, then when we're involved in conversations with other people and we're about to speak a falsehood, we'll probably feel and sense how that disconnects us from ourselves, disconnects us from what is real and present here and right now. There's something about intentionally speaking falsehoods which disconnects us, that you have to be disconnected from reality to say them, to be caught in them, to be involved in them. And for all the ways that lying or falsehoods causes problems in our relationships and harms people and is a betrayal of sorts of friendships, it's also a loss of connection with oneself. It's also a little bit of abandoning this deeper connection, maybe abandoning it ourselves, because we are caught in desires and aversions that we think are the important things to listen to, the important things to obey and go along with, that somehow we benefit from chasing desires, being pushed by desires, being pushed by aversions.

But in fact, when strong, compulsive desires take over, we're losing the truth. There's a kind of falsehood in there, falsehood that these desires are going to fix me, these desires are going to make things better. And if it involves falsehoods or false fantasies and unreal things, we actually don't benefit from it. The deepest benefits we can do for ourselves is to be present, connected here to ourselves so that we become a source of peace. We become a source of well-being. We become a source of kindness and warmth and presence.

And it might mean that we are slower to speak, it might mean that we're more settled, it might mean that we do things a little bit slower, it might mean that we're more available to take in

and feel the whole experience of the present moment. And in the long term, we probably end up living in a better way, making better choices, having less to do to clean up and to fix, to be more likely to speak the truth. And the truth is more in a kind way, to speak the truth in a kind way, in a beneficial way, in a timely way. We're careful about how we speak. Because we know there are more important things in a relationship with other people than our opinions, being right, telling stories, convincing people that we're a good person somehow, or praising ourselves or something.

It's possible to settle down, and there's a deep way we can be together with people with care, with love, and attention. So for this day, maybe it's a good day for mindfulness of thinking, so that you don't get lost in that world. So the world of thinking doesn't pull you out of a deep place of your taking away from your potential for being present in a warm, kind, friendly way, from some deeper source than where the discursive thinking arises, where opinions arise, stories arise. And may it be that this practice of mindfulness of thinking, practice of the precept of not speaking falsehoods, may they together delight you in the possibility of staying grounded and settled in your body, in your breathing, to feel and sense and be aware so that the best of who you are can come forth in speech, the best of who you are can come forth in smiles, the best of who you are can come forth with a warm heart.

May it be that the practice of mindfulness, the practice of embodiment, the practice of heartfulness, here and now, benefits you and benefits the people around you on this day. So thank you very much. And I'll be back for one more day this week, tomorrow. And then next week I'll be away on a little vacation. And I'll talk a little bit more about that tomorrow. Thank you. You.