

Guided Meditation: Clarity

Gil Fronsdal

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Hello and welcome. And today the topic for the guided meditation is clarity. And periodically I find it very useful for myself and maybe for those of you, for others, is to change the way that the practice is described. So the most common way that we practice mindfulness is by practicing mindfulness. And we talk about mindfulness a lot. Sometimes I like to use the word awareness.

Sometimes I like the word, use a very simple word, noticing. Because noticing frees us from a lot of the associations, expectations we have around what meditation is and what's supposed to happen. And it's best with mindfulness to kind of be free of expectations, free of ideas of what it's supposed to look like, and to discover how to make it very simple. So one of these words, alternative words, is clarity. To have a kind of attentional clarity that I liken to, sometimes I've driven or walked in very dense fog, and I could only see kind of just a few feet in front of me, had to drive or had to walk extremely carefully, and the scope of attention was just what's in front of me, a few feet. And I had no idea of what's going on in the wider world, you know, 10 feet away or 20 feet away, walking down the sidewalk in some city and just a dense, dense fog.

And then the fog clears. And now maybe there's been rain overnight, maybe there's been a wind and the soot and the smog is out of the air. And now it just seems so clear. The air is so clear. And the eyesight, if I have my glasses on, is very clear and clear. The clarity now allows the eyes to take in a lot more, both directly and indirectly, than I could have when I was in a dense fog.

So this waking up to clarity, looking for how can we be aware with clarity. What is it to be clearly aware, to have attention, have a kind of silent clarity to it? So there's not a lot of thinking, analyzing, judging, commentating on the experience. What is the fog that we have that

prevents us from having a wide open, wide expansive sense of clarity in being here, just here, just now, in the present moment? And in terms of the mindfulness practice, instructions that we give, as I've been doing the last few weeks, we offer the instruction systematically with breath, body, the emotions, thinking, to a point where we can practice all of them together in a wide sphere of clarity.

Right? They all have their place to be simply known, simply recognized, simply gently approached and seen for what they are. But in this wider field of clarity, where there can be a deep settling, a calming, clarity which is peaceful. So to begin, welcoming your body to assume a posture of meditation, giving a little bit of care to some of the details of that posture. So the hands are placed in a supportive way, the feet and legs. So the back is balanced, a little straightened, in a supportive way for clarity.

If we have a posture that's too relaxed, it might all too easily bring in the fog of sleepiness or dullness, or a lack of engagement. Gently closing the eyes and taking some gentle, slow, fuller breaths. Maybe with breathing in more fully and exhaling a little longer than usual. A little bit like the windshield wipers. Gently clearing the water drops from the windshield, gently pushing away or dropping all the drops of thoughts that interfere with the clarity of seeing, letting your breathing return to normal.

And if for a few moments at a time, notice, see what in your present moment experience can you be aware of clearly, maybe because it's obvious or it's ordinary. It's not complicated. What can you kind of settle back, relax, open, and just have a sense of clearly being aware of it? It could be a sound around you. It could be some physical sensation in your body that's uncomplicated, untroubling, but it's possible to tune into it for a few moments.

So you get a feel for what it's like to know, sense, clearly with a silent, calm mind. Maybe it's how you're feeling emotionally, or maybe it's the thoughts that are coming through. Maybe you're in a rainstorm of thoughts, and that's all you can know clearly. Wide, expansive, open field of simply knowing. See what you can know simply and clearly. Feel and sense.

So you can get some feel for what it's like to have a clarity of mind, clarity of attention. And into that clarity, welcome your breathing. The sensations, experience are breathing in and breathing out. And there are some parts of breathing, the cycle of breathing, that feels like it's easy, peaceful to know with clarity, as if the mind is spacious, a part of the mind that's untroubled, that can simply be here to feel and sense and know as if the breathing, as if your body's ability to feel and sense is like the warm sun that's dispersing the fog or lifting the darkness of night.

With each inhale and each exhale, let there be a spreading sense of clarity, spaciousness, maybe stillness within which all things occur. Clarity can hold everything you, everything that's happening to you, and see if you can identify yourselves more with a clarity, spacious, open clarity that clearly knows and experiences what's happening without you identifying or judging or reacting to what's happening. Because you find your home, you find more like who you really are in the clarity than in the details of what happens. Whether it's breath, breathing, sensations of the body, emotions and feeling, thoughts. Let them allow them to be there without being involved.

For you, being the practitioner, if you're involved with anything, it's with noticing, seeing, feeling, the clarity of awareness within which all the others happen. The experience of clarity has a few related ways of being, ways of feeling about awareness. Clarity might come along with the feeling of being cleansed, clean, a clean sense of awareness, presence. It might come with a sense of space, spaciousness, space that peacefully contains whatever is within it. Space does not contend or judge. Some people might associate clean, open, spacious awareness with a kind of purity, an inner purity.

Some people might associate it with a feeling of timelessness, present moment awareness, in which there is no time or at least the mind is not calculating or figuring. That part of the mind is relaxed and open. And as we come to the end of the sitting, can you recall sometime in your life where you've had a clear sense of clarity, a clear sense of awareness, clarity of awareness, clarity of presence, clarity of mind and heart, and what do you remember in your body, your mind, and your heart of what that experience was like for you? Was it nourishing, inspiring? Did it teach you something important?

And then how do you lose that clarity? What do you do in your life that is most likely to wipe away the clarity, bring back the fog, bring back the darkness? For what do you sacrifice your clarity? And is that what you want to do? Do you want to give it up? Would you rather stay close to it?

One of the benefits for clarity, a clean, open, spacious awareness, is how it can be a medium for a clear transmission of kindness, goodness, warmth, compassion, and friendship. And may it be that, though, to whatever degree we've developed clarity through this practice, may we remember to transmit, to extend our goodwill through it. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. May the way that we offer our clear awareness to this world, may this contribute to the welfare and happiness of others. Thank you.