

Guided Meditation: Meditation as Sensitivity to Clinging

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So hello and welcome to our meditation session.

And one of the things that I think meditation is associated with often is calming, becoming calmer. And to only think of it for that purpose is pretty reductionalistic, but becoming calm is certainly extremely valuable. One of the purposes of becoming calm, and one of the means of becoming calm, and one of the consequences of becoming calm, is the relaxing of clinging, the relaxing of attachment, of gripping, of strong ways in which we hold on or resist in a way that's stressful for our minds, our hearts, our body. And to emphasize letting go, to emphasize non-attachment, non-clinging, in the abstract, sometimes it's hard to understand why or the value of that. But one of the things we're doing through mindfulness practice is developing a heightened sensitivity, a greater awareness of what it's like physically, emotionally, mentally, when we're clinging. To feel the unpleasantness of clinging.

To feel the tightness of it, the pain of it even. To feel, to really kind of be present in such a way we feel, of course we want to relax that kind of tension. It's like holding, if someone's really angry and they hold their hand in a fist, they might even know that they're holding their hands in a fist. And then a friend comes along and sees how tense we are and just picks up our fist and holds it gently, lovingly. And then we, oh, now we realize, and now we realize how painful it is to hold the hand that way and we relax. So, part of this practice then is to be in the present moment so we can feel and sense what this living life is like for us.

So we can see where we are hung up and to loosen up, let up, release. Because we know, we feel. And if we don't feel well, if we haven't really taken in the experience of clinging, of attachment, see in the moment the unsatisfactoriness of it, then I suggest you don't let go, you don't relax, but you bring a greater attention to it until you feel how unsatisfactory it is to do it, to be that way.

So assuming a meditation posture, and now think of this posture as a posture that your body is going to be an instrument, a fine, well-calibrated instrument for sensing and feeling your lived experience, giving some care that it's a posture that supports a heightened sensitivity. And gently closing the eyes. And this instrument of the body, to be more connected to it, take a few long, slow, deep breaths. Just deep enough that you feel more connected, but not winded. And long, slow exhale, a little longer than you usually would as a way of relaxing the body. Sensitive to the body as you breathe in, relaxing as you exhale.

Letting the breathing return to normal. And with a normal breath, continue. Just allow yourself to feel your body more fully as you inhale. Maybe the torso, shoulders, the chest, wherever the body is activated by breathing in. And on the exhale, relaxing. Breathing in and feeling more fully the mind, the thinking mind.

And as you exhale, soften, relax the thinking mind. And if you're relaxed and it's easy to just ride the breathing, easy to settle into the present moment, continue practicing this way. But if there's any way that you're hung up, you have concerns, preoccupations, resistance or contractions, anything that can be called an attachment or a clinging, holding on, resisting. It's okay that you're this way. The task is as you breathe in, feel it more fully. Allow yourself to feel it.

Until you feel how unsatisfactory it is, how there's something deep inside of that attachment, that clinging, that wants to let go. And on the exhale, let go, soften, loosen. But only after you've known, felt, what it's like to be attached. Never let go without knowing first what attachment feels like. Mm.

Remembering to take your time to sense and feel the physicality of clinging, of being preoccupied, holding on, fixating. Whatever way, whatever version of clinging you have, the task is to know it well, feel it well, until you feel almost as if it comes out of the clinging itself, the desire to relax, the wisdom that letting go is wise.

And then as we come to the end of this sitting, to take a brief few moments here to feel yourself more deeply. Is there something about how you might be more settled or calmer or a little bit more clear and aware that makes you more sensitive to clinging and grasping, contraction, holding on, resisting. And even if those things are not present, is there a reference point now for a deeper feeling of them when they occur? Not a judgment of them, not ideas about clinging, but to actually feel and sense what it's like. How can you become wiser when you have a deeper sensitivity to clinging and grasping to desire and aversion.

And the more we can become aware of the remaining ways that we still cling or hold on or

attached, maybe the greater patience and generosity and care, compassion we can have for others who are clinging and grasping and holding on. And we see in others ourselves, we see in ourselves others. We feel and know the challenges that are deep inside. And knowing our own perhaps allows us to be, to gaze upon others more generously, more kindly, as we all go through this difficult world, difficult life. May all beings be happy. May all beings be peaceful.

May all beings be safe. And may all beings be free of sufferings. Thank you.