

Practice Notes: Body Sensitivity

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So to use as a reference point for mindfulness practice, ordinary kind of situations in life can be useful. So if it's a cold day and you're able to stand in the sun, you might have to stand in the sunlight and slowly it might warm you. It kind of penetrates your clothes, penetrates your skin, and you can feel the warmth you sense. There's a sensation that's maybe a little bit diffuse of the sensations coming through. Sometimes, like I did the other day, you can suddenly feel a change in humidity or maybe a change in the barometric pressure. And so there's a certain kind of sense, we have certain senses that operate, they can pick up these things.

And so to have a sensitivity to sense, and sensitivity to sense the temperature. I was hiking in the hills here and it was kind of very clear we turn around a bend or go into a little dip and the temperature changed dramatically. And to be aware of that. It's possible to go for a walk and be so absorbed in a conversation that you don't sense the shifting sensations of the atmosphere, of the weather that you go through. And so this capacity to physically sense, or I like to use the right now of sensitivity, mindfulness is about becoming more sensitive to the inner sensitivity that picks up sense experiences. Not always sharply and distinctly.

Sometimes certain things are experienced more diffusely and broadly. And some things, like if you put, stick your finger right in your thigh, it's very specific where you feel it. And that's in distinction to thinking about things. Thinking about your experience, analyzing it, figuring it out, negotiating it with your mind. What we're doing in mindfulness, because we call it mindfulness, people think they're supposed to be in their mind a lot. But it's actually more to do with being in your body and awakening capacity to sense and be sensitive through your body to the experience of the present moment.

And that in meditation it might be towards you experience sensitivity to what it's like to be breathing. How is breathing experienced as sensations. What are the sensations. How do

you have more acute sensitivity to your breathing. In walking meditation, it's a sensitivity to the kinesthetic somatic experience of walking. It's not about a race, about getting to the other side and turning around and coming back.

It's not about being, you know, a model on a runway to show who's just the best walking meditation. You actually forget about the world around you to really have a sensitivity from the inside out to what this whole experience of walking is like. So, and so a lot of mindfulness is cultivating and developing greater and greater sensitivity of the body to be attuned, to be sensitive to what's happening in the moment. And that can help you be in the present, but one of the reasons we do this in mindfulness practice is that that very sensitivity to the sensations, the experience of the body, sensitivity to the mind, not knowing so as much as sensing what the experience of mind is, the tightness, the tension, the agitation, sensing, it's through our capacity to sense that we can sense when we're off, when we're tense, when we're reacting, when something's not quite right. That sometimes we know that faster than if we don't, not in our sensations.

We can also start feeling some of the beautiful things about being a human being. Some of the wonderful feeling of generosity, of kindness, of compassion, is mediated through the world of sensitivity. If you don't develop a heightened sensitivity, you won't have access to these wonderful human social emotions that we're capable of. And so they come alive for us. The more we're able to ground ourselves in a sensitive body. And that whole different life unfolds through that sensitivity than through mentally, thoughtfully, navigating the world through our thoughts, through our ideas, through our beliefs.

So as we go through this morning today, you might see what shifts for you if you get a little bit quieter than usual with your thinking mind, and see what happens if you, how well you can stay lingering in the natural sensitivity that abides in your body, that is in your body. Stay close to that. Allow yourself to be kind of absorbed that or take it in or enter into that sensitivity and trust it for the course of the next two hours. So I hope you enjoy the morning. Thank you.