

## Deeper Motivations

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So one of the important areas of mindfulness is to become quiet enough, still enough, non-reactive enough, that we can begin to become aware of the more profound or the more subtle voices, subtle movements, motivations, and the emotions that we have. The louder ones tend to be the reactive ones. The reactive ones tend to be the ones where we're trying to make ourselves safe, get our way, take care of problems, express our conceit, be someone, improve ourselves. But the quieter ones are ones that are closely related to contentment, to feeling safe within ourselves, to feeling fulfilled. There's a whole realm of inner life that's much more subtle than the reactive response to the world that I have.

And it isn't that in mindfulness practice we want to deny all that we're feeling. We want to be present for it and really be honest and be present and see, and hopefully have a wise, maybe even friendly attitude to all of who we are, including the reactivity. Of course we're reactive, but we also want to not trust the reactivity. We don't want to invest in it and think that's where the solution is, so that something can begin settling and quieting. So the more subtle and maybe the more meaningful states that are within us can show their way, can have a chance to surface and come out.

And so one of the reference points that I like to use, kind of as a thought experiment, is if you could feel safe, if you could feel fulfilled, if you could feel calm and content, what would you be feeling then? What are the motivations that would come out of you? What would radiate? What would flow? What would be that? What would you want? What desires do you have?

Not a few people's strong desires are compensatory desires. We're compensating for feeling lack, feeling unloved, feeling scared, feeling, you know, ambitious, feeling like we're being left behind and everyone else is getting ahead. The grass is greener somewhere else, and we have to work harder to improve ourselves. And there's all kinds of things that we are doing

to compensate for some feeling that something is wrong. What happens if you didn't feel like anything was wrong?

Some of you will protest. Yes. That's impossible. Gil, you must be living in an isolated little monastery, and the world is completely wrong. But what if you weren't? Who are you if you're not trying to compensate for something? Who are you if you're not trying to force your will or have it be your way? Who are you? What comes out of you if you're content and happy and fulfilled? Yes.

And not a few people are able to take a day off, maybe, go for a walk on a nice day, or take a vacation for a few days, even three, four days or something. And at the end of that time, some people will say, "I came back to myself," and I didn't realize how much I'd lost myself or was overactivated and kind of not connected to myself. So this idea of coming back to oneself and feeling more deeply here is one of the opportunities for doing meditation and doing mindfulness, is to discover a whole different dimension of how we can live our lives that comes from these subtle feelings that are there.

In a sense, if you like this language, kind of who we really are when we're not trying to compensate, we're not trying to adjust for something. But we're allowing some deeper feeling of motivation, of love, of care, of inspiration that arises when we feel content, when we feel at peace, when we feel safe, when we feel at ease somehow. And then, you know, you've been fed, you've been satiated, you have enough to get by on, there's safety on your block where you live, and everything is good, nothing is needed from you. And then, what wants to surface? Do you know?

Some people don't know themselves in that way. They're always living in reaction to something around them that has to be done. Responsibilities and all these responsibilities. I know some people who don't know who they are unless they're busy taking care of everything going around. I know some people who've intentionally taken jobs that keep them so busy, they can never look at themselves because it's just too hard. It's too hard not to feel like a sense of purpose and I'm doing something important and I'm taking care of people.

This whole path of meditation is to find a radically different source inside for motivation, for living a life that arises out of feeling really content, feeling at ease, feeling at peace. And so the opportunity in meditation is not just to be less stressed, you know, if you get calm, to reduce the stress level. The opportunity in deep Buddhist meditation is to discover a different source of motivation, a different source of what's valuable to do with our life and how to live our life. And that comes not from compensation, not from a reaction to what's happening around us, but comes just from the very nature of the heart itself.

This is what the heart wants to do in this world that we live in. And it's a phenomenally valuable way to live a life. Because then it really comes from some depth within and is not so dependent on what's going on in the world around us. And if our motivations have to do with what's going on in the world around us, we're reacting to it, we're compensating for it. Then the world will change, and we're kind of left with ourselves.

Like the friend I'm thinking about who always needs to be busy, and when life changes, the person has been troubled. Like, what do I do now? And I better find the next busy thing to do because it's too difficult not to do anything. It's like it goes against the grain of everything the person believes. Right.

So that's the possibility for meditation, is to discover a whole different source of who you are and how to live in the world. And I think it's really worthwhile. It's a beautiful thing to do, because the depths of our hearts are quite beautiful. And it's a wonderful thing to discover that inner beauty and what flows from it. So I hope those words made some sense, and now we have time for