

Practice Notes: Mind, Body, and Bridge Between

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So an interesting way of considering mindfulness practice, the awareness practice we do, is that there are three important domains or areas of mindfulness. Very broadly in Buddhism, and without making a hard division between them, there is being aware of what's happening in your body, mindfulness of the body, becoming embodied. The other is becoming mindful of the mind, becoming emminded, can we say that? To become really present for what's happening in the mind and to know it in all kinds of ways besides thinking about it, besides having opinions and ideas and stories about it. But the mind is a multifaceted, our mental world is a multifaceted phenomenon. To be aware of that as well.

And then the third area is the connection between those two. In a sense, in Buddhism, mindfulness is an aspect of our mental life, but it's the mental life, part of the mental life that can be aware of the body. And so awareness is the bridge between these two. Mindfulness practice is the bridge between these two. And in that bridging, in that space that allows us to be aware, the mind aware of the body, we can become aware of how we're aware. We can be aware of the quality or the characteristics of mindfulness itself.

And there's a lot of things to discover about how we're aware in that space. It could be that mostly we're aware through the channel of a lot of thinking. We're actually thinking about the body. We're thinking about our experience. We're judging it. We're making plans around it. We're trying to navigate and figure out what to do with it. And you can just feel a lot of the energy is in the mind. And it's mostly we're seeing it through the filter of all those thoughts that are trying to figure it out.

Another way is that you can also feel how the mindfulness is being directed at the body, like breathing. And you can feel that's tight or constricted or there's fear, anxiety, and even being aware, like, uh-oh, the breath is a dangerous place. That's where, you know, I kind of, makes

it a little bit too intimate, too close to my emotions. And you can feel that the attention is holding back, it's resisting or getting narrow, or you can feel that the awareness is just very generous. Just like, yes, a big yes. Wow, this is pretty cool. I get to just hold this spaciously, and my body, my awareness, and actually I don't have to do much at all.

It's almost like I'm better off just doing nothing with my awareness, and that bridge becomes a wide open door, and the body just seems to appear in awareness in a very peaceful way. And there's a whole inner world to discover around that, how mindfulness is the connection, how mindfulness operates, the quality of the mindfulness. And that'll be changing every day. That can change in the course of one sitting, that how you're aware, and sometimes at the end of this meditation, how you're aware of the quality of characteristics of awareness that you have is very different than it was at the beginning.

And so these are the three different areas. And so it's interesting to know, which of these areas are you most drawn to? Are you more drawn to your body? Are you more drawn to the body because it's a welcoming place, a refuge? Are you more drawn to the body because there's a lot of agitation or fear around it, and so you're being pulled maybe even against your will there?

Are you more aware of your mind? Is that where you live mostly? Are you mostly living in the mental world of thoughts, mental world of attitudes, mental world of emotions? And are they swirling around and, uh, so it kind of keeps you like maybe not so connected to your body? Or you're mostly living in the world of awareness. Maybe you're so excited to be doing meditation, mindfulness meditation. It's like, wow, this is so exciting, a brand new thing.

I get to do, like, Buddhism is a major world religion. I get put right in the middle of it through being aware, and this is so exciting, and I can't believe my good luck. And so it's like beginner's luck. You're just like, boom, you're here. Like, you're just present. Wow, I'm so present. It's so great. Wow.

Or you're very strongly drawn to your awareness, your mindfulness, your practice, because it's absent. Like, where is it? What am I supposed to do here? I have to figure it out. It's already two minutes into the sitting. I don't even know what I'm doing. How should I do this? All this is to be noticed. Where are you drawn? Where does it take you? These are in these three areas.

And then, at some point, noticing this, can you find a way that bridging, the way that mindfulness is a bridge between the body and the mind, mind and body, can you make that a peaceful bridge? Can you make that a kind bridge? Can you make it an accepting bridge, an

open bridge, a space? Oh, so that how you're aware is not adding tension. How you're aware is not adding a lot of judgments about it all or reactivity to it.

And it's easier said than done, but you don't have much, you might not have much say about what your mind gives you. You might not have much to say about what your body gives you, but you might have something to say about how you meet that, how you're aware of it. And as a result, you can see what's reasonable for you in terms of what you can adjust. Can you be aware of the mind, be aware of the body calmly? Can you have that be calm? Everything else is not calm, but can you at least do that calmly? Calmly know you're not calm, for example.

So if these words don't make much sense to you, you're welcome to leave them with me. And if some of it's interesting, maybe you can use it today to explore your practice. Thank you. And I didn't say this before.