

Monday evening sit and reflections

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As we begin this final sitting of the day, I'd like to start by congratulating you. I don't think on the first day it's often not easy. And it has not been easy for many people for 2,500 years. You are part of a huge community of people, maybe millions, who've sat through their first day of a seven-day retreat. I hope that the appreciation of what you've done, and staying with the challenges that might have been here, leaves you a little bit contented. You did well.

How do I know you did well? Because you're still here. And as we sit this last sitting of the day, this three-step process of knowing, sensing, feeling, experiencing somatically, and calming or relaxing can be applied directly to those practices to find a way to know calmly. To find a way to sense and feel your experience calmly. To see if there's a way to soften the body, relax the body, in a calm, unhurried way.

Calm, unhurried knowing of the present moment. Because as we move along in this practice, each act of knowing, each act of noticing, can become very enjoyable, so that it feels pleasant to know in a calm, unhurried way. It's pleasant to feel and sense our experience in a calm, unhurried way. Partly pleasant because we're offering something very profound to ourselves. One of the greatest gifts you can give to anyone, including yourself, is to offer your full attention, undivided attention, so you can listen and attend and accompany deeply.

There's a way in which calm knowing is a way that you accompany yourself in a healing and helpful way. Calm, unhurried sensing is a way to accompany yourself, accompanying so something that is different than what you want can begin to show itself, so the deeper aspects of your being, the *Dharma*, can flow and grow and grow as we sit here. To experiment and explore how to calmly know the breathing, sense it, and feel it. And if there is any tension in the body, to calmly and unhurriedly let it soften. Soften in such a way that what's deeper than the tension, what's hidden by the tension, can have breathing room, have space, appear now.

And may you, when you're ready, go to bed and lay in your bed with your head on a pillow and appreciate your efforts, appreciate yourself, appreciate what a profound endeavor you're involved in here. It's a noble one. It's a healthy one. It's something that will bring out the best in you. And to do this together in such a wonderful community of sincere and dedicated people is a real special thing in this life.

And to go to bed appreciating this day, this community, this way of being, and foremost appreciate yourself. And may we sleep deeply, be refreshed, and be ready for the second day of the retreat. Thank you.