

Friday evening reflections

Gil Fronsdal

June 12, 2026

Keywords: *Mindfulness of Breathing*, mindfulness, Buddha, monastic practitioners, generosity, compassion, kindness, practice, community, breath

Sitting here these last couple of minutes, waiting until it got to be nine p.m., I had a chance to look out across the room and see you all sitting here. I'm remembering that beginning of the retreat I referred to, the opening of the discourse on *Mindfulness of Breathing*, where the Buddha twice gathered together the monastic practitioners. He told them how pleased he was, how happy he was, how wonderful it was to practice. And he said that first time, he said, let's sit for another month. This is really good.

And I'm sitting here, and I'm appreciating all of you, and you've done really well. This is really a phenomenal gathering of people. To do this, it's unusual in our world. This much goodness, this much dedication. And I know that for some of you, the practice is very hard.

And I would like to reassure you that one of the meanings of having hard practice, one of the ways to interpret it, is just an indication of how important it is. The more difficult it is, the more significant it is. What you're up against, what you're working with. What's possible on the other side?

I'm struck, over and over again, by how, when people come together to this practice, they're touching, whether they know it or not, into the best parts of who they are. They're trying to be honest, trying to meet what's going on, trying to find a way. So I just want to sit here with appreciation for you all and say it with the hope that you can appreciate yourself, your practice. And if you can't, then I encourage you to borrow my appreciation. I have enough for all of us.

And to sit here in kindness, to sit here with a generosity of heart, sit here with love, compassion. Sit here with deep care for yourself, for this practice, for this world, so that each breath is appreciated as a stepping stone. Each breath, each inhale, each exhale, each moment of mindfulness is where the goodness of this practice flows and comes with love. Sit here with

each moment of mindfulness as an occasion to appreciate, to value yourself, the practice, and our community.

May you all go to bed, when you do, contented and peaceful, and appreciating the work, the practice that you've engaged in. And maybe as you lay there with your head on your pillow, you can thank yourself for doing what you're doing here, to whatever degree you're doing it. And maybe wake up refreshed.