

Dharmette: Experienced Beginners

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Some words about the practice this morning. A common teaching that I give, especially on retreat, is the idea that there are two kinds of practitioners. That's all. There are beginners, and there are experienced beginners. And so it's kind of nice.

One of the things that an experienced beginner recognizes is that the same things arise as would happen for a beginner, but they're not alarmed. They're not so caught by it, not so interested in it. And they're able to kind of hold it much more at ease, much more non-reactively, or much more without getting swept away in it.

An experienced beginner has the same experience of a mind wandering off, difficult emotions sometimes, difficult body sensations, difficult ambient noise. All kinds of things can happen. What they have is the practice that they return to. And they practice through it, where they kind of see everything as normal.

Whatever happens to a beginner is either fantastic or terrible, maybe, kind of just to say it simply. But for an experienced beginner, everything is normalized. "Oh, this too can happen. Okay, now I have to meet this. I have to practice with this. This too can happen. Now I practice with this."

And so the experience of beginner and experienced beginner, think of it as the same. It's just that they hold it differently. Okay. So if you're a beginner, welcome. But maybe with that little talk, you're ready to be an experienced beginner. So thank you.