

Practice Notes: Breathing Room

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And then, to offer you just a few ideas for how you might practice here today, I'm very fond of the English expression "breathing room." I think people use it when there's space for them. You've been claustrophobic indoors, and you go outdoors, and it's spacious, and there's breathing room. Or a crowd of people are hovering over you, and you say, "I need breathing room," and you basically are asking them to give you more space so that you can be there without being crowded.

In the same way, I like it because of the word "breathing," because that's often the center of focus for mindfulness practices: mindfulness of breathing. But as we breathe, have this idea that you're giving breathing room for whatever is happening for you. You're giving breathing room for breathing. You're giving breathing room for your feelings, your emotions, your body, your experience.

Rather than having a project about what's happening—a project to change something, get rid of something, fix something, solve something, understand something—there are no projects in mindfulness. It's just giving things breathing room, giving things space in the field of awareness, and seeing what happens, seeing what unfolds in that. Some things, when there's breathing room, that need to be released will release themselves. When there's breathing room, some things which need to grow and evolve will grow and evolve.

A lot can happen as you give space for what's there. Just be there. And if you want to do anything about it being there, think of it: your task is to give it more space. Your task is the space of awareness. Give it more room. Just give it room to breathe and to grow and to dissolve and, you know, whatever it needs to do in that greater space of awareness.

So, thank you for being here. I hope you enjoy this morning of practice.