

Tuesday Morning Guided Meditation

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To go back to the beginning of *Satipaṭṭhāna* instruction, there is the support of doing something intentionally. Intentionally going into the woods, an empty place, an empty building, under a tree, going intentionally to the place to meditate, intentionally taking a seat. In arranging your posture, that says an erect posture, but a posture of attention. You might call it purposeful activity to go do this practice, and intentionally noticing yourself aware.

The word sometimes is establishing awareness, placing awareness here and now, and being while being aware, breathing in and breathing out. It doesn't say to focus on the breath yet. But it does say, while aware, breathing in and breathing out. It's kind of like allowing the sensations of breathing to appear as they do when awareness is available. I think of this as being a soft awareness of breathing, almost as if awareness itself is a soft place for breathing to move through.

And might there be a way of knowing the experience of breathing that's closer to non-intentional than intentional? A way of knowing breathing where the knowing is from a deeper place. Maybe nonverbal. Maybe from a subconscious place where a lot of the small, ordinary knowings of the day occur, while we're busy consciously thinking about things.

And while aware, breathing, feeling the body, the body is maybe like the pool of water in which breathing swims. And maybe, as a gentle wave through that pool, let there be a calming of the body. Maybe a wave of calming washing through the thinking mind. With whatever thinking might occur, maybe it is left alone to recede to the background, to the sides, as if the thinking mind begins to dissolve into this wider pool of water, space, stillness. Letting a thought come to its end, so something dissolves into the silence before the next thought arises.

With the exhales, allowing something to settle, so you begin noticing a clarity of awareness, a clarity of sensing and knowing. Not a clarity you do. Clarity, openness, spaciousness, that in and of itself is not a doing. It is not made, manufactured. A doing effort is not applied.

Where a clarity of awareness is next to doing nothing, where a natural knowing of the present moment is very close to doing nothing. Almost shading into nothing that you have to do, but allow the natural process of knowing and sensing to unfold. And maybe, with the reference point of doing next to nothing, the reference point of some degree of simple clarity, spaciousness, silence, will highlight for you when you overlay your experience with an interpretation, a projection. Meaning, overlay meaning on it. You overlay some recognition of concept that's like a film you put between you and the experience. How you see it through a narrative of a story, a prediction, a past.

Not to work at seeing this, but maybe trusting a simple way of being, where next to nothing but being aware is necessary. It then reveals on its own the overlays, the constructs that the mind makes, making it more complicated than it needs to be. Oh. In the easiest way it is for you, doing next to nothing, and then discovering what appears in awareness. And can you be free of what appears in awareness?

Ah. Oh. Hmm. Oh. Yeah. Yeah. Oh.

So, one announcement, and then a little teaching. For those of you who have signed the sheet that says you are not eating in the afternoon, the evening meal: if that changes, and you start eating the evening meal, be sure to cross your name out, so that the kitchen knows how much food to make. And you can go back and forth. You know, you can put yourself back on there if you want. And try to keep it current.

So, the simplification that I've been emphasizing is a wonderful way in which simplification supports further simplification. One way that works is, as things get simpler, quieter, we see where there's still a little bit of complexity, a little bit of extra doing. So, for example, if the hindrances get quiet enough, we might see that underneath the hindrances, the basis for the hindrances, are simple projections, constructs, ideas by which we interpret our situation, the desires or aversions.

These hindrances might be based on a certain very simple projection on the appearance of a situation, a person, or an event. That we interpret it in a very simple way. That it's desirable. That it's not desirable. Sloth and torpor, resistance and rigidity, might fade away, and we see operating a very subtle interpretation that having uncomfortable breathing has meaning.

That it's not right, it's wrong breathing, and it's an interpretation, it's an overlay. And having

that overlay on breathing, then there's a cascading of different ideas until they're just too much and too frightening, and something shuts down. Restlessness might begin. Very simple idea of what should and shouldn't be happening. And then the restlessness is a reaction to that. It builds from that.

But to see these very simple overlays, very simple interpretations, assigning of meaning, these constructs of mind that maybe only can be seen when things have gotten simple enough, quiet enough, because they're quieter, simpler than things like the hindrances. And some of these are innocent enough, but just fascinating to watch how quickly we see through the filter of a concept and interpretation. Some of them have a kind of accuracy to them that hides the mind's construct. We see the salad tongs at lunch. And of course, we interpret it, conceive it, recognize it as salad tongs, and we use it as such, maybe.

But we're not completely innocent. There's a simple, ordinary, maybe innocent way of interpreting this little forked, two-armed thing with a hinge as salad tongs. Somewhere else, it might be something that's used when dyeing clothes to pull clothes out of the wet dye. Somewhere else, it might be kids constructing a tower. It's one of the cornerstones of the tower. Some creative person might use it as a scoop.

All kinds of things we overlay ideas, and sometimes these are not so innocent because they build the hindrances, build stories. It's very, very subtle. I sometimes conceive of it for myself that I'm painting reality, and sometimes it's a very perfect painting. If I look at a tree, I'm painting it as a tree. There's some little veil of activity of the mind that is constructing it.

When I see the stick on the ground as a snake, there is, in a sense, between me and the snake, that construct. That's between me and the stick. There's a construct. It's like a veil, a film, a painting. And when it comes that you're able to see that, that supports this process of simplification. Simplification of desires and aversions, simplification of clinging, holding on.

May you have a simple day.