Dharmette: Choosing to be present

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One of the reasons people do this kind of meditation, do mindfulness, is because at some point they recognize that maybe the mind is out of control. Maybe the mind is spinning, it's racing, it's caught up in thoughts and ideas, caught up in thoughts that are not pleasant. Maybe they're even quite painful to have, and painful ourselves—judgments and ideas and criticisms. Or caught in desires that become addictive, and they drive a life that is, in a way, that we're being driven rather than driving our life. We're being driven by our life, and so the idea is to switch to a whole other way of being that's not driven, not pushing, not spinning.

And one of the ways that the tradition talks about that is different kinds of language of becoming established. Or even, most literally, there's a word that's called taking a higher stand. But this idea of taking a stand, being established here, finding stability here, finding a support here, so that something in us can begin to relax, something in us can slow down, someone's willing to stop the spinning, stop the drivenness, stop the incessant way that we usually are. And that's a slow process. But it first starts by offering to ourselves, to the degree to which we can, to just be still, stand here, be here, be grounded here in this place and time.

And so, what is the awareness? How is it that being aware, supported by really making a choice to take a stand in the present, or take a devotion to, okay, I'm just going to be grounded here? As we do walking meditation, every step can be a grounding step. Here, it is to be here, here. And so there's this higher stand, which is *adhiṭṭhāna*.

Which can be understood as being that this is an invaluable thing to do. It's kind of like, in English, we say taking a stand usually means you're committed to something that's really important to you, and you're going to be committed to it. And so, the same thing with this practice is: there's a devotion, there's a love, there's a decision that was made that made, I'm going to be here. You're not going to be that successful at doing that. The mind will spin out. That's fine.

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But without having some kind of choice, some kind of dedication, I'm here to be grounded here. I'm here to be settled here. I'm here to be stabilized here, to be stable. I'm here to be settled here, to be established here, to take a stand here. Maybe nothing is possible, but you have to make some choice, but not to make it with force, with assertiveness, with expectations, but a gentle and loving, this is what I'm here for.

And we make that choice over and over again. Here, I'm here to wake up, here to be here. So then, at my later talk, I'll talk more about this idea, specifically about the four ways that Buddha talked about taking a stand, things that are worth taking a stand in. And so we'll continue later. So thank you for being here.

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