Saturday Morning Guided Meditation

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One of the important things to discover for yourself is how selective the attention can be. We can get locked in or preoccupied with particular things. We can have select, out of the whole world of things to be aware of in this moment, particular thoughts as being the most important, or particular sensations, or particular emotions. And not to dismiss anything, but that selective process narrows us, limits us. It separates us from the whole.

It's possible to be lost in the past so completely that one doesn't feel one's body, doesn't feel one's heart. Is not connected to the place of love or compassion. We don't recognize the physical stress of all those thoughts about the past, or the future, or fantasy, or all kinds of things that we kind of get into this groove. And this is where refocus can feel like the whole world becomes this concern.

And the movement of Buddhist practice is a movement to become inclusive, a movement to spread out the awareness to become whole. The word *samādhi* can mean unification, a gathering together, coming into a whole. I'm very fond that the English word for wholesome, a very important word, *kusala*, translated as wholesome, implies that it's part of the whole. When it's unwholesome is when it's not part of the whole. And so, this being aware more inclusively includes things which we sometimes overlook that support us.

There's the stillness that's also here. If we only focus on the agitation, we don't see the whole. But if the whole agitation comes together with the stillness, what happens in that dance between them? Being kind of narrowed down to some solid sense of something narrow, limited. Span of attention. What if that is side by side with awareness of space? What happens in the dance between those?

If we're locked into the sense of unease, we won't see where there might be also ease here and now. And what happens in that dance between unease and ease? They both have a place. Not one or the other. Both.

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So, to begin this sitting, as a way of beginning, being ready to feel the whole, set yourself at ease. Set yourself at ease. Only to the degree that it's easy for you to do so. Set yourself at ease in your body. Set yourself at ease in your heart. If you're uneasy in your body, be easy with that.

Maybe easing up. If you're uneasy in your heart, uneasy emotionally, maybe you can ease up around that. Be easy with it, and maybe you can set yourself at ease in your mind. Only to the degree that's easy to do so. And if you're uneasy in the mind, maybe it means being easy with any unease. Maybe to ease up around it.

And wherever you are on the spectrum between being easy and uneasy, is there some way to be aware of both? Where it's less important whether you're easy or uneasy, as it is to gently, maybe lovingly, feel where they meet. Feel the dance between them, and around whatever ease or unease you have. There's also space, unless your unease fills the entire universe. There is space beyond the edges of your ease, your unease. What's it like to be aware of both?

To feel the soft edge or the invisible edge between the edge of whatever you're feeling, knowing, and the space around it. And then search within you for the place within that feels the most settled—a resting place where nothing much needs to be done, or figured out, or even thought about. And from there, be aware of your breathing. The sensations of breathing that move through. The infinite space that's here. Each sensation of breathing is itself, while it's intimate with the space around it.

There is thinking, and there is what doesn't think. And there's a dance between the two, experiencing your breathing, your body without thought. And if there's thinking also, then let it be on the edges. Let it be in the background. Whatever you're experiencing, experience it without thought—even if thought comes along. For whatever you're experiencing, as you're mindful, experience it together with a space around it.

Oh. There is clinging, and there's non-clinging. There's holding on. Holding tight, pressing down, pressing ahead, and there's that which does nothing of that. That which doesn't cling, doesn't press, doesn't hold on.

There are more things in the universe that you don't cling to than those things you cling to. Can you feel the absence of clinging in relationship to all the things you don't cling to? And so, rather than a selective attention on what you're clinging to, preoccupied with, there's a dance between clinging and non-clinging, with a loving attention to where they meet. In the whole of our human life, clinging and non-clinging appear together. Clinging and the space

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around them appear together. Side by side, there's clinging and there's peace—the peace of non-clinging.

And in the peace, in the space, in where there's no clinging, there is an invitation. The invitation goes like this: It's okay to let go. It's okay to let go, because you'll be received by the peace, by the space, by your own wholeness. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

With all the space that's here, it's possible to have mindfulness be the act of giving room for all things, giving breathing room to whatever it is we know. Give space to whatever it is that we're experiencing. Give freedom to whatever it is that's happening, giving it freedom from ourselves, from our desires, our aversions, our stories. Give room. Give space.

And in this way, the radical simplicity of mindfulness is simply the simple act of turning on the light. To be awake to all of this, one thing at a time. Okay. Oh.

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