

# 2001-05-17: The Breath

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clinging, breath, meditation, mind, people, notice, stay, practice, life, hijacked, preoccupation, asleep, feeling, operate, attention, buddhist practice, concentration, learning, claim, relaxed

## SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

In the world of meditation,

in the wide world of meditations from many different spiritual traditions, there are many different kinds of breath, meditation, many ways of breathing. Some are quite intentional, some are quite creative. Some involve manipulating the breath in all kinds of ways. But it's quite common. The meditations on the breath and sensitivity to breath is very common and has many, many of you know, in a wide range of spiritual traditions and the word for breath is a very important word in many different cultures.

The you know the word, we know that.

I think the word

spirit like spiritual also has comes from the Latin root for breath, when we say we aspire to expire to risk by respiration has that word spirit in it? The wonderful question Spiritual aspiration, as words breath and both words the and you find you know, Indian language and Chinese languages and Hebrew languages, Aramaic languages, Greek languages

that

the word to breath as it carries a lot of special meanings, connotations. The breath is very central. Some for some people breath meditation doesn't work, it's not the right meditation for them. But it's one of the universal forms of meditation. In Buddhism, the usual way of approaching breath meditation is not to manipulate it, even though I encourage some of you to kind of breathe more fully than usual here. So usually, it's not a matter of manipulation, but rather a matter of using the breath as a way of developing the mind and kind of conditioning the body but to develop the mind and in particular in one

way and that is to train the mind. Not to claim one of the central aspects of Buddhist practice. And some of you would say the really heart of what Buddhist practice is all about, is learning not to cling to anything. And the mind clings phenomenally easy. It's like we have this Velcro mind.

And, you know,

you're thinking about getting a car and every time it's a new car drives by you and just sticks in your mind off, you know, the car is long gone, but you're still thinking about it. You see some kind of very special kind of person, you kind of feel attracted and suddenly a person has long gone out of your sight, but the fantasy is still there that kind of clung to it. The mind clings phenomenally easily, and clinging. The more sensitive you the mind is, the more you'll see that clinging is painful for the mind. If you're if you're living a very coarse life, very active and very busy. You might not Notice that you're clinging has a big toll. You might be so busy clinging and you don't even grasping at things and so distracted, that you're not even aware that you're distracted. But as you get more sensitive, and more present, you'll notice that every moment of clinging involves a feeling of distress, feeling of suffering of contraction, of being tightened down, closing up narrowing of attention, narrowing of consciousness of the mind or the heart. Feeling separate feeling removed from others feeling isolated, the whole series of constellation ways we feel that happens as we claim. I don't know of anybody who's actually says they're clinging is pleasant, except in the fact that sometimes clinging provides a source of security and security then brings a whole slew of other things like certain kind of well being. What we're trying to do in Buddhist practice is discover a sense of well being a sense of joy and delight in life that isn't predicated on clinging to anything, whether it's clinging A relationship is clinging to

anything at all.

The ultimate aim of Buddhism and the ultimate aim of being a Buddha is someone who has no filters no obstructions of clinging on their heart in their mind. And it sounds very simplistic to say the goal of Buddhism is not to

cling. But

if you begin investigating how pervasive clinging functions in the mind, you'll start, you'll think, Wow, that's pretty amazing that some human beings actually are dedicated

to not clinging

or some human beings have actually learned how not to cling at all how to have that complete openness rather than Velcro mind.

They have Teflon mind

because the mud nothing clings to it.

Some people get a little bit perturbed and afraid when they hear about non clinging because they think that it means they can be kind of a zombie. Or it means being, you know, not interested or indifferent to the world and not involved with activities in the world. It doesn't mean that at all. All the various functionings of our mind and our heart can still function quite nicely. There can be all kinds of motivations and activities and reactions and feelings to the world around us. But those things can exist

with clinging or without clinging.

With Buddhist practice is really at the

heart of Buddhist practice let go of is one little teeny simple thing, clinging. It doesn't mean that so if you're clinging to

you know, what do people cling to? Give me Help me out.

Wait, what is one of your cleanser today? As an example,

right now, maybe a claim not being embarrassed.

personal identity. So you know, so you have maybe you're a man. So you claim to being a man all that associates with, it's like, well, if claiming means you can still be a man. But you don't cling to the idea of being man you don't cling to the concepts and ideas of what it means to be a man You don't have to let go of the things you're clinging to necessarily. But you can let go of the clinging. Some people, when they enter spiritual life feel like they have to abandon, let go of all their wealth and their money and possessions and live a life of radical simplicity. It might be very useful to do that it's very helpful to the times. But that's not a symbol or sign, a proof that you become spiritual if you let go of all that and live that life simply by living a life of simplicity, to proof of a spiritual

life in Buddhism is that you don't claim

it doesn't require you getting rid of the things that you were clinging to before. Sometimes there's a confusion between the object of clinging and the clinging and we attack the object of clinging as opposed to understanding where the where the heart of the practice is, which is a clinging itself. People cling because it gives them the sense of safety sometimes, and I know that they're the outer reaches out of this today, the deepest possible possibilities of letting go of clinging is phenomenally frightening to some people. And they feel like they can't trust that. And one of the things we're learning

in Buddhist practice is learning to trust. Coming from a place of non clinging, it's okay to enter into the world, not clinging to things, not always kind of holding on to certain ways things have to be done planning ahead and some cleaning way or it's okay to enter the world without clinging. And if you try that if you try that in a radical way, it's an experiment for one hour. Just Just choose an hour in the middle of your day. It's okay this is the hour I'm going to try and absolutely non claim and really pay attention and see how long you can last before you get afraid.

Is this okay? I can't do this is not safe.

And that's a very fascinating place to explore that edge that meeting place because part of the function of clinging is to protect us from our fear.

But without confronting our fear, there's no spiritual life

in Buddhism at least, so he has a sooner or later be willing to add yourself into Explore that terrain where your fear begins to come up to come into play and massaging it. Maybe don't go into the full fledged, greatest fear you have. Begin massaging that edge of your fear so that you can learn how to feel more comfortable, more trusting in a place of non clinging. Meditation on the breath is a great help for learning not to cling.

Because

let me kind of get it from another angle. This whole discussion

is not too confusing.

What we care about in our life is really important. Not only what we care about, but the fact that we care to begin with. And a lot of what the training and attention that we use in mindfulness is a training in choosing to put our attention put our care into what's important for us to have some some choice about what we care about or are carrying. All of us have, in a sense, we,

you know, this capacity to care.

And what happens often is that our capacity to care is

hijacked

by our clinging, by our

preoccupations by all kinds of things, you see you driving down the freeway, and you see this wonderful billboard that shows a

picture of

most of us couldn't care less but b2b

billboards they have lining the street there now these days, but, but say that, you know, say there's a billboard for palm pilots.

And, you know,

it could be anything right. And so you're going along, you see this picture. Palm pilots, and you notice that they're five minutes within five minutes fantasizing, but how wonderful being to have a Palm Pilot, your care, your capacity to care has been hijacked and pulled into kind of a subconscious, automatic pilots being lost being caught by the concern about palm pilots. whatever it is we're driving along with going along in our life. And much of our time is spent with our care

or caring,

hijacked by our preoccupations.

The movement of learning not being preoccupied, is a movement of clinging,

clinging, you don't don't get preoccupied unless your claim

it's a very subtle, it's very different kind of clinging and clinging to, you know, gross things, but it's a kind of cleaning. When your mind gets preoccupied, it's been your capacity to care has been hijacked and it's lost

any weight the more time we spend their life

preoccupied and lost their thoughts, our capacity to care has been lost. It's kind of like it's going in it's if you'd been used as food for preoccupation.

What we're trying to do in Buddhist practice is to liberate our care,

our caring, our capacity to care. So we can bring that fruit of

caring into her life in a useful way.

So we can care about our breath, we can care about our body, we can care about the world around us, so that we can tend to it

so we can nourish it so we can be present for it,

so that we bring attention to it attention, some people equate attention with love. And if our attention is present and alert and awake for then the love is there. But if our capacity for attention or caring or attending to things, is hijacked by preoccupation with it precludes any possibility of love, for example. So the breath meditation, so the mind tends to be preoccupied very easily. By coming, by bringing the attention to something as simple as the breath, you're training your attention. You're kind of holding your attention of something which is not your preoccupation.

Most people don't get attached to the breath, but you can be.

And so you're trying to stay settled on the breath, and not to waver from the breath. Now let the mind move from the breath, kind of steadiness, what's called sometimes one pointedness on the breath, just stay with the breath, body with the breath, sensations of breath. Some people complain that the breath seems like the most boring mundane thing that ever they encountered. Why to Buddhist follow the breath and to the breath. Once you get into the breath, the breaths becomes incredibly alive and you know, wonderful. You can't imagine something more delightful. But in the beginning, it's just a training to let go of our preoccupations, weathers, emotions or feelings. feelings or thoughts or memories or planning, whatever it is, the mind has tremendous kind of momentum into those kinds of track. And each time you bring your mind to stay in the breath, you're countering the forces of distraction of preoccupation. And each, each time you do it, you weaken little bit, the habitual feeding and supporting of preoccupation. And as I say, it might seem that might seem very insignificant. You know, each moment you bring yourself back,

but with enough

drops, the bathtime gets filled. Each moment of holding your attention with the breath and coming back and be willing to let go of your preoccupation. Oh, there I am thinking again.

Gently come back and be with a breath be

with a breath. And it's a standing the attention with the breath over time, our preoccupations, our care is going into the breath in an active way. And our care or attention or love Not being hijacked by other things. And it's as first for a long time perhaps you find a clip getting hijacked. But slowly what happens you two things will happen. You build up strength

of being able to choose where your attention

goes. So you have some power over what you care about. So you can stay with what you care about. You can Steven, stay with what you want, where you where you want your attention to be. It's kind of a power that you develop. The other thing that happens is the forces of distraction become weaker. They fears the anxiety, the desires, the ambitions, the whatever it is that kind of fuels. Our preoccupation is not getting fed and supported by ongoing repetition. And so begins actually become to weaken and weaken and weaken and weaken. If you stop meditating, then it can you know, you can You know you tendencies we start feeding again those tendencies. But as you meditate, you begin training yourself to be different. You're training the mind, to have a strong attention that can stay and care about what it wants to care about.

And you're weakening all the forces of distraction.

We can enforce the distraction is in a sense of weakening our clinging. But as we become less preoccupied and less distracted, then we can also start noticing ways in which we cling, even when we're not distracted. And part of the function of learning how to be in the present moment is when we start noticing very carefully, the wide range of things that makes us tick that happens within us the motivations, the thoughts, the values, the worldview, the assumptions, the emotions and feelings. They're operating right now that we're kind of clinging to kind of stuck on there kind of propelling us comfortable. helping us to act and think and talk in certain ways. So that staying with the breath is a great way of learning how to slowly let go of things. Let go things like oh things, the more you can stay with a breath, it more attends to help this conditioning, softening and calming of our of our attachments.

And it's really, really helpful to learn to stay with a breath.

It's not easy to stay with a breath.

But that's one of the reasons why I wanted to give you an alternative way of being with a breath today. Some people find that it's most helpful to stay just with the breath in one place. It's less complicated, just kind of just some people are more like kind of there's like the route themselves in one place and

stay there not move.

But some people find is more useful to kind of be with the whole breath body. It's more organic, it's more kind of feels are being it's more movement, it's more

kind of feels more intimate, more alive, more

comforting there perhaps, to be in a whole breath body. And so you might experiment with these two different modes and different times different modes are most appropriate. It might be at times when you're really stressed and have a lot of tension in your body, that breathing through the whole body. As if the whole body is an organ of breathing is the most useful. And times when you're quite settled and calm, it might be the most useful, it's actually too narrow and limit where your pay attention to. So you can really be more one point in one place. And that helps you get more and more concentrated and centered in the present moment.

How you come back to the breath, when you get lost when your mind gets hijacked, is a very important issue.

Some people who meditate will often

notice that their mind has been lost for a while

and then

if you kind of

In the spiritual teachings too seriously,

then you notice that you've mind has been distracted. And you

might save more strongly than that. You know,

and either you know, you get angry or

upset, they very, you know, little, you know, irritation or little impatience. Or it could be that this is, you know, you refer back to yourself. I can't do this, I'm just, you know,

the disaster to Buddhism,

you know, you know,

everyone else is doing it. But no, I just think that the incompetence is something as simple as the breath. Should we make some statement about ourselves, you know, we get complicated, we judge, we get irritated, we get impatient, all these things might happen. It's all unnecessary. And it's important to notice a tendency. What do we do you notice we've been lost, so we can learn to start simplifying

our relationship to getting lost

Just last, nothing more has to happen. But notice, oh, I drifted off in thought doesn't have to be any great conclusions or any judgments or any contractions because of it. And in some people, when they notice they've drifted off from the breath, will jerk their mind back to the breath or they'll bounce back on their breath. There's no need for that it can be very supposed to be a non violent practice. And, and there's various ways of kind of beginning again with a breath. And I'll give you a couple of options. It's not too complicated. One is, don't bring your mind back to the breath. Just very, very generously, very openly. Notice at that moment,

whether you're breathing in,

breathing out,

because we have the notion you're bringing the mind back, you have to move the mind. It's like it's a jerk the mind. But the awareness doesn't actually need to be moved. Awareness is just everywhere all the time. And you can just kind of relax and just notice and it becomes You incense Whoa, I mean Haley. And then you know to do the kind of like little energetic thing with a mind. You know, okay, gotta bring it back.

It's more like you're then relaxing

and letting awareness be broad and letting the breath returned to awareness. It's more like rather than bringing your mind back to returning your your mind your attention to the breath,

you're letting the breath return to your awareness.

Okay, I've been lost Okay, let's let the breath return here

can be a lot more peaceful to do that way.

But some people like the idea of bringing the mind back so you can stairs Okay, do that. It's a lot of people do it. great success. And But another way of doing it is to float the mind back then. So the mind is floated off into distraction. And the same kind of speed. way in which the mind is slowly off in distraction. Just gently floated back to the breath. And if it is to kind of floated back, you take your time, take a couple of seconds, you know, okay. Then it feels much more pleasant and more enjoyable, the whole process, the jerking doesn't feel very enjoyable.

It's not enjoyable, then the mind doesn't want to do it.

You know, well, why would mind want to do anything that

you know, when you're kind of being judgmental.

You can like if you're building in your failure, by just the very way in which some people can get it back, get it wrong, gotta get back up, no one noticed. So how you relate to the mind being distracted is a very important part of coming back. Then being back or being with a breath, it's very useful to sustain the attention through time. Some people are very good of bringing the attention to the breath,

initially, the initial application of the mind and the breath.

But once they're there, they get complacent. And then very quickly, the mind wanders off again, part of the art of meditation

is to sustain our caring carrying,

to stay in our love or attention on that breath through time. And then the art then is learning how to do that in a way that feels welcoming and feels nice for the mind to do that. If you're being tight and forced, and you know and demanding, and,

you know, the mind doesn't want to stay present, then

but in this feeling of welcoming of joy and delight of interest, giving this as nurturing or, or attending or this is a form of caring, or this is inspiring to do with or if you could create kind of a familiar, where it's kind of feels like a good thing for the mind, am I feels welcomed or invited. I don't want to stay around. But if you create a tight, contracted kind of forceful, demanding kind of way, then the mind is not going to want to stay around, it's going to want to go and do something else. But you have to apply yourself some degree, it has to be some strength

of application. And they are a

part of the part of the art of meditation is learning how to apply kind of strength to the practice. Without that that's that strength being straining or forceful or tight. So the artist has to be relaxed and strong at the same time, relaxed and dedicated, relaxed and engaged at the same time.

One of the ways of practicing, trusting, not clinging is to hang in there with a breath, no matter what else arises in your meditation.

Nothing else is more important.

You know these other ways of meditating but just stay with a breath, stay with the breath, stay with the breath, and you have other kind of thoughts or concerns.

I'm not going to pick them up. I'm not going to get involved. I'm going to keep my carrying

with the breath for this half an hour, whatever a long time you're sitting. So I think that's enough. My words for now.

So now it's your turn to

if you have comments or questions about anything,

or if you want to talk a little bit reports, I'm thrilled you're very curious

to hear what it was like for some of you to do this breath

body meditation.

For some of you it might have been new to do it this way. If it was helpful or difficult to do, nice to hear

more questions about it, you might have Yes. Partly

is because trust I have feelings from different places, everywhere actually generates

Most greatest feelings of relaxation. And if I

tense up

one thing and occurred to me that this can't be right.

This can't be the right way.

So, try eating with one point.

Yeah, I think it's really key. It's

the

mean if you find your old way

helps you get concentrated.

What you might do is try it for a little while 15 minutes and then let go then switch once you're calm and settled because the more forceful way you're doing it, but it's possible to focus on the breath. Like it will be they will be focusing on one place. Getting one point of concentration with clinging as part of it, clinging to that. And if a person is very task oriented always, you know,

you know, it's always kind of

pushing and to get ahead,

they can bring that to the meditation also, and they can get actually get quite concentrated, being quite ambitious and quite demanding and pushing and striving as possible. But it but it that's kind of striving might entail underneath that kind of fear about life fear of opening up to life. And also by staying with one point in the body. That point might feel very safe. Some people need safety for a while, so it's good to choose a place that feels good until you feel nice, a lot of safety. But some people don't need more safety. Some people need to confront the places or their fear. And by choosing some one place in the body, you might be avoiding everything else in your body, because our fears often held in our body in various ways. And doing the whole breast body means that your whole emotional body in all the places that physical the muscles get held tight and are being massaged or worked with with awareness and that you have to become a tech aware of them. And that can be very disconcerting also, but with time keeping it up. It is a kind of conditioning factor to slowly get to both learn how to trust and also learn to look at these things very honestly

that speak to you, thank you. important difference

between these states of total

income, I guess,

regular practice and sort of witness consciousness that's a characteristic of

meditation

every meditator has

to make a decision to move from one

There are states that are associated with

a substantially different

witness consciousness or observing

qualities.

It's true that

what you're saying is you can really do for the next

15 minutes,

come back to the other

choice has been made.

It's not that

the classic way of doing

is called the passenger is to do concentration practice first. And then once the mind is quite steady and stable, then to switch over to do the mindfulness practice. But there are other ways of doing In the way that

the primary way in which

spirit rock and IMS and tradition I'm part of was trained in Asia was to actually do the Vipassana straight out and not do it preliminary concentration, practice different minds and I may be contradicting myself as I respond to you. So you have to be forgiving of me. The different minds have different tendencies in this direction. Some people, some people's minds, tend towards more concentration, it's very hard for them to be the mindfulness. And some minds are very much into the mindfulness, the awareness to be possible. It's very hard for them to get concentrated. And so they have to make any choice. It's like their choices are made for them. And if you do it, if you if you do the mindfulness practice, if you're really good at it, you don't need to develop a concentration separately. Concentration comes with that practice.

Some people, not enough concentration comes with

the passionate practice, and then it's helpful to them. Do a little bit of concentration practice to build up enough momentum to be really switched over. In textbook discussions of meditation, there tends to be a very sharp divide between these two Vipassana and concentration or absorption practices. And I think in real and and, and to some degree, then the initial path of practice, it's kind of like a why initially, it doesn't really matter which one you're on. Because you do that when you when you're on the leg of the why. It's like everybody's dealing with the same stuff, and doesn't really matter. But at some point, there's a kind of sense you can choose one or the other, you can go into more absorption or more, more, more mindfulness. And sometimes a teacher will encourage you to do one more than the other will help you at that point of juncture. But it's, I find myself a little bit reluctant to kind of go along completely with that

idea of a juncture.

Because the textbook description of the two being radically different. I think it's a little bit overdone. It's too easy. There's a big overlap between those things. To worlds and to say that witness consciousness purity, being a pure observer, just observing clearly is radically different from the absorptions. Isn't that quite accurate? And, and to say that you don't get into deep states of absorption with very strong witnessing as you're doing Vipassana is also inaccurate. So there's a kind of big overlap.

So I don't know if I managed to confuse you or everyone

is helpful.

But generally, you know, if someone someone coming off the street, like coming here to Palo Alto on Thursday night, you know, get as concentrated as you want. Just go for it, you know, and get as mindful as you want. Just just you know, don't worry about it. And then as you kind of get more into the practice, and you start doing retreats and stuff, then you'll talk to a teacher and

you might get a specific guidance but

but for you where it sounds like The cutting edge for you would not be the concentration but rather than mindfulness right

what happens with concentration is that

some people have it have a capacity getting concentrated, but there's can be not very much self understanding that comes with that. And so that you get concentrates very

pleasant and people get attached to that pleasantness and if they

associate that concentrates state with being a spiritual thing, and they identify with that there's a lot of attachment. But then as they leave that concentrated state, all the tendencies to, to self to to,

to being egotistical

or being greedy or being hateful or spiteful or fearful, are still operating. And so that people just want to wish want to run away from normal life and get back into concentrated state where they feel comfortable in spirits. Again, sooner or later that person has to confront who they really are. And not always be going into some place in state. And, and so we have to, we have to be willing to spend maybe a lot of time being uncomfortable also. So we can really see what's going on. And then rather than doing a spiritual bypass to

wonderful, pleasant spiritual states,

you go through the difficulty and resolve them and then you can stay there much more in a more realistic way.

mentioned earlier

about being

relaxed and engaged. And even in my fantasy world, I don't really have a sense of that. And I'm just wanting to want to elaborate anymore about being engaged and relaxed.

The classic example that's given in Texas

imagine you get your have a big ceramic pot filled with oil to the brim.

And you're walking,

you're carrying on your head like to do some some traditional cultures, you know, supporting and a guy walking and walking through a very crowded marketplace.

And, and, and you have to

walk balancing this vase and roll his pots on your head without spilling any, any of the oil. So you have to be very attentive.

You know, if you can't, can't miss a beat,

but you also have to be very relaxed because if you're tense, then you know it's not it's not gonna work either. So you have to be very relaxed and very alert at the same time.

So that's the that's

a classic example of how both both things have to operate.

So it has to be a real real strength

of presence

like beginner

Give an example. Oh, I

used to miss a

couple dancing actually great when you dance with someone and you have to follow them.

Yeah, I think it's a very good one. And, and Elizabeth is an artist so I would think that you would know about,

about this balance.

Oh, this. Oh, that's the advanced course.

Well, you know, going back to what you said was

during this whole breath I think immediately talking about not being relaxed, and trying not to be evasive, it brought into incredibly sharp focus really fast,

very intensive,

pretty much unpleasant way.

An incredible amount of tension that I was holding in my chest in the back of my throat was kind of fun because the rest of my body was fine. You know, but every time I kind of came up to this area, it was like, whacking against something,

you know, like really wacky.

What some people will do when they notice that a particular place of tension a holding with is of use the breath body is is a feeling. It's kind of massage gentle massage, because stretching it as you breathe in or touching it. Yeah,

I believe.

Whenever I brought

a man she saved See, there's there's, there's two things in meditation, right? One is that you can use meditation to kind of

help you put yourself in a better state

and let go of things.

And in mindfulness practice, all we're doing is cultivating a capacity to be present for things as they are. And so it's actually a little bit heretical in pure mindfulness practice, to say nothing didn't work, meaning, meaning it didn't go away. Right. Well, I find it I finally settled down with that.

As more i'd exhale. Oh, wow.

Great. Thank you. Good, thank you.

Yes, you said earlier, we should just take an hour in a day and try not to cleanse. Yeah. Tell us more how to do that. Well, it takes it takes a lot of attention. So you have to be mindful. But it means choosing an hour someplace. And noticing whatever you do in your mind your speech or your behavior that has cleaning in it,

where you're maybe you come you come to

a, you drive your car and you come to it, the light turns yellow. Cleaning means you're trying to push the way through, you come to you know, you're going down this down the soup, supermarket aisles, and you know what you have to buy,

but you notice this wonderful chocolate that's there.

And, you know, you didn't have to buy it, you don't even like you know, you don't even you know, whatever. And so you know, suddenly is claiming for chocolate arises or,

or,

or you find yourself.

You pay attention to what you want to say, you notice you're not simply telling someone something because it's good information for them. That they it's very important for them to know. But rather what you're doing. You're trying to build up yourself. You're trying to present yourself because you have certain claiming your seven that self identity. So you're saying Something by yourself. Or let me tell you about this wonderful restaurant. If it isn't that so much they need to know about wonderful restaurants like, maybe it's like, oh, you should really notice me that I'm a great chooser of restaurants, the kind of cleaning, there's all kinds of ways to pay attention to what we say, what we,

how we act,

how we think. If you're in a hurry, suddenly, if you're trying to get things done quickly if you're trying to avoid certain things, cleaning us operating. So it's a really radical thing. And if you did it for an hour, well, you'd be a Buddha by the end, so you can't do it well, but you do the best you can.

It's helpful

that I would encourage you to take it on. Definitely.

The remember some years ago, I taught a class where I encourage people to do something like this, but I said to some situation, maybe for an hour or something sensitive And maybe

this will be unusual for you or maybe someone else to use for you.

Where you take the assumption that, that in this situation, nothing has to be any different than how it is. It's okay the way it is. So I think the way this one person came back and said, Oh, I went to this party, and my husband told me, this is the hour. And she said, it was really fascinating to be there, this party as if nothing has to be any difference, you know, no one's talking to me. Nothing has been

different or everyone wants to talk to me. And you know, it's all like, you know, this person is talking to me, I can't believe this person is talking to me. Whatever, you know, so, this is the hour. Someone else came and said that, you know, I think things weren't working out well, but the airplane was late or something. And

this is going to be an hour they're going to practice that.

Yes, please.

Oh, this is just an experiment for one hour. It's not, it's not a good policy to always have that kind of idea. But because most of us operate so radically in the other extreme end of that, that it takes one hour, this is a safe hour, you know, to something's relatively you know, and use your common sense. I mean, don't just, you know, don't make stupid mistakes around this area, but, but just take one hour, we kind of really operate on that premise, everything is fine the way it is, as, as a kind of a kind of an experiment to to notice what happens in your mind, when you're doing that to notice what things you normally, normally the way you normally operate, automatically, you don't really see so clearly, because now you can operate a different way. And you might find out even operate that way much more than you usually do. And you might learn a lot about your fear and your preoccupation. So rather than getting into some big big philosophical issue about You can't operate really that way because there's all this injustice in the world. The exercise is not meant to be a philosophical statement about the nature of life.

It's just

just like it's like a game you play for an hour.

It's a very good question.

There'll be

other things will come along with a desire that's clinging as part of it. If you just ignore that and mutual desire to desire, then there can be there will be no expectation,

no demand, no disappointment,

no irritation, no impatience. No contraction of the mind around it. No forcefulness no ambition. There's all these other things that actually feel kind of painful to arise when there's clinging and desire by self doesn't have that so if you notice that you were expecting an outcome then this clinging no if you mean if you are if you if you get this if you if you feel impatient or feel irritated because the desire is unfulfilled then there's been clinging as part of it

but if you know if

so so you know if I feel hungry

it's very easy for me to have a desire I discovered this

nice Indian restaurant recently so now I'm thinking next time I go eat like to go eat that place again. That's a nice that's a nice desire to find desire to have nothing wrong with that desire. And but if I then I can cling to that desire, which is really important to get there. I really liked that pleasure I got there and I make a quick drive all the way across town to get there and show up on Monday in a closed on Mondays. I get all upset and you know, then I know that Nick clinging to it but you know you know it's a nice desire to have if it's easy to fulfill great and if it's not easy to fail and quite fine eating a peanut butter sandwich

last one yes.

I have a lot

of meditation.

I have a hard time

What do you think would happen to you if you stayed awake? asleep

If I asked that question again and just select kind of your guts answer rather than your mind, what do you think would happen to you if you stayed awake in your meditation?

doesn't compute where it's

what strikes me is that I'm supposed to be awake.

Remember when I was in the monastery, I used to fall asleep a lot. And, and then at some point, I noticed I wasn't sleeping anymore. And it occurred to me what's wrong with me?

I'm no longer relaxed.

Maybe I'm tense, I can't fall asleep anymore.

The causes of falling asleep are varied in meditation. Some people, a lot of people in our local culture are sleep deprived. It's kind of famous now. So some people need to sleep more than need to meditate. And if you're if you're if you're really sleepy, then some people try to meditate. They should be sleep deprived, they try meditating after eating a big meal, which also can add to sleepiness and really easy to fall asleep. Sometimes sleepiness is a sign of being relaxed too much. And then it's a matter of learning how to moderate the effort in the practice and maybe bring a little more alertness or effort both either physical physical effort, sit up straighter, maybe even open the eyes, but also kind of mental effort or trying to bring in more alertness more clarity more investigation to what Your present moment experiences so the mind is more engaged rather than complacent. Sometimes when people meditate, and they get relaxed, they're actually leaning into and savoring and enjoying that feeling of relaxation. And savoring and the feeling of relaxation. And meditation is not meditation. It's kind of clinging. It's fine to have nice feelings of relaxation and meditation, but you don't want to lean into and hold on to it and use it to comfort you. Because if you do that, it tends to be put you to sleep. So you want to look and see what your relationship is to the nice feelings that come with relaxation,

you really wanted to keep developing

is the clarity of seeing.

Also, people tend to fall asleep sometimes because there's unresolved strong emotions or feelings or conflicts that they don't want to look at. And sometimes a body has this amazing protective mechanism of falling asleep. Rather than looking at difficulties. You see it in babies. It's kind of where the babies will be for the babies and environment where there's a lot of stimulus, a lot of noise. You seem to protect themselves from all that by falling asleep. As adults, we tend to do that also, but tends to be more inner noise. And so sometimes it's a matter of looking at very carefully, what's in what are the emotions or thoughts and memories that seemed to flash up the moment before you start falling asleep. It might be a little window there to see that actually what's happening is you're

turning yourself off. So you'd have to face those things.

start to think about something else.

Fire sort of concentrating on the breath and as soon as soon as my, my thought goes to something other than breath, I will fall.

And I notice that

Yeah, I'm not quite sure what that's about.

Soon as I lose my mind

Have you tried keeping your eyes open?

What happens then

you stay awake.

Try keep try meditating with your eyes open and either up and down to 45 degrees and see if that works kind of looking at nothing, just the floor something.

Or if that doesn't work,

keep your eyes kind of gazing up towards a kind of place some kind of light. So it's like the sky, bright window or something to keep your eyes up a little bit. And then continue your mindfulness

and see if maybe you can stay alert.

And then if your mind does drift away, you're more likely to catch it and stay stable and come back and be present. It's it can make some people very challenging the whole area falling asleep and very, very fruitful area of practice. If you do fall asleep and you wake up after a while, don't beat yourself up for it. Rather, there is also some magical moments, very useful insight that can happen after we wake up from having been asleep. So it's very important to begin to mindfulness the best you can, okay, what's happening with me right now investigate that. So just before you fall asleep, and just after important moments in practice

could well be, but you could do the jack kornfield approach and that is you pick you put your chair at the edge of some big wall, you know, some big, you know, Cliff, you know, maybe maybe like, maybe like 100 or 200 feet or something. And, or if you don't want to, you know, that still seems a little bit too far to fall. If you put it at the edge of the pool of water, you know, and make sure you were really good close, you know, it's at the edge of the world. And then you know, maybe that's enough to keep you awake.

So let's end with a short sitting

Next week

most likely I won't be here,

and most likely shaunti soul is going to come and give the talk lead the group. And Shanti is a passionate teacher in the lineage of ruff Denison, and she's someone who's much loved in our community because for many years, she was still is very radically to cook for the retreats that we go teach and she has a whole wonderful spirit of service and love of the day. Mind dedication to bringing

the practice into work and

into movement activity. So it's sort of it's likely that Shanti will come next week and I should be back again the following week.

So,

may you all breathe happily

and

and may your cleaning

slowly decrease. Thank you.