

2020-09-18 Mindfulness of the Body (5 of 5)

Concluding Instructions

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SPEAKERS

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So today brings the conclusion the week on mindfulness of the body. It also brings to a certain conclusion, the last four weeks, where there was teachings, instructions on the four kind of areas foundational, areas that I often use to teach mindfulness practice. Mindfulness of breathing, mindfulness of thinking, mindfulness of emotions, and this week mindfulness of the body. And sometimes I'll usually teach them in a different order, breath, body emotions and then thinking. But the idea is to have a sense of how to be mindful of all these different areas. And then at some point, the basic practice that I like to teach, and I like to teach Vipassana, is that a lot of it is focused on breathing. And then breathing is the home, is the default, is a center of gravity, is the anchor to the present moment. And the breathing is so deeply connected to all the other aspects of our life, that it's a wonderful place to practice because of the influence it has on everywhere else.

But then, if anything else arises, it's more compelling than breathing. Then either let go of their breathing and focus on the mindfulness in that area. Physically what's happening in the body emotionally, or in thinking, or in the mind, or don't let go of the breathing. But let the breathing help you accompany this other thing that's more compelling. Breathe through it, breathe with it, so that the stabilizing force or breathing continues, but you're also attending to whatever else is really compelling or predominant and experience.

As practice deepens as the mindfulness gets calmer and more settled, the tendency is that the places that predominate, that are not there breathing, are slowly working through some of the kinks, some of the wrinkles in some of the places of holding or contraction that we have in our psychophysical system. And so as we bring our attention to them, they sometimes unless it's just pure, straight physical pain, but if it's mild pain, even there's a way of this, we're smoothing out the wrinkles, we're settling the agitation. We are letting go of any clinging and holding and contraction that's around this place. And slowly there's more and more, this mellow, this freeing, this loosening, this opening up into more clarity and more spaciousness and experience.

And one of the places where this kind of holding pattern or contraction becomes evident at some point is the separation between the mind and the body that some people have. Some people live their life above the neck really. And a lot of it's that we say in English in the head, meaning usually it means that in a lot of time thinking and analyzing and planning and fantasizing, and we're swirling around in this two dimensional world of just thoughts and ideas and stories. The three dimensional world is that opened up from the whole body as part of it all, and have the field of relaxation of letting go, of ease, spread outward in all directions. And so to feel the separation, to bring that attention to that place of separation or where the coagulation of around the mind or thinking and have that also begin to loosen and soften and relax. And so at some point, there's no real divide between the mind and the body. You can identify them as being so much separate, but they're not really this. They're coterminous, they're kind of all kind of encompassing in the same field of clarity, of ease of peace.

And so it's a process of letting go of relaxing and opening up, of being receptive that expands expands to everything's included. And so how it starts with a breathing and then move to what's predominant. Different predominant things will then appear. It's kind of random, seemingly. But as practice deepens, I don't think it's particularly random. We're kind of going through layers of our being, layers of where our coagulation is, or our congestion is, or where we're stuck. Where there's a resistance where there's holding patterns. And we're kind of going through it, kind of in whatever is predominant the layers. And it might be one day it might be in the chest, another day might be the head or the shoulders or might be certain emotions that come up or certain cognitive things, ideas, stories, memories. And I like to think that the Dharma knows best. What's next for us. As we sit and focus and settle, whatever arises next is kind of like the Dharma knows, or the inner life knows, okay, now it's time to be present for that and learn to find our freedom with that and not be caught by this and learn to settle with this as well.

And sometimes we find that as we relax, and sometimes there's a big letting goes or a real deep equanimous deepening of letting go or relaxing or settling, concentrating, and it can feel quite nice. It's followed by a period of little more difficulty or sometimes a lot of difficulty. Not that we're going backwards, but rather as we go down, we kind of take care of one floor and the building in a sense, and then we're ready to go down to the next one and the next floor turns out hasn't been cleaned for decades. So now we have to deal with all the mess that's there and once that's kind of done, then we maybe feel more settled and we can go further and deeper and maybe it's a feelings of great love or compassion and that's the next layer or maybe it's a layer of fear. Or maybe who knows what's there.

And I like to think of it if the practice is sincere, then the Dharma knows what to bring you next. And this attitude that the Dharma knows, or the inner life, the heart knows what's next is a nice way of relaxing around resisting or being bothered troubled by what comes up for us what surfaces what's next, what's goes on in our lives. There's kind of an acceptance at this too. I get to practice with instead of not this, please. Or I'm doing it wrong. No, I'm doing it right because now this is coming. Coming up, and now I get to be with that, then this. And this ability to just be with things as they are, and accept them as the field, the domain of practice that we practice with. It's not a generic kind of, or naive kind of acceptance of things. But it is an acceptance where we not in conflict or we don't resist it as being the appropriate domain for practice. And it's a powerful thing to learn how to be willing and open and receptive to practice with anything that comes our way. Rather than resisting or being upset or collapsing. To develop confidence and trust in the power of mindfulness power of practice. Oh, this two I can step

towards in a certain way to step towards a return towards, to be mindful of and be present for and to experience and then we can go through these four different areas. In this particular thing that's happening now, what's happening with breathing? How is breathing going on what's happening in the body? What are the physical experiences, sensations that come along? Where am I tight, holding, resisting, pulling back, leaning forward, what's happening with the body? And what's happening emotionally? What emotions are predominant when emotions are moving through me? And what emotions are motivating me and prompting me to do something attack right away to comfort, what's going on?

And then and then to know what's happening with the mind and our thoughts and our beliefs and our cognitions and the movements of the mind, the contractions of the mind. And so, we have these tools, to be with what is and to practice with it, so that we can find freedom in the middle of it. And as we have our freedom, then we hopefully have more wisdom about how to act, what to say what to do, what to feel, what to intend, how to be with the situation, to take care of ourselves and take care of the world itself. And the combination I feel that this practice is to really have in one's heart, no resistance, no divide between the welfare of others and the welfare of oneself. So that we're certainly caring for ourselves and helping ourselves be safe and healthy and really allowing ourselves to thrive. We're important and we're not holding on to self or holding ourselves separate from people or conceited or attached to our own welfare only.

We're also concerned for the welfare of others. And equally, and there's a freedom, there's an ease in that care. It's not obligatory, it's not like we have to push against great odds. It's just that the simplicity of the heart that is free and relaxed. Of course, it wants to care and be for the welfare of others. Others are very much like ourselves and in some of the deep ways, and the possibility of peace, love and respect. And to really understand that this practice is leading us to, to live in the world concerned, effort, not effortlessly, but naturally almost, for the welfare and happiness of all beings everywhere. That it is certainly it's almost as if the welfare of others is our own welfare. And the welfare of ourselves is the welfare of others and we live in the world. Have caring for each other.

So I hope these weeks of mindfulness, the basic kind of teachings has given you a little different take on how are you usually taught and your attitude are supplemented or deepened in some way and, and supported you and, and, and it's possible we'll continue with some aspect of this next week. And so kind of maybe, maybe it's postgraduate mindfulness next week after the graduating from these four weeks, something like that.

So thank you very much for being part of this and I appreciate it very much and, and I look forward to our time on Monday.