

# 2020-11-19 Eightfold Path-Right Mindfulness (1 of 6)

Thu, 11/19 7:35AM • 12:44

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

mindfulness, awareness, aware, greed, freedom, aversion, conceit, defined, consciousness, practice, stronger, taste, lucid, talk, states, mud, clear, lotus, lotus blossoms, hatred

## SPEAKERS

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So good morning. And in continuing this series of talks on the Eightfold Path, today we come into right mindfulness, the seventh factor of the path. And with all these factors, somehow they're directly an expression, a manifestation, an orientation, based on right view. And so right mindfulness for someone who doesn't really have a taste yet of have some kind of inner freedom, right mindfulness would be based on the notion, the idea, of being mindful in a way that's wholesome or skillful. And to avoid being mindful in a way that's unskillful, unwholesome. So to avoid having mindfulness that's mixed up in greed for spiritual experiences, ambition to become the next great human savior through being a meditator. Not free of kind of aversion and hostility towards anything, like I have to get rid of something. And that's a bad part of me, and I'm going to kind of overcome it and push it away. But rather a form of awareness that is looking to be simple, without a lot of desires that are mixed in. That it's without any ill will, without anyone to cause harm, hopefully without any conceit. So kind of finding where is that? For someone who has a taste of freedom, they know a little bit what that is like, free of aversion, greed, conceit. They have a taste of that. And it's that taste, that kind of helps us to find out, this is how mindfulness is. This is possible to be aware of experience in a simple, friendly, open, non aggressive kind of way. And then we try to build and expand that awareness so it becomes bigger and stronger.

And the teachings of mindfulness by the Buddha in a discourse called the Discourse on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, the momentum of mindfulness as it builds and expands and becomes more inclusive. The mindfulness becomes – the word for mindfulness in Buddhist language is Sati, and it develops to become something called patisati --p, a, t, i, s, a, t, i – and Bhikkhu Bodhi translates, the great translator, he translates patisati sometimes as lucid awareness, which I also like to use as a translation. Lucid in the sense that it's just that we know we're aware. The awareness, the consciousness is strong enough, that we're not blinded or lost in what we're aware of. Of course, we mostly have to be aware of something. But there's two things. There's the thing that we're aware of and the awareness. And if what we're aware of is like if you know something dangerous, suddenly we're going to be more involved in focusing the danger than the fact that we're aware. But there's many times when we are lost in what we're aware of, lost in thought, for example. So much so it's almost like we're not aware anymore. There is awareness, but it's all kind of been sucked into the world of thinking. And

mindfulness practice is a little bit reclaiming that awareness, so that it's not lost to us. And so that when we're thinking, for example, we know we're thinking. When we're looking at a sunset, not only is the sunset beautiful, we appreciate it. But also we know we're aware. When we're breathing, we're aware of breathing. But there's a way that it's so obvious that we know we're breathing. So obvious we're aware of breathing that we don't consciously think oh, now I'm now I'm aware. But it's clear someone asks you afterwards you say yes, I was clearly aware. It's almost like the act of being aware, the phenomena of being aware, is as clear as what we're aware of.

Now, these two things are said to arise together. So you can't have one without the other. But to have this lucid awareness. Lucid here means awareness that we know we're aware. Where awareness is almost like a thing in itself. It's something you can know in and of itself. And to then rest in that awareness, to be with it.

And so the momentum of freedom, mindfulness that has a taste of freedom, a hint of freedom, is that we want to expand that freedom into that awareness. So it's less constrained, defined by our greed, our hatred, our delusion. Less limited, less hijacked by our conceit, our ambition, or our despair, our sadness, our anger. And so this amazing capacity for awareness to grow and expand and change our life radically, without changing anything in life. So say that I am really greedy for something. And I'm lost in that greed. And I'm planning to get it and want to get it. And then I practice mindfulness. And I become aware, "oh, I'm greedy, wow, I didn't know I was so greedy. This is what greedy is like." And then I feel the greed effect on my body, that I'm all tense and tight, and a little bit like a foot in front of my body ready to go to the store to get this thing that I so much want. And so slowly the mindfulness becomes stronger and stronger. And at some point, the mindfulness begins, you can feel, oh, there's freedom here. Yes, I can have greed. But there's freedom in relationship to it. It just becomes an object of awareness. I don't use it to define myself. I don't use it as an object of aversion or hostility. And over time, that awareness can keep growing and growing and growing. And it's just such a beautiful thing. Such a profound, peaceful, inspiring place to be in this field of being aware. And maybe the greed hasn't really gone away, it's still there. But now I feel like peace. And this is a part of the amazing thing about this practice, is we don't necessarily have to get rid of anything or change anything to find our peace or happiness and well being. We discover when the awareness of it becomes free.

And I think one of the wonderful metaphors for this in the Buddhist tradition is the lotus that grows up out of muddy water. It definitely arises from the mud. But then when the blossoms, the lotus blossoms are completely clean and pure and shiny, untouched by the mud, but they flower above the mud. So in same way, awareness as it gets stronger is no longer is touched by that greed I had. Just the awareness is there. It's like the lotus has blossomed. Or if there's hatred, or if there is despair, or if there's sadness or depression even. Difficult states of mind, for sure, very difficult. If there's fear, very difficult. But as the mindfulness gets stronger, all those states don't have to go away. You don't have to fix them or solve them. We're not defined by them anymore. And they are there. And awareness is here. And awareness is so much bigger in a sense. The mind becomes so much more than the particular state that we have. And the mind is not being defined by those states. When we're preoccupied with greed or hatred or depression or sadness, or even good states of mind preoccupied by enthusiasm or excited joy. It is kind of like the mind we kind of become organized or defined around

that. But as the mindfulness becomes free and more open, then the although states can be there, but it's kind of like, there's something more wonderful here. We are conscious, we are aware.

So two forms of mindfulness. Mindfulness that we just engage with and learn to practice with in a wholesome way. It's a wonderful thing to do. It's a wonderful practice and wonderful engagement. And it's the mindfulness that is really part and parcel of the tastes, the initial experiences of freedom that we have. Both of them are moving towards the same place to become more and more lucid in the awareness, More and more present in consciousness. This amazing capacity to be conscious.

And so the saying, a little cliché that's in the Vipassana world, the practice of mindfulness is not to see something new. But to see in a new way. Not to see, look for something new, but to see what's here in a new way, with clarity, with clear recognition.

So I'll continue now for next days to talk about mindfulness in these 7am sittings. Probably tomorrow I'll talk about different characteristic or different forms of attention that come into play as we do mindfulness practice. And then we'll go on and different aspects of this important practice next week.

So thank you for being here. And I hope that for the today or the next 24 hours, that you get curious about consciousness being aware. And how awareness can operate effortlessly. And if you start discovering the effortless operation of awareness, maybe you'll begin to get a glimmer of this freedom there as well. Freedom from effort, freedom from self, freedom from trying. Just this amazing thing to be aware. And may your awareness bring you much freedom and much delight and maybe even a sense of awe, wonder. The wonder of being conscious. Thank you.