

Care Group Talk and Guided Meditation 2:

Listening to ourselves and being our own therapist as we work with our Emotional Noise

As mentioned last time, this is a series of guided meditations, we are introducing to help our members and supporters be their own therapist, to be their own friendly listener inside our personal meditation practice. In this time of self-isolation, it is an offering that will help us to better understand this human condition and more importantly to understand the Buddha's teachings. This is a path that leads us away from our ignorance towards the truth and beauty that can be found in the present moment, as we go deeper and deeper to understand the truth of what the Buddha taught.

Last time we focussed on Anxiety and Fear. (Around the Covid19 Virus) In the preamble to today's guided meditation I would like to start by highlighting the 'Four Noble Truths'. In particular I want to look at and understand how the first noble truth of Dukkha, Suffering, Not-satisfactory is so apparent in the crisis we face today. In the meditation last time we noticed the second and third noble truth being so apparent at all levels of our being. Dukka, beginning and ending at all scales. The breath beginning and the breath ending. The session beginning and the session ending. The day and the year beginning and ending. We noticed all this against the background of still consciousness. In other words, we can say it is set against the background or matrix of our mind. Because we can see how all these differently scaled conditions or aggregations of conditions begin and end, arise and finish and how they are drawn from this background of still consciousness as they begin and end. Some conditions are of a scale where we need to intuit the beginning and end. We notice the transition from stillness to movement of consciousness is followed by further transitions to create a perception of the condition and then a feeling which then fuses habitually into a feeling in our physical being which is also arising and ceasing continuously. We saw last time that right here and now we have the Buddha's list of five Khanda's or five Aggregates. We can see transitions to all that we know and live with, and we can start to see how letting go brings about the unification of these nested conditions back into the stillness.

We noticed last time, that by experiencing the still consciousness that is always present, we can start to objectify the conditions present in our minds and create a distance from them as we become aware and mindful of the conditioning. We saw how this practice brings about relaxation and contentment as the Buddha's five hindrances start to dissipate. We noticed how the mind does relax and become content when desire and aversion recede. (1st & 2nd hindrance) We saw how energy balances when restlessness, Sloth and torpor balance (3rd & 4th hindrance) and the more mindful we become of all this our doubts start to lessen. (5th hindrance)

Today we will look at our Emotional Noise. This is a term that we highlight and teach to our care listening team. Emotional noise is the views and opinions we form from our conditioning. When we look at our emotional noise, we are looking at the way we confabulate the conditioning we take in. It is something that we all do as we build up our individual identities, our ego's, It is a catch all term that describes the way the confabulation process moves to views and opinions that we defend and call our own. Understanding our emotional noise from the perspective of our still consciousness allows us to notice what views and opinions are worthwhile to keep and what we should abandon. Views and opinions that take us on a path of 'letting go' is what the Buddha's teachings are all about. The more we can cultivate still consciousness and have it with us mindfully in every moment, the closer we are to the beauty and joy of truth. As mentioned last time Ajahn.Chah's advice is to know the transcendent (still consciousness) while living and with the apparentness of our lives. If we do this the more we will move towards the truth of the Buddha's teachings.