



So, welcome back. We're into week three now, and we should be extending our meditation times by just a few minutes every couple of days. And you'll find that there will be a natural extension—it won't be a forced one—as you're enjoying just the serenity that you're experiencing, and the confidence that comes with it. As we start to experience some settledness, some groundedness, some rootedness, happiness emerges. It's spontaneous. The world didn't give it to us, so the world can't take it away from us. And so we find that we can rest in ourselves. We become more stable. We feel that we can handle the moment. We can be whatever's happening, and we don't have to just react.

But we can take a minute, we can pause, and then we can respond. We find that we become much more patient, with situations and with people, because we don't feel so touchy. We have a little more sense of being able to allow another to just be who they are, or to allow a situation to be just how it is, because we know that we're going to be able to bring to the table an appropriate response.

Okay. So this week, I'd like to remind you that it's sort of like if somebody gives you a direction of how to get to the store, and they say, “You go down the street, walk two blocks, then make a right turn, then cut across that field, you'll see a oak tree. When you get to that oak tree, you know you're almost at the store. You walk straight ahead, 100 feet, and you'll be at the store.” So it's kind of like that. And as you keep following that instruction, after a while, you don't have to think about how to get to the store. You just automatically move towards the store. You know the way. And it gets like that with meditation.

In the beginning, it may be difficult to settle in, to find the rhythm of the breath, and to just flow with it in that way. We may find that it's a little difficult. But the more and more you do it, the easier and easier it becomes, the more automatic it becomes. And then after a while, as soon as you sit down, the whole body has this figured out. It knows exactly what you want to do when you sit in this posture, and it will help you at that, it'll support you at that, and you'll be able to easily just drop right in. So we should be at this place, if you've been practicing. Remember that practice doesn't make perfect, though. Only perfect practice makes perfect.

Have fun with this. This is a time that's just for you. It's not anything that anybody else can participate. And it's something that you can absolutely enjoy, 100 percent, and you'll see how it actually works toward your benefit once you get off the pillow, because you're recalibrating how you approach your life, moment by moment, and how you approach situations that come into your sphere of influence.



So, let's begin again. And this time, I'm not going to give so much guidance. I think you already know the way. We're going to sit for a little longer this time. If you feel something—a cramp in the leg, or some kind of unpleasant feeling—see if you can sit with it for a few seconds, for 10 seconds, for 15 seconds. If the body is saying, “This hurts. This is uncomfortable,” just move. Move and don't lose your stride. Just move and keep going. It's kind of like the baby that starts in, “Mommy, mommy, mommy!” and if you just turn to the baby and say, “Okay, I'm right here,” baby's satisfied. So this is the way that we'll train ourselves, being gentle, being at ease, breathing in and breathing out, and we'll only stay with the breath until the breath seems to quiet down and disappear. And what we will be replacing it with, gradually, is this feeling of ease.

Now, scientists will tell us, and the doctors, that the body is releasing endorphins, and other chemicals that will regulate the body, and that set the mind at ease. At the same time, chemicals will be released that will stimulate the mind, and we'll become hyper alert. But we won't be a jittery kind of alertness. It becomes an expansive kind of alertness. And so we'll find that, even as we're focusing on one thing, we suddenly become aware of many things, but without that kind of guarding energy that runs hither and thither. We can just sit here, and we become aware of the ten thousand things. That's what brings the confidence. Are we ready? Let's go.

This is your only job right now, bringing your focus and awareness to the breath—that beautiful breath. Just thinking about it brings a smile.

Now we have a step that we do after we get out of meditation. Buddha said we should reflect on what just happened. So thinking about the time that you spent these past 20 minutes—what did you notice? Did sleepiness arise? Did you have an excess of energy arise? Now we come to this balancing, balancing. If there's too much energy, we bring the energy down. We figure out how to do that inside.

If there's not enough energy, we learn how to arouse our energy. Sometimes it takes moving the body, if we've become too lethargic. Sometimes you can just start to really feel joyful, and you can just bring that joy down a little bit, until it becomes stable and smooth. Not quite so much excitement, but more blissful. Excitement is like when you see an oasis, and you're out in the desert and thirsty. But bliss is like once you've gotten to the oasis and taken a sip. So that'll help you understand the difference, and learn how to just temper, and bring everything into a harmonized, easy-flowing way of being in the world.

Venerable Pannavati
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Okay. So you should be taking this off the pillow now, as you go through your daily interactions. And the same way that you're learning to stabilize yourself on the pillow, you'll be able to do it off the pillow. Okay? And I'll see you next week.