

Practice Note: The Weight of Concerns

Transcribed and edited from a short talk by Gil Fronsdaal on March 14, 2012

A primary activity of the mind is to have concerns. The mind can be concerned about all kinds of things – some quite reasonable, and some maybe not so reasonable. But the mind has concerns. Sometimes these concerns happen through the vehicle of thinking. For some people, concerns happen more through the vehicle of emotions, feelings. Sometimes our concerns are carried through intentions, wishes, or desires.

One interesting thing to feel, to investigate is: “What is the weight of your concerns?” How heavy are they? Do you carry the burdens of the world on your shoulders? That’s an expression of weight. How intense are your concerns? How engaged are you with them? How glued to them are you? How much pressure comes with your concerns? How much tension comes with them? How much sense of compulsion?

For me, I like to ask if there is a weight to them. To investigate that means to turn aside a little from the subject you’re concerned about. Usually, when you are concerned, it’s *about* something – and what is interesting is what it’s *about*. But for a meditator, what’s

interesting is not so much the concern itself, but how the mind holds the concern – how the mind is involved or engaged in the concern. So the interest is in this idea of the weight, or the tension, or the pressure, or the glue, or the texture of the concern. How is that felt? How is do you experience that?

With some concerns, the mind gets contracted. There is a very dense feeling inside, like pushing ahead, trying to resolve something. Other concerns just kind of float through like a cloud in a vast open sky. You have a concern but it's almost idle. The concern floats in; you know you have this concern, and then it floats out, and you don't think about it again for a few days. It's very light.

By investigating the weight or the quality of a concern, then you can consider: "Is this the way you want to relate to it?" Do you want it to have so much weight? Do you want it to be so dense? Do you want to be so intense around it? Is it possible to open up around it? Is it possible to relax a little with it, to lighten up?

Even if it's not possible to change a concern, the whole game changes if you step back and just observe it from the point of view of its weight, as opposed to observing from the point of view of the *subject* that you're concerned about. That's part of my offering for today.

As you're walking and sitting, for those of you who might have a concern or two, look at the weight of it, the weight of your thinking. See what happens if you look through that perspective. See if it helps you relax.

I hope you enjoy your morning. Thank you.