

Practice Note: Respect Everything and Be Still

Transcribed and edited from a short talk by Gil Fronsdal on May 25, 2011

I'm fond of the word 'respect.' It's a substitute for the word 'mindfulness.' The reason I like the word 'respect' is it suggests care and a certain degree of honoring things as they are. I also like it because the Latin root literally means "to look again." When we do mindfulness practice, in a sense we're acknowledging something in the present moment. We're recognizing something with some clarity, not just letting it casually drift by in a way we hardly notice. With clarity we actually acknowledge and recognize what's happening in the moment, whether what's happening is the in-breath or the out-breath, whether it's noticing your thinking, a feeling, a sensation in your body, or sounds around you. When you acknowledge it with mindfulness, it's almost like you look at it again or anew. What is this thing?

You might experiment this morning with "re-specting." Give what arises in the present moment a second chance to be acknowledged or registered, and be really present for it. It isn't just a matter of respecting. It's also looking at something, being present for something, and

being still. Be present for your breath, and in some soft, relaxed way, be still in your awareness as you allow yourself to experience your breathing. When you do walking meditation, be present for your legs and feet as you walk. Let something inside be still as you observe that, and be with that.

So respect everything and be still. I hope you enjoy your morning.