

Practice Note: Consider How You Are Supported

Transcribed and edited from a short talk by Gil Fronsdal on October 31, 2012

A variety of feelings or conditions can support meditation, mindfulness practice, and concentration practice. Depending on the feelings you may have, it can be very helpful to feel supported when you're practicing. According to the degree to which you feel unsafe, it's helpful to feel safe. Or if you feel isolated, it's helpful to feel connected to others sitting together. If you feel overwhelmed by other people, it's good to have a place of silence where you can feel left alone.

Given all the attitudes, understandings, or feelings that support this practice, what I'd like to offer today is the idea of feeling supported. Many things can support us. Consider how you are being supported while you're here, so that you don't have to feel excessively responsible for what's happening – as if it's all up to you, and you have to find your way with no support.

It can be as simple as feeling the support of the ground underneath you. When you sit, feel the support of the cushion or chair. Don't take it for granted – rather feel

that you are resting there. When you are walking, you have the support of the ground.

You also have the support here of the schedule. Maybe a schedule seems like a small thing, but it can be helpful to have a schedule that supports you, and creates a container for practice.

You are supported by the other people who are also practicing here. You are not practicing alone.

You have the support of the teachings, which practitioners have been using for thousands of years. The teachings are here to support us. You are not trying to make it up all on your own, as if you were the very first person who ever had to negotiate life in this way. A big body of teachings and understandings are here in the background to support you.

As you practice today, you might consider how you are supported here. What is the support that supports you? Don't do this because you have to, or because it's a moralistic thing to feel supported, but rather consider, "In what way are you supported here, so that it's easier to relax, and just be present in a very simple way? To be here in the present moment, this time and place, rather than having the mind spin out?"

This idea of being supported – you might consider it

today.