

# Practice Note: Accompany Yourself

**Transcribed and edited from a short talk by Gil Fronsdal on April 5, 2017**

One of the really important opportunities of meditation is that it's a time in our life when we're not actually doing a lot. We're sitting here quietly. In times like these, we're not having to do a lot of things, to engage in the world, or to solve problems. There's an opportunity to switch our focus from *what* we're doing to *how* we are.

We can switch our focus away from our activities, from what we think we are, and from our concerns. We can switch from what to how – how we are; how we are in the moment. The *how* means how we're engaged with being present and mindful. And it also means how we are a living, breathing person at this moment. Are we settled? Are we agitated? Are we happy or sad? Are we confused? Are we confident, steady? Are we tense? How are we? How is it?

Once we recognize how we are, then the awareness practice, the mindfulness practice, is to accompany ourselves with something very special. It's like accompanying ourselves with how we are – as if we're a friend to ourself. We can accompany ourselves as if we might offer a sense of sacred presence – a sacred

context for how we are.

Mindfulness is like holding how we are. It is the place at the center, where we can relax or soften in the midst of however we are. How we are doesn't have to change. But there's a place inside that can be relaxed – and can see how we are, be with it, accompany it, hold it, and be the companion for how we are.

The idea of being the companion or accompanier of how we are is not a light-weight thing. It's not a minor thing – which we would tend to think it is, if what is important were doing or accomplishing something, or figuring things out. I think that when we can offer a kind, supportive presence, accompaniment, companionship with how we are, it allows how we are to have space – to be what it is. It allows how we are to evolve, change, grow, relax, heal, reconcile, open, and reveal itself. All kinds of things can start happening in that simple space of how we are – that simple sharing of presence.

To start noticing *how* you are in the moment – in walking meditation or in sitting – is more than what you're doing, and more than what you are. We have all these stories and ideas about what we are, what we need to do, what we should do, and what's happening to us.

In switching from what to how, *how* is always in the

present moment. How are you? How are you now? Then see what that is, and allow your attention to settle in, or be here in a supportive way with the how. Take it in. Make space for *how* in your awareness. Part of the function of present moment awareness, of being here, is to be with the how. If you like using the breath, or the steps in walking meditation, that's like a meeting place – a grounding for awareness of the how. We breath with the how. We walk with the how. Just stay close to it, and be its companion.

The premise behind this idea of being with how you are is that how you are is actually very important. It's a valuable part of yourself; it's precious. Even if you're feeling off, depressed, or angry, or something – if you can accompany the how, it's *you*. And you're important, valuable.

You can just be with how you are and see what opens, what unfolds, what happens in that meeting. Maybe if nothing else happens, then just the fact that you become relaxed about how you are – just allowing yourself to be that way – can be quite meaningful in the simplicity of just sitting, the simplicity of walking.

May how you are be a path to peace. Thank you.