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# Aspects of Mindfulness

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## Excerpts

*“...Moment-by-moment we have to choose whether to live in the dream world of mental events or wake up to our place in the world as it is. The dream offers the instant gratification of our ideas and intentions being real and important. Yet we are forced by events to awaken to the ungrounded-ness of our existential situation, the shifting experiential field which seems to have a life of its own. The phenomenological field cannot be nailed down and we have to be light on our feet. This is the essential meaning of mindfulness, to be attentive to where we are and how we are....”*

*“...Being mindful is essentially a tending to the emergence or the presentation or the unveiling of your existence as it arises, with you as a participant in a world that is always already there. It cannot then possibly be about mastery; you are not in charge. But if you are careful, if you attend to the emergence of the situation you will find a way to proceed. And this is what we do in therapy. We are not like actors; we don't learn a script before we go into a session with a patient...”*

*“...the most important thing is to be open-hearted, to be connected, to be welcoming to the particularities of the person as they present themselves. This is the real heart of mindfulness; to be attentive to how things are, not how you want them to be. That is to say: “I will respond to what is there. I am the attendant. I am following the world as it shows itself. I am not the boss. I am not in charge...”*

*“... Mindfulness is a commitment to remember who we are. If we think of the ‘members’ as the limbs then to be re-membered is to put our limbs all back together, to become intact. Many religions have the myth of the slaughtered god who is chopped into many pieces. And re-membling ourselves means recollecting, gathering ourselves back so that rather than being dispersed we are present as the potential to reveal whatever the situation requires. This is not a re-membling or returning to how we were before, but rather maintaining our presence in the integration of the ever-open ground of our being with the ever-open field of our becoming...”*

## CONTENTS

<i>Attending to the world as it is</i>	1
<i>An attendant always follows, an attendant does not lead</i>	2
<i>The function of mindfulness</i>	3
<i>Divided against ourselves</i>	4
<i>The basis of suffering: "I am a thing and you are a thing."</i>	4
<i>Attending to how things are, not how you want them to be</i>	6
<i>How do we practice mindfulness?</i>	7
<i>Always fresh</i>	7
<i>The state of awareness is the basis of freedom</i>	8

### Attending to the world as it is

Some of you may remember Star Wars. In one film there was a return to the early days of Luke Skywalker. He is a little boy and a slave yet he calmly flies a home-made aeroplane. As he prepares for a critical race in which his freedom is at stake, the advice he gets from the Jedi Knight is simply: "Focus."

To focus is to be mindful, to stay on task without getting distracted. In Pali the word for this is Sati and in Tibetan it is dren ba. Dren ba means recollection, the opposite of dispersal. It means remembering who, where, what, and how you are.

Mindfulness indicates being careful, taking care. It is the opposite of being careless. There is a difference between being careless and carefree. When we are carefree, the general sense is that there is no danger in the environment and so you can relax and do as we like without coming to any harm. However, in most of the situations in life you have to be a bit care-full. Care also equates with worry and concern; you can become care-worn. To escape this burden it can be tempting to be care-less. Care-lessness can be a sort of sleep, an unconscious way of just letting things happen. It can also arise from self-abandonment, a sense of "I don't care anyway".

From the buddhist point of view, the difficulties which arise for all beings – not just human beings but all animals, insects and so on – arise due to ignorance and attachment. Ignorance means not seeing how things actually are, and attachment means getting involved in things as though they are truly real, self-existing entities. This involves a certain attitude: "I want my world to be safe. Therefore I need to stabilise the key forces and factors in my existence in order to give me a sense of continuity and reassurance." But of course, all of us are at the mercy of circumstances. People get sick, they fall out of love, sweet children become crazy teenagers. Life keeps changing. Life itself is change. So much happens in life. Will we work with life as it is, or resist it and try to work against the fact of what is occurring? Either way we will be impacted and forced to respond. The more we fix our position the harder it can be because what occurs is often not what we want or expect.

One idea that can persecute us is the fantasy that we should be in control of our lives. Yet, life is not safe, it can never be secured. So rather than trying to control the external environment it

may be more useful to be attentive to the actuality of our own situation. Tibetans have a saying: "It is better to cover your own feet with leather than to try to cover the whole road."

The fantasy of control is based on a simple notion that there are only two possibilities: in control or out of control; order or chaos. This is often the choice offered by political parties, and of course it's often what we offer to ourselves: "I have got to hold it together." "I have got to be very good and just get on with it." The rigidity of this view installs a kind of mindlessness, a not attending to what is going on, with a simultaneous over-attention to the mental world of plans, intentions, rules and regulations.

Moment-by-moment we have to choose whether to live in the dream world of mental events or wake up to our place in the world as it is. The dream offers the instant gratification of our ideas and intentions being real and important. Yet we are forced by events to awaken to the ungrounded-ness of our existential situation, the shifting experiential field which seems to have a life of its own. The phenomenological field cannot be nailed down and we have to be light on our feet. This is the essential meaning of mindfulness, to be attentive to where we are and how we are.

We can be mindful of the flow of unfolding experience, an experience which encompasses both what I call 'myself' and what I call 'my environment'. However, usually we are ourselves formulated by a particular focus, the line of intentionality that flows from attending to a task. We can check if we are on task by engaging in a review of our 'performance'. This is achieved by self-reflection, by consciously considering how we are doing and comparing it with our notion of how we 'should' be doing. We can also relate to the task through the embodied feedback-looping of self-reflexivity whereby we are alive to the experience of our engagement with the task. That could be the sensation of pressure on my fingers as I write, the inner sense of the rightness or not of a stream of thoughts, or any of the many ways in which our embodied presence registers the experience of its interface with the inner and outer fields.

In terms of our usual dualistic interpretation of events, clarity of intention, of task, is vital for the development of mindfulness. Once my attention is on the task, I am able to see where I veer away from it. As soon as we choose a direction the possibility of deviance is there. As soon as we decide on a journey, obstacles will arise. This is not a punishment; it is the simple consequence of the complexity of the fields in which we live. Mindfulness, in bringing us in touch with this complexity is also calling us to develop the traditional virtues of courage, patience, endurance, fortitude, hope and faith. Of course being attentive to the actuality of our experience reveals the contours of this ever-changing domain, and this greatly helps us to manifest a response that fits the emergent field. Then obstacles become not a curse or a challenge, but an inevitable part of our existence, part of our lives rather than a series of attacks on it.

### **An attendant always follows, an attendant does not lead**

The root of the word therapy is a Greek word that was used to describe the attendants at the shrines of Asclepius, the semi-divine doctor who developed a form of medicine focusing on separating the patient from their usual environment by having them enter an underground healing chamber and attend to their dreams. Thus, the very process of healing was by attending to what was offered to the patient out of their own psyche as she encountered the divine. The people who made that process possible were called therapons, from which derives the English word therapist. The practitioner of therapy sits with the patients in a room set apart from the hustle and bustle of daily life and attends to them in the fullest extent of their existence.

Whether we are attending to ourselves or to others, an attendant always follows, an attendant does not lead. This is phenomenologically grounded because life happens to us. To see that we are not in charge of what is occurring is more honest to the actuality of life. We participate in a life which is already happening to us. When we were very small and started to develop a reflective consciousness, this occurred in a world which was already going on. Our parents were there before we were born. Around the age of three we awaken into a consciousness that seems to move across time and space with a capacity for memory. We start to have a sense of 'my toys, 'my room,' and to nail down points of reference. We develop interests with a sense of attending to certain things and not attending to others. However, whatever we attend to is already there. Thus, we have the revelation of existence and our participation in it, with greater or lesser degrees of attention. That is to say, life is always going on with us in it, whether we are aware of this or not.

For example, if you are lying on a beach on holiday and you fall asleep, the waves are still lapping on the sand, people are still playing in the water but it is as if you are not there. You are there but you are not there; your body is there but your mind has gone off. You wake up onto the beach, where you have been throughout, but you were not there, although you were. This is the story of our lives. We are always in it, we cannot get out of it, but while we are in it, we can be 'in it' in it, or, we can be 'out of it' in it. These are the only two choices we have.

### **The function of mindfulness**

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The function of mindfulness is to support us in attending to what is happening. Of course, when life is difficult we may well not want to be so attentive to it. We can distract ourselves and even disassociate. This is protective of our sense of self because that self, or familiar sense of who we are, feels it will be overwhelmed if it knows what is happening. That is to say, the sense of 'me', of 'who I am', that has been constructed out of past experience, has both a certain composite strength, a certain integrity, a certain flexibility, and also has a kind of rigidity and limitation. In being 'me', I am 'not you'. There are the particularities of my embodied existence which give me a certain capacity to move out into the world to be with others, but they also give me particular vulnerabilities to certain aspects of the environment impinging on me. For example, in terms of physical capacity: some people's pancreas does not work too well and they have tendency to diabetes; some people's eyes do not work so well and they need to wear glasses; some people need to wear hearing aids; some people have irritable bowel syndrome. Each person is affected by the world in specific ways. Our experience of our own sensitivity and vulnerability can diminish the stature of our self in our own mind. The facts of our embodiment can undermine our fantasy of omnipotence and force us to face the fragility of our existence. With that sense of fragility we have a need to protect ourselves and to avoid danger.

This tendency to be self-protective is further illuminated by the buddhist view that there is no inherent self-nature in a person. What we call a person is created out components called the five skandhas or heaps: form, sensation, perception, association and consciousness. This indicates that we are a juxtaposition of certain factors which, while they are collaborating effectively together, create the epiphenomena, the illusory presentation, of our being some particular 'self': "I am this person." However, our 'personhood' is influenced very quickly by factors around us. We know this. If the sun shines everyone becomes happy. If it suddenly gets cold we become unhappy. If the sun is shining too much and you have a garden you worry about the lawn. The bit of you that is a gardener is unhappy and the bit that wants a suntan is happy. Thus, you have been split by the sun. This happens all the time because we are not much of a muchness; we are not 'all of a piece'.

## Divided against ourselves

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If I pose the question ‘how will I attend to what happens when I am with another person?’ it implies that there is a simple coherent ‘I’ who can carry forward an intention to attend. However, if I am not always the same, if I have different self-states and they each have different desires and different notions of what is required from the environment to keep them functioning, then I am going to experience different intentions. That is to say, ‘I’ am going to be divided against ‘myself’; I am going to have conflicting desires leading me to act at crossed purposes, because I cannot satisfy all the aspects of myself at the same time. Thus, if ‘I’ choose to have instant gratification of one aspect of myself, ‘I’ am also going to have delayed gratification of the desire of other states of aspects of ‘myself’. Each self-state acts as if it was our one true self. The less communication we have between these states or aspects, the more turbulent or stuck our experience is likely to be.

For example, if I decide that one of the main purposes of summer-time is to encourage me to eat ice cream then there will have to be delayed gratification of the desire to go to the gym and keep slim and fit. If I can’t keep these desires compartmentalised the conflict between them is likely to generate guilt. You may as well enjoy the summer, get fat in the summer, and then go and do your exercise in winter. However, in the winter when it is cold, lovely thick stews and chocolate are also very nourishing, so then we displace the gratification of getting thin to the next summer. That is how life goes on because we are divided in ourselves.

## The basis of suffering: “I am a *thing* and you are a *thing*.”

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Mindfulness is clearly quite complicated because whose mind are we going to be attending to? If we say mind-less it means not having a mind, so to be mind-full is to be full of mind. What is the meaning of mind in this context? Essentially, it means a consciousness. According to the general Tibetan buddhist tradition, there are eight consciousnesses. Each of our senses has its own consciousness. We also have mental consciousness which organises the input of the five senses, and the consciousness that introduces our habitual neurotic tendencies, and also the consciousness that accesses all the possible factors of experience. The traditional understanding is that these eight consciousnesses operate together. They each reside as a petal in an eight petalled lotus in the heart, and so the sense is that the mind is here in the heart rather than in the head. That image also points to the connection and interaction between these consciousnesses. Our sense of self arises from a pulsation between different systems of information; it is not static. We are not a fixed ‘thing’, and this fact contradicts the illusion of a continuous personal identity expressed through the empty signifiers ‘I’, ‘me’, ‘myself’.

Experiences of shame and humiliation can intensify our sense of being an object, a definable entity with fixed qualities. A person who has been treated badly is likely to develop a narrow, intense range of self-definitions and related behaviours. Thus, in feeling themselves to be a ‘thing’, they think: “I am an inadequate person. It is shameful that I am forty years of age and I cannot control my emotions. I am convinced that everyone is laughing at me.” In that situation the reification, the solidification of the sense of self, adds a huge extra dimension of actual moments of persecution. It is the attachment to the idea of being a ‘thing’ which is the basis of suffering, for it forms the basis of a cumulative narrative of a continuous self entity.

For example, you do something that annoys me and I get angry. Then after a while I am not angry for the event has passed. However, if I think: “Yeah but she insulted me. Why did she say that? I hate her!” that creates a very different situation. Emotions are evanescent; they arise and they pass. It is very difficult to catch an emotion, to catch a thought or a sensation in the body. They are just pulsations, like little fire-flies on a summers evening. However, you can turn them,

through your narrative, into something very dense. The mind turns again and again onto the seeming continuity of something very real in itself. Yet this 'reality' is generated by the act of repetition, a rumination that pulls into the present an event that is already in the past. Then because of the felt sense of the continuity of the event as fact, there arises the feeling that something must be done. "I was insulted and felt hurt" – past event. "They are my enemies and I hate them" – current conclusion. "I must get revenge" – decision for the future.

Having adopted this belief in reified entities continuing through time and space we fall asleep and enter the dream of solidity. Yet, actually, we and all other appearances are ungraspable. Our speaking, thinking, sensing, and acting are all within the stream of experience. This view has some similarity to the stream of consciousness described by William James, a stream which never stands still and cannot be grasped. As the ancient Greek philosopher, Heraclites said: "We can never step in the same river twice." The river is always flowing; the pulse of your life is always continuing. We have names, and people call us by our names as if we were always the same continuous phenomenon. However, who we were in the morning is gone and will never come back, and who we are now is vanishing even as we experience it. That is to say, being and becoming tumble into each other.

If we examine our own neurotic patterns we can see how sclerotic they are, forming a hard shell round us, cutting us off from new opportunities. We may feel full of habitual negative thoughts, or have mood states like depression and anxiety that we visit again and again or that seem to visit us again and again like unwelcome ghosts in the night. It's easy to feel trapped: "This is happening to 'me' and I can't get out of it – I hate it!" Yet, if we try to push away these thoughts, the effort of doing so seems to feed and provoke them so that they return more frequently and with greater intensity.

For example, if someone comes to hate the shape of their nose they may feel: "I hate myself. I have got the wrong body. I hate my parents for giving it to me." Every time these thoughts arise and are identified with, the person pushes their libido, their life energy, into that experiential formation, which in turn pushes back at them. That is to say, the more we hate the object which we take to be inherently real, the more we become solid and real. And the more solid and real we become, the more over-determined, vulnerable and fragile we become so that the next life event that whacks us causes us to tense up and to fragment.

Part of the general view of mindfulness is to try to be alert in the moment as it arises. In the west we would call it a phenomenological attention. It is an attention to phenomena as they reveal themselves without an overlaying of interpretation. When we cease interpreting we start to see that all phenomena in the field of experience, both what we call external and what we call internal, occur simultaneously without any barrier between them. Each of us can experience that here: we are sitting in this room, we are aware of our bodies and we are aware of other people, the carpet, the sound of my voice and so on. There is no absolute difference between what is 'internal' and what is 'external'; it all happens at once for us. Of course, you can identify the different aspects, you can do a triage. You can sort them out and say: "These are internal factors and those are external factors," but in the moment of their presentation as our existence it is one field of experience.

The practice of mindfulness reminds us not to identify with particular field factors but to open to them all – a gesture which simultaneously deconstructs whatever ground the mindful mind is standing on. If you are only in 'yourself' you are not in the world, and if you are only out in the world you can lose sight of subjective factors. The middle way between all extremes is the path. In actuality what we call the 'subject' and what we call the 'object' are fleeting and evanescent. They have no true essence but are mere concepts. I can say, "I am conscious that I am talking,"

then if I stop talking, the consciousness of that ceases. Thus, whatever I say about my experience relates just to the moment of its occurrence. It is very difficult to say something about yourself that is always true on the level of embodied experience rather than as an abstraction. For example, if you say, "I am a woman," and then you tie your sandals, when you are tying your sandals are you a woman? Well, it could be, for some days you might feel extremely feminine. But on other days you might be just tying your sandals because you are in a hurry and the exclusive focus on that carries a forgetfulness of all the other aspects of your 'identity'.

This is a very interesting thing to observe for yourself. Examine whatever you take to be a continuing feature of your existence. Is it actual, in the sense of something that presents itself without interruption, or is it cognitive in the sense of an interpretation which you apply to it? You might say, "Of course I am always a woman, I don't suddenly turn into a man." But if you are not present in the awareness of being a woman maybe that signifier is a mere functioning evoked by circumstances, not an essential definition.

This is something to examine again and again until you see that there is no continuing, enduring, defining essence in anyone or anything. What you have is a moment-by-moment coming together of patterns of experience just like a kaleidoscope turning and turning, revealing pattern after pattern. When this is lost sight of, experience appears as something solidly real, and ones freedom to be becomes increasingly restricted.

Loosening ones fixed beliefs creates new possibilities as if one were looking through someone else's eyes. This new view acts much as a therapists' who helps us to move out of the foreclosure of our familiar assumptions. Then we can stretch and move about a bit more, express ourselves a bit more, because the constraints that were embedded in the position we were in are now revealed as being constructed by historical events. The beliefs and habits that restricted us were not innate, they were not internally, essentially definitive of who we are. They were merely patterns created by the juxtaposition of circumstances.

This awakening brings the beginning of the real work of transformation, for as soon as you start to see yourself as movement rather than as a solid 'thing', two things open up – fear and terror. The fear is: "I will fall apart, bad things will happen and I won't know what to do." And the terror comes from a sense of the absolute unknowability of the situation: "If everything is dynamic and changing, how can my accumulation of knowledge from the past help me as I move into the future. My knowledge and skills were forged under certain circumstances and now these circumstances have changed I don't know how to cope. I cannot rely on what I know." As the Prime Minister said recently: "Just because Britain was once a wealthy country it doesn't mean it will always be a wealthy country." That is a very shocking thing for a prime minister to say – but it is, actually, very true. Some countries that are now poor will become rich and some that are now rich will become poor. Those who have lots of friends might die alone and those who are very lonely and feel unloved may suddenly find a new blossoming in their life. We don't know what lies ahead. So we need to look carefully at the assumptions we operate from.

### **Attending to how things are, not how you want them to be**

To be mindful is to attend to the emergence or the presentation or the unveiling of your existence as it arises, with yourself as a flow of participation in a world that is not something apart from you. It cannot possibly be about mastery and control for you are not in charge. But if you are careful, if you attend to the emergence of situations, you will find a way to proceed. Scripts, rehearsed lines and practiced positions do not support free responsive participation for they clog up the space of experience. Not knowing is a more useful starting point as it encourages the reception of the field rather than projection onto it.

The most important thing is to be open-hearted, to be connected, to be welcoming to the particularities of each moment as it occurs. This is the real heart of mindfulness; to be attentive to how things are, not how you want or believe them to be. That is to say: “I will respond to what is there. I am the attendant. I am present with the world as it shows itself. I am not the boss. I am not in charge. I am not trying to direct it like a theatre director. I am not wanting to set up some *mise-en-scène*, some particular elaboration that will be comforting to me, for then all I will ever encounter are reflections of myself.”

## **How do we practice mindfulness?**

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So how do we practice mindfulness? First of all we have to observe how we get distracted. Distraction is going on all the time. To gain a sense of this we practice staying peacefully by simply sitting quietly and observing the flow of the breath as it goes in and out of our nostrils. This meditation is exquisitely boring for there is nothing intrinsically interesting in the movement of air in your nostrils. However, there is a lot that is interesting in the movement of your mind as your attention wanders hither and thither, focusing on anything other than the breath. These interesting thoughts, memories, feelings and so on are, once the meditation begins, merely distractions from the task. Thus this is a training in renunciation. We decide: “I am willing, in order to develop a focussed attention, to renounce my habitual fascination with the contents of my own mind.” This is the beginning of meditation. As long as we are pre-occupied with our habitual interests, as long as we, like Narcissus, fall into the image of ourselves reflected through our own cogitation, there is no real space for the other.

We sit quietly, breathing in and out, simply focusing our attention on our breath. Whenever our attention goes away from the breath and we become aware of it, very gently bring that focussed attention back to the breath. Don't think about where you went, don't blame yourself for having got lost and don't not enter into fascination with anything that has happened. You simply come back. Otherwise, if you start thinking about all the thoughts that have arisen you will never be free of the endless flow of thoughts.

There is no end to thinking, so as long as we are caught up in it our mind will never be calm and peaceful. We are not trying to stop thinking, merely to mindfully observe a stable reference point in order to wean ourselves from the addictive intoxication of involvement with thoughts.

You can also use an external focus, a small stone or pebble, because for some people using the gaze is better. You place the chosen object about two arms length in front of you and let your gaze settle on it. The key thing is the intention: “I will focus my attention on this object and I am deciding that this focus for my attention is more important than anything else.” In that moment, everything else becomes a distraction. Thus, all the things that would normally fascinate you, carry you here and there and bring value and meaning to your existence are now reframed, redefined as being distractions. Having stabilised our focussed attention we can use it to scan through our bodies, revealing the arising and passing of momentary events – sensations, feelings etc. The key focus here is simple naming of what is occurring without elaborating interpretative narratives.

## **Always fresh**

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Then we can broaden our focus to a general mindfulness, simply registering whatever is occurring in the fullness of its presentation without interfering with ideas of liking/not liking, useful/ not useful and so on. To be mindful means to be attentive moment-by-moment to the evolving situation. That means neither falling into what is arising nor standing back from it.



For example, I am aware of speaking with you. I am speaking like this because we have a particular topic and we are a particular bunch of people. How I speak is determined by how you are. That is normal life isn't it? That is to say, I don't speak out to you from somewhere inside me. The actual site of my activity is here in our shared field of experience. I can move to being more mindful of what I take to be my subjective experience, and I can move to being more mindful of what appears to me as the experiential field of objects I encounter. In particular we want to abide where mindfulness itself is present at the interactive juncture of both. The importance of this is that it is something always fresh. If you enter into this realm of practice you will never be bored again, because life is endlessly interesting since you are not standing on anything stale. You are not standing anywhere; you are moving in space. You are moving in space with all phenomena. It is an endless flow of experience and we are inside this flow. We are in the river of experience; we are not on the bank observing it. Even when we seem to be observing our existence we are sitting on a bit of drift wood as it goes down the river; there is no solid ground to stand on. You are right on the point of the emergence of the world. That is an amazing thing; you are not an observer looking at life outside you. What is going on is that you are in life, you are life. And that is a very different kind of experience.

When we conceptualise, when we reify, when we create an essence out of these endlessly changing moments of experience, we put a huge burden on ourselves. There are many kinds of burdens that we are given which we cannot easily escape from. Can we find freedom and even contentment within these constraints? In some cultures to be born female is seen as an incredible burden because the culture over-determines what the girl can and cannot do. From birth to death she will always be under the power of some male; her dad, her husband, her brothers. They will always know exactly what she should do. That is an incredible burden. However, our neurosis can create similar restrictions as we learn to accept our negative beliefs about ourselves. We say: "I can't do this, I can't do that." "I'll be in trouble if I did that. People wouldn't like me if I did that." When you start to observe what a neurosis is you see that it is a squeezing, a diminishing. It is a foreclosure. It closes the moment down before the moment has even arrived.

If you think of your own life, how many doors have been open in front of you that you didn't go through? What was it that made the threshold so high? What was it that inhibited us in taking a chance, taking a risk, trusting the movement into a world that was not saying, 'no'. The 'no' was in us. As was done to us by others we have also done to ourselves.

### **The state of awareness is the basis of freedom**

Once we experience our own being to be open, ungraspable, indefinable as a presence which is always present yet not as a fixed entity, there is room to relax. Our actual identity is always already present – we don't have to establish it. From that experience we can see that our thoughts, feelings, and sensations, experiences which had seemed very personal and private, are actually aspects of compassion. They concern our being in the world with others. Thus everything that arises, whether sensation, thought or feeling, is an expression of our connection with others. They don't show the truth about ourselves because there is no truth to ourselves. Since you were born you have met many people. If you go to visit your parents, when you cross the threshold and see your mother do you change? Why? Because it is your mum. That is what you do; you become the daughter of your mum, you become the son of your mum. When you are not there you are not the daughter of your mother. You are on an abstract level, just as you are always a woman if you are tying your shoes or not. However, such an identity is essentially an abstraction, because when you are talking with your friends you talk in way you would not talk with your mother. That is to say, you are constellated out of all the factors of your potential; you

are constellated differently in different environments. That is an amazing fact. It means: "My existence is for the other." My existence is for the other because my existence always belongs to the other. What belongs to the self is the self. And what is the self? It is a state of awareness; a state of awareness which experiences the arising of the subject and the object together in the matrix of interaction. That is the basis of freedom.

Mindfulness is a commitment to remember who we are. If we think of the 'members' as the limbs then to be *re*-membered is to put our limbs all back together, to become intact. Many religions have the myth of the slaughtered god who is chopped into many pieces. And *re*-membering ourselves means recollecting, gathering ourselves back so that rather than being dispersed we are present as the potential to reveal whatever the situation requires. We are *re*-membering ourselves in the service of the interactive matrix. This is not a *re*-membering or returning to how we were before, but rather maintaining our presence in the integration of the ever-open ground of our being with the ever-open field of our becoming,