

# Intro to Mindfulness Pt 2 (20) Thinking from Non-clinging

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Welcome to the last talk on the symptoms and results of non-clinging. Non-clinging, letting go of clinging, dissolving clinging, and having clinging lessen until maybe it disappears – these are not easy to do. You can't necessarily sit down and just let go, let go, let go, like we did in the last meditation. But as we keep practicing, every time we come back to breathing, to mindfulness, to a moment of clarity, to knowing and seeing, it is a kind of letting go. It's a way of no longer feeding the clinging and attachments we have.

One moment like that might not seem very significant. Still, you can see the dramatic results of the accumulation of moments of not feeding or being involved in our clinging. You can see this in highlight if you consider that many of us have spent decades with thinking that's propelled by some form of compulsion, attachment, clinging, wanting, or not wanting. Compared to that, the amount of time it takes to begin softening and relaxing is relatively short. Even though the process might be imperceptible in the moment, it still can happen much faster than the opposite happened.

As we begin to lessen our attachments and the drive to be attached – to cling, to repress, to resist, whatever form the attachment takes – something begins shifting within us. It's not just a matter of clinging or not clinging. We begin to appreciate that something is growing within us, a different way of being, a different sensibility.

That has been the theme for this week. A sense of well-being can grow, a sense of spaciousness, expansiveness, a sense of peace, and ease. A sense of feeling more connected to our lives and what's happening now can grow. A deeper sense of creative thinking or a deeper wellspring of thinking in a new and better way can arise within us.

There have been times when I felt overwhelmed by things in my life, by what was going on, or by having too many things happening. My mind was actively spinning, running, and jumping from one thing to another. I've learned when that happens, I should sit and meditate for a while. It doesn't take long for things to settle and relax enough that the quality and the characteristics of my thinking change. The thinking does not jump so much. It's more relaxed and settled and able to address one thing at a time clearly, whatever the issue, rather than jumping around.

Letting go is not just a superficial thing we do. It begins to open up and release the wellspring of intelligence that's in the whole of who we are. Whenever there's attachment, clinging, or repression going on, we're limiting and restricting ourselves. In this practice, we move towards freedom and having an unrestricted feeling inside.

It doesn't mean we're free to do whatever we want to, but there's no sense of the movement within us being restricted. There can be a very different way of thinking. Deep meditation sometimes has a certain kind of rudimentary, simple, very light, very calm, almost silent way of thinking that is about the present moment experience. Wisdom can arise from this deep source.

When you have non-clinging – not easy, but certainly possible for every single one of you – when you begin sensing that you're letting go or relaxing even temporarily, one of the things to appreciate is the different way that you think. It is a deeper or more profound way of thinking. Some of you might have a different vocabulary for it. It might be that the thinking feels more holistic, or simply that the thinking is more calm and settled.

You don't have to use any of these words. You can discover for yourself the difference between thinking that's driven by clinging, compulsion, agitation, or fear versus thinking where we feel settled, at ease, safe, contented, and here in the fullness of the moment. With practice, you can see for yourself how there are two different ways of thinking. Maybe you'll have your own way of describing that distinction.

These days I'm particularly fond of the idea of profound contemplation. This is a way of thinking from deep within, from the belly almost, where we are settled and connected with a holistic feeling of being really here in the body and seeing the wisdom that wells up from within. That kind of thinking can have a different kind of intelligence. Different forms of creativity and wisdom can come.

This first manifested in me when I was living at a Buddhist monastery. Creativity started flowing through me that hadn't existed in my life before. I started writing poetry. I started creating art to give voice to this deeper wellspring of emotion and creativity. Certainly, the art and the poetry required thinking, but it was a very different kind of thinking. There was spontaneity, connectivity, and freedom in it. It felt like it was not me thinking. I couldn't take ownership of those thoughts because they seemed to be coming from someplace deep inside that knew better, knew best.

We shouldn't automatically believe everything that comes from this deeper place. There's always a place for checks and balances, taking a second look at whatever we're thinking, and questioning everything. But it can feel so satisfying to think from a deeper source within where thinking flows in a very satisfying way. A sense of flow emerges. Some people find that happens as they write. There can be a spontaneous sense of flow and surprise at what comes.

How I describe this doesn't have to be how it is for you. The important principle is that as you begin to relax, settle, get calmer, and are less driven by attachments, you might notice that the nature of your thinking changes. It's valuable to see that change and appreciate it if it feels right and good. Appreciating the consequences of non-clinging strengthens our connection to non-clinging.

If all we did in our practice was let go and not cling, why would we do it? But if we can feel the benefits of non-clinging – really feel it, sense it, experience it – then non-clinging is not a duty. It's not just letting go of some suffering we have. We let go to receive the benefits of this life of freedom and mindfulness. We come home to these benefits.

This introduction to mindfulness series, which started at the beginning of the year, has been long. I hope the teachings this week have filled out and expanded the domain of mindfulness. These teachings are the culmination of the basic mindfulness instructions that include being mindful of the consequences of the practice and the benefits that come from it.

I hope you all stay well and connected and find your deeper source of creativity, intelligence, and wisdom through this practice. Thank you very much.