A Note from our Buddhist Chaplain

When we make contact with these patterns through the breath, we free up stored energy for our own becoming. When we practice mindfulness, we relax the body, which relaxes the mind, which frees the energy of the heart. The practice is simple.

1. Practice grounding yourself in your body. Notice what is happening in your body. Describe the sensations of the body in a place of safety. Acknowledge the emotions that arises. What if, rather than watching television, or scrolling through social media, we were to enter into silence? We can begin to notice our surroundings in a moment of stillness. Notice whatever emotion arises as well—letting that be as it is. Dropping the storyline and staying with the direct moment.

2. Here are some ways we can find that calm abiding in the midst of our everyday lives:

   a. When you wake up in the morning, notice what is happening in your body. Describe the sensations of the body in a place of safety.
   b. When you are in a moment of stress, practice grounding yourself in your body. Notice whatever emotion arises as well—letting that be as it is.
   c. Practice mindfulness while you are doing your work, the body is understood to be a container for the heart and mind. Mindfulness is about coming home to the energy they present. I have had several good teachers who have brought this home—including Joanna Macy, a visionary leader, who translated the poet Rilke, with an eye towards our tumultuous times. Let everything happen: the faces of the people around us.

   d. Notice the natural world. Nature helps us to see the patterns of constriction. You can find the patterns in your body by noticing where the breath is difficult. Practice breathing in the upper lungs, then the middle lungs. Then, breathing through the lower belly. As we are doing so, noticing what physical sensations arise: whether the breath moves freely or if it is constricted in any area. Where there is a pattern of constriction, see if you can breathe through this freely or if it is constricted in any area.

   e. Practice mindfulness while you are in a moment of stress. Notice whatever emotion arises as well—letting that be as it is. Dropping the storyline and staying with the direct moment. Notice the natural world. Nature helps us to see the patterns of constriction. You can find the patterns in your body by noticing where the breath is difficult.

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