



So, welcome back to the second week of this four-part retreat for *Tricycle Magazine*. I'm Loch Kelly, and I'm very happy to be here with you. I hope you're able to get a sense of the view that we're presenting here as the context of the retreat, which is that the awakensness that you are seeking is already here; that you are this Buddha nature; that it's just covered over and that simply by uncovering and discovering your true nature, we can slowly but surely awaken in this lifetime. And I have no doubt that that's possible in the midst of your daily life.

So let's begin to look at what's in the way. Interestingly, in Buddhism, thinking is considered the sixth sense. So we have our normal five senses, right? Hearing, seeing, smelling, taste and touch. And then thinking is considered a sense. So the question is, who or what do these senses appear to? Thinking is an organizing sense, so it labels, but if thinking stops and loops upon itself, it creates what's called the seventh consciousness, which is afflictive consciousness, which is the sense of a small, separate sense of self located in our heads, listening to what I'm saying now.

When thought loops on thought, when thinking about thinking creates a sense of self-referencing, what happens is there is a little Mini-Me created in our heads. This Mini-Me, this little sense of self, is created out of what in psychology is called self-awareness, which is the ability to think about thinking: "I can't believe I just did that. What's wrong with me? Oh, I better stop that"—"Okay, I'm not going to say what I'm thinking to this person. Oh, that's a good idea." That ability to observe is a very important function of thinking. However, when it takes up a position of self-referencing, it co-opts the boundary program of the body and actually creates a felt sense as if there's a little person, a homunculus, a little character called "Me" living in your body that even regards your own body as a other than itself. So this, when this little looping pattern of thinking creates the sense of self and uses the body boundary program to make it feel like it's an entity in our brain, it seeks satisfaction and nourishment and protection and connection outside.

However, there's nothing for it to be nourished by, nothing for it to eat, because it's not a real entity. So it's perpetually dissatisfied. And we don't even see this sense of self. We are looking from it and it's completely absorbed in itself and looking to itself and outside for something to gratify and satisfy. And this is the sense of suffering that in a moment can relax, and when it does, you'll discover that there is a freedom from grasping, a freedom from aversion, immediately. So what happens when it thinks it needs to protect itself and gratify itself and satisfy itself, it looks for problems. It looks, "I've got to solve this. What's wrong? There's something wrong. I think I need something. Something's missing. I better get this. Let me try

Loch Kelly
Week Two, *Open-Hearted Awareness: A Cure for Our Addictive Thinking*
September 14, 2015
What Obstructs Awakening?
©2015 Tricycle Magazine

that. Let me try this,” and it piggybacks on real physical needs like hunger, love, relationship and creates an addiction.

So the normal satisfaction, then the secondary satisfaction creates a secondary addictive type of suffering. When this goes, everything's simpler. So there's problem solving even when there's a sense of satisfaction or relief for one second when we have piggybacked and we've achieved something and we've walked to a top of a hill with friends. And we've gotten there, and so the seeking for one moment and the goal-oriented activity of trying to satisfy it relaxes, there's a sense of relief, there's a sense of freedom from a separate sense of self.

In fact, most of our activities for fun are done in a way that we're relieving, trying to find relief. Listening to music, we can for a moment get lost from that seeking. Walking in nature, playing sports—things like this. You get a moment of entering a flow state where that separate sense of self is not here. But right now, let's see what happens if this problem solver can relax for a moment. It's not the problems of everyday life. Those we will deal with. We're not transcending, we're not leaving life. We're shifting this secondary sense of problem solving, seeing what happens if we just let that part retire for little bit and see what's here.

So simply ask yourself this question now and look back with awareness to what's here. What's here now if there's no problem to solve? Nowhere to go, nothing to do, and no problem to solve on the level of identity. So just inquire and look back—feel back—o awareness. What's here? Certainly sensations are here, but who's here? What's aware, what's this like? What's here now, when there's no problem to solve?

Just feel both the absence and relief—the openness, the spaciousness—or whatever you're feeling. And then the presence of what's here as well as the absence of what goes away. And you can even pause the video at this point and let yourself experience this for as long as you like. So now that you've felt this sense of what happens in a moment, perhaps you're able to see that when the problem solver that's perpetually separate and looking, seeking, is just relaxed, many people report a sense that the co-opting of the boundary program relaxes from their identity and there's a feeling of boundlessness, spaciousness—a relief from striving; a feeling of no aversion, therefore no fear.

And, on the positive side, a feeling actually of safety. Of okay-ness. Perhaps you felt this, perhaps not. You can try it again later. But these are the reports from people, even the first time they do it, feeling of okay-ness and well-being. Because when the separate sense of self relaxes,

Loch Kelly
Week Two, *Open-Hearted Awareness: A Cure for Our Addictive Thinking*
September 14, 2015
What Obstructs Awakening?
©2015 Tricycle Magazine

just this is here. And just this is free: free of suffering, free of craving, free of aversion, free of grasping. Free of perpetual dissatisfaction.

So just this kind of glimpse is the type of practice or non-practice that we're going to explore. Small glimpse, may last one moment, one minute, one hour. Doesn't matter. It's that direct experience that's beyond experience. It's the uncovering of who you've always been. And this is the ending point and the starting point in this particular method. Then no big surprise, you'll go back to the Mini-Me system and then you'll learn to unhook and shift.

Drop from head to heart would be the next pointer, to see what that's like. But if awareness was attached or identified to thought, and you simply just, without even knowing how you do it, just simply see what it feels like if awareness can unhook, step back, feel and know your throat directly from within, and then feel and know your sense of awareness and aliveness from within your body. From head to heart-mind. And just see what it's like if you don't look up to thought to know, and you're not looking down from thought using a tension. That you've actually unhooked, step back, and the knowing is directly from the inherent awareness within you that knows your body, your breath, and knows awareness itself directly from within.

So the intelligence has moved from thought-based knowing to awareness-based, seeing and being. So again, you can pause the video and just hang out or play with this for a little longer if you like. And when you're ready, come on back. Or just notice what it's like now if you were able to drop from head to heart, to heart-mind, to open-hearted awareness, to see what that's like.

What does it feel like to know from here? So this sense that thinking is not the problem. Thinking is the sixth sense. It's really the thought looping on itself that creates the separate sense of self. In Theravada Buddhism, there's a famous sutra called the *Honey Ball Sutra*, where the Buddha is saying that the linchpin for identification and creation of suffering is called *papancha* in Pali language. *Papancha* is translated as conceptual proliferation. Which means being caught in the prison of your own mind. There's an interesting Native American definition of insanity that's similar that says, "Insanity is thinking, thinking, thinking in your head." So this sense of only knowing thought as a way of knowing is what we hope to expand your definition.

Even the first stages of mindfulness are using attention and witnessing of thought, but it is actually the discovery of awareness-based and awareness-embodied-based knowing that allowed thought to return to its natural function. So thought is a wonderful part of a group but not meant to be the leader or the center of our identity. This is the key; this is the opportunity, to awaken

Loch Kelly
Week Two, *Open-Hearted Awareness: A Cure for Our Addictive Thinking*
September 14, 2015
What Obstructs Awakening?
©2015 Tricycle Magazine

from this. It requires not just the freedom from waking up from that sense of separate self, but we need a new operating system.

We need to discover the awareness that is already who we've always been. And it is that palpable though invisible feeling of being that is our ground. So this kind of discovery is possible within our lifetime and within everyday life so that we don't have to go off to a cave or join a monastery in order to awaken. Here and now, wherever we live, whatever we're doing. So let's try another small glimpse now.

We're shifting from identifying with awareness, to observing awareness, to abiding as awareness. So just notice what it's like to be aware of thought. You can ask yourself or say to yourself, "I'm curious what the next thought will be." And remain as that observing awareness. Just curious. Maybe there are thoughts; maybe there are no thoughts. The more important thing is residing or observing from the curious awareness. Nonjudgmental as thoughts arise or less thoughts. The next question to ask yourself is: "I'm curious about the space in which thoughts are moving." So just be interested instead of in thoughts or no thoughts, be interested in space. Objectless, content-less, space in which sounds, thoughts, sensations, come and go. What if that becomes your interest? "I'm curious about the space." Boundless. Open.

And now, just adding, "I'm curious about awareness." Awareness of space, awareness of thoughts, awareness aware of itself. So resting as that which is neither subject nor object, but includes and is aware of itself, as itself, inherent within space and thought—including everything. So that the knowing is not looking up to thought to now and not going down to sleep, to rest. Not a separate observer, but inherent, spacious and pervasive. What is it like to be curious about the awareness that's aware of space and thoughts, sensations that are coming and going?

Just look back, rest back, to that which is open and inherent within. And see what it's like when you've shifted from thought-based knowing to awareness-based knowing. It's curious, isn't it? And curiosity is one of the qualities of heart-mind. When we're located in thought, which is functionally supposed to be dualistic and comparing and contrasting as a tool, when we're located there, we're judging all the time. "What's this? What's that? Better than, less than, right, wrong, up, down."

Because we're identified with a function that's supposed to be doing that. When we allow that sixth sense of thinking to rest, then we're in the spacious awareness that's inherent within our body and the open-hearted awareness that's all around and connected to a sense of well-being and non-conceptual knowing. Well, then if we want to use a sense or part of ourselves like our

Loch Kelly
Week Two, *Open-Hearted Awareness: A Cure for Our Addictive Thinking*
September 14, 2015
What Obstructs Awakening?
©2015 Tricycle Magazine

hand, we can move our hand or we can listen to something, or we can think about something. Or we can not use our hands or not listen to something or not use thought to know. Just alert, clear, clean, fresh. Awareness. That's happening by itself, without our help.

So as you can see, we appreciate thinking for its very important role. It serves us well. However, it's been trying to do two jobs. It's been trying to do its job of functionally thinking, helping us reflect, plan, do things in the world functionally. But it's wrapped around itself and tried to take on the role of identity. And when it has, it's created suffering. And so by using deliberate mindfulness we work our way toward relaxing the chattering mind.

The image from Zen in the resting method of meditation, *shikantaza*—or just doing long sitting practices without controlling or manipulating everything—called the resting method, is to say that muddy water, let stand, becomes clear. Yeah? So this approach is longer meditations until the chattering mind settles and there's a calmness, and then this clear awareness shines through. Then the next stage of effortless mindfulness, even if we start with deliberate mindfulness or resting method, is to inquire, "Are you aware of the spacious awareness, the clear awake, empty awareness, or is the empty awareness where you're aware from or what's aware now?"

If you are still meditating on the experience of empty awareness, there's still a meditator here. So in some ways, awakening begins when we let go of the meditator and discover that there's an awareness that's always already been aware. That is who we have been and includes our particular-ness and the aliveness of our humanity. So this is the kind of shift that we'll be doing as we go through this retreat, is to discover and uncover the natural mind, the source of mind, this open-hearted awareness which can act and naturally wants to express itself compassionately.

Wants to be engaged, because it has less fear. It has more sense of being non-separate. It has the sense of empty awakens, open-hearted awareness, is free of the dissatisfaction and therefore realizes what a fortunate human birth we have. Thank you very much for today. I'll see you next week.