Wising Up to Delusion

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The definition of freedom in the Buddha's words—one of the most concise definitions for freedom—is the absence of greed, the absence of aversion, the absence of delusion.

On my recent retreat, this definition became very meaningful for me to take in. I really started to see that there is nothing we can get that will create or allow that freedom. There's nothing to get to drop into that freedom. It's the letting go. And so a lot of our practice is exploring these things that are in the way of freedom.

We've been exploring greed and aversion a lot. It doesn't take much to turn and look at your experience to start to see greed and aversion. They're really obvious at times—the obvious wanting, the obvious "get this out of here, get me out of here"—to the more subtle forms of greed, something more like perhaps expectation or anticipation, subtler kinds of wanting, leaning in, wanting to know. And aversion ranges from the more obvious kinds, which you're all quite familiar with, to the more subtle: dissatisfaction, feelings of boredom, a sense of "just by paying attention to this properly, I'll figure it out and it will go away."

We explore greed and aversion a lot and talk about it quite a bit. We mention delusion a lot but talk less about how it's actually experienced. What is delusion? How do we know delusion? Sometimes people even say, "How could it be possible to know delusion? By its very definition, wouldn't delusion be not knowable?"

Tonight I'd really like to explore this question. Can we get familiar with patterns that reveal how delusion works in our minds? I'd like to spend some time exploring various aspects of delusion, with a lot of stories from my own practice.

One of the more obvious ways we see delusion is that it can arise out of greed and aversion. If aversion is present, for instance—probably everybody has seen this kind of thing—if there's a state of mind of anger or frustration or some kind of dislike, often we see that it impacts the way we take information in. The state of mind can create a filter on our experience such that we take certain things in and not others. You're frustrated or angry, and then everything you see just confirms why you should be frustrated and angry. You're taking in the things that confirm that state and not taking in things that don't confirm it. This is a form of delusion. That filter creates a non-contact with aspects of experience or situation that perhaps would provide evidence to the contrary of the state.

So that's one way that delusion can manifest. And yet delusion is way more subtle than that. In fact, if

delusion weren't present in our minds, greed and aversion wouldn't arise. Delusion is a component of greed and aversion, always. There's always a component of delusion within the very state of aversion, within the very state of greed. I'll come back to this piece later.

While delusion is at the foundation of greed and aversion, delusion can also arise in the absence of greed and aversion. So while delusion can arise from greed and aversion, greed and aversion may not arise when delusion is present.

Tonight's talk will basically offer some information that may help you uncover delusion in your experience. I want to talk about it from different perspectives—three main perspectives I'd like to explore, three ways that delusion comes up and is experienced. The first is the most obvious form of delusion: a simple not connecting with experience, spaced-out states, things like that. The second is delusion based on our views, our agendas, our opinions.

And the third is a delusion that is, I'd say, based more on being a human being—the delusions we all share. So the middle level of delusion involves our own personal delusions around who we are, what we think, and what's important to us. And then this deeper level of delusion is a level of misperception that we all share.

The first kind of delusion, this disconnectedness, is simply not being here in the present moment. Not connecting to the present moment. Being spaced out, being lost in thought.

Shakespeare was a brilliant observer of humanity. In *The Tempest*, I found a couple of really beautiful quotes that point right to the state of delusion. One of them addresses this terrain of just being checked out, disconnected. In this part of the play, two characters are watching another character who's been enchanted by a magical being. In being enchanted, he's seeing all kinds of things that aren't there, fighting demons that aren't there. The two characters are talking about this person who's been enchanted, and they say: "This is a strange repose, to be asleep with eyes wide open, standing, speaking, moving, and yet so fast asleep."

This is actually a familiar state to us. How many times do we drive down the freeway and arrive at our destination with no memory of anything that happened? Standing, speaking, moving, and yet so fast asleep.

I like that in this scene from *The Tempest*, the person they're talking about has been enchanted. Because as I thought about this today, enchantment is essentially what happens to us. We get enchanted with our thoughts. We get enchanted with a world that's created in our minds, and we live in that enchantment. We sometimes wake up into a world of creation. This becomes obvious on retreat—we wake up into these three-dimensional worlds of mind creation. It's like, wow, where did that come from? The mind gets enchanted by them.

This term "enchantment" is actually significant in the unfolding and deepening of practice. The Buddha

points to disenchantment—a letting go of being enchanted with the things we think will make us happy. We actually spend quite a bit of time in this enchanted place, so the moment of waking up, the moment of coming into mindfulness again, becomes important. I spoke about this the last time I talked. That moment of waking up—we begin to get a flavor of that kind of delusion as we wake up into these worlds of mind creation. You begin to get a flavor of what that space of delusion is and see it as mind creation.

That's where the delusion is powerful—when we're lost in the thought of it. Certainly before I started practicing, I would be lost in worlds of thought. I had a partner with whom I had a rather contentious relationship, and I would have all these thoughts about things he was going to do. I'd be getting mad about those things—creations in my mind of things he would do in the future—and I'd be getting furious with him in my mind. I'd come out of that, and it wouldn't even occur to me that this was a creation of the mind. I thought, no, that's something he might do.

This is delusion.

At least here and now, in watching your thoughts and seeing—and this was a great gift of the practice for me—the worlds that we wake up to, we recognize: this is a creation of the mind. It has no inherent reality. The belief in the reality of the thoughts, that's really where the delusion is. The belief in the... I don't quite know what the right word is, because thoughts can reflect reality. So I don't want to say that thoughts are inherently not to be believed. But there's a process of believing and enchantment with those thoughts. That's where delusion slips in—in the process of believing and then becoming enchanted.

We can know thoughts as thoughts, and there the delusion can't take root when we see thoughts arising as thoughts.

There are other ways this kind of disconnection delusion functions. Some very familiar states—sloth and torpor, restlessness—these have a delusive component to them because when we're not aware of them, they tend to make it difficult to contact present moment experience. Doubt also has this effect.

The wavering quality of doubt—What should I do? How should I do it? Is this right? Is this the right practice? Can I do this? I can't do this—this kind of mind state has the tendency to keep us disconnected from the present moment.

The second kind of delusion goes a little bit deeper, actually, because this delusion is based in views, agendas, and concepts. We may be completely aware of what's happening, we may actually be present for what's happening, but not aware that we are seeing experience through a view, through an agenda, through a belief.

The views I'd like to explore right now are our personal views—kinds of societal conditioning, views about who we are, what our roles are, what we're capable of, what our states of mind are. When we're immersed in views like this, we're relating to experience from a perspective. Again, very similar to what I talked about with respect to greed and aversion—there can be a filter over our minds. When we look out

at the world, we're taking in information in a selective way. Other views function this way as well. We're immersed in a view or an agenda, something that we're pursuing, and we gravitate to experiences or evidence that confirms it, but don't see things to the contrary.

In psychology, this is called selective attention. And actually it's a very useful process in our minds—it helps us navigate the world. Yet it's fed by delusion. Where the delusion really slips in is that we believe our minds are accurately recording experience. We go through the world and assume that our eyes are like cameras and our ears are like microphones, just picking up everything. But they're not. We are picking things up selectively, often based on our opinions.

There's a study that really captures how delusion works with selective attention. People were asked to watch a video with people passing a basketball between players wearing white shirts. They were asked to count how many times the basketball passed between people wearing the white shirts. Most people could do that—they got the right answer. So they were pretty good at the task.

During that video, they had a gorilla walk through the basketball court. At the end they asked, "Did you see the gorilla?" What gorilla? They play the video back, and when you're looking with the idea there might be a gorilla there, there's no way you're going to miss it. This gorilla is as big as the basketball players. It's not on the corners or anything—it's walking right in the middle, stops dead center, stands there for a few moments, and then walks off.

Such is the power of delusion that a good number of people said, "That can't be the same video." That is delusion. Selective attention we can understand—oh yeah, my mind will focus, it's amazing it can focus so much that it's not going to see the gorilla. But to deny it—"that can't be the same video, my eyes would have seen that"—that's delusion.

This study really points to just how much we can miss, the big things we can miss. It's quite stunning what we can miss in our lives. To have the idea that we're walking through life with our eyes and ears and sense apparatus just being like recorders—it's not the way our minds work. This is really helpful to know about our minds.

At one point my friends teased me because I kept making assumptions about things. They called me "Andrea the Assumer" because I would see little bits of information and then put things together, and they'd say, "You need to look at all the information." We have this tendency to be selective about taking things in. When we can start to see this tendency, we can at least be open to the fact that if somebody says there was a gorilla there, we wouldn't say, "Oh, there wasn't a gorilla there."

We have views about ourselves—about who we are, what we do. And in a way, these views of ourselves, and we have views of others as well.

This is another big piece that we see—the judgments, the views, the opinions we have about people. And when somebody is putting a view onto us, we really feel that. "You're the one who is always X." It's like,

well, wait a minute. No, I'm not that. I'm not always that.

But we do that to ourselves as well. "I'm the one who's always miserable. That's me." That was a view I had about myself. And the identification with that was so strong that even when I noticed evidence to the contrary—like some happiness—my mind would go something like, "Well, yeah, I'm happy now. But I know that what I really am is miserable." Just kind of almost dismissing that.

So this kind of view that we have about ourselves—again, that's delusion to take that as who we are. This is an interesting area to explore in our practice, the area of views and beliefs about ourselves. There can be habits of mind, like "miserable" was for me. That one actually disappeared fairly quickly after I started practicing. But there was another pattern for myself of self-hatred that was quite a bit stronger.

Observing that pattern of self-hatred a lot, and then at one point really seeing the belief in it as just a belief—"This is just a thought. This is just a thought"—that seeing through the believing aspect of self-hatred had a very potent effect on the whole pattern. The thoughts of self-hatred—"you're no good, you're a failure"—still arose. And yet the belief in those thoughts didn't arise.

So one way to explore these kinds of views is to, when you see an opinion about yourself arise, check in and see how much do you believe it. Not to try to tell yourself, "This isn't true." That's actually trying to overlay something that's not happening on the experience. Often when these strong views arise, telling yourself the opposite just doesn't work. If my mind were telling me "you're a failure, you're no good," to tell myself "well, that's not true, you're good"—it's like that energy of "you're a failure" is so strong. It's like trying to douse a fire with a few drops of water. It just doesn't meet that energy.

And yet, to acknowledge that what's happening is there's the thought "you're no good" arising along with believing—that is a pretty potent effect on the mind. "Thought: I'm no good. Believing I'm no good is what's happening right now." This opens the mind to recognizing that believing is also a process happening right now, in the moment.

With particularly strong patterns of views that we hold about ourselves, views that box ourselves in with this kind of delusion—"This is who I am. I'm a failure"—recognizing how strong the belief is begins to undermine the process of believing by simply recognizing, "Oh, this is a process. Believing is happening right now." Explore that, play with that. See what happens for you.

Another way views get formed that have delusion embedded in them and create struggle, difficulty, and challenge for us: views can be formed based on our direct experience. Some views are formed based on things we make up entirely—not really based on much reality at all. But some views are formed based on our experience. And yet that experience may be, again, selective. We have that selective nature to our minds. So we take in some information and form a view based on that limited information.

The classic teaching story from the Buddhist texts about this is the elephant and the blind people, where the blind people each touch a part of the elephant.

I'm sure many of you know this story. I was actually surprised to discover that it came from the Buddhist texts, this particular teaching story.

Some people touched the legs of the animal, some touched the side, some the tail, some the ears. And then when asked, "What's an elephant like?" some would say, "Well, it's like a post." Others would say it's like the wall of a storeroom. Others would say it's like a broom. Others would say it's like a hose—depending on which part of the elephant they had touched.

In describing it, the teaching story goes, they come to blows, disagreeing about what an elephant is like. And this again is delusion. We hold to our views, believe our views, rather than asking, "Oh, you think it's like a storeroom? Where do you get that idea?" Rather than having a conversation about it, we get entrenched in our opinions because we have some direct experience that we've created our view out of.

The Buddha actually cautioned in a very strong way about our creation of views out of our meditative experience in particular. He said these views that come out of meditative experience can be some of the most deeply entrenched.

The classic example is somebody who goes into a deep state of jhana and has an experience of the world being completely infinite. And somebody else going into a meditative experience has the deep experience of there being an edge to the world. In having a conversation back and forth, the one who believes the world is infinite says, "Well, you just haven't seen past the edges of your world." And the other who sees there are edges says, "Well, you just haven't seen far enough out to see the edge." So they get this entrenchment in their beliefs.

We can have views created based on incomplete information—not necessarily that we're misperceiving, but that we're forming views and then putting that interpretation back, seeing the world through that interpretation. "That is the way it is." That's delusion. Not the perception itself. Feeling the leg of the elephant and thinking, "That's like a post"—that's an accurate description of the leg of an elephant. I could agree with that. A correct perception, but not a correct extrapolation to the bigger picture.

Then there are views that get created just because we're told things repeatedly. Commercials and marketing do a good job of this for us. Society does this—the kind of cultural norm of the United States, something along the lines of "America is a land of opportunity. If you work hard enough, you'll achieve your dream." We believe that to the extent that if somebody isn't achieving their dream, if we're not achieving our dream, something's wrong, or we're bad, or we're wrong. This is actually the root of what we could call the delusion of white privilege—we look out there and say, "Opportunity is there," without recognizing the whole infrastructure in place supporting one race and class but not others.

Another way that delusion can manifest is more subtle than these other views I was talking about. It's where we relate to our experience through concept rather than direct experience. Our concepts are created based on the way our minds work. We perceive experience. I look out at this room and very

naturally I see people. I see walls. I see candles. I see statues. I see zabutans. I see floors. I see wood. And yet that's all concept. Actually, what the eye is perceiving is form and color—straight, curved, brown, white, light, dark. The mind puts together the objects.

We begin to relate to our experience through our ideas because concept is so closely intertwined with our views and opinions. It's very hard for us not to relate to our friends just as they are—we relate to them through our concepts.

This can be quite subtle in ways. There was one time I was in Burma, and I had a dorm room that was pretty close to the edge of the monastery. There was a wall, and the village noises came over the wall into the monastery grounds. Most afternoons at a particular time—I was meditating primarily in my room—around four or five o'clock, mid to late afternoon, I would hear a squealing noise.

My mind recognized that sound as "pig." That was the concept the mind applied to that sound. Hearing this sound nightly, my mind also began to have the sense that this squealing had a very distraught quality to it. My mind created the idea that what I was hearing was the nightly slaughter of a pig for the village.

Now, I could see that this was an idea. I did not actually know that. I could see it was a concept. I could see that the idea of a butcher doing the nightly pig slaughter was just an idea. But at the same time, that squealing sound and the distraught quality of it—it's like, well, some being is distraught. There was this feeling of compassion that arose based on that perception, that concept. Night after night, the same experience.

And then one night, instead of being in my room at that time, I was walking up and down in the monastery and began noticing that there were bats flying really close to me. These bats were squealing. In that moment, the whole thing—all of this compassion—vanished. These bats clearly were not in distress. They were having a good time flying around.

This is again the way we meet our experience based on concept. Perception very easily makes mistakes. Our perceptual process is very prone to error. And one of the delusions is that we don't acknowledge or recognize that tendency of our perceptual process to be in error.

Concepts are really useful. We need concepts. But it's really helpful to know that they are concepts.

It can be very interesting to explore an experience, particularly around greed or aversion. What is it that you're actually averse to? A lot of the time—for instance, you might be sitting in the meditation hall and hearing a sound. Maybe the sound of somebody rustling or doing something. There's the sound, and we think perhaps that we're averse to the sound, that it's an unpleasant sound. But when we actually start to look at what's going on, what we see is that our mind has created an idea, often something along the lines of "that person shouldn't be doing that." We're relating to experience through the concept, not relating to the actual experience.

So this is a great question to ask yourself: when there is reactivity, what is it that is actually being reacted to? A lot of the time, it's a concept. A lot of the time. And the delusion is believing that we're reacting to something out there, when what we're actually reacting to is a creation of our minds.

This is really powerful to see. When we start to see that what we react to is largely a construct of the mind, there's not much place to hold that reaction anymore.

The third kind of delusion is the more human delusion, the most fundamental kind that we operate with. I think we go through and see delusion in a layered way, and this level of delusion is at the deepest level, the deepest structures of our mind.

There are some basic distortions to our experience that we all share, and you'll recognize these. We tend to take what is impermanent to be permanent. We tend to take what is unreliable as being a place where we could find reliable happiness.

And we tend to take what is not self to be self.

One of my teachers has a definition of delusion. Sayadaw U Tejaniya says that delusion doesn't mask the object or the experience—and "object" is kind of a funny word—but delusion doesn't mask the experience itself. It masks the true nature of the experience. So with delusion, we can be mindful of something but still seeing it through a deluded filter.

Here's another quote from Shakespeare. Two characters are talking about a third character, who is observing all of these details in the environment. They've landed on this island, and he's observing all these things about the surroundings. One character comments, "He misses not much." The other says, "No, he doth but mistake the truth totally." Again, this is a different form—this kind of delusion. We see things, but not in alignment with truth. Not as they actually are.

So, seeing what is impermanent to be permanent. The most obvious example of this is seeing ourselves, our lives, as permanent—just the difficulty we have believing that we will die. Things are changing actually pretty rapidly, and this rapidity of change masks impermanence. The rapidity of change masks the impermanent nature of experience.

Actually, if you read anything about particle physics and quantum mechanics, they talk about things being so rapidly changing that the very rapidity of motion is what makes things seem solid in our experience. Something like pain, for example—pain can have a very rapidly changing experience to it. When we get more mindful, we see how rapidly it's changing. But when we're not so mindful, it just feels like a block. It feels like a permanent, solid thing.

And so, exploring where we think things are solid—at one point, this was a big exploration for me. Anytime I felt like something was solid, I questioned it: Is it really solid? Concept also plays in here. Some of the solidity that we impute comes because we are seeing things through concept. Pain is an example of

this as well. Check it out: if you are observing an experience like pain through the idea of pain, it has much more solidity than when you move into the actual experience and begin to see the dynamic, changing nature of that experience.

We see what's unreliable, unsatisfying, unsatisfactory as being reliable, being satisfactory. This is basically the belief that having pleasant experience is good—that this is where happiness will be found. The unreliability of sense pleasure doesn't really land on us. We may know that it's impermanent in a way, and yet as we're going for it, our mind is telling us, "Yes, this is what's going to make me happy."

I've seen this even with a piece of chocolate. I know how long chocolate lasts. Actually, on a recent retreat, I discovered the pleasure of chocolate lasted way longer than I thought it would. I put the piece of chocolate in my mouth and thought, "Let's see how long this lasts." And while it's there, it's like, "Wow, this is really good." It's really pleasant, feels really good. And even after the chocolate had fairly well vanished, there was a lingering pleasant feeling for like five minutes. I mean, it was amazing how long it lasted. And yet still—five minutes isn't very long. And yet while it's going on, the mind believes that yes, this is what's going to do it for me.

So that belief that this is where happiness can be found—in this world of sense pleasure—

puts us on a never-ending cycle of having to get the next bit of happiness, the next bit of sense pleasure.

We end up trying to construct happiness by stringing together bits of sense pleasure like beads on a chain. And that's what we think of as happiness—that's as good as it gets. If we could endlessly get what we wanted and avoid what we didn't want, that's as good as it gets. And we believe that. At some level, we really believe that.

This is where the delusion lies. This is where delusion is enmeshed with greed and aversion. The delusion of greed is that having that thing will make me happy. The greed itself just wants that thing; the delusion is that it's going to make me happy. Greed is not going to tell you that if greed goes away, the release from that greed will be a deeper happiness. Likewise with aversion. The delusion embedded in aversion is that getting rid of this thing is what's going to make me happy. Aversion is not going to tell you that if the aversion goes away, happiness will follow. This is the delusion embedded in these states of mind.

So with this perception—seeing what is unreliable as reliable—we can begin to explore what we are relying on. What is it that we think is going to make us happy? Often this involves leaning into the future, even into just the next moment. "The thing that will make me happy is having an experience like I had in that last sitting." We're just leaning, leaning into the future like that.

The third misperception is seeing what is not self as self. We take so many aspects of our experience to be self. We take our bodies to be me. We take our moods and emotions—"I'm a miserable person" is an example of that. Yes, that was me. I am a miserable person. A little happiness comes along, but no, I am miserable. I am a miserable person. We identify with our emotions, with feelings, with our body. We can

identify with knowing, with being the one who's choosing. This identification is like a creation of something solid within a flow of experience.

That example around being a miserable person—that was a creation of a solid idea that wouldn't admit the truth of impermanence or the flow of experience. Happiness arises? No, I am miserable.

With exploring our experience, we begin to really appreciate and see that there's nothing but a flow of conditions—causes and conditions, changing experience, one condition leading to a result. Cause and effect, cause and effect, cause and effect. It's a natural unfolding of process.

It's perhaps easier to relate to this in the natural world. We see trees grow based on natural law and conditions. There's an acorn that has the potential to become an oak tree given the right conditions. It's a natural law: if that acorn lands on ground where there's enough soil and moisture and proper sun, and there's not a deer coming along to eat the sprout, it will turn into an oak tree. It's a natural unfolding of cause and effect. There's not a being in there "treeing." It is simply a process.

Very similarly, the unfolding of our lives is a natural unfolding of cause and effect. Intention arises—something happens in the body, the bladder is full, there's pressure, unpleasant pressure. The recognition of what that is conditions the desire to relieve that pressure, which conditions the impulse to move. So one stands, finds one's way to the restroom. It's simply an unending flow of natural cause and effect. And after the fact, we impute, "Oh, that's me. I decided to get up and go to the bathroom." We impute the self to that process after the fact.

So exploring, investigating what feels like me, what feels like I. This kind of observation can be elusive. I think a good time to explore it is when the sense of self is strong. Self-righteousness is a good one to explore this with—a feeling of being right. "I'm right. I'm right."

This was an exploration for me at one point on retreat. It was a three-month course, and someone in the hall was asking questions. I had an aversive reaction to that person and argued in my mind endlessly with them about the questions and the answers. One day in particular, I was doing walking meditation, and I finally got to see: okay, this is a pattern. This is the analytical, argumentative, being-right Andrea. And okay, I'll watch this. I'll get to know this pattern.

So I watched this pattern, got to know it over many days. And one particular day, something interesting happened. I was observing it and thinking I was clearly recognizing this as a selfing pattern. And yet, as I was walking—I was doing walking meditation right in front of IMS where there's a driveway—a delivery truck drove up. Made a lot of noise, doors banged, brakes squealing. And the mind actually did something you wouldn't expect. I certainly didn't expect it. The mind went: "It's a truck! Wow!"

I flipped in a split second from being this argumentative forty-year-old, being right, to this awestruck two-year-old. "Oh, it's a truck! Wow, that's so amazing!" Just in this rapture, the sound reverberating through my body.

These two experiences had no relationship to each other whatsoever. There was no connection. And this is an interesting thing to see—seeing the discrete nature of these senses of self. We begin to see that they actually are constructions of mind, conditions coming together. It's pretty powerful to see that.

So the absence of delusion is wisdom. And yet we don't *do* wisdom, right? We've been talking about this. We can't just say, "Delusion, be gone." As that example of observing my argumentative, being-right self shows, I was doing the best I could with that. And yet the mind couldn't quite see the clinging involved there. So it stayed stuck until this other event happened, and then it was like it vanished.

Non-delusion isn't something we can do. It's not something we choose, saying "delusion be gone." But we can begin to explore how delusion operates in our minds. Seeing through delusion is an insight—recognizing the opening to the ephemeral nature of experience. Seeing the arising of a thought and recognizing "you're no good" is just a thought. The belief vanishing. Seeing through the delusive nature of our thoughts, the delusive nature of concepts. That happens as we begin to meet our experience, to touch into our experience with continuity of mindfulness. And it's an insight.

Insights, too, are impermanent. So that recognition—seeing that forty-year-old argumentative self vanish and realizing, "Wow, it was just an ephemeral construction of mind"—in the fact that it disappeared with that rapidity, didn't mean I never got caught in that pattern again. We can see through delusion at times. Sometimes we get that clear sense of seeing through and recognizing, "Oh yes, that's what it's like to not have that delusion operating." We see that clearly. And then the delusive pattern comes back because it's so conditioned.

And some of the deeper kinds of clinging—the clinging that there's got to be something out there that's going to make me happy—that one goes so deep.

The mind can see over and over and over again that there's nothing out there that's going to make it happy. But that's not going to stop it from trying. And we get to watch it try. We can try telling ourselves, "You're not going to find anything." And it just doesn't matter because the patterns are so deeply conditioned.

So over and over again, we see these patterns. And yet, having seen, having had those insights, having seen through the delusion at times, then we can really begin to recognize when delusion is operating.

That pattern of trying to find something that will make me happy—on this last retreat, that was something that happened over and over again. The mind would just search, search, search, search. And it's like I couldn't stop the mind. It's like, "Okay mind, if you want to search, if you want to find something, go at it. Have at it. See what you can find."

The mind was just so—I was watching at that deep, deep level, just the wish for something to be. "Oh, may there be something solid to hang on to, please." And the mind would create something that was better than the searching. It felt, "Oh, that's pretty peaceful." And then it would see the tension of that, and that

would fall apart.

The ease and the peace of the falling apart was so peaceful, so easeful, that for like a few seconds the mind deeply understood: it's not about constructing anything. For like maybe a second the mind understood that—and then it was off again. "Oh, but there's got to be something."

Just watching that pattern over and over again. Seeing it, because the mind had seen the delusion of it, the mind could be there and just know: yes, this is a delusive pattern at work. And so the mind wasn't caught by that pattern. There was a way in which I didn't believe that I would find something. And yet it's like the mind just has to wear itself out trying to find something. It's got to figure it out for itself. I'm not going to be able to tell it that. I can know it up here, and the mind has got to see through that delusion itself. Over and over again.

So let's stop and sit for a moment. There's no need to remember anything that I've said. Just let it go. And meet your experience here and now.

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