Awareness of Awareness

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Are you aware? And what are you aware of?

Awareness of the objects of experience is often our most familiar way to practice and be with experience, to know that we're aware. It's our most familiar way to pay attention—to know the objects of experience. We recognize some specific qualities to the experience: body sensations like vibration, hardness, pulsing, tingling, coolness, heat, pressure, lightness. We recognize sound. We recognize mind states—happiness, perhaps having an uplifting quality; fear, a feeling of pulling back; calm, a settledness, a non-agitation of mind. And so we recognize the objects of experience.

Unless it's pointed out to us, much less often would we notice or be aware of awareness itself.

Are you aware?

We begin to recognize awareness not by trying to turn around and look at it directly, but more through recognizing how it experiences objects. It's not like trying to turn around and look at awareness. To me it feels more like a stepping back, a broadening, or even a falling back. And the objects don't disappear. They may not be particularly drawing the attention.

Are you aware?

The mind has the capacity to recognize awareness, though it is not something that has probably been cultivated much.

Are you aware?

We may know that we are aware without really knowing how we know. That's kind of the simplest way of recognizing it—just knowing that we are aware. It's okay not to know how we know we are aware. Explore the possibility of resting, just knowing that you're aware. Resting and aware.

We can become aware of how awareness receives objects. Not so much interested in the objects or the qualities of the objects, but in how awareness is knowing them. There may be objects appearing in awareness in succession, one after another. This might feel like attention is shifting or moving. Or it might feel like awareness is very still and objects are just appearing in that awareness. It may feel like there's a kind of flow, one object to the next, very smooth. Or it may feel kind of jerky or popping—an object appears and then disappears, another one appears and then disappears. It may feel like awareness knows many things at the same time. It may feel like awareness is broad and diffuse, exploring some very vague

or non-specific experience. Or it may feel very focused and precise.

There's not a better way for this to be experienced, for the experience of awareness to be happening. How is it for you in this moment?

Relax. Are you aware? What is the experience of awareness right now? Not trying to look for it, but more stepping back or falling back. The mind can know the awareness itself.

Over time, as we may begin to get familiar with touching into the experience of awareness itself, we may start to try to find it, or to put our minds in that space. And while it can be interesting to explore from time to time, even that experience of awareness itself is not somehow better than being aware of objects. Sometimes the mind will be curious about objects, taking in their qualities. Sometimes the mind will be interested in awareness itself, curious about how it knows experience.

And so we can be aware, know when the mind is interested in attending to objects and when it's interested in attending to awareness. There's this capacity to do both. And very naturally, the mind will explore both sides. So just beginning to recognize: Are you aware?

Relax and receive experience however it is for you in this moment.

Thank you for listening.

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