Impermanence

Andrea Fella · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Andrea Fella · 43:12

Are you aware? Aware that you are aware? Aware of what is obvious?

Each moment aware, as mindfulness is established, we can connect to being aware without having to try or remind ourselves as frequently. We can begin to notice not only the experience that we're having—sound or sight or mood, emotion, thought, feeling, pressure, coolness—this dynamic range of experience. But we also begin to naturally tune into, at times, the changing flow itself.

Mindfulness, when established, can begin to recognize the impermanent, changing nature of experience. At times the mind may be more interested in the change than in what the objects actually are. And so that's okay. You don't need to try to grab onto the objects. Just noticing this changing quality of experience.

There are different ways we can notice change. Sometimes we might notice the attention shifting from experience to experience. That is noticing the change around the factor of attention. Sometimes we might be noticing the change within an experience—sound becoming stronger or weaker, arising suddenly and vanishing, body sensation coming and going.

Sometimes the attention might be curious or interested in the beginnings of experience, noticing things just arise and arise and arise, almost like magic. We don't necessarily see them end because the mind is interested in the next arising. Sometimes the mind might be interested in the ending of experience, noticing that things are passing away. Almost as soon as it's noticed, we might recognize it's ending, it's vanishing, it's releasing. Just noticing.

If the mind is interested in being aware of change, how is it noticing it? Sometimes the attention, the mindfulness, might be more interested in the whole flow of arising, persisting, and passing away. The Buddha speaks about this arc of experience—noticing experience as it arises, persists, and vanishes. This can only be seen when there is continuity of mindfulness.

The exploration of impermanence isn't something to do exactly. That is, it's not so helpful to try to hold on to see impermanence. There can be a kind of question or curiosity: how is impermanence being experienced right now? But then, if the mind isn't interested in exploring that, not trying to make it do it. Sometimes the mind is more interested in the experience of pressure or heat or coolness or an emotional response. Honoring our experience, what is most naturally known.

Sometimes in being aware of change, there might be the experience of a sudden sense of stopping—a stopping of that flow somehow. And if that happens, this curiosity about that: stopping is happening. What's that like?

Whatever arises, whatever experience is here—whether sound or body sensation or the experience of frustration or confusion or love or bliss—whatever experience is arising has the nature of being impermanent, conditioned, and constructed by the mind. Any experience can lead to this understanding. There's no better experience than the one that's happening right now with which to understand the Dharma.

Honoring, receiving our human experience—the experience that makes this life, receiving the experience of life living itself.

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