# Q&A

Carol Wilson · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Carol Wilson · 1:04:06

How can investigation happen skillfully without it becoming a question-and-answer process in the mind?

Well, personally, I experience investigation of states as one of the seven factors of enlightenment. Speaking of it in that way, it really has nothing to do with the thinking process at all. It's hard in using English, because as soon as we say "investigate," right away the mind says, "Okay," and starts asking questions. Occasionally, I must admit, if I'm tuning in to my experience and feeling that investigation is low, I might actually frame a question like, "What's going on?" or "What's happening?" just to tune me in. But that's the maximum.

The state of investigation is really a turning of attention to whatever appearance is there because of the sinking in of mindfulness—a sort of energetic staying with it. It's not from thinking. Any kind of understanding arises from that opening up. I might tune in and realize, "Oh, it's a mental state." Okay, that's words, but that's really the result of recognizing, of putting a note on what was pre-verbally recognized. And then in staying with it: Which one? Could this be sadness? Could this be grief? Not through that kind of questioning at all, but just staying really close within it. And so—oh, grief. Stay with it a little longer. Oh, no, sadness. But it's arising out of being with the experience, not from trying to think about and describe.

One student shared that sometimes when she's in a really positive, blissful state during a sitting, and the bell goes, there's a tendency to want to stay with that and keep investigating. But in another sitting where she's equally clear and mindful, yet what she's mindful of is pain, when the bell rings, it's like, "Okay, I'll come back to this later." She feels a little guilty about this.

It's great to notice that. Always, guilt is extra. Notice guilt. Guilt is extra. We don't need it. It doesn't help. So notice that first. Because of course that's our tendency: it's nice, we stay; it's painful, we go. That's exactly that root tendency—avoid the unpleasant and stay with the pleasant. To notice it on more subtle levels is wonderful. Not to feel guilty about it. That you're noticing it is helpful, because it's true that we'd prefer to just be with pleasant states.

For myself, when I become aware at the end of a sitting that the energy is present, the mindfulness is clear, I'm quite with whatever's going on, and I feel I have the energy and mindfulness to sit longer, when the bell goes, that's what I use as a deciding factor—the quality of attention, not what is happening. I kind of just make a pact with myself.

Tune in more to the quality of mindfulness and notice, "Oh, I don't want to be with this pain, the bell's

gone, I'm out of here." Okay, start noticing that. Start noting desire to go, or aversion, whatever it is. You might only stay four more minutes. It's not that you have to stay the whole sitting period. But just give yourself a few moments to explore that tendency—"Thank God I don't have to look at this anymore, the bell rang"—to just gently move through that and begin to tune in more to the quality of balanced mindfulness.

And again, that's not to sit and hurt yourself. It's not saying you should sit with pain and cause yourself injury.

I'm not saying that. It's simply that when there's general discomfort but the mindfulness is clear, it's wonderful to notice that process. And if you do get up when things are unpleasant, keep noting as you get up so that guilt doesn't expand. Guilty, guilty—just notice that and stay with your experience. It's okay either way, really.

Since we're at the halfway point of the retreat—or for some of you, the first day—we thought it would be helpful to offer a brief review of the instructions. If you've been here a while, this might be a useful review, or it might not be what's happening for you now. If that's the case: hearing, hearing. Let it go through. Don't get into thinking, "Oh no, I have to go back and just be with the breath." Simply let it come in, let it go out. If something useful sticks, that's nice.

When you sit down, don't just jump onto the breath with some kind of desperation. Let yourself come to an ease of sitting here. Connect with feeling your body, the sitting posture. Let your mind and body come together in this moment, in this posture, in this room. Relax into this moment.

Then, if it's been helpful to you, let your awareness open up to the experience of hearing—how without striving, sounds arise by themselves. They are known by awareness quite effortlessly, and they pass. We're learning to use awareness of hearing to reconnect with a quality of alert yet relaxed awareness: awake presence without trying to do anything.

In the same relaxed way, when one is ready, begin to notice the physical sensations of breathing—in just the same relaxed, non-doing way that we notice hearing. Noticing sensations of in-breath as they come by themselves and go by themselves. Feeling the sensations of out-breath in the same relaxed yet alert way.

Using the mental tool of labeling, wherever you're feeling the breath more clearly—"in" at the beginning of the in-breath, "out" if you're feeling it in the nose or chest, or "rising, falling" if you're feeling it in the abdomen. The labeling is very soft. It's a tool to help connect the attention with the actual sensations. It's not a command. Then simply feeling the sensations of in-breath, the sensations of out-breath.

Throughout the retreat we've been using both the feelings of breath as the primary focus or primary anchor of attention, and also, for some people at some times, the experience of hearing. We use the breath when attention feels scattered, spacey, very unfocused—using the sensation of in-breath and out-breath to aim the attention at the sensations, connect, and sustain throughout each part of each breath, helping

mindfulness come to alertness.

Yet at times this quality of precision can turn to clutching or tightness, striving, becoming involved in a struggle to make the breath more clear, to make it better. At times like this, opening to the non-striving aspect of attention via hearing can be very helpful. Just relax and let sounds arise by themselves and the clear knowing arise by itself. Then, when we reconnect with that aspect of knowing, we can come back and bring the same relaxed attention to the breath. So it's a dance.

As the attention begins to feel a bit more settled, we're feeling the breath, noticing when thinking arises, offering a soft mental label of "thinking," and when the thinking vanishes, coming back again to feeling the breath. If you've just arrived, you might want to keep it that simple for a couple of days.

But as the mind settles a bit, for the rest of us, when we're being fully present with one breath, this aspect of choiceless awareness or momentary concentration begins to open up. In feeling one breath, we become aware of a sensation in the body. In the moment of noticing it, if it's stronger than the breath, we give that sensation full attention. Just leave the breath be. Move full attention to the sensation with a soft mental label—burning, itching, tingling, whatever—and explore it with kind, non-violent attention. Simply knowing how the sensation behaves without needing to like it or dislike it or change it in any way. As it lives its life, we come back again to the breath.

In the same way, when emotions, moods, or mental states arise, we notice them. Giving them a soft label or name is very helpful in knowing what's happening without getting lost or identified with it. Happiness. Happiness.

Excitement. Boredom. Grief. Metta. Anger. The soft label, the noticing, the allowing—letting the component parts of the emotional experience simply be, cradled with our loving attention.

So with anger: feeling the physical body manifestations, perhaps there's tightness, tension, burning, contraction. Simply noticing and being with, without an agenda. Perhaps there are thoughts, a story that is bringing up the anger or carrying it further. Notice the thinking and come back to the in-this-moment physical experience of anger. Or notice the mood tone in the mind. As it fades, come back to the primary anchor. Or if you begin to get too lost in the story, make a more clear notation—thinking, anger—but pull out of it and come back to breathing.

Similarly with noting thinking: notice what happens to it. For certain repetitive thought trains, the label can be more precise—planning, fantasizing, remembering. Notice what happens to it and come back to the breath or hearing.

It sounds like a lot all at once, but it's really very simple. Using either hearing or the sensations of the breath to connect with this present moment with alert and relaxed attention, you never need to look for anything else. All other experiences, when they arise, arise by themselves. When there's mindfulness of breath or hearing, you'll spontaneously notice any other appearance. All we do then is simply

acknowledge what's already happening and give it full and kind attention. That's all.

Whenever you're confused, there's too much happening or there's nothing else happening—use your friend, your primary anchor, and simply rest in whatever's arising in this moment, the breath or hearing. You don't need to do anything else.

Someone asked about the balancing factors among the seven factors of enlightenment, specifically what balances joy and investigation. Both joy or rapture and investigation of states are two of the three energizing factors, the third being obviously energy or effort. Mindfulness balances all of them—mindfulness is always a balancing factor. And the three calming balancing factors are calm, equanimity, and concentration.

It's a great way to evaluate or simply observe your practice when you're not in a self-judging mode. If you're really energized and there's a lot of joy and investigation, you can work with mindfulness always, and also bring in some more concentration—that kind of sticky steadiness on the object—and equanimity. With joy, we can get really attached to it, so you bring in equanimity by just noting "liking, liking," and that will be fine.

Another practitioner shared that in the last sitting at night, she's usually very tired. She'll go into the driveway and jog a bit where no one can see her, or breathe in some cold air or drink some water. But she finds that still, just a few minutes into the sitting, there's simply no mindfulness and no energy at all to bring mindfulness there. Is there any benefit to sitting where there is no mindfulness?

I personally have vast experience of this exact sitting state, and I hate to tell you that I have found there is a benefit. For myself, often—and it isn't always, and that's what's important to recognize, it's usually not always—from eight or eight-thirty on, my mindfulness and energy just goes down. It's like that in my life too.

I do a couple of things. One is I've begun to sit a half hour, then walk a half hour, which I know is hard if you need to sit in the hall. But if you do shorter segments and alternate, it keeps the energy flowing a bit better.

And I've found that I will almost always sit and walk, at least one sitting or one walking, past the point where I'm feeling like you're describing—especially if it's happening every night, and particularly if it happens early. Because I've discovered, even though it feels like there's no mindfulness and nothing's happening, that by continuing to practice, over time I've actually been able to tell there is some mindfulness there. And certain other of the enlightenment factors are actually being cultivated. For example, equanimity.

This is important. We tend to think practice is all about mindfulness and energy, but it's not. Freedom is possible with no energy. It's not necessary to have this totally pristine balance in every sitting, or else the sitting is a waste of time. But I grant you, it's hard to feel like there's any benefit.

Over time, by experimenting—saying, "Okay, I'm tired now, I'll go to bed," and going to bed really early—I noticed that my mind actually gets duller over time with that approach. And by just pushing it a little, being willing to sit with low energy and not much mindfulness and no sense of inner fulfillment whatsoever from the sitting, I notice a real strengthening of actually all the factors. I can tell that it's going on even through the tiredness. So it really can be helpful.

And then for each of us, there's a point. I hit the point where it's not just no energy—I'm falling out of the chair. And then I'll say, "Okay, time for bed." So I'm not a total Spartan about it, but this approach is useful.

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Again, we would like to welcome the people who've come to join us and acknowledge those who've been here.

*A practitioner asks about the nature of consciousness and whether such questions are appropriate.*

I hear many different questions in your question, which I could not hope to answer all of them. And I'm not even sure which is the heart of your question, which one to come in on.

You're asking whether these types of questions are appropriate. I think certainly they are—if they're coming from your experience, not from something you've read, though even that could be helpful. But I certainly find questions about the nature of consciousness, where thoughts come from, things like that arise in my own practice, as certainly valid questions. Not questions with a final answer—"Okay, where do thoughts come from? This is it. Finished." But more the type of question that leads me to turn my attention around and investigate.

So for instance, what you were saying about consciousness continuing forever, and something about consciousness that is "I" never ending, and how it makes you tired. One thing I'd like to say is that consciousness, as defined in the Buddhist Abhidhamma—that quality of knowing—arises and passes moment to moment. It's not a solid state that, once beginning, never ends, and here we are stuck with no change possible. That would be exhausting. That thought I find tiring. And if that were the case, practice wouldn't be of much benefit, since nothing could change.

So the way consciousness can be investigated is to notice that quality of knowing that arises with knowing a sound, knowing a thought, knowing a sensation—and then to see that as the experience passes, so too does the knowing. Another knowing arises the next moment. So it's a sort of endless process, but it's not a solid state.

And what you said about the thought of it going on and on through reincarnation and rebirth being tiring—I would say that thought, that sense of the ceaselessness of arising and passing, is one of the definitions of dukkha, as described in the First Noble Truth.

It's one of the more subtle descriptions of unsatisfactoriness, of dukkha—this ceaseless arising and

passing, arising and passing, of whether it's consciousness or physical sensations or sounds. Of course, it's when there's a sense of me that's identified with it that the ceaseless arising and passing becomes exhausting.

So that's the second piece of what you raised—this consciousness that's "me." I'd suggest looking into that in your experience. Consciousness feels like me in a moment. Don't just accept that that is so, but keep exploring with mindfulness the nature of consciousness in a moment. It feels like me—often that's true. It does feel like me. So too sometimes does a sensation. So too sometimes does volition or pleasant feeling.

Our practice of mindfulness is such that when these questions come up, they're great questions. And in a way, to ask them isn't to get some answer handed to us, but rather a way to bring it up into our awareness and then really look. Next time you're aware of consciousness that feels like me, or a thought comes—where does it come from? Don't think about it, but really look, notice. What happens when a thought ends? Where does the thought begin from? Notice the space between thoughts.

These questions are very important when they're arising from your heart, from your experience. There are no easy answers, but they're in some way the crux, the nub of our practice—to really look at these issues.

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A yogi raised a related question about the ceaselessness of it all, describing how challenging it is when there's a ticking clock nearby. She explained her approach: noting "ticking, hearing, aversion," then doing metta, then reflecting on impermanence. She asked how to make friends with something so relentless, how to surrender to it.

You didn't mention noticing aversion and hatred, I said. Do you tune into those also?

She acknowledged feeling oppressiveness.

All the ways you described practicing are helpful. But with something like that, something really oppressing me, I would personally stay with vipassana. I would keep coming in close, right at the ear door—ticking, ticking—really let in the ticking, feel it vibrationally if you can feel it that way. Rather than pulling away even the slightest from it, which is where aversion really spills in and takes over, I would move right to the ear door. Ticking, ticking, unpleasant. If you notice the unpleasant, or if there's already a little tightening in your mind or body, notice that tightening.

The key is really being fully in it. We tend to sort of notice it—you can even make all the notes accurately—but there's a subtle, ever so subtle pulling away from being right in the experience. The clock is a good example because it just goes on and on, but so many people encounter someone or something next to them that is difficult. And really, so often that becomes the catalyst for deep insight, for real understanding of surrender.

The oppressiveness of the clock, that endless ticking—it's similar to the oppressiveness I was speaking of, the endlessness of arising and passing. It's oppressive when we're clinging to a sense of self. When there's no self that is reacting to the arising and passing, it's not oppressive. And you can notice the difference.

There can be a moment—like I noticed the ticking actually, this sitting, and the thought arose: "I wonder if this bothers the yogis, this ticking all the time." And then I went back to whatever I was doing and didn't even notice it for half an hour. Then all of a sudden: ticking, ticking, ticking, ticking. Oh, that's funny. I wonder how Mark feels sitting right here with this ticking all the time. Maybe that's why he's never in the hall. And then I didn't notice it again for a long time.

You can actually play with it. Take it as an example of the oppressiveness of experience arising and passing, and the way to experience freedom—the arising and passing doesn't have to stop. So it could get interesting.

First, I could really feel my body sensations. And I could let it go. And then all of a sudden, it would come in. And then I was noting sweating, and tachycardia. And I would note them all and kind of dissipate in it. But part of me thought that it was too important to let go of.

I got the drift, I think. There were two parts. The first part was just clarifying about intention and thought. So I'm not sure which part wasn't clear, but what I was trying to say is that one way we can notice intention is that often it manifests as a thought. Often it manifests pre-thought, pre-verbal as well. And to make it more complex, technically even a thought arises from an intention. There's an intention before a thought. That's pretty hard to notice, so I didn't talk too much about that.

But when the Buddha spoke about wise thought or wise intention as the second stage of the path, he very specifically talked about unwise intention as thoughts of greed, of harming, of ill will—and wise intention as thoughts of renunciation and friendliness or mettā and compassion. Thoughts of compassion, mettā, and renunciation constitute wise intention. Sometimes that arises naturally, but we can also consciously reflect, which is what I was talking about. Sitting there thinking, "I've got to have this"—well, for example, your second part of your question: "I've got to ask this question." Which might or might not be true. I'm not saying it's wrong, but there's that sense of "I've got to have it." And then the thought arises, "Maybe not. Maybe I can put it down." That was intention.

The second part of the question is quite broad, so I can only just touch on it. It's about whether mindfulness can be a safeguard in daily life, which we certainly hope so. He asked whether when we come in, busy in our daily lives—not in a quiet meditative space a lot of the time—can we put that aside? I can only speak for myself. Also, there are the things that have to do with the Dharma specifically, because those seem to be the ideas and thoughts and reflections that the mind seems to permit a little bit to enter. They seem relevant and not stray thoughts, but thoughts that perhaps are wise thoughts. They're more seductive.

Dharma thoughts are more seductive, definitely. To me, that's sort of a different question. In the state I'm in, sometimes Dharma thoughts are more seductive, sometimes it's "How am I going to juggle these three things I have to do?" But certainly at a certain phase in retreat, as the mind gets more silent, I find this myself: I can really notice other thoughts. They come. You don't hate them, but there's no real hook. Dharma thoughts, however, can be incredibly seductive. We think, "Well, I don't really need to note and notice this because this is really important. I'm describing my practice. I'm describing the Dharma, the truth."

On one level, it might be true practice—but that's not the point. That seduction, that pulling, getting pulled in, is still craving. And so that's the point. It's not whether the thought is good or bad or interesting, but the craving is just feeding more craving. I saw at one point how I had to be really quite ruthless—not angry. Just, "Okay, I'm thinking. This is thinking. It's an incredibly wonderful, beautiful thought, but it's a thought." And as long as I know it's a thought, there's no problem.

As long as I know there's craving, it's no problem.

But what about the rest of our lives? Well, certainly mindfulness is a protection and a refuge. It might not be on such a subtle level as when I've been sitting for seven weeks. I don't notice a thought before it starts very often, and it really varies. Some days I come in and I'm really right here. Some days we come in and we're planning our talk through the whole sitting. The difference is that I simply realize that's what thought is doing. I don't sit here getting really upset with myself on the days there's a lot of thinking.

The way mindfulness is a refuge is that if there's a sense of really being caught, or some struggle, I can call it in quite strongly. Just as you were noticing sweating and tachycardia and various things, I can start noticing and noting and really get to the center of what's happening and rest in that, rather than being confused and upset and wondering what's going on. Sometimes I choose to think about something. Sometimes I consciously decide, "I'm going to think about my talk now for ten minutes."

Yesterday, Sharon suggested that in walking meditation, we note just before the action—so if it's lifting, you note "lifting," then lift, then note "moving," then move. When you tried that and got caught up in the moment of noting lifting, you were actually noticing your intention. This is how complicated it gets when trying to say things to a whole group. What I would say is that I would note "intending" at that point, because that is what you're actually experiencing. The noting, I find, is meant to land on what we're actually experiencing. So if you're aware of intention but trying to note the lifting, there's a kind of leaning ahead in that moment. For you, in that moment, I would note "intending." I don't know the context of what Sharon said or who she said it to—it could be quite different at other moments and for other people.

She was referring to not using the noting after the action. After the action, yes—after the action, it's gone. Usually the noting should be concurrent with the experience, at the same time as the experience. I've personally found that if I try to note "lifting" before the lifting, it turns into a command. I'm kind of giving myself marching orders or something.

It's been said in other contexts by other teachers at this retreat as well—for instance, Michelle said that before you reach for the doorknob... Well, if you find that's helpful. You did find it helpful, actually, but also confusing. Well, you see why. We all have different experiences. Really, again, I think it points back to looking at your own experience, because what can be helpful in one particular phase of practice, as practice shifts—gets perhaps more subtle or less subtle—that same thing isn't helpful anymore. Something's different. So in a way, it's good that you stay really right there with your experience instead of just assuming, "All right, this is going to be good." You really look and notice, "Wait, this is confusing me." If it's confusing you, then I would try to note exactly what you're with in that moment, not try to get too tricky about it.

Have an interesting day. Are there any questions this morning?

You were talking about the civil rights movement. I guess it's hard for me to understand the boundary between contentment and then deciding that a Black person ought to want to sit at the back of the bus—where that boundary is. I understand inner contentment on a mundane level. You have agreements with people, then you walk into the house and it's not the way you like it, and that's something I suffer with too. So it's not just about world change, but this is actually one of my biggest fears about Buddhism—that we'll just be cloistered in this room in a tent with our practice and we'll forget there's a world out there. And it goes deeper, because I think about who's here and who chooses to do this practice. I don't want to make assumptions about who's here, but we do tend to be white, and there's—

Could you all hear her question? It's about contentment, which I can't go to what Steve said last night since I wasn't here, so I can only speak from my own understanding. And her difficulties with the balance between contentment, and does that mean we all just sit here and never take any action in the world, not care about the world.

To me, contentment and passivity are not the same thing. When you describe sitting here and not caring about anything or anyone else and we're all just happy—that's not how I think of contentment. Contentment does not preclude skillful action, or action from compassion, from wisdom, action motivated by love or connection. Those are very motivating energies that actually arise from the contentment of resting in truth.

That sense of inner contentment when we touch the place—it's not a place, it's hard to talk about—but when we are awake in the understanding that we're not a separate being, that there isn't a me that needs to be protected, that is separate from other beings... Or another way of putting emptiness is a sense of inner completion where wanting and fear have no place, they just don't arise. From that place, it's not a place of delusion that sees everything as hunky-dory in the world, thinking, "Who cares what happens to anyone else since it's all empty anyway?" That sort of wisdom that isn't balanced with the connecting energy of compassion.

So in my own experience, take a very mundane example. Let's not think too much about what's going on

in the civil rights movement or who chooses to come. Because those are important questions, but they just lead to endless thinking. I want to keep the discussion simple, here in the grounds of our practice, because I believe that all of that can be seen in our own practice here.

Take a more mundane example: you come home and the house isn't cleaned according to the agreement. Or take an even more mundane example—you come in the dining room and someone's taking food before the bell, something really immediate. Inner contentment would mean if I'm recognizing the truth in a particular moment, I could walk in the dining room or walk in my house, be centered in emptiness and compassion, see that things haven't been done according to agreement, and I don't lose it. I don't get filled with hate. I don't get filled with anger because I've been disrespected, because I've been hurt. There's an equanimity of, "Oh, this didn't happen." There might be valid reasons why it didn't happen. I find those out first because I'm in a place of balance and connectedness. There might not be valid reasons—the agreement just wasn't respected because the person didn't feel like it. And even then I wouldn't have to respond from anger or self-protection or hurt. There could be a balanced way to respond.

But that response looks at the whole situation. It wouldn't be, "Okay, you didn't feel like it, so we'll just assume there was no agreement." Metta and compassion look at the whole and what's good for the whole. It's not just self-centered, "I'm happy, who cares about the world?" That isn't contentment to me. That's kind of a pleasant resting place in the moment, but it isn't connected to wisdom, the wisdom of compassion.

The questions you raise about the world are huge questions. I don't know the answers to those, but I do know that the inner contentment of peace does not preclude wise action. It can come from a place that's more connected and loving rather than from a place of frustration, or anger, or our own confusion. That's how I relate to contentment.

*Question from the audience*

Thank you for what you just said. It was terrific. It applies to me because I've been doing solid metta for two months and I'm feeling loving and nice. But this morning something happened and I'm so angry. I feel that I don't have the mindfulness... There's a huge ocean and my sails are blown off, but I have a navigation of things. Doing metta feels like a band-aid on this huge wound. I am so angry. I want to get even. I want to do something physical that satisfies my bloodlust.

One thing I'd say, Lorna, is don't despair about that. It's true that when you've been practicing metta for two months, the mindfulness is only going into the metta—which is not a bad thing—but it's true we're not practicing vipassana at that time.

And I would not agree that metta is a band-aid. But as you know, part of what happens with metta practice or karuna practice is that at times, as the purification unfolds, the opposite will come shooting up. And as you're experiencing right now, it can happen very suddenly and with great intensity—anger arises.

Because we're just with the metta, it sort of blindsides us. If you were doing vipassana, you might notice the beginnings of it. Doing metta, we don't notice that. And so when you suddenly become aware, it's like *whoosh*—this huge wave, so sudden and so strong.

So first I just want to say, that's not wrong or a mistake. In a way, these difficult aspects get lifted up more via the metta, part of the purification. So don't blame the metta, don't blame yourself. Something horrible hasn't happened. It's like, "Oh yeah, right. We can do metta, but we're not completely living in the divine abode. We can still notice once in a while these other intentions come through." That's not wrong—it's going to happen. And you're right, it's hard after two months to just switch into vipassana with it. It's a little rusty.

I just want to encourage you not to feel that something has failed, not to give up about it, not to let your thinking mind take over with "Oh no, it didn't work, something's wrong." And do try—the thing you will find is that because of the two months of metta, you might have to work a little to get to the mindfulness of vipassana with the anger, but you'll have a steadiness of mind that, once you get there, will surprise you.

So it's okay. Do try to use the steadiness and vipassana with the anger, not the thoughts. Just feel it. You might just be able to hover right there kindly with the murderous rage—whether it's in your body (especially helpful if it's in your body) or in the emotional tone. The vipassana means you don't have to do something about it. You don't have to satisfy the bloodlust physically—and clearly there's enough mindfulness that that's not going to happen. And you also don't have to get rid of it in order to be loving.

Simply use the steadiness and the vipassana to feel the feelings that arise together with the anger in your body. Notice the emotions and just gently, gently, gently let it be there. It's okay that it comes up. It's part of all of our practice. You don't try to metta it away. It's another piece to accept, and that in itself is metta.

So it might be bumpy for a little while. If you can not worry about that, not judge it, and just keep trying to feel it gently with the vipassana—it will of course shift. But yeah, I just want to say: it's okay, don't worry, just a little rocky for a while.

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