Establishing Mindfulness

Patrick Kearney · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Patrick Kearney · 49:37

Tonight we're going to talk about establishing mindfulness, broadening out our understanding of what the Buddha means by mindfulness and what characterises its practice. We're going to look at this by examining what the Buddha says about how to establish mindfulness, how to get it going, but also what he says about what happens when we lose mindfulness.

We'll start by looking at a single sentence that appears in a number of discourses where the Buddha describes a practitioner beginning his or her formal meditation practice. This is a standard sentence that talks about getting started. He says: "The practitioner sits down, crosses her legs, straightens her back, and establishes her mindfulness directly."

This is the beginning, and you notice that he begins with posture, which is quite interesting. He doesn't give any advice about how to construct the posture; he just describes the practitioner doing it. Presumably he didn't need to, because he lived in a society where people were raised from birth without furniture. Sitting on the floor was as natural for them as collapsing onto a lounge chair would be for us, so there was hardly any need to give an explanation of how to do it.

But still, he emphasises the role of posture. What he describes is a balanced posture with the back naturally straight. This enables two things to happen: it enables the body to relax while at the same time remaining alert. And this gives us a real sense of what we're looking for in a meditation posture. We want relaxation, but we also want alertness. This is what the Buddha is describing.

One way to look at it is to say that we construct a posture of body in order to construct a posture of mind, a posture of attention. This is what the meditation posture gives us—the framework, the foundation for the mind to be balanced and alert. And this reminds us that we practice with our body.

It's interesting that in English-speaking Dharma circles, people often refer to meditation practice as spiritual practice. But as far as I'm aware, there's no word that the Buddha uses in terms of talking about meditation practice that could be reasonably translated as "spiritual." It's very clear, however, that he regards meditation as physical, which we see here.

This is the opening, and then it brings us to mindfulness. The Buddha describes the practitioner: "He establishes his mindfulness directly." Let's look at this expression because there's a lot in it.

First of all, the idea that mindfulness must be established. The original Pāli word comes from the verb *upa ṭṭhahati*, which comes from the prefix *upa*, denoting nearness or intimacy, and then the main form of the verb, which comes from the Sanskrit root *sthā*—from which in English we get things like "to stand," "to

station," "to stabilise." English is part of the same family of languages as Sanskrit and Pāli, so often you see these familiarities.

When you see a verb based on this root *sthā* (or in Pāli it becomes *ṭhā*), what this implies is a firm grounding or stationing of the mind. Awareness is firmly grounded, stable, stationed. And it's grounded on something, something definite. The *upa* again denotes intimacy, so this relationship with experience is firmly grounded and is intimate. It's very close up.

This is emphasised when the Buddha says the practitioner establishes her mindfulness *directly*. What's translated as "directly" is the adverb *parimukhaṃ*, which means something like "completely facing." *Pari*: completely. *Mukha*: face. So, completely facing the meditation object, or whatever we experience. It's what we would call in English a face-to-face encounter, an eyeball-to-eyeball encounter with whatever it is that we are experiencing. It conveys a sense of being firm and direct with how we engage with whatever is happening, regardless of what it is.

In the later Abhidhamma—the systematic psychology and philosophy of early Buddhism where they try to dot every i and cross every t—they talk about mindfulness appearing as the state of confronting, or being face-to-face with an object. It's like: bang, there it is. This is what's happening.

In the terms we've been using, it sounds very much like a description of what we've been calling the grounding object—grounding awareness somewhere, somewhere definite.

So let's have a look at how this might work out. Let's say I'm working on my meditation, whatever it is. Let's say breathing is my meditation object. But let's say my mind is preoccupied by some thinking or other.

Has this sort of thing ever happened to you? And let's say that as time goes by, I'm getting increasingly discontented with the state of my meditation—possibly even getting impatient for someone to ring a bell so I can escape.

Now, this is a fairly typical meditation experience. Clearly, during this experience, I am aware. We've talked a lot about awareness and how elementally fundamental it is. And in this experience, I am aware. I can prove it, because if someone says, "So how was that sitting?" I might say, "It was complete rubbish," and I describe why it's complete rubbish. So I must have been aware, otherwise I couldn't describe it.

But in this experience, my mindfulness is weak—very weak—because my mind is wobbling. It's not firmly grounded, stationed on anything. It's wobbling between at least three distinct fields of experience: there's breathing, there's thinking, there's discontent. I am not directly confronting any of them, but just wobbling between them. The mind is not fixed, it's not established, it's not face-to-face with the situation. It's just floating around it.

But when I am mindful, I establish a firm connection with what's really happening. So if I decided, "OK,

this is not good enough, I've got to get the mindfulness going," what would possibly be my response? What could I do about it?

Well, there are different possibilities. Let's just go through a few.

First of all, I might decide that what's governing this condition I'm going through is my attitude—my attitude of discontent and resistance. And that's why I'm half-hearted about the breathing. That's why I'm easily distracted and generally restless. So what to do? I turn towards my discontent. I directly confront it face to face. The discontent becomes my meditation object and I become intimate with it. I establish mindfulness on it. So, I'm away.

Or, another possibility: I might renew my determination to place awareness on breathing, the chosen meditation object, directly engaging with it. I'm just going to face it. I'm just going to go there.

Or I might make the distracting thoughts the meditation object. We're going to talk later in the retreat about using thinking as a meditation object.

Or—and this I think would be the most difficult one—I could make the whole package my meditation object. I could go wide in an open awareness approach and make the complete experience of sitting here and wobbling my meditation object. But again, directly confronting it face to face.

And it's that movement of grounding awareness firmly on something that generates the mindfulness. It doesn't fundamentally matter what that something is. Some meditation objects are easier to work with than others. But in this practice, as we mentioned before, if we ask what is the meditation object of mindfulness meditation, it is everything. But I need to ground awareness firmly on something. And notice that this means I must be actively engaged with the experience. Then mindfulness can emerge.

So this is how the Buddha talks about getting started with mindfulness. And it shows us something about what he thinks the nature of mindfulness is. Because often when the Buddha talks about a meditation practice, he doesn't define it—he describes someone doing it.

So mindfulness, as I think we have mentioned, translates the Pali word *sati*. And this is derived from the verb *sarati*, to remember. So mindfulness—it literally is memory. And it would have been interesting, those early pioneer nineteenth-century translators of Pali into English, coming across this word and trying to work out: what do they mean? I mean, they're sitting cross-legged and they're not moving and they're working on their memories. What?

What is this about? It would have probably discombobulated them for some time.

So mindfulness is memory, but what makes it distinct from the way we normally use memory is this: mindfulness is memory of the present, not the past. And this, of course, is an odd way to use memory for us. So what's the Buddha getting at?

I think a very good example in our culture are the signs that we see in railway stations saying, "Mind the gap." You've seen those signs, haven't you? And what is the sign asking us to do? It's asking us to remember there's a gap between the train and the platform. Now, it's not asking us to complete the journey, go home, make a nice dinner, have a few glasses of red, and then, while cogitating on the nature of the world, remember, "Oh, that's right, there is a gap between the train and the platform." That's not what it's asking us to do. It's asking us to remember there's a gap in the very act of stepping into or out of the train. It's asking us to remember the present. And this is pretty much exactly the way the Buddha means it. So if you see those signs, bow to them as your teacher.

Mindfulness training is memory training, which is quite weird when you think about it. We train ourselves to remember our awareness. And you might remember that we were talking about how we are already aware and it's obvious, but we easily forget awareness. So mindfulness training is training in remembering awareness. We've been using the example of remembering to switch the awareness light on. We notice, "Oh, it's dark." Remember to switch the light on. "Oh, ah, there it is."

And if establishing mindfulness is remembering, then what is losing mindfulness? It is forgetting. When the Buddha talks about losing mindfulness, when he talks about lapses in mindfulness, one term that he uses is muttasati, where mutta is "forgotten," and sati, of course, is mindfulness. And mutta is derived from the verb musiti, to forget, to fall into oblivion. So the opposite of mindfulness is oblivion. And specifically, it's the oblivion that comes from forgetting, which has its own peculiar flavour. Something is here, and then suddenly it isn't, and that moment of loss represents a total absence.

So how does forgetting work? Let's say I'm packing to come to the retreat centre, and my mind's going through all the things I need to remember to bring. There's one particular item I definitely remember to bring, and it's no worries because I can see it right in front of me. I know I've got to remember that. I definitely have to remember that. There's a very clear encounter. And then hours later when I'm unpacking, I'm looking for this particular item, thinking, "I definitely, I definitely..." The bag's empty. I'm shaking it, I'm jumping up and down on it. "I definitely... it must be here, it's got to be here." No, it isn't. I forgot.

Have you ever had that kind of experience? If you look closely at this process, at the moment that I forgot that item, did I have a problem? No. There's nothing the matter whatsoever. Everything's going according to plan. And why is there no problem? Because I cannot discern the existence of any problem in the total absence, which is muttasati, forgotten mindfulness.

Forgotten mindfulness is a state of oblivion. It's a state of delusion in which there is no problem because there is no awareness of any problem, or even any awareness of the possibility of a problem. In other words, when we forget, we are in a situation in which we don't know, and we don't know that we don't know. And it's that which is the essence of delusion.

So the movement from mindfulness into a loss of mindfulness is a movement from memory into

forgetting, from clarity into delusion, from wisdom into ignorance. And conversely, the movement from forgetting into mindfulness, into remembering, is a movement from delusion to understanding.

When I finally realised: "Of course. I knew I had to pack that. And I put it on the edge of my desk so that I would see it very easily when it came to pack the little odds and ends. And I never packed it." Suddenly I know the whole situation. Everything is clear.

So mindfulness begins with the movement out of oblivion into clarity, into understanding. *This* is what's going on. In a sense, mindfulness is complete in that very moment. Yet while it's already complete, mindfulness, as we've seen, implies continuity of awareness over time. Awareness arises through memory—"Oh, that's what's happening"—and then it must be extended through time in order to truly become mindfulness.

So mindfulness is threatened by the discontinuity of awareness. "That's right, I must remember to take that." Then it's gone. Hours later: "Oh, I forgot to pack it." That is the discontinuity of awareness—a big gap. Mindfulness is threatened by discontinuity, the discontinuity that comes out of forgetting awareness. And it's cultivated by the continuity of remembering.

This brings us to the practice of mindfulness. The practice we're doing in Pali is called Satipaṭṭhāna, which is another compound word and therefore capable of various translations. But rather than getting bogged down in technicalities, let's just call it establishing mindfulness, or applications of mindfulness. It's what we in English often know as insight meditation. And what it's about, essentially, is changing our view of ourselves and our world—of what we assume we are, what we assume the world is. It does this through cultivating mindfulness.

So we go back to the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, the discourse where the Buddha goes through this practice, and we look at a passage where he describes essentially the essence of the practice. Now we have said that the meditation object for mindfulness meditation is everything. The way the Buddha talks about this, he says there are four foundations of mindfulness: body, feeling, heart-mind (we'll talk more about this later), and dharma. Essentially, this is a way of classifying experience into four categories that covers everything. We won't go into the technicalities, but we just take it for granted that this covers everything.

So here is the Buddha describing a practitioner doing it: "Here, a practitioner, surrendering longing and sorrow for the world, lives tracking body as body, lives tracking feeling as feeling, lives tracking heart-mind as heart-mind, lives tracking dharma as dharma—ardent, clearly understanding, and mindful." Now he actually repeats the same sentence four times; we've shortened it a bit.

What we notice about this description is that it does not impose any specific meditation object, nor does it specify any particular meditation technique. It says "tracking body as body, mind as mind." So Satipaṭṭhāna, insight meditation, does not represent a meditation technique. What it's referring to is a way of life—a way of life characterized by being awake rather than asleep, of remembering rather than

forgetting.

This comes out again in the Buddha's language: "Here a practitioner, surrendering longing and sorrow for the world, *lives* tracking body as body, *lives*." The verb is *viharati*. In other words, he's saying this is the practitioner's normal, everyday mind state—not something that you spend a certain amount of time each day on a special cushion or whatever, but something that we do all the time. We live in that state.

I'd also just note "surrendering longing and sorrow for the world." What this is about—longing and sorrow—in Pali you have *abhijjā* and *domanassa*. *Abhijjā* is a word for desire, but it indicates a kind of leaning out of the heart. It's like, "I want." It implies a loss of balance—reaching out, give me, give me, give me. And the word translated as sorrow, *domanassa*, actually covers all forms of psychological pain. Basically it's talking about when we are entangled by what we would call the emotions. We are either distressed or delighted but completely entangled with the situation because of it. The heart and the mind are out of balance.

So we surrender longing and sorrow for the world and live tracking body as body. And you notice that this surrendering is something that goes along with the practice. It's not that we surrender longing and sorrow for the world before we step into the hall and pick it up again when we leave. We're doing it all the time, because often the meditation object we're working with *is* longing and sorrow for the world. So it's a constant letting go, letting go, letting go.

But the central practice that the Buddha is talking about here is where he says, "surrendering longing and sorrow for the world, she lives tracking body as body." Tracking. This is the essential practice.

The Pali word is *anupassanā*. Sometimes you see this translated as "contemplating." I think that's a terrible translation because it implies thinking about—I will sit down and have spiritual thoughts, and that would be my spiritual practice. The Buddha's not talking about that at all.

The word is *anupassanā*, which again is a compound. There's *passanā*, which is seeing—you'd be familiar with this from *vipassanā*, seeing. And *anu* is a prefix which denotes "along." So seeing, a direct encounter with what's happening right now, seeing along—tracking something, following it over time. This is the essential practice of mindfulness.

It implies, first of all, a deliberate directing of the mind towards something, the establishing, having this direct face-to-face encounter with the experience right now. And then making this relationship, extending this relationship, this direct face-to-face encounter, over a period of time. Tracking body as body.

Anybody remember the Australian movie *The Tracker* that came out? Must be a couple of decades ago. It's set in the deserts of South Australia and it's about an Aboriginal tracker who's being roped in by the police to track another Aboriginal man accused of a crime. You've got three coppers on horses and the tracker is on foot. There's this build-up of tension among the party because the tracker definitely doesn't want to be there.

At some point they're going through the desert and they come to a gibber plain. The camera shows you this rocky, stony section of desert that goes up to a ridge, and you can see as far as the ridge. The tracker stands there and says, "Yeah, he was here about maybe an hour ago. He crossed here and went over the ridge there."

One of the coppers is a young bloke who's very suspicious of this tracker. He says, "This is complete bullshit. He's leading us around. He's just lying to us. He can't possibly know that."

The older copper, who knows this guy, says, "Get down off your horse, stand beside him, and he'll show you."

So the two men are standing there, and the tracker points downwards and says, "Do you see that pebble?" The camera goes down and it's like billions of pebbles. What pebble? The tracker says, "That one." And the camera focuses, and there's one of those pebbles, a little stone that has been moved, because the sand underneath it is just a slightly different colour than the sand around it. It was moist not so long ago, but someone kicked it over.

Then he says, "And do you see that pebble? Yeah. Do you see that stone there? Yeah. Do you see that one? That one, that one, over the ridge."

This is tracking. And this is what we're learning to do in this meditation practice. We're learning to follow, to track the experience as it unfolds over time.

So, what mindfulness does is it remembers. It remembers the present. When we are distracted, we forget the present. We forget we are meditating, or we forget the meditation object. And when mindfulness returns, we remember. We remember we are meditating, or we remember the meditation object.

This remembering implies not just awareness, but awareness of awareness. Here we've been talking about the dyad of awareness and its object. Now we're starting to look at the awareness itself.

As we've been exploring, normally we are aware. We don't have to make any special effort to be aware—we are already aware. We see, we hear, we smell, we taste, we touch, we think. So far so good; we are already aware. But are we aware that we are aware? And are we aware of what we are aware? In brief, are we aware of our awareness? This is the different aspect.

Consider the process of distraction. I am meditating and then I fall into thinking. This is familiar, isn't it? We've all done this before—more than once, is my guess. Now that slide off into thinking, what happens then? I forget. I forget that I'm meditating. So I am distracted, but I don't know that I am distracted. You're all familiar with that, aren't you? You slide off into thinking, you're lost in the thinking, but you don't know that you're lost in the thinking. This not knowing is the essence of distraction and, of course, of delusion.

And then suddenly I know I'm distracted. Whoops, I'm thinking. Have you ever had that experience where

suddenly—oh, what a shocker—I've been thinking for the past five minutes? Now, what's the difference between this new experience, knowing I am thinking, and what was going on just a second before, thinking?

When I was caught in thinking, I was aware. Images were flowing through the mind, words flowing through. So when I was thinking, there was awareness. But when I realized, oh, I'm thinking, there's an extra dimension added. There is now awareness of awareness. I recognize awareness as a field within which awareness awares awareness itself. And it's within this wider field that I find mindfulness.

It's a very interesting experience. A moment ago I was distracted and I didn't know. Now I know. So what happened? I remember. And what's the difference between my distracted awareness now that I know I'm distracted and my distracted awareness back then, before I knew? The difference is mindfulness. And mindfulness always contains a quality of recursiveness, of awareness awaring itself.

Sometimes we hear about awareness of awareness as a meditation practice, and it can sound very esoteric and mystical, but it's actually very ordinary and everyday. We just don't notice it. We just take it for granted—like that very ordinary, everyday experience of suddenly realizing, oh, I'm thinking. And we don't realize that is awareness-awaring-awareness.

So, mindfulness remembers awareness. Oh, I'm thinking. Or it remembers the object of awareness—in this case, the meditation object.

and you slide off into distraction, suddenly you know you're distracted and the awareness goes, bang, straight back to the meditation object. Has that ever happened? So there the flavour of remembering is you're remembering the object of awareness, you're remembering the meditation object.

So I remember my awareness—oh, I'm thinking. Or I remember the object of awareness—oh, there it is, back onto the breathing or whatever. These are the two flavours that emerge.

The work of being mindful, of practising mindfulness, is the work of reminding ourselves that we are already aware, or reminding ourselves to be aware of this, my chosen meditation object. So you can see the different styles of the practice. I can give myself something specific to be aware of—this morning we were playing with the breathing, although we were doing it pretty loosely. But you give yourself something specific to be aware of, so the job is to remember this. Or you might have a much more open style of practice where the job is simply to remember awareness itself and you don't particularly care what you're aware of.

These are the two ends of the spectrum: directed awareness, undirected awareness.

Now again, mindfulness is meant to be something to be lived on. It's something to be done in the ordinary and everyday. And of course we get a particular opportunity in a retreat like this where there's nothing else getting in the way and there's nothing else to do anyway, so you may as well be aware.

So the question becomes, when do we remember awareness? And the answer to that question obviously is now. This practice can only be done now. We cannot postpone it for the future when conditions will be better. And we cannot go back to the past and redo our mistakes. All we have is now. All we ever have is now. And the job is to, right now, remember it.

So what is happening now? This is the meditation practice. We talk about various techniques, but when we get down to the basics, it's simply: can we remember what is happening now? The challenge is to remember our awareness. Right now we are already aware, but do we recognise this? Are we awaring?

We gave the example, the question: right now, are you sitting? And of course the answer is yes. How do you know you are sitting? Don't you already know? It's just recognising what you already know. This is switching on the awareness light. Remember what you already know, but may have forgotten. And this remembering is mindfulness. Reminding ourselves that this is happening now is practising mindfulness.

This is the essence of the practice. Just remember: this is happening now. That's it. Very simple. But, as you know, quite difficult.

Any questions?

Today when I was just noticing what I was aware of, there were a number of layers. I was hearing, seeing, there were some thoughts going, and it was a perfectly pleasant combination. Talking about mindfulness as being face-to-face—two questions arise out of that. One is, does that mean that other things just have to wait in the background, wait their turn until they're relevant? And secondly, if it's a matter of remembering, how do we, as it were, know when to shift from one to another? There's the feeling of the sun on your face and your body, which is very pleasant in all of those. And it's very appropriate for different ones to be foregrounded at different stages.

The first part of the question brings up the whole debate among different schools of mindfulness practice. With the classical Burmese approach of Mahasi Sayadaw, it tends to be very go-for-it. But when, for example, Ajahn Chah talks about mindfulness, he talks about it in much more of a kind of wide-opened

not directed—so directed versus undirected. And there's a debate where some people today would say, well, mindfulness actually belongs to the undirected. That's where it really sits.

So here we're really getting into styles of mindfulness practice, I think, rather than mindfulness itself. The way I was talking about establishment tonight was very "oomphy." And partly this is because we're in the early stages of the retreat. Let's fire the engine up here. Let's come in and sit for a reasonable period at a time and just be clear about what's going on.

But taken to an extreme, this can shut out too much, because there's a narrowness of focus on a single aspect of experience and a pushing away of other aspects. Now, it may well be that you go through periods of practice where you do exactly that, because what that does is cultivate the samādhi power which is

necessary. But there's also a style which is much more open—especially in the everyday mindfulness that you were talking about. There it's wide open.

But I would suggest that, let's say, I'm moving through the garden. There's the changes within the atmosphere, the view, body sensations, the whole package of shifting elements. It's true that I'm not focused on any one particular thing, but there is a sense of being established on the whole panorama.

I remember my boot camp training in Burma with U Pandita was very much focused on walking. That's what he wanted, because he wanted the students to develop samādhi power. And I can remember going to one interview and saying, "Sayadaw, I'm not noting the grounding object. I'm noting the entire universe. Is that okay?" And he laughed. He said, "You're seeing the whole element."

So sometimes things just open up spontaneously and you get the whole picture. You know the story about the elephant? It's a classic story about blind men who were given the job of describing an elephant. One holds the trunk and says, "It's like a pipe or something." One holds the leg—"It's like a pillar." One touches the side—"It's like a wall." One's holding the tail—"It's a rope." Each of them were right and each of them were wrong, because they were just seeing a part.

So to see the whole elephant is to see the whole picture. There are situations in which this happens spontaneously. The mind will just open out. But you can also practice this, particularly in everyday mindfulness, when you're just cruising around and you're not focused on anything in particular. I would say there is that establishment on the whole field, but it's shifting and changing and moving within it.

And the decision about where to go is usually spontaneous. I think it becomes more natural as you get more experience with it—the flow, the sense of flow, where the awareness should go. You do get foreground-background structure, but with that wide-open style, it's much more fluid than it is if you're doing a formal meditation session, including formal walking meditation if you're doing the classic slow walking.

So there are different styles, and my rhetorical style tonight has got it... well, I was channeling my inner U Pandita.

Any other questions? Is this making any sense? I think it's useful to get a clear sense of what the project actually is. And it is designed very much for everyday awareness.

At the Mahasi Centre, when I went through my boot camp, there was an unspoken—never mentioned, but implicit—hierarchy: sitting is number one, walking is number two, and mindfulness in everyday activity is number three.

If you ever practice with Sayadaw U Tejaniya, he's part of the same lineage, but he's completely flipped it over. The central practice is everyday activity. And formal sitting meditation is number three. So if you go to his retreat centre, if you never turned up to the meditation hall, he wouldn't notice, and he wouldn't

care. It's just: are you being mindful?

Whatever you're doing. That's it.

And it's an interesting approach, partly because it's a lot slower for people to gain momentum. It takes a lot longer to really get into it. But once you've got it, it stays with you. Whereas the more focused, directed approach is much faster to get into, but it can have the disadvantage that if you're not in the sheltered workshop environment, you can't do it.

I'll give you an example. The first time Sayadaw taught in Australia, after a couple of days, he asked the managers, "Why isn't anybody talking?" The manager said, "Well, we're on noble silence." He said, "Why?" They replied, "Well, it's a retreat. We're supposed to be on noble silence." He said, "Did I ever say we're on silence?" "Well, no." And so he abolished the silence.

The result was pandemonium. There was a certain group who just went ballistic with the talking. It drove people crazy—people were being driven insane by this. Complaints started flowing toward Sayadaw. Eventually he parked himself in the dining hall, which was the worst during meals. It was just chaotic. He ate his meals there, eyeball to eyeball with the meditators. It did calm everybody down for, I would say, at least twenty seconds. But it didn't work.

Finally he stood up in the dining hall and said, "Look, I am not going to ask you to keep silence. I am not going to do this. One of the most difficult things to be mindful of is speech. If you don't get to practice it here, what chance have you got when you go home? So I am not asking you to keep silence. I'm asking you to be mindful when you speak."

He was so determined on this principle that he was prepared to see the whole retreat dissolve rather than compromise. I must say, I've never followed this example myself. But it really illustrates something about his approach—the centrality that mindfulness is about tracking experience over time. It's not necessarily about sitting in a particular posture and following your breath for thirty minutes. It's about being aware in all your activities.

In this sheltered workshop situation, you've really got the opportunity. Slow down. Be aware of the movements of the body. What's happening in the body? Feel the nature of experience. And up here in this environment, you're really in it. It's wonderful. Track what's happening in your mind as you do this, as you do that. As you move in here, as you move out there. Really practice it, because this is what you take with you when you leave.

If you manage to get a deep samādhi state, you're not taking that with you. That's going to crumble very quickly. But the habit of staying aware in ordinary everyday activity—that you take with you. So really get into it.

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