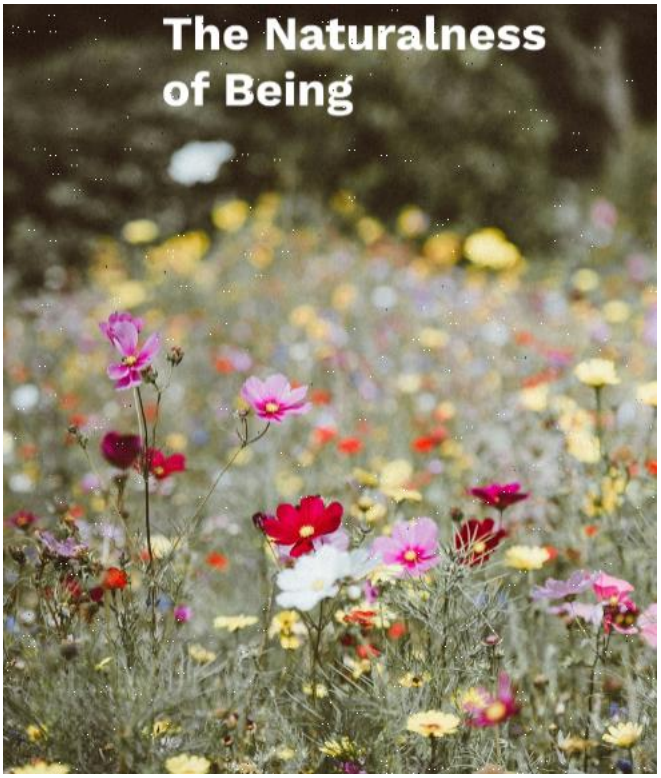


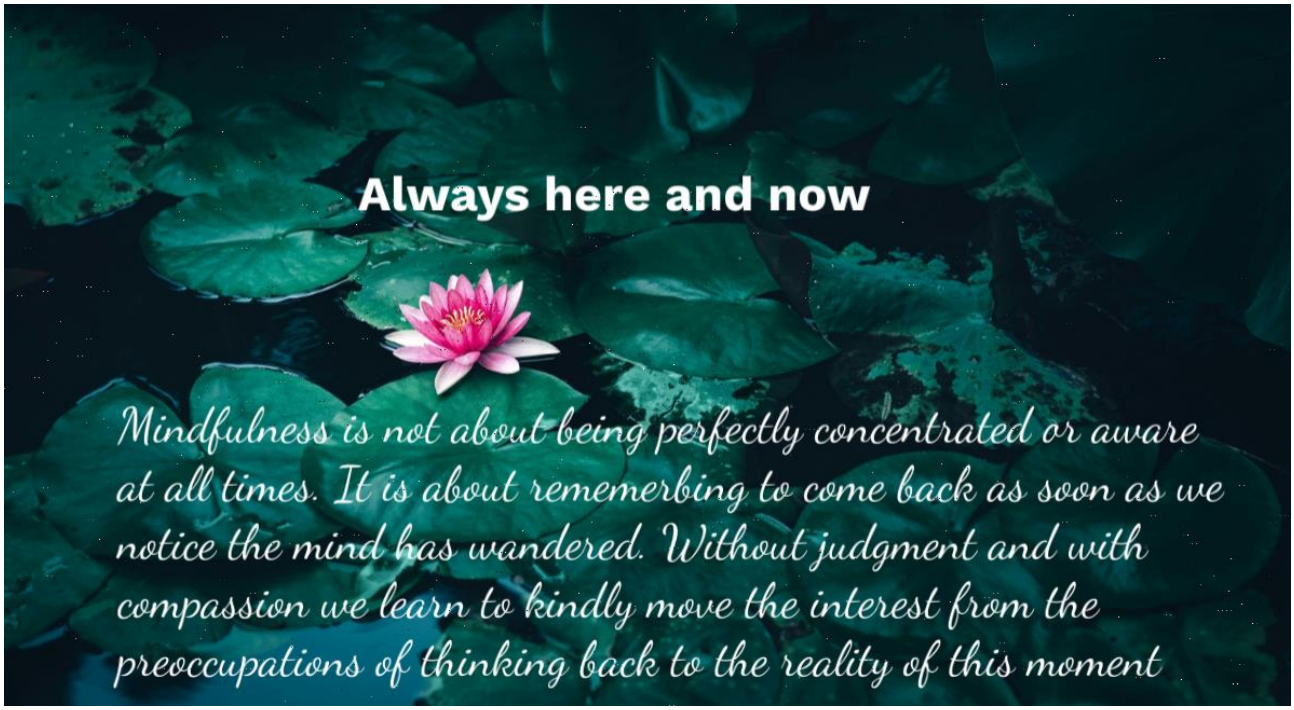
Often when we approach mindfulness or meditation, we do so from the tendency to want to be something that we believe we aren't.

However, instead of starting from an idea or concept of ourselves that we are not mindful and need to become a mindful person, we can explore bringing our attention to the natural state of being and awareness that is always here and accessible in this moment.

This can be summed up in the reflective question 'What's already here'?

Therefore, we are learning to see practice as a movement of interest towards what is already here in this moment rather than something that we do now to become peaceful or 'better' in the future.

However, to do this we need to begin to gain perspective on the mental frames, beliefs or attitudes that are already arising in the mind that are framing how we see life and may be preventing us from noticing this natural state of being.



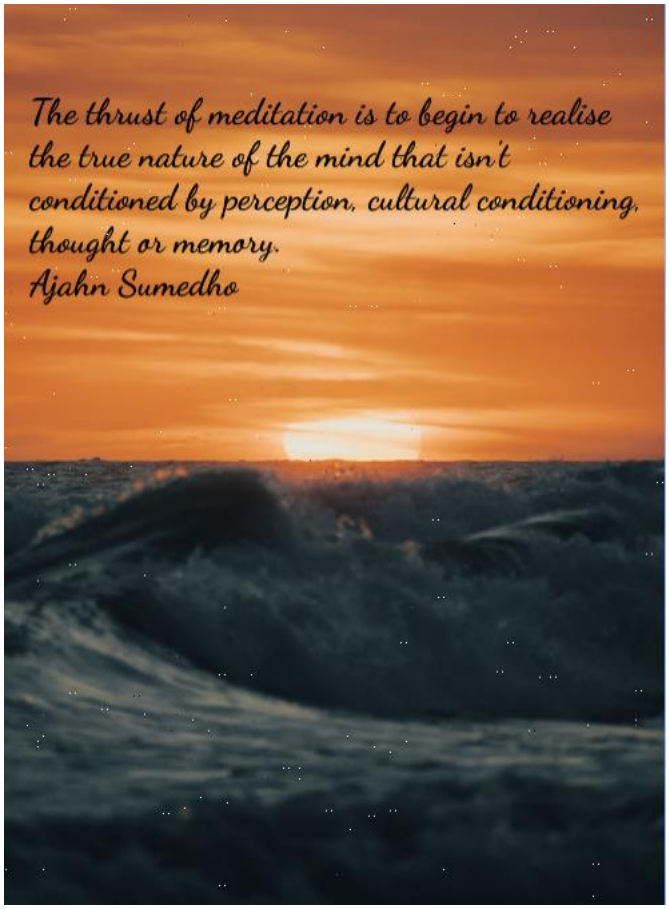
The Shift from Doing to Being

One of the most challenging aspects of mindfulness is to find ways to work with the habits of our thinking mind and the frames we tend to put over experience that condition how we see ourselves and the world.

One such frame emerges from the tendency to be busily engaged with tasks and actions that revolve around ‘me’ and ‘getting things done’ and the actions that we need to take to keep our lives running smoothly. At the centre of all of this is often the sense of ourselves and things in general not being how they should be.

Therefore, over time a sense of being the ‘doer’ of life becomes a conditioned way of relating to all experiences. So much so that when we practise meditation, we can see ourselves as the ‘doer’ of ‘awareness’ or even the ‘doer’ of ‘being’. This is the perception that we are trying to bring attention to and question.

Is ‘being’ something that we do? Or is it a natural state of presence that goes overlooked as the mind is engaged with beliefs, preoccupations and perceptions?



This frame if not seen for what it is, can act both as a distraction with thoughts such as ''There are more important things I need to be doing than sitting here doing nothing'' and as a self-judgement ''Oh my mind has been wandering, I'll never be able to do this mindfulness thing right''. Beneath all these beliefs is the subtle perception that mindfulness and presence is about getting somewhere or getting something done - 'I'm getting my practice done so that I'll be peaceful''.

The difficulty with approaching meditation from this position is that it creates a perception about being and presence that it is something to do with personal effort and time and not a natural and always accessible reality of this very moment.

Ironically this can place the present moment as being about the past and the future. That I must practise now to be more present in the future or I should have practised more in the past to be more present now.

However, if we investigate this frame, we being to question: How could being in this moment be dependent on the past and the future?

If we try to think about meditation practice as this or that, we're creating an image that we're trying to realise, rather than just trusting in the attentiveness of the mind, in mindfulness; letting go of the desire to find or grasp anything……There is still consciousness, sensitivity, but it's not seen in terms of being a person… there is just awareness of what is happening - what the feeling is, the mood, the atmosphere that one is experiencing in this moment. We can call this intuitive awareness. It is not programmed and conditioned by thought or memory or perception. Ajahn Sumedho

So how do we work with this process?

Firstly, we establish an attitude of noticing what is already here in the mind. For example, if it is present in the mind we can bring awareness to this tendency to want to do or achieve and see it as a conditioned thinking pattern arising and ceasing rather than to fight against it.

Instead of trying to stop anything, get anything or become anything we practise bringing the attention to the natural awareness of the moment to what is present as it is and not so we can change it. Then we gradually and kindly shift the focus and attention away from the frames of perception and towards the natural expression of the heart/ body/mind in the present moment.

Noticing Being Itself

As we continue this process we can even go one step further back and begin to notice the awareness itself. Is being always here? Is awareness always here? Can we notice what it feels like to bring attention to this sense of open knowing. What better way to receive the beauty and wonder of this moment?