

## Held Lightly

People often ask me  
You teach mindfulness~do you meditate, have a practice?  
I usually pause, and reply like this, 'Well, I used to.....'  
You see it's a difficult question  
In my view, there are no rules in meditation  
It's more about understanding than sitting or walking  
I don't use meditation stools or zafus any more  
Once I did a lot, but not now for sure  
Reading their minds I can sense their feelings  
A teacher of mindfulness who doesn't sit~what's he thinking?!  
It's a good point and one's apt to inject  
'Meditation~it's not what you think!'  
Clever on a T-shirt, but makes the spirit sink

Let's think.....  
To be mindful, to meditate means being aware  
Paying attention with care  
For me, there are no bells, ohms, icons or jossticks  
No tools, techniques or tricks  
No floating on a lotus becalmed  
No special time or place beyond harm  
Nor smiles beatifically on face  
None of it really needs to take place  
But to be fair, I do see stuff when I'm being aware  
Noticing, Observing, Witnessing  
N-O-W spells 'NOW'.... now we're talking!  
Meditating for real

Noticing what's going on in my head and body  
Inside me and out there with you  
The present moment~morning, noon~night time too!  
Drifting to the past and future, getting in a stew  
Ordinary everyday life~all the trivia~changes and strife  
Everything the mind thinks, feels and senses  
Allowing the lense of mindfulness to focus  
Anywhere, any time  
No announcing, sitting or walking to stay in line  
Awareness of breath~the fact of breathing  
How about you, are you breathing?  
Good! you're alive, being mindful of one thing  
Asking the question peels the mind's eye  
And there you are, with sudden insight  
'Breathing is good for me~respiration with a sigh!'

Reading the screen of the phone I'm holding  
I notice the grip, words unfolding  
Expressions on faces

Awareness of beauty, peace and places  
Tons more in life to perceive  
Like the itch on my foot I can't relieve  
The creature that's almost too small to see, crawling across the floor in front  
of me  
Predictive text misspelling my poem (hilarious and dangerous at the same  
swine - I mean time!)  
Vapour trails in the sky above  
Riding my bike as the chain flies off  
Birds screeching overhead  
Gut wrenching flash-backs of the lost, the dead

The breeze caressing my face and hands  
Crunching underfoot on pebbled strand  
Thumping gym beats gathered to compete  
Understanding what someone's saying  
Getting it wrong and paying  
Trying to do things right and stay in the light  
Checking for an email that won't come all night  
Priding myself on something I've written, or said or made or done  
Beating myself up for something I've written, said or made or done  
'Such is life' ~ said my Mum  
Noticing what the mind says~the stories it tells  
The trouble I get into~hell's bells!  
Not forgetting, forgetting

All living's an opportunity for awareness  
That's meditation remember, when we're not being careless  
Or even when we are, being mindful of that  
Try not to run over, the cat!  
Using our senses, allowing all to be  
With Patience, Open-Mindedness, Trusting, Non-Striving you see  
Accepting, Letting Go, Non-Judging, the other three  
These are the seven pillars of mindfulness, of course!  
It would be great if we could be more like that~I should go on a course!  
But let's be honest, this awareness we call mindfulness comes and goes  
Moment by moment..... by moment.... by moment  
Good, bad, in-between, these mental events are all there to be seen  
When we notice, they tell us we're alive  
Not necessarily that all's well  
But well, this is the way it is~going live~to be living

Is there an off-switch through meditation?  
No, sorry there's not!  
If you turn to face your life as it is, there's no escape or avoidance, it is as it is  
For instance try this....  
See that red open top sports car, being driven by the giraffe with the pink  
flowing scarf?  
See it? Red car, giraffe, scarf.... Got it?.....  
Now get rid of it! Can you do that?

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Not for long ~ it always comes back full on, strong  
Try to stop thought as you think you ought  
And you'll find it floats back, putting you back on the rack  
If you understand this, you'll soon realize the truth of non-doing  
Oh, and it's not a prize

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So I don't try any more  
I don't aim to be mindful or seek change and improvement  
I've given it up, it's a job I don't need  
Sowing the seed of mindful living ~ my guide to life  
I notice my thoughts about the future, the past  
I notice they all pass, quite fast  
Sometimes I can see and allow them to be  
At others I struggle and get in a muddle being mindful of all this  
All this stuff of which to be mindful, I want to be mindful  
With all it's faults, foibles and frissons  
I want to be mindful all the time, from now on  
But, 'I want doesn't get', my Mum also said  
You know that and nothing is perfect, although we want it so

Even when you're not being mindful, guess what, you're being mindful!  
How do we know that?  
You think it, there's a thought, 'I'm not being mindful'  
And knowing you're thinking that thought... Well that's being mindful!  
So there's a lot more awareness than we think, don't you think?  
Despite all this awareness~sad to say  
Your head won't empty or go blank some day  
Your thoughts, feelings, sensations won't stop~leave the room~any time soon

And yes, it's hard to accept the way it is  
We always want more, get into a fight  
To try and find a permanent light  
Until that is, the lifeguard of mindfulness  
Gathers us up and shows us all there is  
To Notice, Observe, Witness, to be aware of  
I'm very grateful for moments of understanding~it's a thrill  
More helpful than any amount of sitting still

If someone's just beginning and wants to understand  
Learning to sit for practice is a great start  
As long as they see, it's not the whole art  
Meditation guidance is good advice  
Attending courses and retreats are fine  
It's just~watch out! Too much practice and not enough understanding  
Can lead to a lot of doing mindful standing~ still  
And very little being mindful of the moving~ wheel

Being mindful is meditation  
Meditation is awareness  
Awareness is survival  
Survival is being mindful in everyday life

So yes, I admit it, I don't do it~not in the usually expected sense anyway~yet I  
still teach mindfulness  
Being mindful of life~meditating on life  
I look for understanding  
I look at being alive  
I look through the light of mindfulness

Held lightly

*Are you breathing?*

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