Meditation

Angela 2 — Week 4, Day 4, Session 8 — 33 minutes

Summary: Russell invites a sitting in which, after a bell, someone may read a line and speak from within the meditation. A brief exchange about neck strain comes first. The group then sits with passages on intimacy, aliveness, and warm-hearted welcoming, breathing those words in and out.

Introduction

[Russell:] My inspiration and invitation is that we begin sitting, and we continue sitting, and at some point I'll ring the bell. And while we're sitting, someone can read a line or two, either as a question or as something that they're taken with. If they have something they want to say about it, they can, but speaking from in there. So it's a different kind of conversation.

And then we listen to what someone says, whether they just read something or comment on it, and we sit for a bit with it. If something wants to come about that, not in reaction to the person, but is coming — it gets stimulated by something someone says. We stay with it. We have time in between comments, and then something else comes, and we sit with that.

And then there might be a gap for a while, and I'll ring the bell again, and somebody else can start a new thread. And we'll actually have a meditation conversation. And we'll see how that is.

[Participant:] So is there anything I can do to loosen it, that would just support it? Because it — like it really — it just —

[Russell:] Okay, so describe the sensations that you're having in your neck.

[Participant:] It feels permanently pulled up, and lengthened.

[Russell:] Okay, so it's lengthened in a way that feels strained.

[Participant:] Yeah, like I feel like someone pulling, yeah.

[Russell:] Okay, okay, yeah.

[Participant:] And it — like that, uncomfortable, I don't know.

[Russell:] Okay. So if possible, this is what we were pointing to, what I was pointing to with you during the lesson. If it would feel okay to come a little bit forward and up here.

See if that forward — not lift, but forward and a little bit up — to where you get support for your head from further down.

And if that doesn't feel okay, and it still feels strange, you can lie down. Okay? But see if it's possible. The postural tendency you have is to come down a little bit, not quite get the support from here, and you were having a nice lengthening in your neck, but it needs something underneath it for more support.

And so see if that would feel all right. Not take a break.

Sitting

[Russell:] So set yourself up for sitting. If you've already got the article written nearby — if you have something that you're interested in, you're taken with — you know, only a few people will probably initiate a subject, but if there's something that you have, have your article nearby so you could come forward with something. And it could include something — why that interests you, or how that touches you, or if you want to go further from there.

And as we're listening to people speak, we want to listen from all the way down here and take it in, resonate it, feel how does that influence my sitting? Do I connect with it?

And there might be time after you've sat with it a little bit. 10, 20, 30 seconds, something might want to come about that. Or after maybe a minute or two, or three, of no one speaking, I'll probably ring the bell again and invite someone else to come with something.

So it's a different form of sitting together. And so we'll just start with sitting, and I'll ring the bell when this space is open.

[Silence 5 minutes]

[Participant:] Enlightenment is an accident, and just sitting makes your accident grow.

[Russell:] You say it once again a little louder.

[Participant:] Just sitting makes your accident grow.

[Silence 36 seconds]

[Participant:] Throughout human history, most violence and intolerance came from people's inability to question their own thoughts and feelings.

[Russell:] And once again, please, a little bit louder.

[Participant:] Throughout human history, most violence and intolerance came from people's inability to question their own thoughts and feelings.

[Silence 44 seconds]

[Participant:] The point of meditation is not to control the mind, or to be mindful, is to be intimate with self and life.

[Russell:] I wonder if we can feel what this word intimacy points us toward. Just sitting here.

[Silence 2 minutes]

[Participant:] The point of meditation is not to control the mind, or to be mindful. It is to be intimate with self and life. This intimacy is alive because you are alive.

[Silence 42 seconds]

[Russell:] And just for the next few minutes, as you inhale, lightly say the word intimacy. And as you exhale, the word alive.

Just feel that practice for the next few minutes. Intimacy with the inhale, lightly. Alive with the exhale.

[Silence 2 minutes]

[Silence 33 seconds]

[Russell:] Of course, when we inhale intimacy, we're feeling intimacy all the way to the bottom, on the cushion, the breath. What does it mean to receive this breath intimately?

And what does it mean, from our bottom to our hands, to our spine, to breathe out alive?

What does our whole body and mind have to say about intimacy and alive?

[Silence 2 minutes]

[Participant:] Intimacy calls for the lover. Intimacy calls for vulnerability.

[Russell:] Feel into that.

[Silence 2 minutes]

[Participant:] Let go of accomplishing something. Sense how you know you are alive right now.

[Russell:] Great. Again.

[Participant:] Let go of accomplishing something. Sense how you know you are alive right now.

[Silence 37 seconds]

[Participant:] Aliveness and intimacy allow for the questioning of beliefs and thoughts.

[Russell:] Once again.

[Participant:] Aliveness and intimacy allow for the questioning of beliefs and thoughts.

[Silence 2 minutes]

[Participant:] Warm-hearted welcoming creates the conditions in which meditation can reveal you to yourself.

[Russell:] Say that again.

[Participant:] Warm-hearted welcoming creates the conditions in which meditation can reveal you to yourself.

[Russell:] Can we sense the warm-hearted welcoming right now?

If not, can there be a warm-hearted welcoming towards the not?

And if not, can there be a welcoming towards that knot?

[Silence 2 minutes]

[Russell:] For our last five minutes, let's have the practice of inhaling the soft word intimacy, feeling it through and through. What is this intimacy?

Exhaling, what is this alive?

And warm-hearted welcoming of anything that appears in this breathing of intimacy and alive.

[Silence 3 minutes]

[Russell:] Even if distracted thoughts or feelings are there, what does intimacy mean when we notice that?

What does aliveness mean when we notice that?

If tiredness comes or fanciness, what does it mean to be intimate and alive?

[Silence 2 minutes]