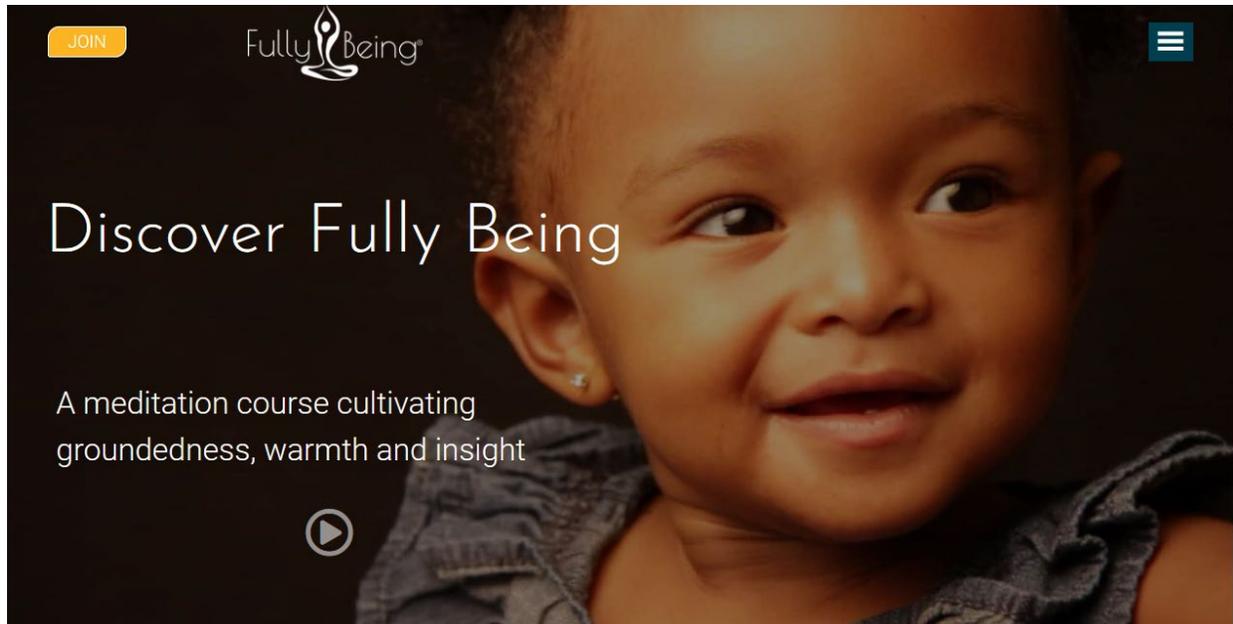


FULLY BEING

IMMERSION LEVEL II > INSIGHT

TEXT VERSION



PREFACE

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The text is to be used in conjunction with the online videos or downloaded audio available for each lesson.



WELCOME TO INSIGHT II

THE WISDOM OF FULLY BEING



DESCRIPTION

Insight practice harnesses the analytical power of the mind to peer deeply into the nature of reality. With a thorough grounding in calmness and clarity, the innate penetrating quality of insight can, like the rising sun, illuminate our understanding of ourselves and the world. We explore what is ultimately and relatively true and their interrelationship.

METHOD

With clarity, calmness, and essence love as a platform, we focus the laser-like analytical mind on self-identity and the nature of phenomena.

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> DISPELLING IGNORANCE

QUESTION

- How can we use listening, reflection and meditation to wake up?



KEY POINTS

There is a threefold traditional way to dispel ignorance:

- Learning through listening and studying
- Resolving our doubts and gaining certainty through reflection
- Fully transforming our deepest patterns and conditioning through the wisdom of meditation.

All three need to work together to help us wake up.

EXERCISES

- Our practice with insight is to use listening, reflection and meditation to wake up. Practice listening without bias or preconceptions to a short but meaningful teaching many times on different occasions and when we are in different moods

and places. Notice how our listening capacity changes in terms of how present we are, how we overlay interpretations, and the emotional resonance. Notice the change in the mind's activity when we shift from listening to contemplation. See how our relationship to doubt and uncertainty changes or not as we thoroughly contemplate the dharma.

- Once we have listened and fully contemplated a dharma text, use the power of meditation to cut through our deepest obscuring patterns. We can repeat this threefold cycle many times.

DAILY CONTEMPLATIONS

- Three ways to dispel ignorance
- Listen, reflect, meditate

TWO KINDS OF INSIGHT

QUESTION

- What are the two kinds of insight and their connection?



KEY POINTS

- There are two kinds of insight: that which arises from the body and feelings, and the other through investigative inquiry.
- Hold experience like a baby, neither too tight nor too loose.
- The mere I has a soft and light grasping. It can act in the world in a relaxed, spacious, and non-reactive way.
- The mere I allows the space for essence love to play.

EXERCISES

- Familiarize yourself with insights that come from feeling and the body. Feel the texture and energy movement in this kind of insight practice.
- Practice settling the mind without an object, resting in nowness without distraction or effort, and suddenly ask, “Who is meditating, who is the

handshaker?” Then relax back to settling the mind. Alternate these in your practice.

- When watching movies or TV, observe how you react to or are triggered by different characters and their actions. Look carefully at where you get drawn into the story and forget you are watching. Transfer this practice to your daily life and look at patterns of engaging, rejecting, and feeling indifferent to the situations you find yourself in.

DAILY CONTEMPLATIONS

- Insight of the heart
- Find the handshaker
- Feel the flow of impermanence
- Healthy grasping is playful

LEVELS OF INSIGHT

QUESTIONS

- What are the two levels of vipassana?
- What does “truly existing” mean in dharma?



KEY POINTS

- Vipassana practice has two dimensions: deep inquiry and seeing the abiding nature of things. This practice uses the thinking mind until it falls away of its own accord.
- We can observe, through preliminary analysis, that all subjects and objects are impermanent. We can't find anything that doesn't change.
- Also, we can understand, as our investigative practice into impermanence matures, that we can't find any phenomena (subjective or objective) that are not dependent on other phenomena. This is dependent origination.
- At a deeper level, we can understand that all experience relies on matrices of interdependent causes and conditions and that the investigating mind cannot find any phenomena that are independent of causes and conditions.

- It's important to note that in dharma, the oft used term "truly existing" means phenomena are permanent, independent, and singular. This is what we can't find with our analysis.
- The importance of doing this analysis or investigation is that it begins to undermine our naïve assumptions about ourselves and the world. This leads to a deeper understanding of emptiness.

EXERCISES

- After dropping into the body, handshaking as necessary, connecting with essence love and settling the mind, make an intention to investigate the nature of reality thoroughly. Take up impermanence first and look at this as directly as possible in your experience. How do things change exactly? Is there anything that is truly existing?
- Building on this practice of seeing impermanence (going to graveyards can help with this), then contemplate how you cannot find anything that is not dependent on other things. You can start with simple objects such as a cup or whatever you feel most comfortable with, and then move to more subtle objects that may include the ordinary mind and our feelings.

DAILY CONTEMPLATIONS

- See through the mind
- What truly exists?
- Undermine the mind

CLARITY

QUESTION

- How do we use inquiry and insight to analyze the truth of things?



KEY POINTS

- Insight practice happens after we have established calmness and clarity.
- Insight uses sharpened intelligence to analyze the truth of things.
- Concentrated intelligence uses inquiry for insight to manifest.

EXERCISES

- As our mindfulness becomes stronger and we are less distracted, ask yourself "What is this faculty of insight? How is it the same or different from simple knowing?"
- Feel the energetic quality of investigation in the subtle body. Tune in to the movement of prana as we investigate.

DAILY CONTEMPLATIONS

- Simply knowing is not insight
- Sharpen intelligence
- Always be aware of calm and clear

REAL AND TRUE

QUESTIONS

- How do we understand "real but not true"?
- What is the point of analysis?



KEY POINTS

- Fully being and deep understanding go together. Deep understanding is established through an investigation into what is ultimately and relatively true.
- Before analyzing, we establish a basecamp of a grounded body, an open heart, and a clear mind.
- Analysis wants the truth of things – how they are. We gain confidence as we learn how to see deeper.
- As we deepen our understanding of what is real but not true, we can be more with the suffering in the world. We can engage with more guts and transformative power.
- The two wings of compassion and wisdom come together more and more.

EXERCISES

- Explore the difference in feeling tone between analysis with a grounded body, open heart, and tranquil mind and analysis done without these. How do our understanding and self-awareness change?
- Go back in your life and recall times when you felt alive with the discovery of truth and perhaps the passion or love you felt for this uncovering process. Go back to when you were quite little and recover the open and natural experience of questioning how and why things are the way they seem to be. These are questions arising from our deep feelings and expressed as thought.
- Keeping the point of view in mind of "it feels real but is not true," practice small actions as if they are dreamlike and, at the same time, very real. Build on this experience and the attempt to balance wisdom and compassion in each of your actions.
- Give yourself up to the hungry ghost or needy part of yourself. Talk to this being as a friend, an equal. Feel the need and hunger, and use insight to see its cause without judgment. Be with the seeing and feel the hunger.
- Reflect on the layers of meaning in the phrase, "It feels real but is not true." For example, we may often feel and believe "it is real and true" or "it is not real nor true." What is it in us that makes us feel something is unquestionably real and authentic? To stimulate this, we can recall some disillusionment in our lives when something that felt so real but turned out to be untrue.

DAILY CONTEMPLATIONS

- The analytical mind feeds on truth
- Start at basecamp
- It seems real, but it is not true
- See the truth, respect the relative
- Always fly with two wings

WHAT IS REIFICATION

QUESTION

- What is reification?



KEY POINTS

- The core issue addressed by dharma is reification, which is the tendency to make what is impermanent permanent, what is dependent, independent and, what is composite (made of parts) singular (one homogenous lump).
- Space and emptiness are the exact opposites of the process of fixation or reification and the cause for liberating karmic imprints.

EXERCISE

- Explore how reification, making things concrete and solid, happens in your experiences, especially if you are having stress or discomfort. How do these temporary, dependently related events get so real and true? Explore experiences of pleasure and bliss in the same way.

DAILY CONTEMPLATION

- Be space

> DREAMING THE RELATIVE

QUESTIONS

- How do we use dharma teachings in a healthy way to heal our monsters and then liberate habitual karmic patterns?
- What are the dangers of translating dharma teachings in the wrong way?



KEY POINTS

- If we take the relative truth to be real and not an illusion, then there can be no liberation.
- Relative truth is like dreaming. We may have nightmares or pleasant dreams, but both are dreams and not liberation from illusion.
- There is an authentic, agreed-upon relative reality or truth (and distorted relative as well). But ultimately, we need to go beyond these karmic patterns or imprints. There are many methods in dharma to do this, but we have to heal our monsters first, or they will misunderstand and mistranslate the teachings.
- Kindness is the needed healing aspect of truth for the monsters.

EXERCISE

- Examine your conditioning that assumes a materialistic world view. Watch the tendency in your practice and off the cushion to mistake relative, agreed-upon reality as real and true.

DAILY CONTEMPLATIONS

- Relative truth is dreaming
- Heal monsters first

> CONDITIONING COVER-UPS

QUESTIONS

- How do we use understanding and insight to uncover our nature?
- Why do we sometimes manifest as needy and hollow?



KEY POINTS

- Our natural qualities of essence love, groundedness, and insight can't manifest fully due to the temporary coverings of conditioning.
- As we grow up, we learn "how to be," and this learning is necessary to survive. It is essential to see the extra emotional conditioning that results from this process. Signs of this are: over-seriousness, up-tightness, reactivity, and the tendency to reify experience. This is where handshake practice is critical.
- We become needy and hollow when we cannot touch happiness, our innate well-being. We try to find our identity outside ourselves with the hungry social I. Under this needy I is a shaky, insecure quality of mind, afraid of impermanence.
- As we mature in our practice, the needy social I and the "all about me" quality is transformed.
- We can engage our experience in a more loving, creative, genuine, and heartfelt way. We begin to benefit others without the intention to do so.

EXERCISES

- Investigate why calmness, clarity, essence love, and deep insight are not always present. Why is this? What are the causes and conditions? What does "covered" by the reified I mean in your experience, moment to moment?
- What happens in the naming or labeling process? When are there emotional messages attached to this? As we look at our unhealthy labels, beliefs, and feelings, we can gain insight by seeing how they form and dissolve.
- Look deeply at your experiences of being an over-serious, responsible person (you can substitute other qualities that work for you). What is this serious quality? Where does it come from? What function does it perform? Was it always there? If not, how was it constructed? How does it change in different circumstances?
- A reflection on interdependence: look at the stream of influences that have come together for you to grow up. Reflect on how these influences interact and touch each other in different ways and continue in your life.
- Note: To make this exercise work well, you can find what is most meaningful for you to use as an example of interdependence. Often our stream of relationships can stimulate this inquiry.
- Look at the unhealthy social I both in oneself and others next time you go to a party, family reunion, or social event. Just see how it works without judgment. Feel how your body, subtle body, and mind are when you are under the spell of wanting approval to feel okay. Investigate as you feel it, where it comes from and what is the essence of the need to be happy and loved?

DAILY CONTEMPLATIONS

- Find naked insight
- Juicy love, not dry logic
- Don't divide outer and inner
- Be a social nobody and enjoy yourself
- Respect your magical display
- The needy I lives in a hollow house

NEEDY I

QUESTION

- Why do our attempts to be happy not work over time?



KEY POINTS

- See into the extra grasping, and our neurotic attempts to be happy. Look into the feeling that something is missing.
- The problem with temporarily feeling good is we end up feeling dissatisfied again, and then the pattern repeats.
- We can see into the source of this needy I and know how to heal it with essence love.

EXERCISES

- Reflect on times when everything in your life was okay, but you felt something missing. Explore this "something missing" through dialogue with good friends, journaling, or any other means that is helpful. Get in touch with this uneasy feeling.

- Connect with times in your life when experiences may have been painful, but you felt alive and juicy. Feel this state of mind and body and make it a new positive habit.
- Use insight into both experiences (something missing and okay-ness) to get a sense of how grasping and neediness play a role in both. What is the quality of experience with and without extra grasping and need?
- Talk to the needy I as an equal and friend. Introduce your kind associate, essence love, gently, and use handshake practice whenever you need to. Make sure there is no plan to change or impose anything.

DAILY CONTEMPLATIONS

- Feel into what is missing
- We have the fundamental right to feel good
- The needy I needs essence love
- Awaken the sleeping bindu in the heart

MERE I

QUESTION

- What is the mere experience of the self?



KEY POINTS

- What is a mere cup? This is the same analysis as with the "I."
- The real way a cup exists is not understood if we reify it. It merely exists: not permanent, independent, or singular. Nor is it non-existent.

EXERCISES

- Reflect and then meditate on the meaning of "mere appearances," including the I that is meditating.
- Reflect on how things can act or function and yet merely exist. If they didn't merely exist, could they function at all?

DAILY CONTEMPLATION

- Mere cups filled with mere tea

> WHAT IS MERE?

QUESTION

- What does “mere” mean?



KEY POINTS

- How do we cope with the understanding that both distorted relative and the authentic relative truth are both mistaken views?
- To cope, we need to understand and experience the mere I. This is the crucial "I" of the five I's.
- Mereness is the way all relative experience appears out of emptiness. We see how emptiness and confused experience arise together within our mere experience.
- The mere I has the qualities of love and compassion.
- There is mere perception by the mere I.

EXERCISES

- Notice in your practice how experience can be very reified at times and then more mere. Observe this “dance” and how your thoughts and feelings change when reified or not. Sense this in your body if possible.
- Consider how your beautiful monsters, no matter how powerful seeming, are mere and full of love and compassion.
- Reflect on how mere changing appearances are neither fixed things (static) or a total absence of perception.

DAILY CONTEMPLATIONS

- How do we merely cope?
- Mere is crucial

> MERE QUALITIES

QUESTIONS

- What qualities come from understanding mereness?
- How is mereness different from reification?



KEY POINTS

- A kind of effortless compassion naturally arises from mereness as well as renunciation and joy.
- If we don't understand mereness, then we reify experience and become attached to our experiences as real and true.
- We reify either “nothingness” or “solidity” as concepts.
- When we reify, we lose humor and become over-serious. We lose the dance and become hollow.
- Phenomena exist and don't exist at the same time (e.g., a cup); therefore, they are mere.
- Mereness is connected to beauty.

EXERCISES

- Pay attention to times when you become over-serious, humorless, and dry. Look into what you may be reifying, making something or a relationship too real or solid, underneath these states of mind.
- Practice seeing all relationships as mere and if you find more beauty in them. This would apply to people we are very attached to and to those for which we may have aversion or indifference. We can check to see if we feel more joy and compassion as mereness becomes more present in our experience.

DAILY CONTEMPLATIONS

- Mere effortless compassion
- Mere beauty
- Not so serious
- Don't lose the dance

EMPTINESS AND MERE

QUESTION

- Why is mereness not the ultimate reality? How is it different?



KEY POINTS

- When merely perceiving things and ourselves, we need to recognize that this is not the ultimate reality. There is a tendency to reify this new mere way of seeing and understanding the world.
- We respect the mere appearance of things, and based on this, we can move toward liberation. We don't, however, want to reify our respect for the mere.
- Things appear as mere because of causes and conditions, and these can be untangled and liberated through practice.

EXERCISE

- As we develop our practice over time through dropping, handshake, essence love, vase breath, and settling the mind, the way things appear may naturally become more open, creative, fluid, and interesting. Notice when your perception

becomes more mere and the reified I is not active. Sense this in your feelings – how they are as mere as are thoughts.

DAILY CONTEMPLATIONS

- Respect by not reifying mere appearances
- Mereness leads to liberation

> LUMPS

QUESTION

- How does grasping and reifying function like glue?



KEY POINTS

- The lumping process is when habits, stories, and emotions get glued together through grasping. The ego or "I" holds onto these undigested lumps as part of its seeming identity.
- Over time this lumping process can become more substantial and more stuck in patterns that cause suffering. The body and the subtle body become more tight, frozen, and dead.
- Investigate the lump and ask, "Where is me, the agent, holding the experience?" See and feel what is moving and fluid, what is stuck.
- Be with the tight reified I and see its nature with insight. Almost die into it.
- Look at what we are holding or grasping moment to moment. Find out how we turn flowing water into ice cubes by seeing things as permanent, singular, and independent.
- To free grasping, allow the experience to open naturally.

- We can be compassionate and a genuine friend to this wounded and defensive part of us.

EXERCISES

- Recall a particular “lump” you have experienced or are experiencing. Perhaps this is something that came up in handshake practice repeatedly. Look closely at how lumping happens and how the pieces get glued together. What is this glue? Directly experience this “gluing” process.
- Examine how you hold experiences. Is it a light, fluid feeling, or does it have a frozen, tight quality?
- Practice going into the tight cut off places in our body and subtle body with compassion and gratitude for their efforts to defend and protect us. Practice opening and befriending these feelings and situations.
- Have a dialogue with the ego that protected us. Offer your warmth, gratitude, and friendship for its kind help.

DAILY CONTEMPLATIONS

- Frozen reactivity is hard to thaw
- Watch how you hold experience
- Analyze on the sidelines at times
- Don't let the water get too icy
- Things open naturally

> WHO'S MEDITATING?

QUESTION

- What is the self or observer?



KEY POINTS

- Investigate the various aspects of the self or I in the same way as all other phenomena. The analysis is rooted in our experience, not just as an abstract mental exercise.
- There are traditionally four aspects to the self: mere I, reified I, self-cherishing or needy I, and the permanent I or **ATMAN** or soul. Rinpoche adds the fifth one here, the social I.
- The most crucial self to see through with analysis is the reified I. Once this happens, then self-cherishing naturally dissolves. As the reified I and self-cherishing are increasingly understood as non-existent, then the concept of a soul or permanent self also vanishes.
- Of course, when we are not practicing vipassana, then the world seems to appear as usual.

EXERCISE

- Investigate the reified I. Is it permanent, singular, independent? Keep a notebook to write down your findings and questions. Then look deeply at the needy I and the **ATMAN** or permanent I. How does this analysis begin to change your view over time about how you assume a genuinely existing self?

DAILY CONTEMPLATION

- No self, no problem

> CHANGE

QUESTION

- How do we understand and directly experience impermanence?



KEY POINTS

- There are two types of analytical meditation: philosophical and experiential. Both are rooted in settling the mind.
- Experiment with both types of analytical meditation to see and experience coarse and subtle impermanence.
- Seeing impermanence slows down our reactivity and softens the conceptual boxes we impose on the world and ourselves.
- Feel the moment to moment impermanence of habits and their energies in the body and subtle body.
- Find if you can discover something solid and permanent in your habits.
- See where the experiencer abides; directly see its impermanence.

EXERCISES

- Investigate impermanence in your actual moment to moment experience of the senses, emotions, thoughts. What amid this experience is permanent, independent, and singular? Try to find, especially in the feelings, what is lasting, independent, and singular.
- Examine how we create a subtle feeling of our permanence as we conduct our lives. One example of this is assuming we will not die in the next moment. We impose a belief of permanence on experience, but why?
- Look directly at where the experiencer abides. Is there something "there" that is permanent, independent, and singular?

DAILY CONTEMPLATIONS

- Analysis has two paths
- Respond but don't react
- Re-vision old habits
- See where perception originates and abides

> WHERE DO THINGS COME FROM?

QUESTIONS

- What is emptiness?
- What is causality?



KEY POINTS

- Emptiness is the absence of any thing or concept. There is no permanent, independent, or singular thing called emptiness.
- How do things arise? They arise due to causes and conditions, which are like the laws of chemistry with different elements coming together and apart to produce different results. Causality is like natural law in this way.
- Causes and conditions create confused experience and also unconfused, liberating experience.
- The teaching on causality is considered very precious in dharma because it explains how everything arises (confusion, perception, and liberation). Until we can go beyond causality, we should never disparage it in any way.
- One scary statement in dharma is that both the distorted relative and authentic relative truths are considered as mistaken. This is from noble beings' perspective.

EXERCISES

- Reflect on the three aspects of emptiness: lack of anything permanent, independent, or singular-- by taking each one separately at first and then combining the meaning of the three in various ways. Meditate after this reflection on emptiness.
- How do you understand causality in your ordinary day-to-day experience since one key feature of causality is that it explains how everything (including our thoughts, perceptions, and experiences) arise? What is the relevance of this teaching to our view?
- Contemplate and meditate how the distorted and authentic relative are both mistaken perceptions? How are our ordinary CORRECT understanding and perceptions not true ultimately?

DAILY CONTEMPLATIONS

- Causes and conditions create experience
- Emptiness is nothing
- Never disparage causality

GROUNDED, OPEN AND CLEAR

QUESTION

- How do we bring together calmness and clarity?



KEY POINTS

- Trust in basic clarity by doing nothing (**MACHUPA**), and if we experience persistent thoughts and emotions, do handshake practice until they transform.
- Don't worry about involuntary thoughts. They are like the wind.
- Practice calm and clear together.

EXERCISE

- With this guided meditation, practice with Rinpoche as many times as you need to, so that calm and clear become increasingly united.

DAILY CONTEMPLATIONS

- Calm and clear at once
- Trust basic clarity

> WHAT'S OBSERVING?

QUESTION

- Who or what is the observer?



KEY POINT

- Once we have used the analytical mind to realize that objects are empty, we begin to investigate the mind that is reifying the observer.

EXERCISE

- Use your sharp intelligence, *prajna*, to discern the nature of external objects, then shift to thoughts and feelings. After this analysis, rest and relax in whatever you may or not find. Just be. Then turn in on the mind which is resting and look at who or what is doing the practice, the observer. Investigate this, just like you did with external objects and thoughts and feelings.

DAILY CONTEMPLATION

- Who is meditating?

> MERE I AND HOLLOWNESS

QUESTION

- What is the mere I in our experience?



KEY POINT

- Reification by the ego can manifest as tightness in the body and feelings of being over-serious and heavy. By connecting with these feelings and sensations fully, we can find essence love at their root.
- Hollowness evolves from this tight, serious and needy existence.
- Deep down we have the mere I that is humorous, juicy and naturally loving. It is covered by the reified I.
- The mere I perceives the world in a light, open way and has an awareness “behind” the more reactive nature of the reified I.
- The name “mere “is used because everything is impermanent. Mere ownership is rooted in the insight that nothing is solid or permanent, including the familiar feeling of having an ego.

EXERCISES

- Go into the experience of the tight, serious, screwed down, reified I. From this place find essence love and the feeling of happiness for no reason. Go back and forth gaining familiarity with these two experiences. Understand and feel your experience in both of these places.
- Connect to the light, humorous, mere sense of I under the more serious and dutiful reified I. Play with this relationship, feeling how each is in the body, subtle body and mind throughout our practice and our daily lives.
- Examine this question: if everything we experience is ever-flowing appearances, then what is the cause of grasping? Explore this with both kinds of insight.

DAILY CONTEMPLATIONS

- Be happy for no reason
- Be the inner smile
- Feel relaxation and joy in the flow of perception
- The mere I has mere ownership
- The secret agenda is to shine our light into the world