

When I started mindfulness practices I was constantly being told, and then told myself, that my mind was a ‘distraction’, something that would inevitably interrupt my practice and something I had to guard against. Without realising it I had set up an oppositional relationship with my mind, at least as far as practice was concerned. This isn’t helpful!

Of course, our mind is ever present. At times it can be very active, and at times less so but always there. It’s what minds do, they think. But can we stop seeing our minds as interruption and instead see it simply as part of ‘what is’ for us and therefore part of our practice?

I have been moving that way over the last few years. I have also noticed that many teachers also use that type of language now, asking me to nod or smile to my busy mind or even to give my mind a few moments of attention before returning to the breath or the body or whichever focus I am practicing that day.

Some teachers even encourage me to acknowledge the mind and re-assure it that I **will** be giving some attention to it a little later. All of this has helped me to shift my relationship with my mind. It hasn’t reduced the level of busyness or the number of times that I find my attention taken by my mind, but it has allowed me to be much more at ease with my mind, in whatever state I find it on any particular day. That I feel has helped me in my practice and has contributed to a wider acceptance of being with ‘what is’.

Brining my attention to my mind.

One phenomenon which I regularly experience happens when I deliberately bring my attention to the mind. It hides away initially rather like a small animal seeking shelter. Having been busily taking part in my practice when I have focussed elsewhere now it’s in the spotlight it runs away! Usually only for a short while. It gradually emerges again into the light and once again brings all of its wondrous variety and possibility into my attention.

Being able to overtly acknowledge what it is doing, what it is thinking or remembering or worrying about or planning, all of that abundance can be given its own space, smiled at, and welcomed. No longer an unwelcome distraction but a full contributor to my practice, appreciated for what it brings and how it enriches my life.

So, I now feel I am much more friends with my mind and this has enriched my practice not diminished it. Is your mind **your** friend?