

Obstacle #4 - Pain in the Body

Part 11.1

Finding Your Edge

how we work with pain in the body is, in many ways, very similar to how we work with distractions, or strong, or difficult emotions

we want to just bring our
attention to the pain and notice
how it feels in the body

there are some important
differences with pain

when you notice pain in the
body, the first thing to do is
actually bring your attention
to the pain

Really see if you can notice
where it is in the body.

Noticing just the raw, physical
sensations of pain.

Pain itself is just a concept.

what we want to do is break
down the concept,

and actually start to feel what it
is exactly that we're feeling

Rather than just saying to
yourself

“Oh, there's pain in the leg.”

“There's pain in the lower back.”

Really bring your awareness
there and say,

“Well, what is this made of?”

“Is it heat or coolness?”

“Is there stretching, or vibration,
or tension?”

“What does it actually feel like?”

See if you can really locate
the precise point where you
feel the pain.

you'll find that when you
try to locate the pain, you
can't actually find it



and really just feel the pain

Noticing the raw sensations.

You might be thinking,

“Wait, you want me to actually
explore my pain?”

“You want me to bring more
attention to pain?”

what you start to realize is that
most of the difficulty with pain
actually comes from the fear of
pain or our resistance to pain

“Pain times resistance equals suffering.”

if you can take away the
resistance to the pain, there's
much less suffering

you don't have to suffer
because of it

there's also an important
difference in how we work with
pain

from how we work with things
like distractions, or difficult
emotions

And this is to not push ourselves
too far in pain.

There might be times when the
pain is actually too much;

it's really OK to bring your
attention elsewhere

you can bring your attention to
the feeling of the breath

or opening up to sounds

just divert your attention away
from the pain if it's overwhelming

Mindfulness is not about gritting
your teeth and sitting with pain.

if it gets to the point where it's
overwhelming

where you just can't handle it,
there's no need to keep your
attention there

In mindfulness, we want to come
just to the edge of our
discomfort, and see if we can
just take one step over, and be
there patiently investigating the
feelings

without reacting to it.

just allow your attention to go
back to the breath,

or to open up to sounds

This is really about being kind to yourself, being compassionate.

learning to take a step back
when you need to

And if the pain is serious and
really overwhelming,

it's also OK to adjust your
position,

or even just take a break from
meditation

Next Video

Meditating With Pain