

## **Mindfulness – a great pleasure**

Mindfulness harmonizes and unifies every aspect of Buddhist practice into a concentrated, responsive awareness of body, feelings, mind, and mental objects. Perhaps the most apt analogy - again from the arts - is to say that being truly mindful is like playing a musical instrument, with oneself as both instrument and player. A violinist doesn't give a bit of attention to the score, then a bit of attention to her fingers on the strings, then a bit of attention to the conductor. To play well, she has to bring about a fusion between herself and what she is doing, a fusion almost between her awareness and its object. Everything must come together in a single, rich experience of energy and expressive skill. She is fully absorbed yet at the same time keenly aware of every movement she makes. This heightened state of awareness is what we need to aim for, body and mind fully engaged in a state of clarity and positivity that saturates and colours the whole of our experience. And it is surely a state much to be desired - not a duty, but a great pleasure.

This is the aim - everything coming together in a smooth flow. But just as the violinist needs to work on the details of her technique to achieve the full effect, so we need to pay careful attention to the details of our mindfulness practice - that is, to each of the four foundations and to further details within each of the four.

Sangharakshita, *Living with Awareness*, p. 7

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