

Stim Morane: Hi Solo!

Stim Morane: I wonder if I can get my avatar to stop brushing his head ...

Solobill Laville: Does that only happen when you sit there?

Stim Morane: Hi Eliza

Eliza Madrigal: Hi there :)

Stim Morane: No, it's an autonomic function. :)

Solobill Laville: Hi, Eliza! :)

Eliza Madrigal: Hello

Solobill Laville: ok, try this....

Solobill Laville is looking

Stim Morane: We'll start in a minute ...

Solobill Laville gave you Stop All Animations Lyr (WEAR TO STOP DANCING).

Eliza Madrigal: I've been looking forward to this..can stay the whole time today :) I know SL has been slow and odd today

Solobill Laville: wear that and see if that doe the trick

Stim Morane: I'll try it, thanks, Solo

Solobill Laville: yw

Eliza Madrigal: Hi Pila, Bleu

Solobill Laville: Heya, Pila :)

Bleu Oleander: hi

Pila Mulligan: hi everyone

Pema Pera: Hi Bleu, and hi everybody!

Bleu Oleander: hi Pema

Eliza Madrigal: Hi Pema

Pema Pera: Bleu, I hope we didn't chase you away yesterday!

Pema Pera: at the Time Workshop!

Bleu Oleander: RL called

Pema Pera: ah, okay!

Stim Morane: Hi Pila, Pema, Bleu, Eliza, Storm, Scathach

Pema Pera: I was afraid we were too bottled up in our own corner :-)

Bleu Oleander: the time workshop is very interesting

Pema Pera: thanks!

Eliza Madrigal: Scathach, Storm, Fefonz, ~Hello

Bleu Oleander: i'll try to catch it next week

Scathach Rhiadra: Hello Stim, Solo, Eliza:)

Pema Pera: we had few people, but next time we'll get more

Fefonz Quan: Hi all :)

Wol Euler: hello ari, solo

Stim Morane: Hi Fefonz

Pema Pera: great, see you then (too)!

Bleu Oleander: I'm reading Adam Frank's book and really enjoying it

Stim Morane: Wol

Fefonz Quan: the constant fire bleu?

Pema Pera: Glad to hear that, Bleu!

Solobill Laville: Hi, everyone! :)

Eliza Madrigal: Hi Wol

Wol Euler: hello stim, bleu

Wol Euler: hello eliza

Bleu Oleander: hi

Scathach Rhiadra: Hello Bleu, Ari

Bleu Oleander: hi all

Mickorod Renard: hi everyone

Stim Morane: This is the third meeting of a new series I'm doing on the nature and role of View in traditional contemplative practice. One possible point of this particular series would be to give us all a common ground for some delicate discussions later, regarding how contemplation might be understood in the modern, scientifically-informed context.

Pema Pera: (I'll have to leave again in 15 minutes, sad to say, for my RL duties . . . )

Stim Morane: I say "possible point" because this is all an experiment for me, and I don't know what is really most suited to SL yet.

Stim Morane: Sure Pema

Stim Morane: So I suggest we go through my little exercise series one more time, and then discuss implications for other things.

Stim Morane: Try this---spend about three minutes (not two this time!) working with the following token practice and view: breathe normally, and count each exhalation. So start by counting the first exhalation as "one", and the second one as "two", etc..

Stim Morane: Frame this practice with the view that an unfocused, scattered mind lies at the heart of many of life's problems, and that the practice should be used to help you learn to control the mind so that it eventually suffers no distractions and enjoys strict, uninterrupted awareness. Don't tolerate gaps. (The "macho" view.)

Stim Morane: If you lose the count, be aware that that has happened and start again at "one". Don't cheat! ?

Stim Morane: Count towards a total of thirty breaths. I'll be the timekeeper, and will stop you at the three-minute mark.

Stim Morane: Start the little practice now.

Wester Kiranov is Online

Stim Morane: OK ... that's three minutes

Stim Morane: :)

Stim Morane: in a previous week, I mentioned that this was not a spiritual view at all, but a secular one, and I think we basically agreed re that. Are there any comments?

Stim Morane: I mean, the view that's control-based, and narrowly goal-directed.

Chloe Paolino: Hello Blue, sorry I am late.

Stim Morane: Hi Chloe. Welcome. ... First of all, could you keep the count?

Chloe Paolino: What do you mean?

Stim Morane: Sorry Chloe ... my comment was directed to the others.

Wol Euler got up to 12.

Eliza Madrigal: At 24 I thought, "is that 24?"

Stim Morane: Great

Stim Morane: :)

Solobill Laville: yes

Fefonze Quan: slipped at 20 :)

Mickorod Renard: 23

Scathach Rhiadra: got to 18

Stim Morane: I would be that if we took a bunch of "advanced" western zen sitters and gave them this exercise, they would lose the count.

Stim Morane: \*bet

Stim Morane: So don't be discouraged

Eliza Madrigal: I decided it was and kept going..but should I have started over?

Stim Morane: Yes, start at 1 again

Eliza Madrigal: K

Stim Morane: There really is a point to this.

Stim Morane: First of all, we're deliberately using a narrow view

Stim Morane: one that's very picky and control oriented

Fefonz Quan: i got an interesting respond from someone i know about that view exercise

Stim Morane: But aside from that, the continuity of the count really is important

Stim Morane: Yes Fefonz?

Fefonz Quan: he didn't loose tha count since he repeated one,one,one,one, then two,two,two, all teh time

Stim Morane: :)

Fefonz Quan: in the head in order to keep track

Stim Morane: well that's one way to win

Scathach Rhiadra: :)

Stim Morane: but the real point there is to see the mind

Fefonz Quan: and waste a lot of energy

Stim Morane: the distracted mind

Storm Nordwind: The effect is different if you start each breath with the count instead of finishing it too :)

Stim Morane: the low view makes it a goal, which is ok, but tries to win by beating back all the distractions.

Stim Morane: That's interesting, Storm. Say more?

Zen Arado: isn't counting still thinking?

Storm Nordwind: When you do it at the end, it feels like to are saying "I've achieved this"

Stim Morane: Yes

Storm Nordwind: When you do it at the start, it feels like you are giving yourself permission instead

Wol Euler: yes, you're right, it is different. wow.

Stim Morane: Interesting. So you think that our current approach increases the likelihood of losing continuity?

Stim Morane: If so, that's a new angle ...

Stim Morane: Anyway, the point is really to fail!

Zen Arado: never worked for me - I can count and think at the same time

Storm Nordwind: I suggest experimenting between the two

Stim Morane: OK, we will try that sometime, Storm!

Stim Morane: Anyway, for now I'll just say the point actually is to fail!

Storm Nordwind: The best success I ever had was counting to ten, then back to 1 and up again etc

Stim Morane: Because the distractions are more important than our small victories.

Storm Nordwind nods - sure!

Stim Morane: I see. Yes.

Solobill Laville: That is what I usually do as well, Storm (1 - 10, 1-10, etc.)

Stim Morane: When I had to go through this decades ago, the standard was to get to the point where I could count to 10000 or more without losing the count

Storm Nordwind: I meant 1-10 then 10-1 then 1-10 Solo

Stim Morane: Oh interesting.

Solobill Laville: (Ah!)

Stim Morane: Anyway, is my comment about valuing distractions coming through?

Storm Nordwind nods

Stim Morane: On the one hand, we really should try for continuity.

Stim Morane: On the other, we learn most by seeing what breaks it.

Stim Morane: And that's where view #2 comes in!

Pema Pera is Offline

Stim Morane: Let's go on to that.

Storm Nordwind is an avatar of very little brain and big numbers bother him ;)

Solobill Laville: :)

Stim Morane: We'll avoid big numbers here. I don't like them either

Stim Morane: This time, count the breath as before, but instead of practicing the sort of mind control that figured in the first approach, meet all distractions with compassionate inclusion. So anything that arises within your nature which seems likely to throw you off or make you lose the count should be met in a welcoming and inclusive way... and an \_appreciative\_ way!

Fefonze Quan: In fact in 1-10 you just have to remember one digit, that is easier Solo

Stim Morane: We value the distractions.

Stim Morane: The view here is that there are no real distractions, only things that we haven't yet learned to appreciate as actually contributing toward a larger sense of presence. Practice that way.

Stim Morane: Start with one breath and maintain continuity for about 3 minutes.

Stim Morane: Start now.

Stim Morane: OK, that's it

Stim Morane: Feel free to stop counting!

Fefonze Quan goes quietly AFK while counting... rl...

Wol Euler: :)

Stim Morane: :)

Stim Morane: comments?

Storm Nordwind reached 62 and found it very much easier

Wol Euler: O.O

Eliza Madrigal: Was it more than 3 minutes? I was at 39...seemed a lot longer

Solobill Laville: I quickly got catapulted to #3 when I heard the birds...then regrouped, started counting again

Stim Morane: Yes, I let you go for a bit.

Stim Morane: this seems like a very trivial exercise, perhaps

Eliza Madrigal: :) ::whew::

Stim Morane: But the implications are potentially huge

Wester Kiranov: I was at 21 + 19 - weren't we supposed to start again at 21?

Stim Morane: :)

Wol Euler: Nine.

Stim Morane: doesn't matter

Storm Nordwind: Wily Stim

Stim Morane: As I said, the whole point is to see the mind

Chiaiu Chiung: sorry, must go, bye everyone

Solobill Laville: hehe

Eliza Madrigal: Bye Chiaiu

Myna Maven: (Bye Chiaiu)

Stim Morane: and to see more of it, rather than picking and choosing

Solobill Laville: /em waves to Chiaiu

Stim Morane: Bye Chiaiu

Stim Morane: But let me ask you ...

Stim Morane: why does being more open and accommodating more inclusive counts as being more "spiritual".

Stim Morane: \*count

Stim Morane: Why is it "spiritual"?

Stim Morane: Or is it?

Storm Nordwind: Who said it was spiritual?

Stim Morane: We did ...

Eliza Madrigal: Lighter?

Stim Morane: But I'm questioning that now.

Stim Morane: Storm, this was in the first week ...

Storm Nordwind: I had a huge smile on my face throughout if that counts as spiritual! :)

Stim Morane: But I'd like to raise the question now what that word really could mean.

Solobill Laville: :)

Stim Morane: Well, there is indeed some reason to say that spirituality is about being more friendly, more compassionate and inclusive.

Stim Morane: So the argument can be made ...

Stim Morane: But I would also like to encourage you to challenge things here

Stim Morane: Any comments?

Eliza Madrigal: I don't think it \*is\* spiritual, but feels perhaps more open and light..which people associate with spiritual

Stim Morane: Yes

Stim Morane: Others?

Wester Kiranov: i would think spirituality is about connecting to as much reality as possible

Scathach Rhiadra: feels less self-centred, again thought of a s'spiritur!'

Stim Morane: The point is a large one ... what is spirituality?

Stim Morane: Yes, Wester, I would agree.

Storm Nordwind: In that consciousness it seems as though dealing with others would also be more compassionate. In many religions that would be seen as spiritual

Stim Morane: But again, being friendly to distractions and thus to all the facets of mind and nature, could work in that direction.

Stim Morane: Yes.

Stim Morane: I really do think View #2 is related to spirituality.

Stim Morane: But I also think that "spirituality" itself is a weird notion.

Stim Morane: There's no exact counterpart for it in the contemplative traditions we're introducing

Stim Morane: So it's something to consider.

Stim Morane: We could ask the same question about view #3 ...

Stim Morane: Why does attending to "aliveness" count as "spiritual"?

Pila Mulligan: 'highest good' comes to mind, in relation to spirituality

Stim Morane: And note that Taoists, for instance, would think it's an important thing.

Stim Morane: Yes, Pila

Stim Morane: I'm uncomfortable with this notion of "spirituality". It seems to imply a separate subject or category or aspect of life, and I think that's unfortunate. But it's hard to say what we should use in place of this term.

Stim Morane: I would want to talk about being connected to something that's important, more important than our usual distractions and preoccupations. And I think the most important thing we could connect to is simply reality. So spirituality for me really amounts to a concern with reality. And I think this is the reason why it might be meaningful to have "science and contemplation" dialogs in the first place --- they both are concerned with reality in one sense or another.

Wester Kiranov: there is also this aspect of learning to see, feel the truth that in some ways you already know

Stim Morane: Yes, exactly

Stim Morane: It's interesting to note that the word "spiritual" actually refers to inspiration and respiration --- to breath. For the ancients, that was about as real as you can get, and I think they were on the right track.

Pila Mulligan: :)



Stim Morane: It's not so strange to claim that reality is maximally accommodating or inclusive. Or "alive". Death comes from looking away from what Is, disconnecting from it.

Stim Morane: But still, we shouldn't use the word "spirituality" without some caution.

Stim Morane: Anyway, something to consider ...

Stim Morane: I wonder whether "science and contemplation" discussions could proceed without having to trip over this word

Pila Mulligan: probably not, Stim

Stim Morane: You may be right, Pila.

Stim Morane: But I'll leave that question open for now ...

Stim Morane: In my classes at the monastery, I asked people to do the simple "breath-following plus counting" practice 100,000 times within a one year.. This was a commitment I urged them to make and keep, the first of several I suggested over the years. And they did keep this first commitment, within 12 to 16 months.

Shilv Tigerauge: have to go - rl

Stim Morane: Bye Shilv

Shilv Tigerauge: bye

Mickorod Renard: bye shilv

Stim Morane: One of the things I noticed at the conclusion of this practice commitment was that some of them really needed to do the same thing again from the beginning. And lest that sounds strange, if you were following one of the traditional contemplative training courses, such as the one that's typical in Tibetan Buddhism, you would be asked to do much much more as a prerequisite for any sort of advanced instruction. This is where the "500,000 preliminary practice repetitions" comes in. This latter takes far longer than just five courses of counting your breath 100,000 times, since a typical breath only takes about six or seven seconds whereas the Tibetan practices each take much longer per repetition.

Stim Morane: To see the point, take an example: if people undertake Zen practice, like shikantaza, where they are being relaxedly and appreciatively present, without some kind of preliminary training of the sort I'm describing here and that we've tried in our little exercises recently, been the practice will actually involve a lot of gaps in awareness ... a lot would be missed and on more than one level. Being spaced out is not shikantaza.

Stim Morane: \*then the practice

Stim Morane: The implications bear on our own growing appreciation of our own lives and natures, and also bear on more theoretical discussions.

Stim Morane: In our remaining cafe meetings, near-term, I would like to collaborate with you all on which way we should go ...

Stim Morane: towards more re "practice", or re theory?

Stim Morane: What do you think?

Pila Mulligan: I'd like to approach attending to aliveness in both, practice and theory, Stim

Storm Nordwind: Theory that can be practised? Practice that can be discussed to see if there's underlying theory? Both in other words! :)

Wester Kiranov: as far as there is a difference at all, I think I would prefer practice

Stim Morane: Yes, fair enough, Storm?

Stim Morane: But by theory, I also meant theoretical discussions such as figure in "science and contemplation".

Stim Morane: \*!

Stim Morane: Do you want more on practice and theory re your own personal awakening?

Stim Morane: Or more re "science and contemplation" in the theoretical sense?

Wol Euler would find that useful

Wol Euler: (practical, that is)

Stim Morane: OK

Storm Nordwind appreciates the baby steps we're taking so far.

Stim Morane: These are baby steps. But they have huge implications, as I mentioned.

Mickorod Renard: anything on personal awakening

Pila Mulligan: if we can connect science and contemplation, it will seem to of necessity be theoretical, while the awakening part can be both

Stim Morane: Some great masters of the past just did something like what I've already introduced here.

Stim Morane: Yes, Pila.

Eliza Madrigal: :) Have liked this

Stim Morane: I like to see these two undertakings as connected.

Pila Mulligan: :)

Stim Morane: But I want to be responsive to your interests too

Stim Morane: This is really a group undertaking

Storm Nordwind: The practical stuff helps us build a vocabulary for the theory it seems

Stim Morane: Yes, right, Storm. And insight too! Part of the reason for my thinking exercises like these,

Pila Mulligan: science seems to overlook the awakening part of breath that cannot yet be measured

Stim Morane: is that we need to "see" the mind that does ordinary science-like work.

Stim Morane: True, Pila. It can't easily get at that.

Stim Morane: ANYway, I'm saying that a meaning science-spirituality (ugh) dialogue, needs more awareness of "what kind of mind are we using?"

Stim Morane: \*meaningful

Stim Morane: This is one reason for working w the exercises.

Stim Morane: So my purpose thus far was just to get grounded.

Stim Morane: ANd we can continue fine-tuning that.

Wester Kiranov: i think the vocabulary part is pretty important if we're going to get theoretical. words get very tricky when you talk about "spiritual" things

Stim Morane: But I'd like input re preferred directions ...

Stim Morane: Yes, say more Wester?

Wester Kiranov: just think about the conversation about "spiritual". Or "emptiness"

Stim Morane: Yes, good example

Stim Morane: Remember, in our first, somewhat failed meeting, I mentioned nirvana as another example

Stim Morane: Even simpler cases like "values" figure here

Pila Mulligan: oh, and then there is the big biggy, karma :)

Stim Morane: It's really hard to have a meaningful discussion without some concrete meaning being assigned to such notions

Stim Morane: Karma is on the list too, definitely

Pila Mulligan: :)

Stim Morane: Anyway, you see the issue we're facing

Stim Morane: For me, without practice and insight, discussion and argument is meaningless

Stim Morane: Do you agree?

Eliza Madrigal: Yes

Wester Kiranov: yes!

Pila Mulligan: aye

Scathach Rhiadra nods

Wol Euler: mmhmm

Myna Maven: Yes.

Storm Nordwind nods in agreement

Stim Morane: OK, good. So now all we need is another 10000000 breaths!

Stim Morane: :)

Mickorod Renard: yea

Stim Morane: Or maybe less ...

Stim Morane: This gets us to another, related issue: practicalities

Stim Morane: In modern society, there simply is not enough time to do all this traditional training, unless you find a clever way fitting it into ordinary life.

Stim Morane: \*to fit

Stim Morane: So that's another thing we'll have to work out together.

Stim Morane: You are already dealing with this in PaB too, of couse.

Stim Morane: \*course

Eliza Madrigal: Thank you Stim, must go :) Bye all

Stim Morane: Bye Eliza

Myna Maven: (Bye Eliza\_

Mickorod Renard: bye eliza

Mickorod Renard: yes,,if fast tracking isnt counter to what we are tryin to acomplish

Stim Morane: So there are several entwined issues: more direct awareness of our own natures (reality), the overlap with science, and workaday practicalities issues

Stim Morane: Also, cultural stuff ...

Stim Morane: All of these figure.

Myna Maven: :)

Stim Morane: Where would you like to go next week? I would be happy to get some suggestions.

Zen Arado: why do you need to bring science in along with spiritual practice?

Zen Arado: don't quite see the need?

Stim Morane: "spirituality" may not need it, Zen.

Stim Morane: But it's a possibility.

Stim Morane: I've been studying and teaching several contemplative traditions for decades.

Zen Arado: I see a danger fo 'science worship' in our society

Stim Morane: And I have found that science, as the dominant world-view present, does pop up and even interfere with people's "practice"

Stim Morane: These two domains are not entirely separate, however much we might like them to be sometimes.

Stim Morane: And I, in fact, would like to study overlaps, interfaces. But I know you might not.

Zen Arado: people will only accept spiritual teachings if they fit in with the findings of science

Stim Morane: It's really up to you.

Zen Arado: science is the final authority

Stim Morane: Zen, you've brought up an example of my point.

Pila Mulligan: science can be associated with attending to aliveness

Deepthinker Oh: Science can never encompass spirituality

Stim Morane: I'd like to meet that head-on ... somewhere. But maybe not yet, or not here.

Bleu Oleander: Adam Frank's book may be a good base for some of these thoughts

Stim Morane: Yes, Deep.

Stim Morane: I agree ... at least for now.

Stim Morane: OK, well we'll have to consider our options.

Zen Arado: just a thought

Stim Morane: Yes, Zen. I agree with you.

Stim Morane: I shouldn't keep you ... think about your REAL near-term interests, and we'll work out an approach

Stim Morane: It may take a while ...

Stim Morane: Final thoughts?

Solobill Laville: Just to say thank you for your time, Stim

Stim Morane: My pleasure ...

Pila Mulligan: yes, thank you Stim

Zen Arado: thank you

Storm Nordwind did not agree with Zen. But then Storm lives in a less fear-driven society :)

Scathach Rhiadra: yes thank you Stim

Storm Nordwind: Thank you Stim

Mickorod Renard: thankyou stim

Wol Euler: thank you stim.

Wester Kiranov: thank you stim and everybody else

Stim Morane: Storm, which point are you referring to?

Myna Maven: Ditto. :) Thank you Stim.

Zen Arado: I am not agaist science

Stim Morane: Thanks, everyone!

Solobill Laville half agreed with Zen! :)

Zen Arado: it very powerful

Zen Arado: just think we worship it too much

Stim Morane: Yes

Stim Morane: My concern is the misuse of science ...

Zen Arado: it is a kind of religion of its own

Storm Nordwind: I do not see these dangers around me in Europe. I do not project the US view onto Europe :)

Stim Morane: misapplication

Stim Morane: I see, Storm. :)

Stim Morane: I run into a certain level of problemmatical tensions between the two fields just in teaching meditation to my students.

Wol Euler quietly excuses herself and heads for bed. 'Night all, take care.

Storm Nordwind: It's just that we do not have such a fear-ridden culture here.

Solobill Laville: bye, Wol

Zen Arado: thought it was a Western thing

Myna Maven: Bye Wol.

Storm Nordwind: Ah no Zen

Stim Morane: Perhaps if I explain more, and give examples, you might find a match in your own culture

Mickorod Renard: I fear that science has over ran our conciousness,,as a spieces

Mickorod Renard: speices

Stim Morane: OK, well I'm starting to see a possible point of exploration.

Solobill Laville: :)

Stim Morane: We'll pick this up next time.

Zen Arado: sure

Stim Morane: Thanks for coming. Please remember to breathe!

Storm Nordwind chuckles

Scathach Rhiadra: :)

Mickorod Renard: he he he

Zen Arado: I worry about the 'psychologising of Buddhism too

Stim Morane: Yes, another concern I share.

Zen Arado: thats a good discussion point I think ?

Stim Morane: But this too is probably a bigger problem in some countries than others.

Zen Arado: I tand to think that Western societies think very much alike?

Deepthinker Oh: That is a great topic the psychologizing of Buddhism

Stim Morane: Just keeping sending me your thoughts, and we'll work out a mutually-interesting workshop

Mickorod Renard: bed time for me folks,,bye all,,thanks

Zen Arado: but interesting point

Stim Morane: Bye, everyone!

Storm Nordwind must go too. Bye for now Stim

Scathach Rhiadra: bye Mick

Solobill Laville: OK

Zen Arado: bye

Bleu Oleander: bye

Solobill Laville: Night all

Wester Kiranov: bye

Scathach Rhiadra: bye Stim

Aurora Kitaj: bye everyone

Aurora Kitaj: :)

Myna Maven: Bye all. Enjoyed it. Until later. :)

Deepthinker Oh: Western people tend to want to strip out the cultural sapects of buddhism and focus on the essence

Wester Kiranov is Offline

Aurora Kitaj: sorry i missed the meeting

Scathach Rhiadra: good night all:)