

Linda Clair
Ten-day Meditation Retreat
Kallara Conference Center, Australia – July 2021
Transcription from Audio Recordings

FILE 2 C – Afternoon discussion

Linda: You good?

Question: I've been getting a bit better this afternoon. I've been a bit bumpy. I was feeling tired and resistant, and it was hanging around so I thought, "I'd better get a bit closer to this" – really feeling the felt sense in my body. Then I realised there was all this emotion pain, just wanted to *wail* – really strong.

Linda: That's gone?

Question: Yes, that was before afternoon tea mostly. But it shifted something with the resistance. I got more into – fluctuating – but being a bit more in my body, and a little bit more settled into the ten days.

Linda: Well, it's only the first full day. It can take a while to settle in, and doing ten days is different to five days. You're in a different rhythm in a way. Sometimes when you're doing five days it's all condensed into five days, and ten days is quite different because you pace yourself differently. You know you've got ten days so you forget about the days a bit more, and it can take a bit longer to settle in.

Question: I think I went through quite a lot in the lead up to this retreat – well, I did. My practice at home was strong before I came and I was having to work quite hard with some things in the day. Like the drive to the airport – which I never really like, I am often a bit anxious – it was really strong. I had real anxiety and dread. It was quite strong in my body. R. was driving me, and often I want to urge him to go faster or do this or do that, or just talk all about myself. But I didn't want to do that this time and when I felt the anxiety I really practiced, with just feeling it in my body and getting close to it. It felt like it was burning it up a bit. Then I could talk to R. about things I knew he'd want to talk about, about him, just to comfort him.

Linda: Good. It's good to do that sometimes, to talk to someone else about what *they* want to talk about, whether you do or not, and be a bit interested in it even if you have to force yourself.

Question: Yes, I wanted to be able to be that, rather than to make it a stressful thing for him. But all up I think I arrived here pretty tired.

Linda: You look a little bit tired now, but you've had a big week, cooking, cleaning, doing things.

Question: Yes, it's different – the coming for ten days and helping with the preparation. I realise it's out of my comfort zone, stretching myself a bit, so that's partly why I wanted to do it.

Linda: It can be difficult being around me in that situation too because I get a bit edgy before a retreat. I sometimes don't want to be around anyone, sometimes it's okay. Can be a bit difficult.

Question: Mmm, I feel like I'm not grateful or enthusiastic like I sometimes am, but I am at least interested to see how the ten days will go.

Linda: Well, be interested, and it will become much more interesting. Every retreat, particularly the first twenty-four hours, just allow yourself to settle in. And it's a shock when you first start doing it. The resistance will often – not all the time but often – be quite strong. Because you can't help but have some sort of expectation before, about how it's going to be and what's going to happen, "Maybe this will be it," and then suddenly you start and you go, "Oh, sitting again!" But things will change, and keep changing, so just try and keep up with the changes. Don't resist, or resist as little as possible. And every retreat is different, for everyone. Good.

Question: I made an observation and just want to run it past you. I noticed today that the thoughts that come up, primarily – I can't control what comes up – but the ones that come up seem to offer feedback, electrical chemical feedback, whether it's dopamine, endorphins, adrenaline. What I saw was the ones that seem to dominate and drag me away the most, there's a physiological kickback. I felt like a bit of a rat in the lab going for the water with heroin in it. I got a bit excited, "Oh, I can see that now." I don't know, I guess that's where it's at now. I'm just curious. Now I've seen that I feel it's worth investigating more – why do I favour that? You know I've got a history with addiction and I've looked at that before and heard lots of times, how thinking is very addictive, but it's the first time I've seen it like that. And there is a bit of a cheap thrill with those thoughts and the feedback you get in the body. So I feel it's worth looking at now – Is that true? Why do I go there? and what's the alternative?

Linda: It is true. Thinking is, I would say, the deepest addiction that anyone has. Thinking is a way of not being in your body, but it is using the bodily reactions to not be completely in the body. So you are getting this high, often, from thinking. You are getting adrenalin from thinking. But it's not a natural high, it's a forced more addictive high. You get addicted to not being in your body, having these amazing experiences, but you're not actually in your body. You're always somewhere else, whatever you're thinking about, doesn't matter what it is, you can't be completely in your body. But the thinking does do something to your body, it does something to your brain. That's why they do studies on people who meditate a lot, to see what the difference is.

But it is exciting when you see that. So, keep looking, keep seeing that. That's a really deep realisation and it will keep you interested. But just be careful you don't start to analyse everything too much.

Question: That's one of the things I was curious about. When I noticed it I felt myself getting a bit excited and I wanted to talk about it. But also then I was trying to leave it and not analyse it, just try and drop it.

Linda: Well, it's great to get excited about something like that that you've seen about yourself. And you're the one who has seen it. You haven't read it somewhere and applied it. You're doing this experiment on yourself – that's what we're all doing. I can say things but there is no point believing what I say. You have to apply it to yourself and see if it is true. That will give you a bit more trust in me and this whole thing – what I'm saying is possible – it will give you trust. But really the only one you're going to trust is you, the real you, not your mind. So, you do start to mistrust your mind much more when you see what it's doing and what thinking does. I can say, it is much more exciting than any thought to be completely here. Because it is something that you've never experienced before, and that is happening continuously all the time. You're in this state of newness and complete unknown forever. There is no time involved. You can talk about time and you have to use words but really there is no time involved. What you said is exciting, that you saw that.

Question: The addiction gets boring because it's finite.

Linda: You start to see it's repetitive and you have one experience that happens and you think about it. Initially, when you think it's a new experience, it's amazing, but then you keep trying to recreate that high again and again. That's what thinking is all about – trying to recreate some initial high, like with drugs.

Question: So just keep watching it?

Linda: Keep watching, and keep watching it very closely, but be careful you don't play around with it too much. Just keep watching because that's what you do when you're doing an experiment – you watch. You don't start to manipulate things and get involved. You step back and just watch what's happening. That gives you much more power than getting involved, because the mind wants you to get involved, it wants you to get high from things. If you step back and go, "No, I'll just watch what's happening," it does weaken it. That's the way to weaken it, to simply watch. Because as soon as you get involved you're playing at its game, and before you know it you're lost.

Question: So, don't worry about why?

Linda: Don't worry too much about why. You can realise eventually why you're here but it's not an intellectual thing, and it's something that it's almost impossible to express. You realise why everything that has happened in your life has happened. But you don't go, "Oh, it's because of this." It's this intense, "Aha! This is why I'm here." And in that moment you accept everything that's ever happened in your life, everything that you've done – even if there are things that you wouldn't want to repeat, that might have been painful, and you know you were being maybe hurtful to people – you accept it. Everything that you haven't done, everything that you've done – you accept it and you don't regret it because you realise it's part of this, it's part of now.

So physiologically you do change through this, your brain in particular changes, and you can get quite a bit of sensation up there in your head at times – headaches, a bit of pain. Because your brain is going back to its natural state. It's becoming empty of all these thoughts and memories that you've been building on, creating, using as a foundation. And then it becomes just so spacious that when you do

things, any sort of action, it's pure, it's not related to an emotional memory. A bodily memory maybe – you need a bodily memory to drive and do things like that. But they are more pure bodily memories rather than emotional memories.

Question: Can it happen slowly, partially, as well? I've noticed with some older relationships with people, whether it's people I've got a strong aversion to or a strong attachment to, there's been instances of both in the last few years, where it finally feels like it's been put to rest. And it's okay, whatever happened or didn't happen.

Linda: Yes, it does happen gradually, and it needs to happen gradually, and you don't even notice it. You can notice certain things but some of them are so seemingly insignificant that you can just pass them by and not even notice. But it does happen gradually. That's what this is all about – preparing for that point where everything does turn around. And there's still things that happen after that but there is a point, that you could call enlightenment, where everything does turn around. Then after that there's still a bit of residual karma that needs to be played out, in everyone. But this makes that part of it less bumpy. The preparation does help with the post-enlightenment life, because it can be really bumpy after that. And you see in some people there is obviously something that they haven't sorted out in their karma – maybe ignored, maybe tried to put aside. And I feel it's probably because they haven't had this foundation before that deep realisation. Because that's what this is doing – like you were saying with people you've had an aversion to just gradually, gradually dissolving. It doesn't mean you want to be around them maybe, but that strong fear or aversion isn't there.

Question: The trigger dissipates, it doesn't bite anymore.

Linda: Yes. So, the stronger the foundation – and that's what this practice gives you – the deeper and fuller the realisation.

Question: At lunchtime when you were talking to A. about the "I", I just came in at the end of it. Could you talk a bit more about, "It's not the I that's watching."? Is that what you said?

Linda: I don't know.

Question: I'll say a bit more then. When I heard that, it's like, I'm trying to turn around to look at something that's looking and watching and seeing everything. And it's obvious to me that that's what I am, and it's like pure conscious – aware of perception, aware of feelings, aware of sounds, aware of thoughts arising. But that's not me. I'm not quite sure, but I keep turning around trying to look at it.

Linda: No, don't do that. Don't do that. You'll just get confused.

Question: Yes, I was very confused.

Linda: So, stay in your body, keep coming back to your breath, anything that comes up – see it, come back to your body. If you start doing that you will become just confused. So the truth is that's what it is, that's how all this non-dual stuff works. But really, people end up confused because they start doing

something like that. Whereas you're bypassing the steady – I'm here, come back to the body, I'm here, come back to the body. You see things like that every now and again, and see them if it just spontaneously rises, do that. But then come back to the body, stay grounded. It's a gradual turning. It doesn't happen... Eventually, how it happened for me, was that it just clicked into place. It felt like something that was turning round just clicked into place, and that was it. Then everything turned around. But if you start doing that before you're ready you're going to go, "Aww, what's going on?"

Question: Is that really just the mind? It doesn't feel like it's the mind looking. But it feels like a movement.

Linda: To a degree it is. If there's this movement away, it is the mind.

Question: The other thing is – it just mostly feels like there's a constant shining light, and that sometimes takes over and that's all I am. But the mind can come up and say, "Well, I can see that light." And it's not a light at all, that's really not the right word.

Linda: Just see that, it's a thought again. A thought will arise. Come back to your breath, be in your body. Don't believe anything the mind says. But you need to see it if it comes up, don't push it away, see it, come back. It will try and undermine anything – anything you realise, anything you see, anything that's happening. And don't get too caught up in anything else, like the light. You feel light, feel light, don't make a big thing about it. Don't make a big thing about anything. See it, feel it, come back to your body.

Question: Another thing, I was wondering if you have any suggestions for at night. Even at home, it's just non-stop, not vibrations but I can't describe it. There's no mind there, it just is, and it keeps me awake for so long.

Linda: What is it? Can you describe it?

Question: Well, it just feels like intense being.

Linda: Like energy, a vibration?

Question: Yes, and there's always this noise in my head. It's like I close my eyes and it's as if something takes a massive step back, and it's going like that in the background. And it won't stop and shut up. I do eventually sleep, but it is frustrating because I get so tired. And watching the breath just seemed to make it more.

Linda: Leave it with me.

Question: Thank you.