

The Reflective Meditation Inter~view

Synopsis of distinctions in our direction of the Reflective Meditation inter~view (2021)

Not a formula, varies on conditions

Middle path -catching ourselves as we go over towards extremes

-in our assessments of the other person

-in our views

-knowing we always have a filter, don't know anything purely

Empowering other person

-simplify rather than making more confusing

-demystify, more transparency - less mystery and ministry

-personalize - stay close to their experience

-broaden, what else was present - mystery of not knowing everything

Conversation is a container: various purposes for the inter~view

-Validating experience seems primary because this is where a person will develop their own knowledge, from getting to know their conditioned experience

-Name the dharma teaching we see in their experience helps them value their experience

-Exploring, being curious, kind, gentle

-Distinctions between mirroring, parroting, paraphrasing, reframing

Inter~view close to our own abilities

-confidence will develop in what we know

-developmental process is important for both parties (our approach leans toward developing autonomy but student may be in a place where they need more from the teacher)

Synopsis of distinctions in our direction of the Reflective Meditation inter~view (2019)

After meditation and journaling:

Allow the meditator enough time to share their meditation sitting or practice, and to talk about what they remember from the sitting and their reflections. You might be tempted to comment or interrupt when you don't understand something, but allow them to continue until they feel done.

Listening to other people's meditation sittings, with the added condition and intent of inquiring into their meditation experience, helps develop the capacity to attend to your own internal experience while engaging with others in the dialogue.

FOR DISCUSSION:

Taking notes while listening?

Inter~viewers affect: nodding, smiling, eye contact, expressing emotions, body language and positioning

Relationship between you and the meditator

Starting and continuing the inter~view

Learning to have an inter~view is not a linear process. It takes time to develop the skills. Lightly inter~viewing at first leads to a more in-depth conversation between you and your students.

The teacher will model inter~views for you as much as possible. You do not have to inter~view before you are ready, although if you are having resistance you may want to bring that to the group.

Becoming more familiar with skillful ways of inquiry opens-up other avenues for self-exploration, and enhances the ability to be able to articulate dynamics that would typically go unnoticed or unexpressed.

Hearing other group members ask questions allows you to work as a team to do the interview, and observe the style of questioning and dynamics with other individuals; a collective wisdom becomes emergent and visible.

Continue practice for the inter~view on your own with students and friends.

Practice with your peers in triads: one person shares, one inter~views, one observes. Make time for questions and the group closing comments about the inter~view.

FOR DISCUSSION:

Choosing an initial question or comment

Inquiring with gentleness, permission, and curiosity

Internally referencing your own experience

Using the meditators language

Offering suggestions, advice, interpretation

Performance Anxiety

Triads - role of sharing, inter~viewing and observing - additional learning

Marking the end of the interview and going into a group recollection process helps remind us that we are making a shift of focus from further exploration of the meditator's sharing to our observations and impressions of the inter~view:

- The person talking about their sitting has the chance to talk about how the interview went for her, her internal responses to the interaction, surprises or new insights from the process, and/or feedback to others regarding their questions.

- The inter~viewer and the observer can share their perceptions, what they heard, how they related to it, and their reactions.
- The observer may talk about the questions they wanted to ask but did not know how to verbalize or integrate into a dialogue. At this point the focus will shift to how they were seeing what was going on with the meditator and how they were relating to the meditator's experience.
- Bring in the dharma teachings that emerged in the dialogue. Go further into the dharma teaching questions or mark them for a later discussion.
- Observations or questions about dynamics between individuals or group dynamics may be included by talking about your perceptions. In doing this the focus will be on your perceptions and how you can start to examine the variety of subtle feelings or intuition forming, get feedback from others and help check the accuracy.

FOR DISCUSSION:

How honest should I be here?

Will I hurt someone's feelings if I talk about my perceptions?

What if I am not ready for feedback on my interaction?