Why Meditate? By Pema Chodren / Tricycle

As a species, we should never underestimate our low tolerance for discomfort. To be encouraged to stay with our vulnerability is news that we can use. Sitting meditation is our support for learning how to do this. Sitting meditation, also known as mindfulness-awareness practice, is the foundation of bodhicitta training. [Bodhicitta is the wish to attain enlightenment and to bring all beings to the same awakened state]. It is the home ground of the warrior bodhisattva.

Sitting meditation gives us a way to move closer to our thoughts and emotions and to get in touch with our bodies. It is a method of cultivating unconditional friendliness toward ourselves and for parting the curtain of indifference that distances us from the suffering of others. It is our vehicle for learning to be a truly loving person.

Gradually, through meditation, we begin to notice that there are gaps in our internal dialogue. In the midst of continually talking to ourselves, we experience a pause, as if awakening from a dream. We recognize our capacity to relax with the clarity, the space, the open-ended awareness that already exists in our minds. We experience moments of being right here that feel simple, direct, and uncluttered.

This coming back to the immediacy of our experience is training in unconditional, or absolute, bodhicitta. By simply staying here, we relax more and more into the open dimension of our being. It feels like stepping out of a fantasy and discovering simple truth.