

THE INTUITIVE WRITER:

STILLNESS

– WITH RONIT JINICH –

Why we need stillness. And how much stillness do we need? Sarah Selecky talks with mindfulness-based therapist Ronit Jinich on how meditation and stillness can support your writing practice.

July 24, 2021.

Sarah Selecky 00:05

Ronit Jinich is a Dharma therapist in private practice working at the interface of Eastern and Western understandings and approaches to human psychology. Her mind-body approach is informed by her exploration of these disciplines and traverses various schools of thought, as well as communities of practice for over fifteen years. Born in México, Ronit is fluent in Spanish, English, and Hebrew. Ronit has a diverse academic background spanning from literature to performing arts and Gestalt therapy. She holds a master's degree in Environmental Studies with a focus on self as social transformation from York University. Ronit is the Manager of Education and Lead Facilitator for Mindfulness Without Borders, a leading provider of evidence-based programs on secular mindfulness, and social-emotional intelligence for youth, educators, health, and corporate professionals in communities around the world. She is the founder of [Dharma Praxis](#), home of [The Living Room](#), a community dedicated to exploring the principles and practice of mindfulness in everyday life. Ronit is also a faculty member of the Applied Mindfulness Meditation Certificate Program at the University of Toronto.



Sarah Selecky
WRITING SCHOOL

I'm really excited to introduce you to Ronit, who I am really quite fortunate to also say is one of my closest friends. Ronit, welcome.

Ronit Jinich 01:29

Sarah, thank you so much for having me. And it's just interesting to have you read that introduction. Because this feels like, you know, like, it feels impressive. And then I say, Who is that person?

Sarah Selecky 01:41

I know, I know. This is what I love about this format, I get to see your professional... And you are impressive. And I do get to see your professional side, and I get to show both sides. I get to be in conversation with you as a friend. And I get to show how amazing you are to our readers. So thank you so much for agreeing to do this. And I'm really excited to have this professional conversation about the things that we do and talk about in our lives and have been for many years now.

Ronit Jinich 02:15

Yeah. Well, it is a pleasure for me. And it's an honour for me. And I also think you know, as you mentioned, this idea of friendship and professionalism. I think we think better in friendship, we think better together. When we are in conversation with people that we love, that we share values with. And even with people that we don't share values with, but can extend the hand of friendship. Something magical happens there, and our thinking becomes more than what it could if it was done on our own. And so I love this idea of bringing the professional and the friendship together and seeing where it takes us.

Sarah Selecky 02:56

Me too, I love how you said that. So we have written together, we have done sitting meditation together, we have done walking meditation together, dance practice together. In so many ways, I see you as someone who really attends to the present moment. And you always have and you have built a life around helping people access that present moment for themselves. And I want to talk to you about writing in particular and just let you know, like, obviously, we are talking to writers, most of the people listening to this are writers. So hopefully, I want to talk about how you bring,



and how we can bring more aliveness to our lives, our living lives, as well as to the scenes that we write. Kind of like professional life and friendship life, you know, merge and integrate a little bit of that writing life and real life together. So that's just kind of my introduction, I'd love to talk to you and ask you a little bit about meditation and creativity and why do you think it's so important for writers especially? Like, do you like working with writers in your practice? I know you are a writer, so working with your own writer. But, why?

Ronit Jinich 04:14

Well, I mean, there's a bunch of questions there. And so I guess the first thing I want to say is this thing that you said about presence and being in the present moment. And I find something that is very important to say is that regardless of having or not having a mindfulness practice, a meditation practice, a contemplative practice, by virtue of being human beings and having the brain and the neural physiology that we have, we have access to the present moment and access it on our own, intentionally, and not intentionally. And so I think that there's something going on with rarefying this idea of the present moment, as if it was an inaccessible place, but actually all of us have access to it constantly. And we know that. What meditation or a mindfulness practice does is that it begins to decodify the mechanism by which to get in contact with it more readily. Sometimes even at will, or even, you know, to take it a step further, when we are caught up in patterns of anxiety, or obsessive patterns, we can begin to notice that and we can begin to dismantle that because we know how to get ourselves back in touch with the here and now.

Sarah Selecky 05:46

I love that. And it is true that we talked about the present moment like it's this rare, special place. And it's like, we have the telescope backwards. I mean, the present moment is actually all there is. The rest of it is thinking, and remembering, and worrying, and dreaming. And the present moment is actually the most real.

Ronit Jinich 06:09

Yeah, and you can think about it this way, as well, like how there's so much talk of mindfulness, and I feel like the word is getting, you know, Thich Nhat Hanh has this very beautiful saying about the word love. Because he says that sometimes words get ill,



and we have to heal them. And he talks particularly about the word love because he says that in the Western culture, it has come to denote love, as, you know, a kind of hunger or quenching of a particular thirst or a particular need. Like, I love hamburgers. And so it really diminishes the value of the word. But in using it differently, we can restore its meaning and even grow it. And I think the same thing goes for, I think the word mindfulness has been overused and therefore is losing a bit of its essential meaning. And mindfulness comes from the Sanskrit word Smriti, which means to remember. And you know, at this point, you can begin to consider what is it that we need to remember? Where in this context, we need to remember the present moment, to come back to the here and to the now.

Sarah Selecky 07:30

I'm thinking especially of writers of memoir, who are going back in time to write something that happened already, or fiction writers who are writing about something that never happened. So there's the imaginative in this, and there's also bringing our minds somewhere where our bodies are not, in the scene. How can meditation help? Why is stillness and mindfulness useful for writers who ostensibly aren't trying to be in the present moment?

Ronit Jinich 08:03

That's a super interesting question. Because it really depends on what we mean, by the present moment. You know? And I think, to be mindful, is always to be mindful of something. A lot of people tend to think that being mindful is arriving at a certain state of mind and staying there. And then once you are not mindful, you're not there anymore. But actually, being mindful always is being mindful of something. So you could be mindful of daydreaming, you could be mindful of the thoughts you're having, you can be mindful of the fact that you're anxious or that you're rushing, or that your mind is not settling. That is being mindful. Mindful is not being in a place where no thought is happening, where everything has seized. And I think this is one of the great confusions.

Ronit Jinich 08:56

So I think your question with regards to writing, and the way you asked it was a very interesting way of asking it because you said, you know, how could this help people who



are taking their mind elsewhere, you know, or where their body is not? But actually, the mind and the body are one and the same. And so when you're taking yourself, for example, in memoir, you go back to those places, you're not only going back there with, you know, and I'm doing the sign of quote unquote, mind, because we would need to define that category. When I write memories, my whole body is actually reliving, re-feeling, re-sensing the residue of that particular thing that happened. So we're not going to the past, we're actually bringing the past into the present, where it is. The past lives with us in the present, you know, the thing about the past is that it's not the past, it's here, and therefore we are calling upon it to be able to see it and write with it.

I believe that the technology, sometimes I call this practice, practices, technologies of self, which is tools that people in and of themselves and with each other employ to be able to know themselves better, and to transform themselves. And I would imagine, this could be said as well, of writing. You know? I think that what mindfulness does is, well, let me start here. Mindfulness like writing is, you know, we construct something out of nothing. We sit, we gather our tools, and then we use them. And we wait to see what happens. Right? Like you could exchange that with the act of writing and sitting in front of a blank page, like I come to my question, I use the tool of the posture that I choose, I use it the tool of my breath. And then I train my attention in a certain way to come back again and again to a certain object of attention. And then in doing that, I am creating a scaffolding for my experience.

Sarah Selecky 11:37

Wow, that does sound a lot like writing when you put it that way.

Ronit Jinich 11:41

Yeah. And then what amazing things can happen when I construct this scaffolding, because even when it gets scary, I have a place to return to. Even when I lose track of where I'm going, there's this scaffolding that I can come back to ground again, and look again. And when it gets to be too much, I can retreat and feel safe. And so sometimes in the classes that I teach and the community that I lead, I talk about the actual practice of mindfulness as, and I think it's a very pertinent metaphor as we are in spring, I've been watching just how the robins construct their nests. And they just go out and bring this little twig and then they go out and bring another one, and then in two or three days,



suddenly you have the most beautiful constructions, perfect, where they now can lay down and rest and pay attention to what's here, in order to pay attention and to engender what is yet to come. You know, which is you can think about it as the little eggs that are there. They're already here. But they need the warmth, and they need the scaffolding, and they need the space, and the tenderness, I would say tender care, in order to evolve into something else.

Sarah Selecky 13:09

In your metaphor, are the eggs the thing that is going to evolve into something else? Are you talking about the self? Like in the people in your community, the person?

Ronit Jinich 13:20

Yes, it could be the person. But in your case, in the case of writers, it could be the expression of that self. And I think in the community where I teach, it's also the expression of that self. Because ultimately, that is what this practice is all about. I think at the beginning, mindfulness or I like to talk more about Dharma practice than mindfulness, because mindfulness has been separated from its origin as Dharma Praxis.

Sarah Selecky 13:52

Yeah, can you introduce that?

Ronit Jinich 13:55

Dharma Praxis?

Sarah Selecky 13:56

Yeah.

Ronit Jinich 13:57

So Dharma, roughly speaking, you know, there isn't an exact translation for it from Sanskrit. There are some approximations, but none of them seem to be the right one. So basically, you can understand Dharma as the canon of the Buddha, all the teachings of the Buddha, and then you can understand Dharma practice as the way of life acquired by someone who's influenced by the teachings of the Buddha. But then I decided to call my locus of work [Dharma Praxis](#), because praxis in the Paulo Freire



tradition let's call it, is the action reflection of people upon their world in order to transform it. And I added the world and the self, the action reflection of people upon their world and themselves in order to transform those things, which I don't think about as separate.

Sarah Selecky 15:02

Right.

Ronit Jinich 15:03

Because if you only have action, just action and just reflection can both be blinded. So you could have blind activism and you can have empty verbalism. But if you bring them together, then you have the opportunity of using your highest intelligence to test things out in the world, come back to this nest that you have constructed for yourself, consider the impacts of it, refine, and then go out and do it again. And so Dharma Praxis is the, like I said, is the action reflection of people upon the world in order to transform themselves and the world, but also influenced by the tenets of Dharma. Some of them are, you know, I can name now three that I think would be very useful for writers, which is not knowing, bearing witness, and tender action.

Sarah Selecky 16:04

Yes, like tender action, like being compassionate to yourself as you write a first draft, let's say.

Ronit Jinich 16:11

For example. Or, being tender when you find within yourself this knot of emotion or feeling that is hardened, and that you experience as ugly and gooey. And you don't know what it is, and you get scared at sensing it. If you can remember to bring some of the tools that you cultivate through this practice, to be curious, to be gentle, to just bear witness to it. To respect its beingness. The reason that it's there. Then you have a much greater chance of it telling you what it needs to tell you.

Sarah Selecky 16:50



Right. Right! So Dharma Praxis I see as from a Buddhist perspective, from that compassionate theory, kind of being the change that you want to see. It's like the theory in action.

Ronit Jinich 17:11

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. And this idea of expression, you know, you asked about the eggs.

Sarah Selecky 17:17

Yeah. Yes. Like are those books? Are those stories?

Ronit Jinich 17:21

Yeah, exactly. You name it. I feel like the essence of this practice, what it's aiming at, is to allow you to connect to your very own uniqueness. And I'm talking about something very different than exceptionalism, you know, sometimes, especially when, when we're writing, and we're thinking of heroes and heroines and I think that just the word heroine denotes a certain exceptionalism and apartness. And we need to think in those ways for story purposes sometimes. But I think that what this practice does for you is letting go of the exceptionalism to embrace the uniqueness, which are two very different qualities. What makes you you, and when you connect to that you realize that what you say, how you behave in the world is the only way you can say, and you can behave in the world. And it gives you a sense of assurance, like, hmm, this is me, no one can do or say the things that I do or say, just by virtue of being me. But to get to that, me, that by the way, is always changing.

Sarah Selecky 18:46

Right?! I wanted to say, how do you get...

Ronit Jinich 18:50

...Especially when we live in...Yeah, go ahead.

Sarah Selecky 18:53

Well, I want to reverse engineer that or break it down a little bit. I do know what you're talking about, from my own experience with meditation and my own practice. And for the benefit of those who don't have one or haven't experienced that and just see it as



sitting still and watching your breath. How do you get to a point of understanding your own uniqueness when you're just sitting still?

Ronit Jinich 19:20

That's a great question. I think, let me put it this way. So much is moving all of the time, right? When we think about any of our given days, our days are plagued with a, well, not plagued, it is also a blessing to be busy and to be... But so many things are moving, within and without. And so when through mindfulness practice, or sitting practice, or meditation practice, you'll begin to construct this place that you can return to again and again, and you focus your eyes in a particular way, and you focus your breath in a particular way, or you focus your attention in a particular way. It might seem like your body is still because you're not moving. But as soon as you arrive, that place of what looks like a still body, you realize that the mind is in constant flux. All the time moving. All the time churning. And it's almost like in the building of that nest, you can become the observer of that activity.

Ronit Jinich 20:40

And so mindfulness can also be thought of as a practice, to familiarize yourself with yourself. Almost like beginning to map out your beingness, you know? Certain states that you constantly enter, the stream of thoughts that you visit again, and again, the new thoughts that every now and then come, can all be beared witness to, when you find this place of, I don't want to call it stillness because I think it's misleading, but of grounding. So you ground yourself, and for a very long time you just wrestle with the ability to just follow your breath. And in the midst of that, something happens. And you acquire a certain quality of grounding. And then you begin to observe your thoughts, and you'll begin to observe your emotions. And then you will begin to observe the corollary physical sensations. And what this does is that, first of all, I think it diminishes the fear that sometimes we have in encountering certain thoughts, certain feelings, certain physical sensations, certain emotions. Because as you find and construct this place of grounding, you are able to see the arising of say, an emotion accompanied by a sensation that is not pleasant, or that elicits discomfort or fear for you. But you can stay with it, you can become very curious of it, you can see it unfold, you know, and show you what it is, and then dwindle. And so to be able to see the arc of an emotion



emerge, arise, evolve, and disappear, it's quite empowering. Because you get to know it. It's not as scary.

When you have a steady practice, you begin to notice places that you visit again and again. And you also begin to see how much of your experience is constructed by the culture that you live in, by the family you grew up in, by the particular experiences of your childhood. And many of them though you cannot entirely shed them, you begin to polish them. And as you polish them, something else begins to emerge, which is what you alluded to. This uniqueness. And then you don't need to discard these experiences, because they themselves are the building blocks of that uniqueness. But they're not hindering you, you're not escaping them. You can use them as the goals of, What do you want to construct next? What do you want to write? What do you want to say? What do you want to do? Whatever that is, you know?

Sarah Selecky 23:50

I love this. And it's making me think about the inner critic as you're speaking. There's a lot of stuff that comes up around resistance for writers, for creatives, for all of us, but writers really face this and much has been written about resistance and facing your resistance, getting past it. Just keep your body in the chair and keep your pen moving. And what I hear you saying is that it's a more holistic look at those internal interruptions of thought that come up. Sometimes they're really obvious, the inner critic that's just saying, like, no one wants to read that or this isn't worth it, or this is derivative, whatever things our inner critic says. And sometimes it's more like, ooh, when you look at your notebook, or you look at that file on your computer, you feel this feeling in your gut, you know, of aversion to it. And what I hear you saying is that just by paying attention to the doubts and the voices of the inner critic, those might become more quiet with observation. Correct me if I'm wrong.

Ronit Jinich 25:08

Yes.

Sarah Selecky 25:08

Yes?



Ronit Jinich 25:09

Yes. And what I want to say is that, so you know, sometimes people begin sitting practice in there, they really cannot connect the dots between how is this going to help them in any way, how is coming back to the breath or to sounds, again and again and again, going to help me with my relationship to myself or to others? But the thing is that, again, going back to this inner scaffolding, you are constructing certain skills that are the exact same ones that you're going to be using when, say, the voice of doubt comes up and wants to hijack your work. You know? When you have that scaffolding, you can identify, oh, this is the voice of my inner critic. Hello, again, I wonder what it is that you're here to tell me this evening. Okay, let me hear it. And then you have the capacity, the internal capacity to bring yourself back to the task. Because you've done so, so many times with your breath. Because you've done so, so many times with sounds. So on any given sit, you're sitting there, and you're, you know, you set yourself up for ten minutes, and I'm going to be observing my breath. And in second 33, you're already thinking of something else.

Sarah Selecky 26:37

Yeah.

Ronit Jinich 26:37

And you notice this, and then just gently you nod yourself back to the breath, and then back to the breath, and then back to the breath. And then what this does is this creates the neural pathway that wasn't there for you to be able to interact with the distraction and bring yourself back. So the way it works is like, you know, let me just put a very simple exercise, when we go to the gym, you want to become strong. We don't carry a dumbbell once and you know, and consider, oh, I'm done. I'm strong. You know, you have to do repetitions. The same goes for the practice of mindfulness. You come to the cushion, you set yourself up for observing the breath, you notice yourself deviating, you bring yourself back, deviating, back, deviating, back. And then there's something that begins to happen in the mind, that begins to understand, oh, this movement is important. And so the periods of distraction start to become shorter, and the periods of awareness where you can bring yourself back to your task become more available and start to last longer.



Sarah Selecky 27:52

Is there, okay, I'm just gonna get really practical for a minute because that's what I do sometimes. Also, I just want to provide instructions, like earlier today, I was looking at a plan for running. Kind of a couch to thirty minute program. So by the end of twelve weeks, you'll be running for thirty minutes straight. But here's how you do it. First, you walk for twenty minutes, then you walk for thirty minutes, then you walk one minute, run one minute, and repeat. And there's a plan. There's a recipe, you know, it's a step by step prescription. Is it like that with the breath work, and deviating, and breath work, and deviate? Like paying attention to your breath, and then losing it, paying attention to your breath, and losing it? How do we do that? Is it different for everybody? Or is there a tried and true standard method that gets you from you know, in twelve weeks, you get from full of self doubt, full of inner critic, lots of resistance to being able to recognize my uniqueness, and be okay with the inner critic, and finish writing my story in twelve weeks is that like — how long does it take, Ronit? When do we get to a point where we can, you know. A plan.

Ronit Jinich 29:01

I know. I love your question. Because it really brings it up to the world in which we live, you know, and to the demands that we place on ourselves on any given day. And also a culture that is so goal oriented. And you know, goals are super important. Nobody would begin meditation if they didn't have a goal. And we project all sorts of goals into it, right? I do think though, that there is something that passes through a different place when we are engaging in the practice of meditation. And I think you know this also as a writer, which is the art of misdirection in which you're, you know, you're sort of taking your reader in one direction while you know, all of a sudden, the character that you thought was least important suddenly shows up with something that, you know, you did not expect at all. And I think that meditation is a little bit like that. You need to have enough reason to come to the cushion. And it doesn't matter if it's for five minutes, or ten minutes, or thirty minutes or an hour. But what matters is the repetition and the consistency. And I think that in the repetition and the consistency, something begins to shift within you, sometimes you are not even aware of it. But because you're giving yourself to that place, and in showing up to the cushion you're constructing this habit, no? Of being there, no matter what. Something begins to soften and feel more trusting within you just because you're showing up.



Ronit Jinich 31:02

And I think about it also very closely to writing, right?

Sarah Selecky 31:07

Yeah. It sounds like writing.

Ronit Jinich 31:08

Yeah, we sit there. And sometimes it feels dreadful, and we just want to walk away, and we don't want to do it. And then we show up, and maybe we write for five minutes, and it's all we can do that day. But we don't leave that place. We don't abandon it. There have been times in my life, when I just touch the, you know, I have a space in my home where my meditation cushion is. And it's visible. So every time I pass through it, I see it. So it's a constant reminder that that space is there for me, should I need it. You know? But in the times in my practice where it's been very difficult to sit, there were times where I only came by the cushion and just touched it and took a few breaths there. You know, just to let me know that that space is there for me. I think before considering goals, we need to assess the need. I mean, the reason why I came to meditation is because I was really struggling, I was really struggling with my mind. You know, like, I read this quote, I think it is from the Rigveda, which was, I do not know just what it is that I am like, I wonder about concealed and wrapped in thought. And for me coming to sit on the cushion, even with the struggle, even with the discomfort was better than not doing it because what I was living outside of the cushion felt unbearable, you know? So at least by coming to this place and creating it, I started to accompany myself in the difficulty of what my mind was churning. And so I think that once that desire is there, then the goal and the target can move a bit. And you can begin to experience yourself differently right away, you don't need to wait, you know, months and years. Just by bringing yourself to that space, you can begin to experience yourself differently.

Sarah Selecky 33:27

I love this, I absolutely love the way you turned that around. And again, it really does remind me of writing. They really are close sisters, these practices. And the external goal, like I was talking about, like how to get to thirty minutes of sitting on a monthly plan or on a weekly plan, kind of mirrors these challenges, right? These challenges to get



to a finished place. How many words a day, how many pages a day. Certain personalities especially, I think there's an inner or outer competition factor that kind of adds to the creative play for some people. And I think that if we layer those external goals for our writing on top of one another, again and again, like book after book, or published story after publish story, or write another chapter, write another chapter, write another chapter. But don't touch that compassionate space that you describe, of looking at your cushion and just patting it. Or looking at your notebook. I think what could happen if you don't nourish that kind of personal relationship that's internally motivated to be in touch with something of yourself, then when you do look at your cushion, or your notebook or your writing desk, you may feel like, guilt or heavy burdensome and feeling because you're not showing up. You know what I mean? Does that ever happen?

Ronit Jinich 34:58

Yes. I think you talked about our relationship to the spaces. And what came up for me was, you know, why is it that we write? What is this desire that is at the heart of our need to express? And I don't know, for anybody else but I think that for me, it is about evolving. You know? It is about things that I haven't been able yet to understand that I want to understand.

Sarah Selecky 35:30

Yeah.

Ronit Jinich 35:31

And to give, to give that the space. When we are able to stay connected to that as one of the primary motors, or motivators of why we ride or why we come to the cushion, then gentleness is possible. You know, because we understand that evolution has its own timing, different for each and every one of us. And when we notice those voices that come up and say, the next book, the... Getting published next, we can see them as sometimes supportive, because yes, they can propel our work forward. And sometimes as obstacles and even ways to distract ourselves from the actual goal in itself, which is writing and the discovery of what will come through us in the coming to sit with our minds in front of a page.



Sarah Selecky 36:36

A few things came up for me. One is that I don't want to underestimate the power and beauty of being around someone who has a strong meditation practice or mindfulness practice. It's a gift to be around someone who has a daily or regular practice of feeling grounded. It affects me. It affects other people. So I, I want to say that and then link it up to writing in that, as you were talking I was thinking, at the same time, what humility is required of coming back to the internal motivation or, or what is the motor of why I write, being to understand myself to understand something I don't understand yet. It feels so navel gazy, it feels so like, who am I to spend all this time trying to figure out myself? And at the same time also I feel like, what pride! What pride to make all this time to sit down and like you think other people are going to read that and think about it, and that's going to be useful for other people. I guess what I'm coming to is that my ego really is wrestling with this concept of what writing is for. And I think if the parallel continues, if it really is a mirror, if these two practices of meditation, mindfulness, and writing are mirrors, then it would go, the hypothesis would go so far as to say that if you can sit and write with the intention of putting your ego aside, so leaving behind, I'm so humble, or I'm so proud, like leaving that behind, and going into the inquiry of paying attention to yourself to see how you are evolving, that it's a gift to the people around you who may read that work later. In the same way that coming back to your meditation practice is a gift to the people around you who benefit from your grounded presence.

Ronit Jinich 38:40

Hmm, that's so beautifully said. It feels like you know, it seems like the taste of something really good in my mouth. Like a full, beautiful meal. Yes, I think you said it beautifully. Writing and sitting, and I say sitting but you can practice meditation lying down, you can practice meditation sitting upright, in a chair, you don't need to have meditation gear. You know, you can practice walking meditation, there are so many entry doors into this practice. And I want to say this out loud so that those who have an idea of what this practice looks like, and they see themselves and they can say that hmm, that's not for me, I would never be able to do that — let go of those ideas, because those are set ideas that do not necessarily have anything to do with the practice and that can deter you from you know, the curiosity that you could have and the benefit you could reap from trying it. But what I wanted to say is that the offshoots, they are so



alike because they are practices, and they are called practices for a reason. You know, it's a practice because we come to it again and again and again. And we think that the goal is outside of the practice. But whatever comes out of the practice is something else, the book that you're going to write, it's going to have a life of its own, and it's going to be something else. If you know, it was created within the space of your writing practice, it was revealed in the space of the writing practice, and then it's in the world, and it bears the mark of your uniqueness. Likewise, sitting, you know, you come to sit and, you know, after sitting for almost twenty years, like sitting is in and of itself. It becomes this place that is both me and not me. And it is its own reward. It doesn't need anything else. And yet, what I'm able to do because I devote my time to this place, and to myself, is quite unique. And so we're back to this idea of uniqueness, this very thing that you can be or that you can say that no one else can.

Sarah Selecky 41:16

We're coming close to the end of our call, and I love this conversation so much. I know that people will want to find out more about you. You've been so beautifully articulate. And my mind just feels like it's expanding in a very slow and delicious way right now. How can people work with you? I know you have a new program coming up. Can you tell people a bit about the Breath Works and Dharma Praxis, and maybe how they can get in touch with you?

Ronit Jinich 41:49

Yes, of course. So, you know, you can go to my website, and you'll find out all the information. But let me talk a little bit about the work that is offered through the website that is called [Dharma Praxis](#). So the first thing is the Living Room. The Living Room is a Dharma practice community that was started in 2013. It's called The Living Room because it started in my living room. And I just opened the doors of my home and my place for people, neighbours, and friends to come and sit and study together and just get to know each other. And, of course, now with a pandemic, this has evolved into a Zoom platform, and we meet every Wednesday, evenings. There's a guided practice, there's silent practice, there's the reading of the theme. And there's some inquiries that sometimes are done as a whole group, sometimes in dyad, sometimes in triads, and then people share what's up, you know, what's been happening in their week, what their practice is looking like. And by practice we mean both the formal practice of



sitting, but also the actual practice of your life. And, you know, this is again, we're constructing this space slowly, week after week, getting to know each other. So that's one of the offerings, but I think that by the time this episode comes out, we're probably be in our summer break. But come September, The Living Room will restart again, and everybody is invited to come.

Then the second offering that you will find there is, you know, what Sarah read at the beginning, which is Dharma therapy. And Dharma therapy is a combination of my root practices. On the one hand, mindfulness and Dharma practice. And then on the other: therapy. My second practice for the last twenty years has been therapy and psychotherapy, and different understandings of the human mind in western traditions. And I have found both of those practices affirming of each other, supportive of each other, and enhancing one another. And so I wanted to begin offering a space that would bring both. In Dharma therapy, what we do is that we harness the skills that our mindfulness practice gives you and we put them into use in the therapeutic space. And the reason why that is helpful is that sometimes in the therapeutic space we need to sit with not immediately intelligible material. Things that we don't know exactly what they are, that don't feel comfortable, that feels scary. But if you have a mindfulness practice, and you have constructed that space that we went into so beautifully in our conversation, then again, you have a lookout. You have a nest to see these aspects of your experience that are difficult. And so when it's too much, you also have practices that can help you nourish states of joy within you, to recharge your battery. So that when you need to confront again something difficult, you come at it with energy and not depleted. Because when we go up things that we're not ready to go at and we're already depleted, chances are that we retraumatize whatever was there, you know? And so in bringing together these two ways of understanding the mind, the body, we simply enhance them. We use with our highest intelligence what's most intelligent in those two. And that's the other offering.

And there is a new offering, this is really brand new, out of the oven, it is called Breath Works. For the longest time, I've been incorporating different ways of using the breath as an add-on to my meditation practice. So sometimes when the mind is too busy, I would pull one of these breath techniques and use it to help settle the mind and then go into the meditation. Sometimes I would use it at the end. And for the longest time, I



never thought of sharing those with anybody because these were, you know, like, these do come from some practices that I've learned in the past, say, for example, from pranayama work, which is the breath of yoga. But also from things that I've organically felt like doing and felt like were supportive to my practice and to my well being. And then one day I said, people would benefit from this, why don't I teach it? So I'm offering a four week course, once a week, an hour and 45 minutes, starting in September. I think it's going to be Friday mornings, and you will be able to see this in my calendar.

Sarah Selecky 47:14

Wonderful. That's perfect. So people can think about it, and then go check that out. And there's lots of time for them to consider it and sign up. That's wonderful.

Ronit Jinich 47:28

Yeah, but you know, if people have questions, if people want to reach out, if you go to the website you'll see that in the contact section, there is a menu and say, for example, you're interested in a discovery call, just click that and then send your message. If it's general inquiries, if it's about The Living Room, if it's about Dharma Praxis, then, you know, select what you're most curious of and we can set a discovery call.

Sarah Selecky 47:57

Fantastic. Thank you so much, Ronit. This was really a beautiful conversation. I feel very inspired and I can't wait for people to listen to this and to introduce you to all of our listeners and our readers.

Ronit Jinich 48:13

Thank you, Sarah. This also felt very nourishing for me. And again, just to go full circle to the beginning. I do think that friendship is a better way to think. So whatever was expressed here is, you know, the combination of both of us, both of our experiences, our voices, our practices coming together and then bringing, you know, churning up something that only you and I could conjure together. So thank you.

Sarah Selecky 48:45

Totally unique.



Ronit Jinich 48:46
Exactly. Totally unique.

Sarah Selecky 48:50
Thank you so much.

Ronit Jinich 48:52
You're so welcome.

