

Open Circle Mindfulness Raleigh
REVIEW, REFLECT & PRACTICE
Session 64, July 30, 2026

<https://www.opencirclemindfulnessraleigh.org/review-reflect-practice>



Seeing Clearly

“Nothing is personal, permanent or perfect.” – Ruth King

A simple aspiration in Buddhist practice is: **May I see clearly.** This has been especially meaningful to me recently, having just completed two cataract surgeries, for which I am deeply grateful.

But the roots of this aspiration reach far beyond physical sight.

To aspire, *May I see clearly*, is to really ask, *May I see reality as it is*. According to both Buddhist teachings and modern psychology, our perception of the world is filtered through our conditioning—our thoughts, feelings, past experiences, habits, and long-held, often mistaken beliefs about ourselves, others, and the world. These filters distort our perception of reality and become a source of emotional suffering.

So how do we begin to correct the lenses that distort our view?

One place to start is by examining our perceptions and becoming curious about how much of what we are experiencing comes from the situation itself, and how much comes from the stories we bring to it.

The Buddhist teaching of the Three Marks of Existence offers a helpful framework. Insight meditation teacher Ruth King (Charlotte, NC) expresses this ancient teaching in a wonderfully practical way:

Nothing is personal. Nothing is permanent. Nothing is perfect.

- **Life isn't personal.** We suffer when we take everything as happening *to me* or *because of me*.
- **Life isn't perfect.** We suffer when we expect life to conform to our wishes.
- **Life isn't permanent.** Everything changes, including both pleasant and painful experiences.

In a 2017 talk published by *Tricycle* magazine, Ruth guides a meditation in which she invites us to bring to mind something that has left us feeling irritated, hurt, anxious, or upset. She then encourages us to explore our experience through three simple questions:

- Am I taking this personally? Is it absolutely true that this is about me?
- Am I believing this will last forever? Is it absolutely true that this feeling or situation is permanent?
- Am I believing this should be different—that life should be the way I want it to be?

She invites us to hold these questions with kindness rather than judgment, approaching them with genuine curiosity rather than trying to arrive at the "right" answers. Even when a situation contains a measure of truth, we ask: *Can we know that our interpretation is absolutely true?*

I invite those of you in our meditation group to bring these questions into your practice this week. You might explore them in relation to a recent difficulty, a recurring pattern of reactivity, an attachment script, or even your response to current events. After reflecting, notice whether anything has shifted. Is there more space around the experience? Is the emotional grip a little lighter? Do you see the situation more clearly? Or does it feel tighter, denser, and more constricted?

Simply ask the questions again.

Over time, we begin to discover that our troubles are not as solid or fixed as they first appear. They shift, soften, and change. They are impermanent. And seeing that more clearly is a big step in seeing reality more clearly.

You may want to listen to *Tricycle* talk by Ruth King at <https://tricycle.org/dharmataalks/ungripping-the-heart-and-mind/nothing-is-personal-permanent-or-perfect/>

For continuing Sustainable Compassion Training practice, the specific meditation we did this week was *Letting Be* (<https://sustainablecompassion.org/audio/>). Try it!

I dedicate the positive potential that has arisen through our meditation and practice to aid in the healing and transformation in the world.

Betsy

For more information and notes from past meditation sessions, please visit the **Open Circle Mindfulness Raleigh** website: <https://www.opencirclemindfulnessraleigh.org>