

# 2001-06-18: Fear

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

fear, people, afraid, stories, confront, situations, present, anxious, mindfulness, stay, mindfulness practice, person, monks, common, relationship, thoughts, world, fearless, life, anxiety

## SPEAKERS

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So for those of you who here last week, there was when we weren't here last week we did an exercise exercise on fear, exploration of fear and how it is for you. And today I thought of following that with my reflections on the topic of fear. And perhaps we'll be some time at the end we can continue our discussion of it. And in thinking about fear this last week, fear and anxiety I was very conscious that I became increasingly aware of all the different varieties of fear there are and all the different things we can be afraid of. And it seems like it's such a pervasive such a huge theme and topic that I felt we locked in to make any single statement about fear, any kind of simple kind of approach to it or, you know, seek singular common understanding of it on but overcame my reluctance

by thinking about one of the ways that mindfulness practice works is that it's meant to one of the things it's meant to do is to clarify what our relationship is to what is arising, what's happening in our experience, and our relationship. And so the one of the simple ways of approaching fear is not to look at fear, the issues of what you're afraid of, and the origins of the fear, the reason why that's fears there, but rather to look at what are what the relationship is towards fear. And so it makes it very simple. How do I relate to this issue of fear? Do I relate to it there's there's common strategies we have towards fear. Some people strategy is always to run away from it to be afraid or their fear to escape and retreat to go into escape mode. To distract themselves from what they're anxious about, or to run away some people's attitude towards fears to strike out to, to push it away or to attack or to get angry. What is the relationship that we have towards fear? So one of the one of the very simple approaches we have in mindfulness is to look at what is the relationship you have to the presence of fear. And of course, in different situations, there might be different relationships you have, but many people have a common pattern in their relationship to fear, they tend to be maybe more a type that kind of pulls away from fear, or more the type of person who lashes out in the presence of fear. I had a conversation with someone today, who I sent a simple statement to was very innocent, I thought, but I think the person was afraid. And later the person called me to apologize about what had happened. And, and the person self described him or herself as being having gone ballistic. And, and as being

kind of the object of the, you know, inter ballistic missile. It felt like, you know, I was being attacked. And I felt like I was the person who was needed to apologize for having done this tremendous of front. But that person was basically afraid. And the person that reacted to their, their own fear by this, you know, attack and anger and so what's the relationship to what's our relationship to fear? Now, in asking that question and investigating that issue, we're doing something very important, and that is, for many of us is we're changing our relationship to fear in that very investigation. Instead of being caught up in our version to fear or caught up in our aggression or whatever it might be common patterns, suddenly there's a new relationship to fear. And that is a relationship of investigation of curiosity. And if that sense of curiosity or investigation of interest is strong enough, it can completely override the gripping power the fear has over us. If, if it's just, you know, interest is not so strong, then perhaps the power of the fear can override the curiosity. But as the mindfulness gets stronger as a person gets more confidence in the value of mindfulness, then they can bring to bear on almost any situation, including fear, a kind of interest or investigation. Which can really, really make the whole situation much more workable and easier just doing that. You don't have to understand The fear not to, you know, get rid of it or resolve it. But simply, when interest investigation is powerful enough, it has a way of this thing is this thing, distancing us from the fear or disentangling us from a fear pulling us outside of its gravitational pull and field, so that we don't feel like we are in meshed and identified defined by the fear.

So what's the relationship with fear that you have? And there's a wide range of them. Some people love their fear when it's or they rely on it. When the fears relatively mild, the kind of college term paper syndrome, you know, you put it off, you put it off, you put it off until the last evening, and part of what really gets you going and even it gets the creative juices going. And gets you really to do it is that suddenly you realize, Oh, my God, you know, I'm going to fail this class and then drop out of college, my parents Getting angry with me I'll be homeless, you know, this is, this is it. And so some people rely on fear to get them motivated. And so they feel some kind of fondness for their fears or they depend on it. And they don't want to get rid of it. But that kind of dependence on fear, I feel is related to the kind of similar kind of dependence some people have on anger, when they use anger to get them motivated to do things. If you really angry at some wrong that's been done. And so they go out to write the wrong there's nothing wrong with writing or wrong at all, we should do that, by all means. But when it's motivated by anger, it's painful. It's caused suffering for you. So anger is always you know, suffering producing. It isn't that we have to ignore the wrong but are the needs is right, the term paper. But one of the things we're trying to find through mindfulness practice is a motivation that can get us really going to do things that we need to be done. That's not based on us being contracted, or suffering or gain tight or uptight. It's not based on either anger or fear. A lot of people don't know that kind of level of motivation and never relaxed enough. And in the relaxing, trusting mode allowed some kind of more organic sense of powerful motivation to surface. There's a lot that they don't feel safe to let go of their sense of control. That sometimes comes into play. We latch on to fear or latch on to anger to get things done. So our relationship to fear. It doesn't take a lot of reflection, to see a lot of the painful acting out that fear has in our society. I think of some people you know, politicians will use Fear for getting their votes, passing certain policies. Certain people have certain political beliefs that

the belief system they have is really an expression of the fear. And it's they're kind of they see the world as a threatening place. And so they come up to the whole political point of view for whole philosophy of life, a whole religious point of view of how to approach life. That is based on the notion that things are a threat that world is a threat to that there's something to be afraid about. It's just, it's it's not necessarily just see the world is constantly being a threat. There's other approaches.

Fear can color our world dramatically, can really make a sea blindly what's out there. I've been situations where I've been afraid of someone only to realize the person who was far from dangerous the person who was actually very friendly, but my own fear colored my perception of the person until I got to know the person better. And as I've said that hadn't done a lot of times that so not enough times now that you know that I don't believe my fear always when it comes up. I'm afraid of that person. I'm willing to stop is Oh, but I'm just afraid, is based on my fear. I know what the gut feelings of fear I know the sensations of fear when they're there. Because I know the sensations of fear when the present. I kind of arise kind of suspicion in my mind. Okay, the way I'm seeing this person right now. Is it being informed by this kind of contraction in my body? Before I knew this little trick, I wouldn't know that I was contracted. I'll just know what my opinion of that person was. But when I'm contracted, it's like a cube. says, oh, wait a minute, your opinion maybe is not so accurate. Or maybe it needs to be tested. Or maybe you need to look more carefully. So we learn to look at our relationship to fear and we learn to look at what fear is itself. To just simply study our fear, and feel it physically in the body to get to know it really well then allows fear to be what it may be meant to be, which is a signal. It's often sometimes a useful signal. There are things to be afraid of in the world, and you should be afraid of them. But 99% I suspect of the times in our society when people are afraid, they're being afraid situations probably that don't need to be fear producing. Our society has been called. We've been told we're living in the age of anxiety. And one of the definitions of anxiety is it's fear based on our imagination. anxieties seemingly always to do with something in the future, the possibility of something happening in the future that we're afraid of. And that relies on our imagination. And the stronger the powers of imagination, the more anxious you can become. If you're one of those people who are blessed with a very poor imagination, then maybe you'd have, you know, very little anxiety.

But it's very powerful to realize that anxiety arises out of our thoughts and ideas that are super suppositions about what might happen in the future. One of the little pieces of wisdom that I've acquired painfully and through a lot of repetition it's one of the unfortunate facts of wisdom, that wisdom sometimes only arises from familiarity. Why it's painful is familiarity sometimes takes a long time to get familiar with something repeated pay, see if certain pattern over and over and over again, that finally dawns on you. Oh, that's how it is. And so one of those for me was, I wouldn't get anxious about the future. I used to get caught, you know, 10 years ago used to be anxious about coming to our group here and giving a talk Monday night and all kinds of situations. And what happened was that I started noticing that often, it didn't turn out the way my imagination expected it to turn out. And so I just noticed that and then it dawned on me What a bunch of wasted energy you know, I probably could have powered the California California Vegas blackouts. If I just had, you know, I got you know, plugged in, you know, over and over again. You know, I was worried about Stuff that didn't turn out

though, you know, I show up for some event and the event was canceled, you know, or, you know, just somehow was different than how I imagined it was going to be. And, you know, just was wasted, worrying. And so, through the familiarity with that process over and over again, I've started to pick I started become more relaxed about the future. And so I'm less likely to get anxious now. But what's going to happen in a week or a month or later in the day?

So we study our relationship to fear. And we studied the fear itself, you get to know what the fear is like. And then the fear can function as a signal that helps us understand our life better. Now, sometimes it's a signal of a real danger, and sometimes it's a signal. It's time for you to look at yourself, Mark Flee, it's time for you to come to terms with your own fear because maybe it's unfounded. But whether it's founded fear or an unfounded fear, learning to be more. Learning not to be caught in the grip of fear is very helpful. And the example that I think for me is very significant of this is when I was a relatively new student at the San Francisco Zen Center, which was in a very dangerous neighborhood in San Francisco. And there were lots of this 10 students were mugged, held up at gunpoint shot stabbed was a regular event on the street corner there to be activity. And there were some remarkable stories of some of my friends who would say that they were being held up at gunpoint or knifepoint and they were able to stay calm during that event, and because they're able. They come, they seem to know the adrenaline was probably going at the same time. But they kind of knew. They kind of had some kind of ability to stay mindful and present. And because of that they were able to figure out or know what was necessary thing to do, to kind of get through the situation in a safe way. Both men and women have told me this story and they attribute it to their meditation practice setting sat for a number of years, they, they were able to stay calm and stay mindful, in the midst of it. Are the people I've talked to all the ones who have talked about their thing held up? who stayed who should be staying calm to their meditation practice, got through it beautifully. The person who didn't do it didn't stay calm. Even though he had number of years of practice. He ended up in jail. Not Not the mugger because he acted out in a really silly way.

And when I realized I thought about this, then I remembered I would have what I realized is that, I believe the way that fear is addressed in western Dharma Stark Western Western Vipassana circles, seems to me to be generally quite different, and how it's addressed in Southeast Asian Buddhism. In the general distinction between these two forms, is a tendency in Southeast Asia is for the practitioners to focus on developing their inner strength of calmness and concentration, and letting go so that they can be independent of the fear so they don't Quite caught by the fear. The general tendency in American imposter circles I believe, you'll have maybe there's different opinions about this is more psychological, that you should go and investigate the fear and understand, understand the causes are better learn how to dissect it, learn how to be really present or in the body really go into the fear directly. And there's lots of great stories in Southeast Asia, the monks going off and sitting in the jungles with sometimes intentionally to confront your fears. But sometimes because that's what they do. They sit in the jungle, and back in one or two generations ago in Thailand. They were tigers and big poisonous snakes and wild elephants and all kinds of poisonous and dangerous things in the forest in the jungles. And the monks would go you know, unarmed into the by themselves alone. And

they would end up sitting in a cave or sitting someplace in the middle of the night and a tiger would walk up to them. And they would kind of look at Tiger in the face. Or sometimes they sitting meditating and they hear the Tiger Tiger walk up and they hear it snarl and feel its breath or whatever. And they would say, okay, and in fact, this is very common, at least the way it's recorded. But people who survived

they would say they would say something like, you know, this is it. If I'm going to die, this is my time to die. And this is my time to die, nothing I can do about it. And, and if I'm going to die, I'm gonna die, devoting myself to the Dharma. I'm going to die in the Dharma kind of, and that and so they will just sit there and they wouldn't flinch. And they would just really try to develop the concentration really stay with the breath, stay with our object. Meditation, develop a concentration. Try not to get caught by the fear not to run away by the mind run away by the fear, but stay detached from the fear. And, and sometimes stories around it back stories of shivering and breaking on to sweat and you know, the ones who survive there's always this moment where they break through psychologically, you know and then suddenly this tremendous peace and enlight appears and they kind of get freed of their fear. And then dawn occurs and they realize that they're still alive and they're ready to tell the story. Now I think it's an Amr or John tiny zero says that there that there is no recorded evidence of a monk ever being eaten in Thailand. So maybe, you know, the Tigers aren't as dangerous as they are purported to be, but There's lots of these kinds of stories, other stories and stories of going into cemeteries. Thais seem to have be particularly afraid of cemeteries in a way that a lot of people in the West, maybe are not so not as afraid of cemeteries. And though I suppose a lot of people in the West would prefer not to spend the night in a cemetery, but so the monks would intentionally go out and spend the night in a cemetery meditating. And the stories that survive are inevitably the ones where the ghosts visits. And so there's, you know, something really comes along and they just gonna sit there and the same thing they said they're committed. So I'm not. So these are very dramatic stories. I use these stories as an example, for this approach. That's not psychological. But rather what persons do is developing a strength of the concentration, their calmness, their ability to let go. In the same way that these end students found that their own interactive concentration and calm and letting go, had come with our meditation practice, and then was translated to situations where it was really needed. And this is a very important principle that you build inner strength by a regular meditation practice. And that inner strength then becomes a foundation that's useful in times of crisis. It's certainly you know, in times, if you find yourself in times of crisis, it's certainly useful to bring mindfulness to bear. But you might not be able to you have much ability to bring mindfulness to bear on the situation, when you're so caught up in the crisis. But if you have a regular daily sitting practice and you build the inner strength, and that strength comes along with you into the point of crisis, and the whole situation can be radically different. Sometimes when a fearful situation is strong enough for enough anxiety arises, to bring attention to it or be present for it. can be counter indicated because you only get more anxious and up with a panic attack. And the wise thing to do is not to be present for not to be mindful of it, but to know actually to pull away from it, maybe to do loving kindness meditation, or take a very big spacious, open, kind of open sky meditation or just focus on the breath in a very simple way. But when the strength of mindful mindfulness strength concentration is there, then it's possible to turn the attention

very directly at the fear itself. And here in the West, in the positive circles, we focus much more on the psychological approach in the sense of if you're afraid, bring your attention to the fear and focus on the fear and learn how to be free of the fear independent of fear by being really present for it. And this is counterintuitive for a lot of people here because a lot of people are uncomfortable about their fear. Fear, sometimes usually uncomfortable situations and uncomfortable feeling. And many people recoil from any discomfort. But the common instruction in mindfulness as you go into what's really going on, you bring your attention and hold it there with a fear. One of the ways to do this that's very useful is to feel the fear or the anxiety in your body.

feeling in your body grounds the experience, in something that's different than the imagination, the thoughts and ideas you have of what's going to happen. The physical sensations of fear are often much more much easier to be present for. Then the whole kind of shebang of fear what you're afraid of. So maybe sit down if you're afraid of something, it's not you know, the tiger. That's Coming maybe if you see a tiger in Palo Alto maybe you should call 911 or something but but, you know, you close your eyes and sit quietly and just feel physically what's going on with the fears. And where do you feel in your body and then break ground your attention in that place in the body. As one of my friends who sat the three month course said, it's a three month retreat. And he had a lot of fear. He's a fear type person. And a lot of panic came up for him. And he discovered was kind of an aha kind of moment. That his fear with a lot of Kentucky in his case was a lot of constriction in his chest. And all I can be present for him constriction in my chest, and every little moment Oh, I can do that at least, maybe give him a little toehold, the crack in his psyche, so he can learn to start being present for us fear and not always recoiling or reacting or kind of having it be a kind of cycle. They got bigger and bigger. So, he grounded in the body as a way of not being tripped out by the thoughts connected to the fear or the anxiety and then learn to be with it. Once again study always be studying well how do we relating to this my then how am I relating to the physical sensations of fear? Am I resisting it and embracing myself against it? Am I attacking it, trying to get rid of it, and always trying to massage that relationship we have with experience to see if we can be nonreactive which means just allow the experience to be there by itself. One of the marvelous things about experience in one kind of interpretation of Buddhist teachings is that everything, all experience is self liberating. If you can know how to be present for things in a nonreactive way, all things will liberate themselves. Free themselves. So you don't have to be afraid of your fear. But if you can bring your attention to your fear fully, that fear will do will process itself will release itself will resolve itself. Just simply because you're holding your attention in a nonreactive way for that nonreactive awareness allows for the self liberating process of our life to unfold. As you have as you have, as you begin to begin to have more confidence in how things self liberate, then you can have more confidence that it's okay just to bring this nonreactive awareness to whatever arises. What's happening now what's happening now. As we begin being more present and stable and willing to be with fear in the body, then at some point, you might turn your attention to what's going on in your mind to thoughts and ideas. Their presence when you're afraid. And as you begin looking at the thoughts, then your relationship to those thoughts might also shift. One of the very radical moments again in mindfulness practice is when a practitioner can look at a thought. Any thought and realize, Oh, that is just a thought, Oh, that is just a thought. Because often we're kind of



entangled with our thoughts. We think our thoughts are true, and visually when they're connected to fear, fear as a way of making our thoughts seem very compellingly true. But do we believe our thoughts do we do identify with the thoughts or the thoughts kind of

Reality is what we're anxious about in the future, we kind of almost as if it's really happening already in our imagination, but it's just a thought. It's like, it's like a television show that the mind is produced. You know, we look at our television show, or they go to the movies. And I guess we get caught up in the movies, right? You know, that's part of why we get Suddenly, the tiger jumps out, you know, in the movie screen, and everybody cringes in their seats. But if you you know, if you really kind of pay attention to what's going on, as you kind of look around the room, the green movie theater, look at all those heads popping up and pulling back and, you know, and listen to the crunching popcorn and you realize, you know, nothing is going on up there. It's just, it's just a movie, then suddenly kind of pop the bubble out of the way in which we're enchanted by what's going on up there. It's possible to have the same release from our thoughts. We see. Oh, that's just a thought.

Anyone who is involved in mindfulness practice in a spiritual practice, sooner or later, we'll have to confront their fear. Sooner or later we'll either have to do the traditional kind of Southeast Asian approach of developing a stronger presence stronger concentration in mind is stronger than the fear. So the fear has no hold on the mind. Or do the more kind of Western approach of going into the fear directly. Until by doing that way, the fear no longer has a grip on the mind. And we're free of it. Everyone who does mindfulness practice, I believe, sooner or later, we'll have to confront fear. Because what keeps us from being free is our contraction and fear. It's almost as if the Buddha said that the primary poisons that keep us in cycles of contraction and fear is greed, hate and delusion, greed, aversion, and delusion. And then the Buddhist tradition says, fear is a variety of aversion. So fear is a kind of subcategory these first three. I've heard American Dharma teachers speculate. We were a guy Armstrong giving a talk on fear once and he said, and he said that he had Buddha tell us, you know, the primary root of all suffering is greed, hate and delusion. And then he said

something like

Well, that's just one man's opinion.

And, and he said, I suspect that fears at the root, you know, is really the root of it all. It certainly is for some people. And I've done a lot of people who have gone and started doing a mindfulness practice. And then the mindfulness practice has revealed to them in a great shock. how pervasive their fear is in their life. They had no idea that fear insinuated itself in so many different aspects of their life, all aspects, it's always there.

But the process of letting go the process of waking up that process of having an undefended heart to heart, which is clear and open and free, requires us to confront the places where we're protecting the

hearts or protecting ourselves. Because there's no freedom without the release of those holding. That's just Matter, there's no freedom without that you might tend to kind of easily want defend your holding and say, Well, you know, in some situations, it's really important to defend myself. It might be. But it's still, the fact that there's no full freedom without letting go of all the holding. And letting go of the holding requires us to look at the fear of letting go of that holding

some people's fear of losing control, for some people's fear of vulnerability, for some people's fear of a kind of dying. I remember when some early point in my practice, fear became a very regular companion for me. And the fear has to do, I saw through my practice that I had in order for me to be at ease and at home, be free. I had to let go of some The common ego games that I played some of the ways in which I defined myself to myself the way I kind of talked to other people. So they did, I was still trying to kind of manipulate them, so they'd see me a certain way, you know. And I dependent on the kind of this, you know, had this ego game that I was playing self image that I was building up and trying to polish and defend and present to the world. And I came to this edge, it felt like a precipice where I knew that if I was going to go any further and practice, I had to let go of that. And I knew what was required on me. But I was afraid. I mean, there was nothing to be afraid of around me. I mean, there's always good people. I was living with you always the kind nice people or go on retreats and retreats are some of the most safest places in the world. You go to spirit rock, you know, and you're not to lock your door. You can leave your wallet, you know, that money bulging out, you know, You know, in the buffet table everybody sir, every walks by right needed money boating, you know, you know it's gonna be there when you show up later. You know, it's one of the safest places in the world probably. And except for the mountain lions and people are terrified, you know, so I was terrified. I was terrified, but I was afraid because I saw this fear. I saw that I was up against this purpose. It felt like a precipice. I knew what had to be done. But I was afraid of letting go. And so I walked up to that edge many times and backed off up to that edge and backed off vector. But I kept massaging it even though I wasn't I didn't have the ability to let go of it. I was able to do what I thought I should be able to do. I just kind of Matter of fact, they walked up to their contact off. But I was willing to at least walk up. I was willing to least walk up and walk up and walk up. And slowly I think what happened was, each time I walk a little bit further, each time it's a little bit stressed. Little bit district little bit. And finally, I think you know, I don't know exactly what happened because it kind of mysterious, unseen process. But it was as if the boundaries of fear got stretched and stretched and stretched thinner and thinner and thinner and thinner and thinner. At some point it became transparent, like hardly see it anymore. At some point, that level of fear just kind of seemed to just vanish. I have a lot of my fear that's confronted in my practice, disappear when I wasn't paying attention. Now that's not a that's not a that's not a plug for mindlessness.

It's a plug for not taking responsibility that you're the one who has to do the work and fix things. But rather I had to do my part of the work. I had to bring my mindfulness to their over and over and over again to be as mindful as I could. But then, you know, some point, you know, I'd come back to the next sitting. And where's it? Where's that big issue that I was confronting. So trouble by, I had to in the sitting before I had to put myself there and be up against the wall against the wall. But I've learned, I



learned that I don't have to solve the wall. Sometimes it will be solved. Sometimes I see something, some insight, but sometimes just simply putting myself there, then I'd come back later and be gone. That problem. It seems to resolve somehow, behind the scenes.

So one of the things I'm hoping to convey in this talk today is the usefulness of being interested in your fear and also you'll study it, get to know it. And so one thing is an interest in your fear. And the second related to that, is that a willingness to be present for it. be interested in your fear. And then not only be interested in but also be willing to be present for it, to feel it to learn what's there to learn how to be free of it, to learn, not be fooled by it. You're not, it's not necessary to have your fear disappear. You're not to get rid of your fear, to be free of fear. You can have fear and not to be in a script, not to have it limit you. And then your fearless fearless does not require the fear to go away. And I've been in many situations where maybe where I've been afraid. And the fear I could I knew what the fear was like, I recognize anyone There, I wasn't seeing it and clearly being a present that would be familiar with that whole process of fear. The fear became like pesky little flies kind of like in the background. They're kind of annoying to have there. But they weren't going to interfere with what I had to do with my life. And they were just content just leave them there in the background. I didn't have to do anything about them. I became fearless in certain sorts of circumstances, even though those little flies were their little voices were there. In the Buddhist tradition, people who become fearless, are set to offer one of the great gifts the human being can offer to others. And that's said to be the gift of fearlessness. It's a marvelous thing, to give the gift of fearlessness to be able to meet, meet other people and they have nothing to fear of you and they sense in you that Kind of deep trust where you realize that you're fearless.

So those are my thoughts for today. So now it's your turn for your reflections or comments or questions. Yes.

Maybe what you're talking about is

about a particular feeling

I couldn't be that way the there are so many different things we can be afraid of. Sometimes all the different fears we have, might have a common root. It might just be one single, it might be the fear of rejection might play itself out. And, you know, the fear of what, um, you know, when people think about, you know what I'm gonna wear, the fear that maybe Macy's can be closed because because that's the place where I get the right kind of clothes where I can wear those clothes in that particular setting and then people won't reject me. So there's, you know, I don't know if that was a you know, there's silly example, but, but there might be a common route that sometimes discovered and some people who are more fear based than others sometimes have a common route. From some people. It's a fear of death, fear of rejection, the fear of loss of control for some people. I've known people who, for example, sometimes when a parent has gone Through mental illness, especially very dramatic,

even they had to be institutionalized. And it happened to me this person was a child. Sometimes they'll spend that personal grow up in this constant kind of underlying fear of losing control, and maybe to have it happening to them. And that's kind of a common roots of many other kinds of fears. But sometimes it's not a common root, but rather, the if we study fear really well, in one situation, it might translate to fear and other situations, because the smell and feel the texture of fear is very similar. And so if you'll learn how to deal with your fear of, you know, heights, it might work really well then to what you all you've learned there and the power and the strength of mind, mindfulness and studying your relationship to fear that you've learned there might translate very well. is completely unrelated situation because it's still a fear

Doesn't have to be yes Mita

tells me

tear up the whole pyramid for fear of my husband dying in a lonely

basically,

meditation gave me

a final state of harmony within myself that really didn't require much of anything else

that I could go there, you know my childhood and I just my husband and I to my mother's house

and that's our thing of confidence in a different way that

all of any of these can go and they can still be talking.

That is not dependent on anything more

Beautiful, it's very beautiful and very profound what you said, and ultimately, in Buddhist practice. That's one of the things one of the things that's being pointed to, is that place of deep inner peace and happiness. Were not dependent on anything in the world being a particular way to realize that we have absolutely nothing at stake at the core of who we are, there's nothing at stake. And then we can come out into the world and not be so caught by the other kinds of fears. I also have discovered a certain kind of fear that I'd never had before, after my son was born. And it's kind of like, what I know what you're talking about. Also, it's kind of like I sometimes I go back and forth between those two and having one having the freedom that deep peace makes it easier for me to be present for the fear of losing my son, for example, and that still stays with me. But because of mindfulness practice because my willingness to recognize it, my knowings other possibility, it just stays is a very low key little kind of

kind of tight pressure in my gut in my stomach. I know it'd be very easy, especially in the old days for that to kind of swell up and become much more anxious and much bigger event. Because the practice is stays there. It's kind of there and I kind of, I kind of feel well, maybe it just comes with parenting, it's biological, just part of the scene. You know, it's like, this is what I signed up for. And you know, that's the way it is. And I'm glad I know. I don't know that the thing you're pointing to also. Yeah,

I can't remember. I remember a Dharma talk, which somewhat

similar to the one where you meditate on death or find something that you are afraid of? You're afraid of it

out here

sure, Miss but that's what citing some time monks would do they would go into the forest or the cemetery either to confront their fear to test Am I really fearless now? Let's find out and there's someone recently exactly exactly know how the story how the conversation went but this is what happened was someone asked you know in Thailand people monks go off and nuns go off in the jungle and face the Tigers no Tigers confront their fear. Should we do the same thing in America? Should we go someplace? That's really frightening. And you know, should we go down to the tenderloin in San Francisco at midnight and meditate and in a dead a dead end alley. You know to really deal with our fear or go you know, you someplace. And sometimes it's wise I remember once there was a woman on retreat up in Bonjour Pawnee, who had a lot of fear and she chose to go off far off into the, into the woods up there, and to sleep in her tent far away from everyone else. So she can really confront that fear of being alone out there in the dark. And she thought was very useful. She was very cool, very quick, you know, super terrifying for her, but she was very, very, very useful to confront the fear. Anyway, so this person was asked, I think, was a Thai monk, you know, should should we in the West in the West, should we do the same thing? Should we go find places where to sit where we're, you know, to face our fears? And the response was,

yo, yo, just sit down. Yeah, don't be there.

This is last week.

We were in there were two of us, me and another gentleman who

I guess you would call us adrenaline junkie, at various points in our lives.

Currently,

we actually go out and seek

ride your motorcycle back on the road. So you jump out of airplane. I am actually clinically acrophobic right? times when I go out to the edge of a cliff and it's like, dark you know, I know I'm gonna throw myself off and it's just absolutely amazing. And I worked for years as their hydrator. I would. I started by going to probably the latter and then I you know Finally, I was looking at 100 grids. But that fear never went away. Then I was actually I confronted it head on and I went with because there was a certain adrenaline thing that happened, which was stimulated. I'm not afraid.

I see.

Well, I'm not going to, you know, I think I think there's probably a place to have fun, you know, with your fear and certain kind of thrill sometimes it's okay thing to do. But I, you know, I don't know if this is, is not meant to be a judgment of you. But, but the it's, it's possible that if you had you could discover some other way of having the same kind of freedom and same same kind of vitality that you get from confronting fear. Without confronting fear without feeling fear, as a there's an innate tremendous vitality and freedom and delight and joy that is quite compelling. And if a person knows about that and has access to that, then they might lose interest and the kind of vitality and energy that comes clarity that might come from, from from going into fearful situations.

The other thing is to look at something else over the

last two weeks, which is

perhaps what I'm afraid of.

is being afraid

and I

that's interesting. So thank you very much and may you all have a happy summer solstice.