

# 2001-06-28: Solitude and Aloneness

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, solitude, person, listening, listen, life, speak, deep, speaking, solitary, question, sense, important, spiritual, kinds, truth, thinking, relationship, talking, friend

## SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

Good evening everyone. And

when I was about 14 I went to a boarding school for a few months in, in Switzerland, high up in the Alps, and I was very careful in choosing the boarding school that I went to by its very careful because it was I chose when there was co Ed, that was very important. There are a lot of unisex choices. And I also chose one that was in a beautiful location too high up in the mountains inside of the Alps. Right next to ski resort and when I got there I found out that I chosen the place the boarding school in Switzerland that took in all the delinquents from the other boarding schools. So much of careful choice, you're looking at pictures. And I was a little bit when I was beautiful location and I was there for about three months in springtime. And I was walking on the roads one day near the school with a friend, older friend 17. And I was kind of in awe of this amazing Alpine sky, the snow covered mountains and the beautiful kind of green meadows or pastures that kind of roll down the hill and, and it was kind of, you know, just being this little person Walkmans will row in this great big majestic landscape. In all of all this I kind of said to my friend, you know, something like, you know, why are we here? What's the meaning of life? Why are we alive? Why what's? And my friend said to me, don't be silly. And since he was older, I knew better, of course, I thought that I had, you know, I was being stupid, asking those kinds of questions. So I just kind of closed up that part of me forget that. I'm not going to show that to anyone again. Until, you know, until in my late teens, I guess for another five these tough five or six years. And I think back at that to some some feeling as an idea that that was kind of as you will pity it's the movement within us to ask deep questions or to be in this kind of the mystery or the majesty of life or the uniqueness of what it means to be a human. What does it mean to be human being? What's it mean to be alive? What does it mean that you have this life to live? Where does it all come from my my son now who's three last night putting him to bed. He wants to know, where the world come from. So, now if you can't do if you hadn't had theological background, you know, it's you have easy answers, especially ones that are three year old can understand, you know, because it who made this world, but Buddhists don't have the same kind of theological ideas that other

religions have. So I couldn't give them the easy answer. So what do I say? So I made an answer for him and then he wants to know. Well, then, we want to know what was before the world. And he wanted to know who made the sky or how the sky get made. And what there's no world and there's no sky, right? And he's asking all kinds of questions, and I was doing my best to try to answer. But, you know, I remember you know what it was like as a 14 year old asking kind of similar questions, and then having that kind of curiosity or that sense of awe closed up because someone told me that that was silly to have the kind of thoughts and ideas and I think oftentimes our society when it's business or it's concerned for materialism or many things, is not very kind to the little flicker within us of questioning of all of the kind of spiritual quest of wanting to look for to find or touch into some deeper sense of truth or understanding or some sense of our true self or some possibility of deep peace or and sometimes just a little little kind of flame inside of us. That, you know that kind of the winds of society would just blow out, you know, the first chance of guests. And off we are kind of busy with work and homes and family and activities and like a bank accounts or whatever.

But to kind of let this kind of see this flame, to nourish it, to blow gently on its own, it grows and grows and becomes kind of a shining light, rather than something we have to be embarrassed about or hide or lock away. I was thinking of talking today about three different areas to read different aspects of that I think are quite important in a spiritual life. And they might at first seem a little bit odd that I would lump these three together. But what I'm thinking about today is solitude listening and speaking. These three areas are very important areas for people engaged in the spiritual life, the least the Buddhist life, to cultivate our sense of solitude, to cultivate our capacity to listen well, and to cultivate our capacity to speak well to speak with wisdom and kindness. And if you can do those three things, then you go really far in, in developing your inner self. solitude. rabies is for some people obvious that this belongs to spiritual cultivation. Some people it's far from obvious. One day seminar that kind of formative experiences for me, in my spirit in my spiritual life, was story I've told often but when I was living, I was living in a small farm. They had five dairy cows and some cows. And the couple who ran the farm, went on vacation for a week. And so I they left me take care of the farm. And I was about 20. And I had no idea I never before in my life, been alone for any length of time, more than a few hours probably. And here I was alone for seven days. And I wasn't planning it wasn't like I was thinking, you know how it'd be nice to be in retreat and be alone. Those kinds of thoughts were inconceivable to me I didn't didn't, didn't have a place had those kind of categories in my mind. I just knew my friends were leaving, and they asked me to take care of the farm and there was no one else around in the course of the seven days. The only person I saw was I saw the mailman walking up the road to the mailbox going about a distance, but I didn't talk to him just Tony person I saw and I had these five girlfriends, then that had to milk every day. And I feel very close to them. And what happened to me during the Seven Days of being alone was that many of the ways in which I think and the way the ways in which I'm kind of concerned about how other people see me and how I see others and the kind of complications of social life dropped away because I didn't have a social life at all. And it was just myself. And in the course of the days, I noticed that my sense of perception got sharper and stronger. I was much more aware much more in the present moment that I had no idea that that was a good idea, particularly. And I found myself kind of that I was really amazed at how everything began seeming kind

of very sharp and highlight everything I looked at seemed kind of like it's shimmered with light almost. And, and that aware sense of strong awareness that developed also was inward. I became much more sensitive to my thoughts, my feelings inside and I'd never before have been so acutely sensitive to the movements of my mind what I was thinking was feeling felt almost as if the inside outside were equally kind of radiant and alive for me. And I felt very still I felt in. So by end of the seven days, I felt very still inside very complete, very expansive, very peaceful. But the key the key thing for me was that the sense of intimacy isn't so real sharp seeing the sense of perception and really being present for things in a way that I hadn't before.

And then my friends came back, and all that went away pretty quickly. And then partly, to my credit, the the, the very important question then that I had, for my spiritual life after that, from from many years, kind of fueled by my passion for practice for a number of years was how could I have the sense of solitude together with other people? or How can I have this intimacy or this piece together with other people and I say to my credit, because it would have been Easy to have come to this conclusion, well, this was great. And I get it by being alone. So I'm gonna go be a hermit. And so off I go, but rather I had so I don't know where it came from my husband to his idea that I want to, I didn't want to reject my social world. But I want to learn how to enter the social world. With that sense of solitude, that sense of freedom, a sense of intimacy, that sense of not being caught up by all kinds of things. So that shimmering and a lightness and presence could be there, every everywhere. So that was my goal. That was what I set myself out to do. And what I've learned over the years over and over again, is the great value of solitude. That we have to it really helps to really appreciate solitude and to take some refuge or some route ourselves in solitude. Whether it's real solitude You're away from people. Or it's a kind of very healthy sense of solitude that can be in the midst of even you know, many people, cocktail party even. Some people cringe at the word solitude, because for many of us, solitude is we kind of are, we kind of in many of us, our inner kind of life is covered over crusted over by census, senses of alienation, isolation, loneliness, aloneness, fear of others, fear of rejection, all kinds of all kinds of issues. And so solitude seems to be kind of, I don't want solitude because that's kind of is entangled with all the other feelings of loneliness and isolation, alienation. And so they maybe can't hear what a fantastic unnecessary thing solitude might be. solitude is not loneliness. solitude is not alien. Or even you know, you know, aloneness particularly, solitude is the capacity to be able to be alone or to be solitary to be to be to be one without being caught up or entangled or lost in our relationship to other people, and many of us get so entangled and lost in those relationships. We're worried what people are gonna think about us if we open up to them. We're worried what what, how people are going to see us. We're worried what we're worried about how we present ourselves, we're worried about, you know, the conversation we had about past what people did to us and in somehow our sense of who we are, our sense of what we need in our life is very deeply entangled with our relationship to other people. And it makes some sense that's case because human beings are phenomenally social and you know, it Deep down in a very deep sense of who we are is our social connectedness to other relational sense of self. But it's possible to discover within us a depth of sense of being at home in ourselves, that doesn't require any kind of doesn't require defining ourselves in relationship to anybody

else. A sense of being at home in ourselves, it doesn't require us to, to receive anything from anybody else, or even to give anything to anybody else. The sense of a wholeness that can come just being here.

Maybe we'd say in a kind of solitary way alone, just one. And the paradox, of course, is that of course, but the paradox is that the more solitary you can be in the way I'm talking about, actually graders, your sense of connectedness to other people. And actually what some people will say is you can not only have a deep loving relationship to other people, if you've learned how to be solitary. If you've learned how to be at home and yourself, with no needs from other people, then you can go into your relationships very lovingly. Because when you go into your loving relationships, without having confusion, of fear and hope and expectation and neediness and all those things that might occur, there's a beautiful quote, by Roca. It says something like, he sees it as the fundamental task or the sacred task of all couples is that each person in the relationship needs to guard the solitude of the other. It's very nice, do you think are the solitude in the other regard that's that sense of independence or aloneness or, or wholeness or completeness or being at home this in the other person, and many times we don't do that we kind of sometimes we're kind of like, leeches and other people, we want something from them, we demand something from them. And we don't really give them their independence. And we, but one of their fantastic ways of meeting someone is, which is as to solitary people, to to people who are at home, in themselves. And being at home in itself. The relationship then is qualitatively, often much deeper. Then if we're not at home in ourselves, and we're trying to feel what kinds of needs in the relationship we have. So solitude is, I think, very helpful quality to cultivate and learn how to be comfortable solitude. There was a some thinker, famous thinker who said, something like spirituality or religion, the essence of it, is, has to do with what you do when you're alone. when no one's watching what you believe or what you you know, you know, you're not doing anything for anybody else. You know what your deepest values are that you live by when no one's watching. So I find it very useful to go off sometimes and be alone and go for a walk in the woods or skyline or go to the beach or just go and close it, close it close the door and be alone in a room or the physical solitude to actually be separate from people is very helpful. And it has a way of sometimes settling things away and clarifying and highlighting what's really going on in our life, who can keep being busy and doing many things. Sometimes it's very hard to know oneself. The busier people are, the less they know themselves. I've been surprised how many times people have gone on retreats for example, and comes to an interview and said, I had no idea that was part of who I was. I didn't know that I had those kinds of concerns those feelings, those those values or whatever. They're too busy to notice. Part of the function of going on retreat is letter. Sit, let ourselves catch up to ourselves. And that's what happens when you stop. So to go off and start, spend some time in solitude and discover how comfortable you are with that, how uncomfortable you are with that and work with it. It's possible to be necessary to be ultimately deeply comfortable with solitude. But that's not all of a spiritual life. And big I think, for me, at least a big part of it is also how we are with others. It's part of the spiritual life is not separate from it. And for that listening, the practice of listening is very important how we listen. There's a great quote where someone said, God gave us two ears and one mouth, so we can

listen twice as much as we speak. And then there's this. I don't know if you probably don't know. There's the Order of St. Benedict the Catholic community. The order has the rules of St. Benedict. And the first rule, the opening word of the rules is in Latin, a sculptor. And a sculptor in Latin or Italian means listen to the beginning of the monastic rules. Just listen. And I've been told I don't know if this is true that the word obedience in Latin etymology of the word means to listen. To be obedient means to listen. The disciples of the Buddha, were calls Sanskrit, SRA, Baca, Saba cuss, and which means listeners, those who listen.

To have the capacity to listen is very close to the practice of mindfulness. Some people will use listening capacity to listen as a doorway to becoming more mindful and more present. Listening, to listen or to hear, to listen kind of spatially openly, to listen without interfering, to listen without needing to rush ahead and say Say what we believe is true or to interrupt someone, but listen deeply to what's going on. I read a story or joke, I guess when he's wise stories of some man who goes to the rabbi and says, I'm having a really hard time with my wife, we have a lot of conflict. What should we do? And the rabbi says, Oh, go back and listen to your wife. So, the man comes back to the rabbi some weeks later and says, Well, I'm doing what you said, I'm listening to her. But she is still having a lot of trouble. in there, I said, Oh, go back again. He's supposed to listen to what she's not saying. There's many ways of listening but to listen very, doesn't really pay attention to give someone attention. He probably you know that one of the maybe it's a cliché or one of the kind of theory Good psychologists psychotherapy is it really 99% of good psychotherapy occurs because the therapist is a good listener, or at least the client thinks he or she is. And the listening is very healing, to be heard to really feel like someone's listening to you to offer someone your ear to listen to someone and connect to them in a deep way to hear what they're not saying even the feelings the motivations behind what they say. A friend of mine who, who some years ago, found himself at the beach and parking if you know, if some online parking dispute. He pulled into a parking space that someone else thought should be theirs. I don't exactly know what it was. But the other guy was furious at him and got in the car was yelling and screaming. And my friend listened for a while and didn't intend to interfere or defend himself or do anything. And after a while, my friend said to him You're having a hard day, aren't you? And probably the way said it was just right to me it Be careful how you say these things. But but he's, you know, he probably he just, you know, he was he was very attentive and listening. And he just somehow he said it and the guy just relax the shoulders and took a deep breath and said, yeah, that's the truth. And then they had a whole different relationship. And you know, the whole thing changed. And a lot of it had to do because my friend was listening to what's really going on for this person, rather than kind of butting heads around this conflict and the words, flinging back the insults. When we listen deeply, we're not just listening to, you know, words or ideas. And I think we're listening. We can listen, I think to the depths of the person, to their soul, to the heart to their deep motivation, their psyche, to the capacity of that person, to be loving the capacity to approach the other person to be at peace. Or to offer that from us to listen as a way our listening can be essential. We offer them whatever depth of presence we have available within ourselves. We offer the person our peace, our loving kindness or heartfulness. It's kind of an offering to listen. And many of us don't listen very well. So whole art that can be learned, developed, how to be a good listener. And I think it belongs to a spiritual life cultivating the capacity to

listen. It's a great gift we give to others. And it's a maybe more important gift that we give to ourselves. I think that we are transformed by being good listeners to others, as opposed to rushing in with our thoughts and our ideas, or getting lost in our fears and our concerns, to have the kind of stillness within us that can really listen and not get in the way of what's what's being said. It also ensures that our life is connected to other people in a deep way. For me, it's very important that a spiritual life feel like it's deeply connected to the world around you. To me, it's inconceivable a spiritual life would not be. So whereas I think solitude is centrally important, being in relationship to other people's also centrally important, and the beauty of it is to have them work together, the capacity to be solitary, really supports the capacity to be in relationship. This has the capacity to have us be at home and oneself that solitude or presents supports the possibility of being this kind of listener, I'm talking about a really good listener.

The third aspect of practice, I'm thinking about today is this thing about speaking, to be good speaker to speak consciously, carefully, mindfully. It's been said that some people choose their clothes more carefully, and they choose their words. What does that say about us then I've heard also saying from Tibetan Buddhism that says,

When meditating, watch your mind when out in public, watch your mouth. attention to what goes on when you speak. It's our mouth is kind of like a doorway. Key to ourselves. If you listen to your own voice to what you're saying the way you listen to someone else, you'll find that what you say what you're about to say, what comes out of you, you'll, and what motivates it, why you're saying it, you'll find out all kinds of things about yourself. That will go if you keep doing it'll go deeper and deeper, deeper into what really makes your run which really motivates your life. To pay attention to your listen to your speaking is a very, very powerful mindfulness practice. I find it myself sometimes it's a little bit embarrassing to admit it, but you know that I listen to myself speak sometimes. And sometimes I noticed that I just said something, not because that person needs to know that very important piece of information. Because you know, but rather I'm saying this thing, because if I'm trying to influence them, to think well about me. Because if I say that about what I've done, then they'll be more forgiving of me, or they'll think kindly of me, they think I'm special or something. It's very, very, you know, I noticed, oh, why don't do that. And they don't need to know that for any other reason, except that I'm trying to predispose them to like me by seeing me a certain way. Is that the depth of motivation that I want my life to be coming from? So by paying attention to that and noticing that impulse, there's a chance maybe to think about that. Maybe let go of the first impulse to speak first reason, and then maybe is there some deeper reason to speak here? Maybe what I should be doing is just listening more carefully this person rather than telling them something, I think they need to know that they don't really need to know. Or maybe there's something I can say that is more useful for the situation that doesn't involve trying to, you know, manipulate them to think kindly about me in some particular way. So, a lot, a lot can be learned by just paying attention to our speech. But also mindfulness of speaking is more than just being aware of speaking. And the Buddhist tradition at least it also means paying attention to what we speak about, and choosing when we speak about in a mindful way. And so there's guidelines that that is the Buddhist version gives on when you could speak. But the impression I had is



sometimes when I was in Asia, some of the monastics that I spent time with it was kind of like, the impression I got was the default mode of being for them. was not to speak you know if there was like question you speak or not speak they didn't speak that yes, they were just they prefer to be quiet that was like kind of what they did was they were quiet. But but then you sometimes you have to speak and so what are the guidelines for when you speak the guidelines the Buddhist tradition gives or for the first one probably is no most important, and that is only speak the truth. If you speak the truth you have left to remember, only speak the truth. And if you just did that, I think you know our life or society we transformed. But speaking the truth means, of course, not just simply obvious ways of lying and speaking the truth, but also means avoiding lies of omission, perhaps exaggerations. exaggeration or truth. fourth way of speaking. So speaking the truth. And I think it's pretty common in many spiritual traditions, to the importance of speaking truth. The second is, speak what is kind. Be kind in your speech is what I'm going to say a kind thing to say might be true to say. But it's it's kind. Actually it's not kinda at all its truth, but you're using it as a weapon. So I'm going to get that sucker. I'm going to tell them you know, exactly, you know, the truth and just blast them out of the water with the truth. You know, the people use a truth as a weapon sometimes. is a kind is what I'm about to say kind. And there's a whole it's a whole issue. What is what does it mean to be kind when you have things like tough love, maybe. But it's a kind is it loving what I'm about to say? The third criteria is, is it useful? To say this, it might be true, it might be kind But the person is not going to hear it that you're going to speak to it's not gonna have any impact is not useful. It has no purpose.

There are some people who simply can't hear what you have to say. And why waste your energy if the person can't hear why bang against it, you know, locked door for too long. It's not going to open. So is it useful? And then the fourth one in the Buddhist tradition? So is it true? Is it kind is it useful? And the fourth one is? Is it conducive to Concord? Is it does it help create social harmony? does it bring people together? This is very important in Asia, India, China and Japan. Once I countries I know a little bit about the idea of harmony, the of Concord of being kind of not being in conflict with the people around you. Does it create harmony? When I'm about to say, does it bring people together? Or does it separate and isolate people? does it create separate Or does it create the intimacy or sense of knowing between people? If you're angry with someone, for example, the way you speak that anger or about that anger is just going to create greater separation, or does it create greater possibility of reconciliation. When we're angry sometimes we don't couldn't last thing we care about the conciliation. What we want to do is get back at that person we want to strike it, then we want to make some, you know, we want to sometimes hurt them back or whatever. Is it conducive to social conquers are conducive to bring people together reconciliation or harmony? What I'm going to say. So, things like gossip, for example, is usually not conducive to social Concord. Gossip more often than not tends to divide people and create, you know, gossip has causes tremendous harm in our society. Even when it's true can cause harm. I find myself increasingly uncomfortable talking about other people who are not present. I still do it. I know some people who don't do it. Or they say they don't do it. And I still do it. It happened today several times when I was talking about some other person who was in there. And if I'm an increasingly uncomfortable about it, I think somebody's discomfort is unwarranted. It's just that I've kind of entered this territory and I'm unsure unsure about it now. But often, it's not very often we

start talking to other people, and we wouldn't we would never would never say that thing when the other person was present. And that's one of my guidelines is I try at least to say things that I would not feel embarrassed or reluctant to say if the person was actually present. And sometimes I do say something about someone that seems kind of strong, and they're not present. And then I'll try to go find the person and say, you know, we had this meeting, I had this conversation with someone, and this is what I said. about you. I want you to know what I've been saying about you. Because it felt, you know, I don't want to be talking behind your back, I want you to know what I'm saying. So is it conducive to social Concord to harmony. To pay attention to these three areas, to solitude, your capacity to listen and to our speech will clear the air ground. A lot will clarify and give you food for practice for reflection for transformation that will probably last serve you for the rest of your life. These three areas are very powerful, very useful areas for doing spiritual practice. And I really would encourage you to think about the last two or three were the last two listening and speech so that your whatever spiritual life you have whatever practice of mindfulness you're trying to bring to the rest of your life that you think about. It's being directly relevant and important to bring it into your social life also. So your social life is part and parcel of your spiritual your meditative life. So, thank you for listening. I'll try to listen now. So you have anything you want to say or comments or questions? Yes.

Well, one of the ways is to start practicing and to go and you know, to restrain the tendency to rush in, in speech and may be comfortable to be comfortable. We'll try to create a little more silence in speech when you speak, so that when you finish speaking with someone Spanish speaking, don't come right on the heels of what they say with your words, but rather have a pause in different situations, you know, different lengths of policy appropriate or comfortable. But let it be a pause and see sometimes I'm surprised. You know, I'm ready to kind of give some person advice, right? Okay, I know what you know, okay. I've heard the mouth for a while, okay. And then, whenever I often when I wait, and don't get my advice, and then give space for the person to talk more and sometimes asking a very good question, encourages further than to speak more. And being good listener also entails being a good questioner asking some really good what's a good question? Someone said something. Okay. Let's see. Is there a good question that I got asked further to help us help go deeper with this topic? And then I'm surprised how often you know, my great piece of advice that I had, you know, either was, you know, irrelevant because I didn't know Standard situation and or the person had great wisdom themselves and in fact that I let that person speak further. maybe ask some questions that came out on its own. I didn't have to say anything myself.

Do you have anything in mind when you're asking the question? Oh, kids should know. Oh, yeah, I shouldn't. Yeah. Kids. Think that I have to just know whenever someone asks about kids, I shouldn't answer any questions not qualified. Would

but you know, with my son also, listening is very important to him because it's, I find it very, very important to be less trying to try to listen to what he's not saying because You know, too often something deeper is going on than meets the meets the meets the eyes first, first. So if he's acting out



or being difficult, you know, maybe my first instinct is to say, Oh, you know, you know, or but, but what's really going on? And maybe he, maybe he's lonely or maybe he's afraid because something happened at school. So, you know, something happened to your school today. You know, occasionally say, Oh, yeah, this other kid he was, you know, he pushed me over, I didn't understand why and then we can talk about it. So, with kids, I think sometimes listening is the kind of operating principle I have with my son is that or the first operating principle, theory or whatever? is that if I listened to really well, and kind of there's some way of speaking to him or responding to him That'll settle him. If I can just find out what it is, something's bothering him. And if I can just listen and find I can probably, then I can, what that might be, then I can say that thing which will be settling for him. Like one of the things we've learned, for example, is that our son, he likes to know what's going to happen. And so, rather than just telling him what when it's when something's about to happen, what's going to happen, we tell them ahead of time, sometimes a day ahead, and that settles in, for example. And so that's my theory, you know, sometimes it's hopeless. Yeah.

Imagine how it will be.

If a person is married and had children and had a very full busy life that you know, it would be nice to go take a walk, but I'm, I'm single, I'm alone all the time. And I see the distinction between alone and solitude. I have so much solitude that I'm frankly kind of afraid to go on retreat and you Maybe for a lot of reasons, but maybe you could try to say something about the different quality that solitude might have for someone who has a lot, a lot A lot of it and maybe

hasn't

figured out how to work it in to the spiritual practice or how it relates.

Because all those things that you said are often in people's minds with solitude, rejection alienation isolation. Yeah.

What Why do you spend so much time alone? I enjoy

it.

What's the downside of

feeling disconnected?

or lost in the world?

Am I pursue the things I like to do are solitary types of things. When I call someone up

Be sure to read books in libraries.

And you have any sense of what your time alone does for you. Why did you enjoy it? What does it do for you in some deep, deep way?

It's a regenerative

I, I put out a lot in work and it's a it's a it's a more it's a much more smarter social environment. I think I'm naturally inclined to be in and then when I go home, it's it's getting strength again to go back out there.

I see. So you're maybe by inclination, a person who likes being alone, solitude or quiet. But then you have work that makes you brings you a lot of social contact with people and drains. And then you regenerate by going, being alone. So in addition to the pleasure just being solitary by itself, there's also something regenerating about it, it might be helpful for you to start looking at what happens to you at work that drains you, with the assumption, or the, the kind of operating assumption you'd probably work with is the reason that your needs to be regenerated is because there's some way in which you are at work with you are at work, which drains you. And for you to take a look and see what is it that I'm doing? Because you're doing it when you're around other people, are you you tend to be afraid a lot and that tires you or you tend to be, you know, you tend to give yourself over too much to other people or what is it that you do and to explore that and see if there's some way that you can work on that and see if you can have a healthier way of being at work. And then you might find you need less. You need less regeneration. And then you might stay solitary just as much as you always do, but as a different function, or you might not need to be alone so much when you get home. And then you might have more time for a little bit of a social life too. So it sounds to me like rather than rather focusing on healthier solitude, it's probably focusing on healthier relationships. Please,

I will find that because I come

from an ancient tradition.

When I'm listening to somebody else out here, like you're questioning or I don't disagree with that makes me feel negative. But

because I'm very attuned to keeping up conversation, harmonious level, but also

trying to keep it happy. And then

later in retrospect, I

feel very good, but I did

not know how to change it sometimes

exercises

now becoming more aware, more receptive to sticking up for even after the fact that I'm slowly getting closer to the time when it happens. But if you have any ideas of how to expedite that process

Stop it.

Yeah, great is a great question.

I don't know if this is relevant to what you're bringing out but the curse to me is it's not an issue. If you feel a conflict with someone disagreement with someone, it's not always necessary to speak it. Sometimes it's okay to for the sake of harmony of sake or whatever not to speak it. But, but you don't have to repress it either. Always it means you can actually try to you might actually if you start feeling these thoughts inside of you, you might speak them louder in your own mind can repeat them in your own mind much more cause like you're having a conversation with them, but you're doing it in your own mind. So it really becomes conscious in your mind what you're doing. If you have a tendency of repressing or pushing away or not paying attention to those, try speaking them in a sense out loud in your in your mind. You're not to say it out loud, unless it's feels appropriate or necessary, but but to repeat them in your mind and see as you repeat them kind of conscious second or third time consciously in your mind. Then begin exploring what are the what's the nature These kinds of thoughts. Are they always critical or judgmental? Are they are they simply disagreement about something or, or, you know, what, what's the basis, the emotional basis for having these kinds of thoughts? There's a lot you might be able to discover. And you might also discover kind of greater familiarity with that kind of thinking if you kind of began stopping and speaking silently to yourself. So yes, we're an exercise. So that's one thing.

Let's meet around way but because I've had this tendency for so long to just keep things on happy level. It's almost hard for me to say something. Stop a particular path

that other person is

times have been

Oh, I mean, there's also

you know, one of the things to do with mindfulness is mindfulness of speaking, for example, this kind of thing is to choose some situations where there's very little risk for you, and then start practicing conflict, or whatever. I mean, you know, if you go to a grocery store, and you're never going to see that person again, and the person's being kind of difficult, you know, you know, you know, just, you know, when I was when I was when I was 1819 years old, I used to hitchhike around Europe. And so I was 1718. And I had this idea that I was going to, I didn't know who I was exactly, but, Okay, I'm gonna find out who I am by trying on different personalities. And I just kind of need different persons. If someone picks me up, I'll never see them again. I'll just be a different person for that person. You know, I think try this out and see that that's like, try this, you know, precise, and I would be a certain way and be grumpy or be whatever exuberant or whatever. And I would just kind of experiment with different ways of being. And you might go someplace where no one knows you were very little consequence. And, and, and, you know, see if you can just kind of, you know, forget about, there's some cultures for example, really like conflict a lot, they're really much more into it than some Asian cultures, you know, and maybe go visit that kind of cultures, you know? And, and just do experiment, experiment there. And so, go, you know, try out those muscles someplace where it's safe. Or have if you have a really good friend, you know, go confess to your friend your issue and say, you know, how about if we just, you know, have a good, good have a good argument about something. Let's try it. Let's try to try to decide on a, you know, let's try to decide on a restaurant we're going to eat together and, but before we decide, let's Let's have a good argument about it. Let's see if we can really kind of get into it or I don't know. But it is a sense of playful experimentation and safe exploitation in situations where there's not much at stake to kind of exercise a certain muscle is underused. And also what's listening to you. It also sounds like since you talked about this being this tremendous backlog, a feeling of resentment might be necessary to go and address that directly and maybe do some therapy for example. Yes.

Thank you for the talk with step

one was I just thinking about

what works for me when friends when I need to be listened to?

Because I really realized what you said that most time when I'm giving advice, it's about some other motive for me. Almost always But if it's something to do with quality of respectfulness, whoever's listening, and two different people can say something in one exact same words, and it's done differently. And I'll feel really listen to somebody else I won't. So I'm not sure on that. But

the other things that I just did a question

with you, and you mentioned about truth. And it's just a mind boggling kind of we're

committed really figure out at what level being truthful most the time

so I guess

usually I can go away I guess.

But part of me is being truthful. And so if you can say anything about that, but also

the main thing I want to ask you about was the speaking part.

If one goes long periods of time,

almost without a voice, without speaking, is there a time that a, it's important to do the opposite of what you had said,

to speak up for oneself, even if you're not sure.

Perhaps it's an issue of balance. So some people are imbalanced in one direction, some people in the other direction. And sometimes you need to kind of go on the other other extreme for a while to kind of create some balance. And so so, you know, if a person hasn't, has been, has been repressed or silenced for a very long time, then perhaps it's useful to go someplace to really just speak non stop for a while. Go find someone you can speak to or, you know, become a meditation teacher so that you can just talk all the time, people Listen and so there could be a time for that and I did when I was younger there was a time where I experimented with talking a lot by I kind of prefer not to talk too much actually. And so I there were times where I experimented with just talking to anybody who was willing to talk to me and just talking, talking talking and I worked at the Fed and the fast food restaurant for a while and was very fast and there's all these waiters and waitresses Oh, come on. I was I was a cook you know, so I'd be at a table past serving all these foods up and the waiters and waitresses would come in and out and the bus boys and you know just all this commotion and I tried having an on. I tried having. For a while there. I tried. Once I kind of learned how to do the job. I tried an experiment for a while. Next time he's talking non stop, but seeing if I can have a conversation ongoing conversation with everyone who came into my vicinity. And so, and I keep trying like chess player playing, you know many different games at once. It was like I try to keep track of all the old conversations so they've come in and we have a little exchange and they go away and come back few minutes later we continue the conversation. Meantime, I was carrying it on with other people and, and I was just trying to exercise my speaking. You know, see what it was like and, you know, it was one of the best way of experimenting. Am I answering your question? Sorry. Yeah, practice you know, if you need to, sometimes you need that you need the opposite in order to create a balance.

cheese pizza. That

finishes your sentence scoring, you know, before it's even out of your mouth when you're going

it's

just mean. Yeah.

And I find myself

sort of start to sentence and then realize that she's trying to track it and take it off in another direction. So she can't, which is very nice

remarks about listening at the mind.

The way you said it to me, I need to tell her because you didn't tell us who it was.

Then you might have to, now that she knows so someone person knows.

Yes. One thing I found useful. I guess last year you came One day sitting on mindfulness of speech. And I remember her saying that it was interesting to take note, while one was speaking, and I think well, one's listening as well, to see what's the posture as whether it's expect them to the eager whether it's drawing away whether it's balanced, and just to notice the quality of attention. And that looking at the body of the wind bodies held and is moving, has seemed very useful. To me. It's not always evident enough to bring it up. But when I'm able to bring it up, I find it

beautiful. Thank you.

So let's end with a short sitting