

2001-09-30: Relating to People

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SPEAKERS

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I was scheduled on October 13, and Saturday to teach a day long class at the Sati center on the Buddha's teachings on mindfulness, with the idea that the way that mindfulness is taught by us Western Dharma teachers is a little bit different from the way that it's taught by the Buddha. And it might be interesting to go back and actually see how he, how he taught it what he was taught teaching and pointing to when he talked about mindfulness. But in prepared beginning to prepare for that class. I didn't find myself very inspired to do it anymore given September 11. And last weekend, I did a workshop or we can kind of a workshop in Los Angeles, that was focused on the Buddhist teachings on peace. And I collected together a whole bunch of, of the selections quotes from the Buddha from the discourses of the Buddha on the Africa peace and violence, non violence. And it was a very nice thing to do given our times. And so what I decided to do is that time, October 13, not teach the class I was slated to teach, but rather do a day on the Buddhist teachings on peace. And there are flyers there on the table, if anyone is interested in in doing that. And so

Cheryl says everything's okay. She came and got the doctor. Yesterday at the Portola Valley, that we put on the one day sitting in St. Mark's middle of the Dharma talk. Some some child release children in the park nearby playing soccer. We've had this child kind of banging against the window, the door glass door and kind of whimpering or crying and at first it didn't. To me it didn't seem like much who seemed like kids, maybe a nice kids somehow. And then it got a little more dramatic and vaguely it seemed like maybe there was a scuffle outside or something to people involved. And then there's a glass kind of glass window you couldn't quite see through, but you could see suddenly these two hands kind of banging against the window trying to get in and begin to seem kind of more dire. And so we went outside to see what's going on. And, and there was a maybe 13 year old boy who was autistic, who was mother was struggling try to keep on what the right word is but under control. And so we opened this door and the kid, you know, I tried to I didn't realize that he was autistic. I tried to engage the kid in a nice, friendly way and he just brushed me off and walked right into the room like we are sitting here and just walked right in the middle and And then proceeded to walk through the,

through the hall into the bathrooms. And he really likes water because he went to the toilet and locked himself in the toilet, flushing the toilet. So he did that for a while we heard the toilet flushing and, and it felt, you know, kind of painful to, to see the circumstances of the mother trying to work with it and, and the only thing I could think of offering was our kind of acceptance of the circumstance that reassure the mother that the boy could just wander freely around us and through us in our building and not have to be concerned about disturbing us and our Dharma activity and chatter while he finished and then he walked through again and be nice to hope that somehow walking through a group of 3040 people sitting meditating had a beneficial impact on someone to walk through. weather, the sun. So we never know when things show up. And someone pointed out that September 11 in New York City was a beautiful day. Unexpected What happened?

So

one of the things has been in my mind is the question of how do we relate to other people, in times of tragedy in times of violence? How do we relate to others? And there's a very simple teachings on by the Buddha on this topic, where he said, he encouraged us to compare ourselves to others or liking ourselves to others find parallel in others to ourselves, he said something like all beings, all people are feeling Violence all. All beings cherish, cherish their lives. likening oneself to others likening others to oneself, don't cause harm towards anyone. And you'll find over and over again the Buddhist tradition is emphasis of English we'd say putting ourselves in the other people's shoes. Imagine ourselves as others, and how would you want to treat them then? It's kind of a universal ethical kind of approach to life is to consider the other as oneself. Some years ago, there was a I guess, a psychologist, a researcher, named something like Susan Langer. Maybe this anyway, Langer was her last name is her last name. She wrote a book called Mindfulness where she tried to study She claimed to study mindfulness as a Western topic. She didn't claim no real connection with Eastern to Buddhist teachings of mindfulness. And we're just exploring it as a function of psychological functioning, that could be studied by Western psychologists. And so she was doing research on this topic. And in her book, she describes doing an experiment with some great cool school kids, where she gives shares to groups of kids, and she takes them gives them both a series of examinations. And the first group, she tells that basically tells there's only one right answer to these questions. And the second group she tells there's a number of right answers to these questions, find, you know, find a few of those out right answers. So they do this test for a while, and then the experiment comes where they then show these people Photographs of different people, some who are with handicaps in wheelchairs or blind, some who have no particular handicaps. And so we've had a collage of different photographs of people. And then they're told that they have to select kind of teammates people to play with, for different activities. So I guess you know, some kind of sports. There's a sing along who would like to be with you and you sing along. Who would you like to be along with you to play? pin the pin the tail and donkey? We're gonna blindfold people. And the people who had been told that there was only one right answer to the test, they tend to only pick the healthy people or so called people have noticed abilities. And the kind of kind of type two type people into very black and white categories and just chose the people who are so called normal perhaps. And then the kids had been taking the examinations where there are a

number of right answers, it was a finite number of right answers, they tend to look not at this, they tend to judge the person, they tended to judge the functioning of the person. So they made function specific decisions rather than person specific decisions about who they're gonna pick further activity. So if you could do a sing along, it doesn't really matter. So I'm gonna do wheelchair not because that has no bearing on it. And if you're going to do I guess, pin the tail on a donkey, it doesn't matter if a person's blind because that's the whole point of the game is to be blind. And so the point being that kids were somehow conditioned or trained to think more broadly to think more function specifically, in their, the choices they had to make rather than person specific. And there's a strong tendency, I think, for many of us, to, to have been trained to look for there's one right answer for how things should be and to be very uncomfortable with ambiguity. complexity. And if we want to have you be right, we want to be to know what's going on. We have a lot of security comes with thinking we know what's going on, or we know what the right responses. And so often people will latch on to the first, right? The first idea that comes along and this is the only right answer. This is the answer. This is the way.

And there can be a whole training and beginning to broaden your mind to see maybe there's a number of variety of solutions as a complexity individual in the world around us. I was also impressed by her book. She had an experiment where she showed I guess, kind of movies and television I guess videos of different people. And so they the subjects of experiment are watching these three groups. They're watching these people on on video. And for the first group there, she's talking They were told what kind of people were they were watching. And they were given all kinds of categories, nothing really to do with who they really were. But they were so this is a deviant. You know, this is a, you know, terrorists, and you know, they kind of listed all these kind of types of people and some kind of negatively some positively the second group, they just said, watch this videos carefully. So they said, and the third group, they said, Just you watch this is like, you know, like you're watching television at home, just we want us to kind of be, you know, you can't just kind of just watch this, you know. And what they found was that the people who are told to watch carefully, and the people who were told who they were watching, especially because they were told mostly, maybe all the people were told or somehow had deviant type of labels. They were able to after the after watching his videos, they were able to report much greater detail about what they saw. On the video, the kind of characteristics of the person their hair color, and they talked or how they were, they were able to remember many more details of what they were watching, they were more hyper, they were more alert to what's going on. Whereas the people who were just kind of told to watch television, like you watch television at home, they didn't remember very much at all. And it struck me quite a bit that mindfulness by itself, can be used, can be heightened out of a sense of threat or a sense of, of criticism or judgment of someone. And it could also be used kind of very neutrally just pay more careful attention. And in a sense, what they found was the people who were given negative labels for the people. Their mindfulness was more heightened, but they use that mindfulness in the service of being more critical and being more having more prejudice for what they were watching and seeing, even though they could watch they could actually see more detail. They Using the service of their, of their prejudice. So mindfulness itself is relatively neutral. Perhaps maybe just like, you know, clear glass you, you train your mindfulness, you clean the glass in your windows, you can see clearly, but the glass windows and ethically neutral, just

just clear window. Perhaps mindfulness by itself is ethically neutral. And we need to bring something else into play if you want to live an ethical life or to live a life of wisely and compassionately relates to the world around us. And one of the things that would have been taught was this exercise of empathy, of likening yourself to others.

One of the areas of thinking to take a different track for a moment of complexity. When we look at ourselves, and some people would like to latch on to a particular view of who they are, I am this way, this is the way I should be. And I need to be right or some people take I'm wrong, and this is the way it is. And there's a lot of people who aren't very comfortable with allowing for complexity in their own minds and their hearts and not willing to see themselves as actually having a range of wholesome and unwholesome qualities within them. I know people who are horrified that they would have some bad thought that they would think badly about anything. And so they know people who've actually repressed that part of themselves and kind of create a veneer of being kind of goody goody in a sense, because they're so frightened of the voices within them that might be a little bit violent or aggressive or hateful or whatever. One of the things that you I've heard a lot since September 11 is that if we retaliate against whoever we think has caused these terrorist attacks with hate, then we're becoming what we hate. And though most people who act out of hate, don't usually take the mirror back on themselves and see the same behavior in themselves, they often see that see the world black and white, and the good guys and that's the bad guys. It's been pointed out by people, some people, Carl Young, for one for whatever he's worth, that, that sometimes when we play the neck, very black and white separations in the world between good and bad feminists, it represents a division in our own minds. And it becomes kind of a violence to ourselves. Also, if we insist on seeing the world in black and white terms, goodbye good guys and bad guys, good gals and bad gals, then chances are that we're also unwilling then to see ourselves in our complexity, but we divide ourselves along the same category. And often then we'll see ourselves. As you know, the good guys, sometimes it's the opposite. Part of I think, with mindfulness causes it calls upon us to do is to relax the categories by which we hold things in certain way, and allow for the complexity to show itself to allow a whole range of what's going on within us to show itself and then to do that with compassion, with acceptance, acceptance as if this is a normal part of human life. I was felt very fortunate that when I was 14 or so, my father pulled me aside, there's, you know, this father son kind of talk, and he told me as you go up, you'll find times when you have really bizarre thoughts, And this is really normal. You don't think you're crazy? And I didn't think about it much of the time. But sure enough, there were times I had really bizarre thoughts. And I had been warned that this was normal. Isn't that great? As opposed to, you know, thinking, wow, no one notices, and this is really bad. How could I think this way. So to somehow be accepting, maybe not allowing in the sense of acting on these things, but very accepting of, of the complexity within ourselves, they willing to see the range of range of thoughts and responses and motivations and ideas that exist within ourselves. And what happens then is that it becomes harder to see the other other people as radically different than ourselves. One of the, you know, to see that you have the capacity to hate in some corner of your mind, then you're more likely to empathize somewhere. For someone else who expresses hate, overtly, if you're if you suffer, it's a lot easier to see other people suffering in an empathetic way, the near enemy of compassion in Buddhism is pity. And pity is when you remove

yourself from the pity occurs when you don't see that yourself as an equal with someone else in their suffering. But rather see yourself a little bit above them kind of looking down and say, Oh, I'm so sorry for you, you know, you know, I'll help you, you know. And

but what does it take to see someone in their suffering as equals, is what Buddhist practice is supposed to lead us to? So part of it is to begin discerning the complexity in ourselves and see the wide range. Maybe today, you happen to be a saint, and it's very nice. We're all happy for that. But maybe tomorrow you won't be you know, there's who knows what's going to happen to you tomorrow. I'm kind of an all in my own mind. My own reactions by the wide range that I'm capable of having, when the conditions around me change. And, you know, with our times when I was in a monastery, that, you know, I was pretty saintly, thank you. And times when you know of a family crisis, that, you know, you guys thought I would call myself so to be accepting of the complexity with our within ourselves. So, how do we relate to others and how do we relate to ourselves and how do we relate self? How do we compare? How do we empathize? empathizing has to do with the wisdom of knowing how to see ourselves wisely, clearly how to see someone else. One of the great poems coming out of the Buddhist world in blessed interation or so? Is the poem by tick not Han, called, please call me by my true names. And maybe many of you have heard of many times. And if you have you can think of it as our liturgy. taken out, hein wrote, please call me by my true names. Do not say that I'll depart tomorrow. Because even today, I still arrive. look deeply. I arrive in every second to be a bud on a spring branch, to be a tiny bird whose wings are still fragile, learning to sing in my new nest. To be a caterpillar in the heart of a flower to be a jewel hiding itself in a stone. I still arrive in order to laugh and to cry in order to fear and to help The rhythm of my heart is the birth and death of all that are alive. I am the mayfly meant metamorphosizing on the surface of the river and I am the bird which When spring comes, arrives in time to eat the mayfly. I am the frogs swimming happily in the clear water of a pond. And I am also the grass snake, who approaching and silence feeds itself on the frog. I am the child in Uganda, all skin and bones, my legs as thin as bamboo sticks, and I am the arms merchant selling deadly weapons to Uganda. I am the 12 year old girl refugee in a small boat who throws herself into the ocean after being raped by a sea pirate. And I am the pirate my heart not yet capable of seeing and loving I am a member of the public burrow with plenty of power in my hands. And I'm the man who has to pay his debt of blood to my people dying slowly in a forced labor camp. My joy is like spring, so warm, it makes flowers bloom. My pain is like a river of tears. So full, it fills up the four oceans. Please call me by my true names. So I can wake up. And so the door of my heart can be left open the door of compassion. So here tech, not Han sees himself. In the other end, he doesn't. He certainly sees the world in a polarity between the victim and the perpetrator of the various forms of violence who sees a distinction between them. He's not ignoring that distinction. But he's also not going To see the person who's being separately himself is not going to lock that person out of his heart. And, and as he requested, the very end is please call me but my true names so I can wake up. And so the door of my heart can be left open the door of compassion

can it be our wish or desire or motivation, that the doors of compassion remain open? And can the sense of compassion, the desire for compassion, the wish work, be stronger than any other wish that

we have? Can we have enough put enough value and compassion that even when the complexity of who we are brings forth all kinds of range of responses, that the motivation to find compassion to keep our hearts open is on the forefront of what we want to do? So then after September 11, A couple and by the name of Frederick and Mary and Bruce Bruce thought he took take that hands palm and adapted it. I am a World Trade Center tower, standing tall in the clear blue sky, feeling of violent below to my side. And I am a Towering Inferno of pain and suffering imploding upon myself and collapsing to the ground. I am a terrified passenger on a hijacked airplane. Not knowing where we are going, or that I'm writing on fuel tanks, there will be instruments of death and I am a worker arriving at my office, not knowing that in just a moment, my future will be obliterated. I am a pigeon in the closet between the two towers, eating crumbs from someone's breakfast when fire rains down on the from the skies. I'm a bed of flowers admire daily by hundreds and thousands of tourists now buried under five stories of rubble. I am a firefighter sent into dark quarters of smoke and debris on a mission of mercy only to have it collapse around me. And I am a rescue worker risking my life to save lives. Who is very aware that I may not make it out alive. I am a survivor who has fled down the stairs and out of the building to safety. Who knows that nothing will ever be the same in my soul again, and I am a doctor in a hospital treating patients burned from head to toe. Who knows that these horrible images remain in my mind forever. I am a resident in an apartment in downtown New York who has been forced to evacuate my home. And I know I am a resident in an apartment uptown. Who has walked 100 blocks home in a stream of other refugees. I am a family member who has just learned that someone I love has died. And I'm a pastor who must comfort someone who has suffered a heartbreaking loss. I am a loyal American who feels violated, and vows to stand behind any military action that takes the white terrorists off the face of the earth. And I am a loyal American who feels violated and worries that people who look and sound like me are all going to be blamed for this tragedy.

I'm a boy in New Jersey, waiting for a father who will never come home. And I'm a boy in a faraway country rejoicing in the streets of my village because someone has hurt the hated Americans. I am a terrorist whose hatred for America knows no limit, and I am willing to die to prove it and I am a terrorist simply Pfizer standing with all the enemies of American capitalism and imperialism, and I'm a master strategists for a terrorist group who plan this abomination. My heart is not yet capable of openness, tolerance and loving. I am a citizen of the world glued to my television set, fighting back my rage and despair at these terrible events. And I am a person of faith struggling to forgive the unforgivable searching for cat searching for compassion for all.

So the search for compassion, the motivation to find it and to keep it in the forest And to allow ourselves to see the complexity of it all. Rather than see something in black and white terms, I was also in thinking about this reminder, this poem by Naomi Shihab ne it's like pronounce your name. She's an American Egyptian. And it's called kindness, then maybe it could just as well be called compassion. Before you know what kindness really is, you must lose things. Feel the future dissolve in a moment, like salt in a weakened broth. What you held in your hand, when you counted and carefully saved, all this must go so you know how desolate the landscape can be between the regions of kindness. How you ride and ride thinking that bus will never stop. The passengers eating maze and

chicken will stare out the window forever. Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness, you must travel with an Indian in a white Poncho lies dead by the side of the road. You must see how this could be you how he too was someone who journey through the night with plans and the simple breath that kept him alive. Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside, you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing. You must wake up with sorrow. And you must speak to it till your voice catches the thread of sorrows, and you see the size of the cloth. Then it is only then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore. Only kindness that ties your shoes and send you out into the day to mail letters and purchase spread. Only kindness that rises its head from the crowd. The world to say, it is I you have been looking for and then goes with you everywhere, like a shadow or a friend. How many times have we experienced some great loss or suffering or made some big mistake in our lives. And it kind of makes us quite tender as a result. How many times has it made us more bitter, more hardened? The choice is ours to make which one we take. And I hope that we can always choose the kindness, the compassion, and to let the tragedies of the world our suffering and the sorrows. The real ourselves to feel the depth of it, so that we can feel the depth of compassion and kindness. So we leave those situations and kindness ties are shoes, kindness buys the bread. The kindness, compassion, love is something we carry with us. It's always close at hand, as she says. That goes with you everywhere like a shadow or a friend.

Last thing I'll read is my favorite quotes from Thomas Merton. Then it was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty have their hearts. The depths were neither sin nor desire can reach the person that each one is in God's eyes. If only they could see themselves as they really are. If only we could see each other that way, there would be no reason for war for hatred for cruelty. I suppose the big problem would be that we would fall down and worship each other.

So those are my thoughts for today, and still very much filled with the various events. And I hope that that sense of tenderness and kindness or compassion or vulnerability that I felt since September 11 remains with me. So any thoughts or questions anyone would like to ask? Morning comments. Yes,

compassion for

doing

terrorists. All that is

my training seems

to be where the, you know, the carts are really just like when you're reading you know Thomas Merton was saying, you know, I think that about

basic fields so that will just be perfect.

But I think

I get some anxiety or conflict over having some sort of intellectual understanding the theater right in front of me.

And I was planning

Yeah, I think it's been for me that I don't want to second guess myself or I don't want to have some fixed idea of how I'm going to respond in different situations, we'll find myself my commitment is to try to meet the situation with compassion, and, and with harmlessness. But I don't want to carry that with me as a kind of fixed policy either. But it's the commitment to try to find that way to work work towards that. The but the ability to put ourselves in other people's shoes is often quite helpful. It can often soften a lot of conflict. Maybe not when some terrorist has a gun to your face. But sometimes, in other situations, I've seen so many times where I've been involved or been somehow connected to conflict with a conflict was disarmed by listening to the other person. And I've seen it I've seen times where conflict has been exasperated, when people weren't willing to listen to each other, somehow the other party was discounted, or those people are crazy, you know, they don't know they're talking about let's not, let's not give them any creed, and just add the adds to the conflict, that adds to the tension. But if people really get listened to there's so many times that so many times that things change quite a bit. And I don't know about, you know, the actual terrorists, you know, that are these little cells that are operating, how to get to them by There's all these supporters of them. There's a whole, you know, whole communities of people who are there supporting them. And they're their children growing up in communities that, that there's tremendous suffering and poverty. And can we listen to those people? Can we listen to the terrorists of 20 years, who are going to be the potential terrorists for 20 years, and listen to their suffering and their need, and try to respond to that, if we just kind of, you know, make it very black and white, then, you know, it's not gonna be that helpful in the long term. But also to put ourselves in other people's shoes means to realize that there are different perspectives for looking at the same event. The, you know, from, from the point of view of our perspective, is, it's just, you know, it's a completely unfair bit forgivable, it's awful. What happened in New York City in Washington, DC, and I would never argue that it wasn't. But then to want to have to retaliate which is a cry in a rallying cry. America somehow retaliation. Retaliation doesn't necessarily, you know, it looks looks like it's, you know, Justice from our point of view. But from the, you know, the children of the people who who get killed because of retaliation feels like vengeance to them. And then their response is, well, anything, you know, my father was killed out of engines by America, I need to retaliate. And, you know, it goes on and on. And you see many places in the world where vengeance and retaliation just goes back and forth. And part of the reason it keeps perpetuating through time, is that from a perspective of both parties, they both they both see themselves as being right. They both have been wronged and they're righting a wrong and unless we can somehow see that there are different perspectives and that that in

some in some way, not to justify in some way, see the situation in it through the eyes of the other, that we're not going to lie Learn how to respond in a way that's probably helpful. Yeah.

situation that becomes a

little bit slower for

similar situation, something that's troubling me. And that I feel that I don't know why I feel annoyed all the flights that fly because I come from a place of love and war get quantified to be assigned in unity that some people are flying flags these days compassion Mooji installed over 6000 families in deaths. So I'm debating. I think sometimes if I don't find a role flag Am I being complicit in being quiet and not being a good Buddhist never quite a low flying flying life. Simple first of all having a symbol on my vehicle. So really trying to sort out, you know, I don't want to think by just being quiet. I'm allowing a certain kind of militaristic point of view to fail. So I think what happens is that you see signs of flag unity are transposed by militaristic world leaders into battles to really kind of figure out what to do, you know, I'm afraid we'll have to vote on someone to

some people can't be as yet.

So I'm just kind of trying to

sort out an issue of not being fearful of having a whole plan like I'm even guilty chicken May, you know, be out there with my truly simple pacifist beliefs and work and then fight Michael Flatley. Get the roadside fight, somebody fly the wolf calm

Repeat a bit. Patriotism is a very complex phenomena. And, and so many things are held underneath that there's something justified by it. And it's been said something like, you know that, you know, the strongest Bastion for patriotism is fascism or something like that you can justify a lot of the word patriotism, you know, that's not patriotic and so then you justify

the Germans during World War Two

it's very, very hard. You know, it's very hard because you, you know, always is very difficult for all of us is complete. There's complexity in the I find myself talking to a lot of people who kind of want peace and don't want war and they But it's you know, it's very as has been said, you know, this is a very different than fighting than being anti Vietnam War. You know, it's a whole different event and, and, you know, we certainly don't want to be in a situation of not defending ourselves or not bringing perpetrators to some kind of justice, and which requires the use of some gun. I mean, I can't imagine going in there with an arrest warrant to Afghanistan say, Please come with me. And so, you know, where's the line between, you know, a useful police action or useful defense action that requires when

it does, and, and, you know, retaliation and war and, and, you know, and it's not clear to me actually where that line should be some of it. Some of it, I think, resides in the rhetoric we use. And we have to be a little bit careful with the rhetoric because it can inflame things to Helen

frustrated

with your

supervisor to speak out say, I want to talk more. In the current situation, that's not covered. And it was an idea yesterday, I really feel a lot better. An idea of maybe what we should be speaking out for is for every dollar we spend, we should spend the dollar for compassion. We should spend the dollar figure

for every dollar we spend for extra policing.

Our condition may be

more election could be behind. I think a lot of people are feeling patriotic, but at the same time, also feeling a lot of additional connections.

I do the same sex is similar. The I don't think it for me it's not good enough to be against war. And, I mean, that's kind of I take her for granted. But to really go around, go around protesting war seems to me personally kind of flat. And I think what what I hope to see is a movement where we were movement that is offering an alternative. And that's what you're that's what you're suggesting. So we offer an alternative, say, you know, we're gonna march for, you know, for the Afghani refugee camps or you know, increasing the trying to develop Pakistan in some way or, you know, I don't know what to I don't have no idea what the right action should be. But rather than being against something before something, but in being being fought for something's very clear, that's an alternative to to war. And I think that it changes the nature of the discussion because it's not so black and white, then it's not for or against. It's, you know, you for this so for that gathering. Yeah, listen

To the G's.

Exactly. Yeah.

I was just saying that we could some people have said in your follow

through to the reputation that he has.

Yeah, I was thinking, the same thought. And I thought that when things get a little bit more settled and clear, because to me, it's not clear where things stand right now. So soon, but maybe at some point

like we did, the week after September 11. We had all the data baskets go toward the American Red Cross. Maybe in some time, it shouldn't be too soon, because then it becomes I felt it was too soon on the heels of what happened. Still but disrespectful of the tragedy that happened. We don't want me to shoot, you know, it's a real tragedy and people still hurting from it. But at some point, things become clear. Maybe we can do the same thing and the Sangha have done a basket and do exactly what Elizabeth is saying. Have it go towards that? The Afghani refugee camps or someplace like that where we can express an alternative response

about what happened, but isn't it now everybody is leaving that situation with anger and hatred is now in everybody's like building up more strategies and building up.

You know, just endless but the whole

middle, it feels like thousands and thousands of people are gearing up for like war. It just seems like, you know,

we're letting them take the initiative. And I don't know it seems like it'd be nice to be able to somehow engage in a situation where we get and get something

quick. This is the right time. I could speak for myself around this around this issue.

Yeah. Well, I see some positive things happening. We haven't done anything yet. And there are some voices out there expressing his point of view at the top. And

donkeys

think it's nice to wait a little bit because the rhetoric has been one thing. But the actions so far have, you know, you know, there haven't been any overt actions that it's mostly the rhetoric and what might happen to we're worried about. And each passing day I'm wondering, though, if actually isn't isn't some real wisdom behind the patience that the government is exhibiting? Maybe there is maybe there isn't but

to raise the point of saying, on the site event, reaction and I decided to actually action because this is what I did when I got back from jogging or I wanted to sit down and write group letters to Congress people that

I think they need to do next. I agree.

What Elizabeth said to the question I have is, when are the Afghan people suffering? Answer that questions as we're suffering.

They were suffering two months ago to so the

Yeah, you know, the thing that I struggle with on this is being able to hold it off. Even though I hear the solutions of you know, I've seen the emails Obama was buttering the idea that somehow you know, interact with me Afghani population and I, you know, here I work for the government. So I certainly hear the other side in terms of there's a lot of patriotism and a lot of people waving slides and things and, and the thing that I keep looking at is the fact that I don't think either solutions really are the solution that we should be looking at, I think we really need to look at what the deeper issues are, you know, it's not just about the app, and it's about our, you know, how we relate in the world. Now America comes forward in the world. And I think those issues of like, really being able to, to look at how our actions,

you know, actually

feed into this system and feed into the terrorists without, you know, I mean, I personally lost them one incident in the tragedy and so I had a very personal connection to it. But interestingly enough, her family, her closest family are totally for not retaliating in terms of, you know, war, but so how do we get home We get down to the really deeper issues that and I think that's where our practice and our Samba Buddhism in general, has the place. You know, I think that's our responsibilities. I think it's fine to support the people that are affected by it to, you know, to do all these actions, but we're really going to make a difference. And looking beyond, you know, what's needed immediately.

And so there's two, there's both the social level, the cultural level, the political level of our country and economical level. There's also the very personal level in ourselves and in a sense, in which I think the greatest contribution Buddhism has to offer is not any great wise analysis of the political situation, but rather is the careful study of the forces of greed, hate and delusion, within the individual, the attachment to self and the way the attachments to self self clinging is one of the important roots that gives birth to violence in the world. Every every act of violence can be said or divorce perpetuated by individual people who make decisions. And those individual people are operating on on some of the same forces that are operating in us. And so, the real contribution Buddhism has to make, I feel less to do with offering a very powerful practice that helps us get into the root of the very personal causes for these things. That's my take, whether Buddhism as a religion is supposed to have response, you know, beyond that, you know, I don't know, I haven't seen a lot of wise, you know, Buddhist political theory.

I visited Pakistan about 10 years ago to see the early Buddhist ruins in the swan Valley, and is the region isn't very female friendly. And I visited some of the towns where they were selling rocket launchers in order and children selling bullets and they're all test driving these things and I had to

leave the Town Car Because the sound of gunfire was so upsetting, and I felt I felt that sense of we and them being so different.

And the poverty in the area and in Afghanistan, it just it doesn't make any sense to bomb people who don't have a clue what they're doing. They see us as being so really happy so much. How do we ended up with all the goods

that China was giving her last weekend and he was saying the best way to fight enemies is not to have enemies and again to look at the root cause that

makes sense. Sorry.

To voice over to one of those that reading

the event that auto cities are trying to plant a tree and it's happening a week from Tuesday

morning apartment house, no.

But it made me I wonder if that's something that we do

and

how to organize that for maybe that would be the first thing to do at the

event.

The original technology called me by my family came to

attention because I was listening to the tape in the car.

And I was at the event in which the tape was made, of course the people

wondering if there's metaphor here, we can listen to the oil we get our food, we can just be some bathroom. So take that picture

so

One of the things I've been trying to do is kind of as a teacher for our community in this kind of role that I have is to try to gauge kind of the process that the group process of how we're responding to

September 11, and how to deal with it and, and my kind of approach, My idea is that the slow process of a long time and there's different elements different times to address and deal with some people as individuals, some people are ahead and some people are behind, and other you know, other way and other ways of responding and reacting. The most important point I wanted to get across today was probably I was talking to myself is a tremendous appreciation in need and desire for compassion and kindness. And that it's not always easy to have those But there can be a dedication to trying to keep those doors open. And to try to find a way sort of compassion becomes the wellsprings for how we go through our lives.

So

in a couple in a minute, we'll stop for our potluck those of you who stay and if you don't, if you don't, didn't bring anything please stay anyway if you'd like to stay and since it is the potluck day, that perhaps before you leave the room here just before our break here, if you can turn to one or two people who are near you who you least know and, and just introduce yourself and just say hello so people, so there's some some connection that'd be very nice. Yes.

inside or out here.

So I guess I want to say hello to someone and then we can all go to our next event. Thank you