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SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

Good evening, everyone. And yesterday someone said that any people who come on Thursdays don't know who I am. And last time I was here on Thursday, I didn't introduce myself. So I thought probably I should introduce myself. I'm Gil Fronsdal. And I've been teaching meditation here on the peninsula. And for this group for about 12 years. Mostly I teach for the Sunday and Monday classes that we have. Can you hear me okay everyone. Okay, okay.

And what's been on my mind for for some time is the topic of desire. And probably all of Buddhism can be considered a meditation on Desire. It's all about understanding our desires. And even though Buddhism has sophisticated philosophy and beliefs and faiths, all kinds of range of practices, it could probably without with justice, be reduced to a study on the issue of desire. I believe that probably everything you need to understand about liberation of Buddhism spiritual path that the Buddha had to offer can be understood from our by investigating understanding they will, our designers and so I want to kind of just talk on the topic for a while. And my my own meditation on the topic. I want to start with a story or kind of story kind of when I was younger, in my teens and early 20s. I used to read a lot than we resort absorbed in books. It's hard to sometimes get my attention because I was going reading all the time. And I enjoyed a lot of walking into bookstores. And what I found that when I left bookstores, I felt awful. I felt kind of going into the bookstores, I felt this, you know, this joy, anticipation of what I might find there, the desire to find another great book, interesting topics to explore. And when I left that you'll often feel drained and feel exhausted and tense, maybe a little bit headachy and frazzled. So I paid some attention to this. And I realized the reason for this was that I would go into bookstores, and then have a desire feast desires to just take over because there's all these books that I wanted. And you know, a lot of individual books in the bookstore so you can go through and just, well, that's a good one. I want to I want that. I want that. I want that. And I usually wouldn't buy a book because For various reasons, including I didn't have any money when I was young. So the idea of buying a book was kind of, you know, I'd rather go to the library or something. But I would just see all these titles and then look at it and look at the title page or whatever. And I want that I want that I want that. And the

accumulation of all those kind of constant desire and clinging, wanting, wanting, wanting, was exhausting for me, and then leave the bookstore exhausted. That whole story is, in a sense, a little kind of nutshell of what the Buddha had to say about the necessarily desire, but a certain kind of desire. A kind desire that is characterized by having some element of grasping as part of it, that is exhausting. And that brings a lot of suffering into our lives. And in fact, the Buddha emphasized that the cause of suffering causes our individual suffering suffering, we can do something about the suffering at the practices really trying to address not all pains but the human being but suffering and we can take some responsibility for is that suffering that arises because of our grasping. The word that he chose was not grasping was the word thirst. We use that word in English. It's the word in Indian language. Tongue now, which means thirst. And in English, we use a word. Also, sometimes your woman has really strong desire, if thirsty, you know, Thirsty, thirsty for blood. And then especially was the first one that came to my mind. You know, so you explain what you really want to fight. Maybe somebody needs really eager for a fight. What does it mean thirsty for a fight? Let's go, let's go in the alley. And so to say, a thirsty, a certain kind of desire that kind of grips us and becomes very powerful, kind of passionate or kinda like imagine if you're really thirsty and parched and he has kind of the desire that really goes into I want this now. And the Buddhist questions that kind of designer creates All of the suffering that is optional human life. And so how do we kind of suddenly have an echo? Do you hear it too? But you're okay with the sound? Maybe it's just me echoing here okay. So, if you have trouble with a sound speakers Raise your hand. So that so one of the interesting things to study is the cost of desire, of having desire having grasping desire. And certainly they can be exhaustion is happened to me in this little story of bookstores, but they can there's a lot of costs in pursuing desire at times of grasping desire and immediate desire. craving.

One of the interesting ones is it lean lends itself to always be externally focused, in the sense that you're always looking at an object that you want or you want changed. It's innocent enough in itself but for example if I want this bell because it's a nice Bell makes a nice sound I could have a very innocent desires be nice to have to sit home and do my morning sittings. I could wring it that that's an innocent desire. But if I grasp you know, easy commies and go desires are dime a dozen. And so it's easy for me you know to see them arise and pass away usually, but sometimes you like a grip by a desire or the bell I gotta have that bell it's so pleasant. It's so wonderful so cool. You know better meditations at home and be really dynamite if I just good meditation Bell and, and I wonder who I can talk to at the center to get it. I wonder, you know, maybe I can buy it. Maybe I could, you know, no one's looking. I could swipe it and maybe, you know, the mind gets gripped by the desire and the desire in a sense as gripped the mind, you know, is leading the mind around. The desire is fueling the minds thoughts and concerns and, and you're not in charge anymore. You've lost charge of your mind. You'll mastery of your own life, when desires leading you around by the nose, and all your thoughts and your ideas. So

so when you But the interesting thing is when I want the bell, I'm posting focusing on something on an object, the bell. All we could do in meditation practice or in any kind of mindfulness practice is train ourselves to turn the attention away from the object of what we want. Instead, feel the desiring feel like to be human being who has desire coursing through your body, your system. Now when you're looking

at the object, and really want it is often sometimes the seduction of pleasure. So it can be very pleasant sometimes to want to I know sometimes it's very powerful. The desire is powerful enough, you can't even sleep at night, as I've had experiences, you know, random toss And turning because my, my passion was so strong for the woman next door and the other room, you know, she left the door open. What do I do? And, and so but but you know the focus is external can often be external. And what happens with focus external is we lose touch with ourselves. So you might be innocent enough with one desire. But it's easy for us instead to have many desires in a row and spend a day pursuing all kinds of desires. And in doing that losing touch with what who we are subjectively what's really going on within us. And so training and mindfulness is not to reject desire. Rather to train yourself to turn away from the object to really honestly feel what's going on in here. One of the things you'll find is the cost of having grasping desire, you actually feel alienation from yourself. Sometimes, especially if it's chronic and regular. One of the interesting things that happens to people sometimes is that if you're on kind of a roll with a lot of desires, it might be kind of pleasant, the seduction, the fantasy of the desire, but it's unpleasant, the kind of way in which we lose touch with ourselves. And people are chronically in desire mode, are increasingly alienated from themselves lost touch with themselves, which makes them feel uncomfortable and easy. And one of the reasons human beings grasp is to try to avoid feeling discomfort. We feel often we feel often somebody so we want something to satisfy us. And so there's a wonderful paradox of the desiring. There's a habit a lot of we do all the time. alienation is alienates us from ourselves which makes us feel bad Feeling bad makes us want to desire more to make us feel better. This deduction of it'll make, it'll make me feel better. I saw this very dramatically. When I had this health problem I had a wheat allergy for about seven years. And one of the characteristics sometimes food allergies apparently certainly was with me was that you crave the food you're allergic to. So I would feel kind of I worked at the bakery. So I would, I would, I would crave you know, as soon as I feel in whatever reason I really feel bad or whatever, I would eat some bread and then I feel bad. So I wanted to kind of comfort myself. So my desire was to take I want to comfort food, which was I love begets rotary Tassajara Bakery is a great bread. And so this wonderful French bread baguettes stuff, and then I feel worse. And then I want to come from myself more so I'd eat more bread and I feel worse. It is awful spiral. I didn't know it was happening yet. I didn't know what the cause of my allergy what the problem was. I just knew Actually, I remember walking through San Francisco, thinking I needed to be institutionalized. Because like I couldn't even think like, you know, someone asked me something, I don't think I would have been able to answer it because I was just so numbed out by this allergy. So I mean, that's with food, but it can happen without food, you know, that, that we kind of lose touch with ourselves. Also, the interesting thing about wanting is generally more in general, most of the time, when you want something, you're usually future oriented. It might be future in a second. It might be in a minute, it might be in a day, it might be in a year, which like in something, I want something and I want you know, it's we're focusing on how we're going to get it in the future. And as we do that, we lose touch with the presence That's one of the costs of desiring it's too easy to lose touch with not only ourselves, but just the present holding the richness of the present moment.

Another cost of desires frustration is that you don't if your desire is unfulfilled and you really have this neediness, execute executed desire, and your desire fulfilled, you feel frustrating. It could be worse. netic be angry or furious. And there's a cost to that. And it can be a setup for anger and frustration could be pursuing desire blindly unrealistically.

Another cost of desire is when the grips of a too powerfully we don't make sound judgments. We don't usually think we know we don't have wise decisions but when we want when we need. I made you know, many people have seen that with food right? You see this wonderful Food you know used to being served to dinner or whatever and you say wow you know mashed potatoes I love mashed potatoes, you know be really satisfying to have just one other helping us great mashed potatoes with butter on top and, and you know it actually is you know just desire and yearning it is actually pleasant to eat it until you You're so heavy you know you spend the next two hours and why did I do that? Somehow you sometimes our best interest is not served by that part of the mind that's consumed by desire. We don't sometimes don't make wise decisions and other cost of desire is sometimes in this Buddhist language. In the Buddha said I think or is this the Buddhist language is it said you become you can become ugly. I think what this means is that it's not pleasant to be around someone who just kind of want to want want want want. I know it My son is that way sometimes. And sometimes like if you want to Yeah, give me a break. You know, just I have this, I have that I want that, this, that this, just understand how anybody can have so many desires, except sometimes I look at my own mind and then I say, Oh, I'm just not vocal about it. And what is interesting is my son is that when he was two, once he seemed something like sometimes, like, old desire machine just wants stuff. And sometimes he could have desire without knowing what it was he wanted. So for example, I held him once in a walk into remote holding and he had no idea what was behind him. But he went like this to grab it. He really wanted it whenever he was there. He wanted to have you know, it sounded like his, you know, wanting with a blank check on you know, unspecified. One thing is, he knew he was wanting momentum of one thing. That's another cost of the wanting if the whining is chronic, The desire is chronic, even if it's healthy desire, there can be healthy desires. If it's chronic, it's a regular repetitive over and over and over again, the mind gets into a rhythm into momentum of wanting desire of having doing that kind of activity of desiring. And so, say that every possible desire you have has been fulfilled with the mind is still not know and you're looking for something to desire. Because it just wants to feel that, you know, that need that that momentum, that activity of the mind, which will become habitual. And I see it, I see it myself, sometimes when I, if I'm at home, and I'm doing a lot of activities at home, like cleaning, you know, to all the different chores at home, you know, trying to get through it quickly and doing a lot. inefficiently do it quickly. No, do it mindfully. There's a kind of subtle desire that goes into why is it clean, when to finish when to do this and then and finally stop and might sit down on the couch or something and there's just momentum still with me sometimes. It's hard to stop. I'm doing hammer home improvement these days. You know, and, and trying to actually doing some little sheet rocking and stuff in my basement. And, and I feel like this mode of wanting to do things, sometimes it's hard for me to want to stop because I just kind of driven by, you know, by the activity. When I was in my early 20s I went to, I was hitchhiking. And I was picked up by this little older man. It was and I was traveling, it was a long hiking trip. And so we started talking about our lives. I

started telling him the things I wanted to do with my life. And I wanted to study Zen Buddhism and I wanted to study Sufiism and want to study it Kido and I wanted to study golfing and I want to study Gestalt. And I wanted to study, organic farming, I wanted to study and learn carpentry and I wanted to, you know, and I was going through the litany of things that I wanted to do. And at some point, the man turned to me and said, You have a lot of desires, don't you? And, you know, that kind of caught my attention and kind of like, I woke me up and realized, you know, probably, I don't really have enough in life, enough years of my life to fulfill all those desires. And

so that kind of kind of started paying attention a little bit more to my desires then. And some years later, reflecting back at this, telling him all the things that I wanted to do with my life, I realized that there was a there was a desire in the conversation that I hadn't realized at the time. And that was his I wanted to somehow impress him. I want somehow create an impression for him. By beings by Creating an identity from making an identity for myself through what I wanted. I was like, I'm really cool, because I want to do Zen Buddhism, right, you should know that that's what I want. I didn't know anything about Zen Buddhism, you know, but I wanted to know about it. And that made me cool, right, put me in the right camp, whatever, you know, and I wanted him to kind of admire me a little bit. And so it's how I did my self identity myself, you know, I was trying to paint a picture of who I was. So there's wanting to be a certain person in the eyes of this other person to understand this. This is something you're familiar with at all. So I had these other desires, but I was using those desires to fulfill this more fundamental desire of self identity of being someone. Why was that desire there? Sometimes it can be there because of fear. We're afraid of being judged. One of my issues no younger was I really wanted people to like me, it was fear. You know, the reverse was, I was The fear of people not liking me. And I was driven by this trying to make people like me. And until I until I just got exhausted from the effort and realized that that just wasn't worth it. Because why should I want Why should everybody in the what should every every human being have to like me? I mean, it's an okay to have some people not like me. I mean, why should I, you know, sacrifice my whole life trying to manipulate, negotiate and kind of create a certain persona so everyone likes me rather than just be myself. Turns out people like me more myself than I am when I'm trying to get them to like me. But so that, you know, that was partly partly what's going on. Partly it can be the desire for security, or the fears, you know, the fear that's connected to that. These can be very fundamental kind of existential desires that we feel driven by it. Sometimes we don't see it. They're operating and kind of subtle level. Like for example is telling us this this pic guy picked In the up, you know, my desires what I want to do with my life, I didn't took many years to see the underlying desire, we're trying to be a certain kind of person. And there's a cost even when you can't see it. It's kind of subconsciousness sense might take a while to see it, it can have a tremendous cost on the psyche. It can be exhausting and tiring, put a lot of stress on the system on you. It can cause the all the things I talked about the alienation. alienation is very interesting, because that's more subtle kind of desiring comes from a deeper part within us, which is a deeper part of it within us is the place where if we're going to really feel at home, in this world or with ourselves, we have to somehow access that the place, which oddly enough is also the place that feels vulnerable and feels insecurity and all these kinds of issues. So we have to learn to bring our attention back and really see in Be honest about these things. Very, very honest. Not

because it's moralistic, and you're good or bad because of it, because that's kind of the access point, the entry point to some of the deeper, you know, areas of freedom within our psyche and well being and happiness and love and compassion. Our desires operate so subtly. I was I was coming over here this evening, and I was thinking, I'll talk about desire. And I got in my car. And I didn't even notice that I had the desire to turn the radio until I was reaching over to turn it on. That'd be desire there first, right? And I didn't catch that desire. I knew I was reaching over to turn the radio. Is that subtle, right? We did that level, but it's more subtle. It's a circle has desires operating in the thoughts that you pursue. You know, your thinking is is manipulated by your desires and desires operate in what we pursue in the thinking world.

Oh, my wants I want I want to pursue that thought that's a pleasant thought. That's a self aggrandizing thought, I think I'll go with that. And then lots of meditators who, sometimes on retreat to struggle for a couple of days in retreat, and then they'll come to interviews and say, they'll say I struggled. But then I had this really great fantasy. And I just went with it because I felt like I needed a vacation or I deserved it or, you know, whatever, you know, they come off they go because it's, you know, it's a takes them away from their own deep process of what's going on.

And it's fascinating in meditation in particular, the mind gets a little bit quiet, to begin tracking how desires operate in the mind itself, you know in the subtlety, the thoughts in the stream what we think about and what we pick up and there's a saying in Buddhism, very graphic saying that grasping or does this kind of grasping desire is like licking the honey of the edge of a razor. Honey is really sweet and wonderful, right? But so there's this double edge thing with candy with with grasping desire, pursue this wonderful thing, but there's a cost. So part of what mindfulness practice helps us do is to understand the cost of having a desire of desiring. But maybe I need to back up a little bit because someone will probably ask all desires bad all desires harmful are all desires have a cost like this. And that's not the case. Word desire is kind of in Buddhism there's a word like for example, Chanda, Pali. In Buddhism we can take desire to be a neutral word world word. It's kind of an umbrella word. And within the word desire, desire is an umbrella where that covers a wide spectrum of different kind of motivations that go from one end to the extreme become addiction or craving or grasping or thirsting or compulsion or givenness. Or what are some other juicy words like that. Some people would put passion there, but that's problematic because we have such a wide range of what we mean by passion. And, and then on the other end of this spectrum are things like aspiration and wish inclination of the mind. There can be wholesome desire, and there can be it can be helpful desire, desire, that doesn't cost us we suffering and there's desires that do cause more suffering. And part of what mindfulness practice is helping us do is to separate out those desires which are useful and helpful and appropriate from those which are tinge or overwhelmed by this grasping the contraction and tightening of neediness of grasping. So, you know, many of us is, as I said, desires are a dime a dozen, some desires are quite innocent. In relatively you want to go to the bathroom, there's a desire to find the toilet. Maybe that's more like thirsting so if you're really desperate, but but you know, nothing wrong with wanting to find a bathroom, nothing wrong to want to eat if you're hungry, I think want to say a nice word to a friend who's having a hard day. There's a lot of beautiful things there's compassion is a

really beautiful aspect of human human heart. And compassion is expressed in a particular kind of desire, desire for someone else's welfare. So to differentiate between those that suffer With that desire which is suffering, producing that which is not very important. And then to be wise about that desire, which is suffering, producing the order to make that distinction. Again, mindfulness is very helpful. In particular, it's very helpful to practice mindfulness of the body, to pay attention to what is going on in your body, when you have a desire. If it's a helpful, wholesome desire, you probably feel very differently in your body than if it's an unhelpful one. Which suffering produce one, because one hand one hand, you'll feel a suffering, you feel the contraction, a tightness, you feel the nine you feel the yearning, you'll feel the compulsion, the demand. Sometimes desires can have tremendous authority in our minds. In a very powerful sense of compulsion, it has to be right now. If you try not to follow through in the desire, you feel the suffering there, you feel the, you know, the tension, you know, the angst or whatever all this feeling. They're in traditional traditional Buddhist monastic training. They use this, in a sense, they use frustration, as a tool to help us understand ourselves. If you have free rein to shop until you drop, to just do whatever you want to, you know, follow all your desires, you're not you're not too likely to understand what's really going on with your desires. But if you're not allowed to desire, if you're not allowed to fulfill your desires, and act on them, then it kind of comes right up to your face, you see, you know, and then you have to grapple sometimes with the passion and the craving and the compulsion. And really, you know, sometimes we can feel, you know, struggle and biblical proportions dealing with it.

And, but the but the reason for that struggle is to find a level of self mastery, self compassion, self control, to enter in a meal to enter into that depth of our being, which is not accessible when we're in the surface of life, which is often where these grasping desires reside

so what one of the really great things to do this is a practice I've recommended many times is a practice called writing out a desire Find yourself a really good desire we don't find it but when you when you have some really strong thing that you really want you really compulsion in the greater the compulsion The greater the addiction The better you know, but I guess you shouldn't go looking for it but wait until it comes you know use but when it can be ready. You know, the passion you know the desire to smoke or drink or to you know, something that just you got to do or you're going to die. And when you feel that there sits still go find a chair because when you cushion meditate or something, just go sit really still be really still and don't act on it. And it's Dad, feel what's going on inside? Feel the physical sensations, the restlessness, the power, what's going on with this desire, the sense of compulsion, the inner voices, maybe the lawyers come, all your lawyers come, you know, come out. Have you noticed this? I know that there's this I have desire sometimes. And it's company by a team of lawyers. That is trying to explain, you know, you know why this is, you know, why this particular desire is ethical. You know, I know it's not ethical normally, but the lawyers explained, well, you know, if it's done this way, in this way, you know, that right? loophole. Yeah. And so you have to be very careful with lawyers. But the great thing about lawyers when they come along, is you always have the veto power. So you don't have to worry too much about them. You have to remember your veto power. And, but to write out to write out the desire, don't give in and you must feel like you're gonna die because

sweaty Some people you know if it's really powerful addiction just okay. And it might build and build and build and you might read the screen. you're committed to not moving, not acting on it just it's like riding the rodeo except the outside, you look like you're completely still on the inside, you feel like you're on a wild horse, right? And then sooner or later, that desire will weaken and pass away. It's like this way break sometimes and then it passes.

And when it passes, you learn that you can write it out. You learn that you have the ability not to listen to the authority of this desire. You learn that you are not the desire, you survived the desire. You didn't die with this. Passing in the desire and I've heard people say they feel very empowered by doing this practice of writing their desire and then in the future becomes easier because they know they've been into it I just have to hold you know hold on to the reins and it'll you know pass the time and you know some if some desire is maybe not that powerful that you feel like a rodeo, but you know probably find something. Remember horns is this comes to mind now. I visited a Gary monasteries, a Buddhist monastery up in Ukiah. And the tradition the Buddhist monastery is that when you come to the monastery, you bring an offering of food for the monastic people living there. And I went with a group of friends and everybody brought food I quit the lunch like was a potluck right? So it's like a potluck it because the monks don't bring anything. They just eat. And so you have an offer you offer this food. So I was so everybody you know it's a long drive up there and, and all my friends brought some fresh food with it was just been cooked or something and I really wanted to bring some food to to these monks and it was a wintertime I think and I knew that they don't have a lot of visitors in the wintertime and they're kind of dependent on people giving them food so they can eat so I wanted to you know, give them a supply of food to last you know, when we weren't there and after the weekend during the week and so I brought dry goods beans and rice and spaghetti and things like that. things that weren't ready to eat that particular morning when we were eating our lunch. So you know, I made my eBay my offerings to the kitchen and then we went into I sat sat in the dining area where they were going to start had this ritual of eating the food they've been brought for the day. And I had no idea the custom that they were about to start and the custom was they would bring out from the kitchen, each plate. Each dish that someone had brought, and they announced who brought it And I got the just very quickly that all my friends were going to be named, but I wasn't. And the monks and nuns there, they didn't know didn't know who would offer food and it wasn't like you put it in their hands. You just took it to the kitchen to the people who work in the kitchen who are not monastics. So I said, you know, I'm going to look really cheap or thoughtless, you know, and, and, you know, I didn't bring anything for them, and you know, they're getting all this credit and, Oh, woe is me, you know, and, you know, this is terrible, my self identity and my self worth and my friends and you know, and I have this compulsion in me to kind of say, raise my hands up, but but I brought food to it just for another day. So, but I wrote, I can tell you, I wrote out the desire, I saw it and I thought about this is ridiculous, you know, and be caught up in my self image like this. I know that my best intention was to offer them food and help them out and I don't have to get credit for that. I just know that they're gonna be fed, I'd be happy. They don't have to know that I was going abroad it. So, you know, I talked myself you know, calm myself down but desire. So imagine that this is, you know, a little bit familiar to some of you human beings are should be we shouldn't be called human beings we should be called human desire links

and because it's such a, you know, pervasive aspect of human life. So what do you think of that? Do you have any questions or comments? Do your own desire stories? Yes.

stories

all the time.

My kids do the same thing that you started now.

I'm trying to figure out what the wise thing is to do my fault. My son is four. And so the last is more today. I'd happened just a while ago. And, and he said, You know, I want Can I have that? He said, and he kept saying, Can I have that kind of wasn't first I didn't answer it, you know. Then I said, I said to him, you have a lot of desires today. And he said, Yeah, I know, I'm gonna have it. It's what I was trying to do was very, very matter of factly without putting too much of a weight on it, just saying, just kind of mirroring back what he was doing. So you could see, I've done that in the past, and that's him. Sometimes it's helped, where he sees what's going on, because sometimes it's hard for the child be mindful themselves, what's happening. And so we kind of vary without, hopefully without any judgment or a lot of acceptances. Oh. And I heard of a mother who recently heard of a mother who was going down the supermarket aisle, with a child in the cart. The Kairos child was I want that Reaching out to grab, you know, you have to know how to do the cart right in the middle of the aisles is just out of the reach, right? I want that I want that. And, and the mother was a matter of factly naming each product of that spaghetti and that's just naming it. And so it's a way of kind of, it's a way of meeting, hopefully we're meeting this child recognizing what the child was doing. Not giving into it, but also somehow meeting a child there in a way that is respectful. Other than that, sometimes I've tried to talk to him about you know, in Why do you have all these desires? And he says, I don't know. And sometimes I've been quite firm and said, you know, absolutely not, you can't have that. That's enough now. And sometimes we, you know, said, You know, I explained to him beforehand, you know, we're going into a store, we're going through a situation he starts to ask me for things and I say, Well, you know, you could have one thing and you know, you seem to want a lot of different things here. You can take one of them home. You have to choose. And so he understands he has one, you know, he, that's the deal. And he goes to Sometimes he'll tell you take one thing and they said, I guess I don't want that I want this one. And that gives him you know, I like that. I like that because it starts giving him some sense of being able to choose among his desires, it doesn't, it doesn't have to fill all of them. And the other thing that I've done is sometimes when there's a lot of desire going on, just you know, kind of just try, you know, just seems crazy. I recognize that probably there's some other needy as it isn't that he needs to have those things, he needs something else he needs, maybe he needs love and ease, contact needs attention. And so then I'll I'll just, I'll just, you know, somehow, you know, provide that for him to change the context, you know, give them a hug or do something which is you know, more loving and, and we could because it's another need has. That's one of the interesting things about desire is that sometimes desire is a manifestation of a deeper need. Maybe a health maybe unhealthy is the right

word here, but a deeper, deeper need that needs addressing somehow. And if we're just staying on the surface of, you know, wanting, wanting wanting, for example, you might want to ice cream. Why do you want ice cream might just be because it's hot day and who knows why. But it could be because you're feeling lonely or disoriented. And so it's a way of kind of comforting. And the real need is not for ice cream. The real need is somehow addressed the issue of loneliness. And so part of what we do in mindfulness is that's one of the reasons why it's so valuable to use mindfulness to turn the attention away from the thing that we desire and, and feel what this feels like to desire. Feel the feel the desiring. Because that gives you that gives you an opportunity to look behind the desiring to what might be fueling it. And then really address that, if you don't address that, it's going to be there, you know, you might have the ice cream, and loneliness is still there after the ice cream is worn off. And then you want, you know, something else to feel that same hole. So children can be that way too. So sometimes I try to tune into that with my son and try to then change the content or offer him that kind of, in sometimes it's a matter of limit setting, you know, and I'm saying I'm going into detail with this because some of you maybe don't care, you're already wiser than I am about this and have your own things to say. Because you raise kids, but often our mind is like a two year old or four year old. So everything you've learned about raising children is appropriate probably for your own mind.

And, and one of the things about one of the things is, sometimes you just very clear its limits settings necessary. And I was really surprised when I learned how important limit setting was for my son because I didn't think I could My whole adult life, these Buddhist circles where the whole point was Be kind to people, you know, kind of nice, you know, and consider it for them, you know, whenever and, and sometimes that's what you want to do with a kid. He was going to say, No, you can't do that no way, you know, and, and then he goes into temper tantrum. You know, he looks at me like a, like, like, um, you know, Pol Pot or something, you know, it's like, I feel awful. Let's look I get you know, he's, you know, like, public enemy number one. And but you have to hold my ground say no. And it amazed me was that 30 seconds later, he's completely relaxed and at ease completely, if he needed to have that limit set in order to feel safe and secure and know that the world has some order to it and some, you know, and, and he's going to find it, but he really what he wants really what he's asking sometimes is a really strong no and sometimes that's true. The mind, sometimes a wise thing to do in the mind is to say, No, I'm not gonna do that anymore. I'm not going to follow that. So those are some things I'm struggling to learn.

Yes.

motivation.

Yeah, but motivation is a neutral word. So, you know, you can be motivation is it kind of, I think a motivation is a little bit deeper than desire, what's their motivation for that desire? And so, motivation might be fear, or it might be you know, feeling empty hole. So this might be my vocabulary. I think a motivation has been the deeper roots for the desire. And it can be wholesome. It can be

unwholesome, it can be, you know, you can be motivation is to go out and harm someone. Give a jabbing save Java champion, comment, comment. That's the comment that's really going to hurt them. Or the motivation can be to be saving, make that a kind word that's really going to help them feel better. Or motivation, I think, because I think of the motivate motivations being a little bit more deep the deeper than just the thing that we want. I think that's very important element of Buddhist practice is to start learning to pay attention to the motivations of what we want to say, where our desires are, what we know. And I, when I was at, Zen student, one of my Zen teacher said, said, one of the ways of understanding Zen Buddhist practice is in a nutshell is it involves a purification of our intention, looking understanding our intention, studying it, getting to know it, purifying it, refining it, following it, you know, the track of it is our motivation sometimes there there are layers of motivation. So you don't just settle for the you know, now I understand it because you understand particular aspect of it be good deeper and deeper and deeper. Is that why? Just the question? Well, the question comes up because motivation is really necessary when? possible, right? You got to be motivated to lose, right? That's, that's a positive motivation, right? That was called that necessarily desire to sound like I say, yeah, motivations a deep fryer on site, but it can become completely neurotic and completely beautiful. Yeah, there's a word of ambition. One of the interesting questions that's often asked is, is people ask about something usually about anger, but sometimes about ambition. For example, what's wrong with that? It gets me out of bed because we do things and accomplish things, as if accomplishing things is the you know, the definition of successful life and it's quite wonderful and very happy. Sometimes to accomplish things. But at least his suggestion in Buddhism is that the deep wellsprings of joy in life can come or unconditioned don't require the fulfillment of certain conditions. They're inherent in who we are. It's like in a kind of like our essence is already joyful and happy at peace, kind of like that. And so we do is we learn how to touch and recognize the inherent sense of well being, that's kind of our nature. And that's more important than the feeling of well being and come from accomplishments. So one of one one way this is carrot, one character characterization expression of this is contentment. And contentment, I think, is a very important beautiful part of being a human being. And then people say, well, content means you'd be kind of a non entity means like, you don't have any ambition or can do anything in life and you know, you need to be really ambitious. Is nirodha accomplish something? I'm so sad when I hear that because there can be really beautiful motivations arising out of a contented state. And part of why it's so beautiful what one of the beautiful things about it is that when you act from a contented state, when you have a desire from intended state, you're not trying to fulfill yourself, you're not trying to get happy, through the fulfillment of the desire, the desire you already content, so you do it maybe quite strongly and intently, but your happiness is not at stake with it. So it's possible and to do with me without expectation without demand without even disappointment in some deep, deep way, because your happiness is not rooted dependent on that accomplishment.

Yes, just

things with your own son. I've just spent several days with my grandsons that are approximately the same age And I find another way that they operate that is similar to the way my mind validates that if they desire one gummy or a taco and I brought a bag of gummy worms, which they see the

first time they want one cookie or

but the second time they wanted to go anywhere, and I think left alone we would have gotten up to a bag at a time. And I think that's the way the mind often works to that.

If you don't keep the desire under control at the beginning, it just gets bigger and bigger and bigger

candy. Yeah. The scene that my son also and sometimes I think what's going on is he's testing me

to see how many gummy worms are

working I'll kind of get away with here.

And I'm watching myself wanting to be loved and giving them to gummy worms. But

isn't that a great system that they had desires and their desires met your desires and you know, sometimes Just the whole behind this whole, you know, way, the world is a huge, you know, huge you know, interaction of desires, you know, our desire, this desire is bumping into that person's desires or, you know, you know, so really amazing. And so you know, this expression in love makes the world go round. I think it's a Miss Miss, I think it's a miss. Not quite right. I think it's desire that makes the world go round. That's the fuel. And often we confuse love with his desire. Well, that's an interesting one. The confusion of the love and desire and that's one of the sad costs of desire is that when we have those two entangled, we lose sight of really beauty of love. Love in and of itself, doesn't require anything. And often we we yoke it when it's tied up with our desires. And it's, you know, it's kind of sometimes it's quite sad because we lose touch with what's most beautiful

and fun which might be similar to the one Innovation ambition. And I

wonder if you could speak to

like if one has a desire to live with a certain lifestyle

in a way that's more compatible with,

you know, their own nature. But that's hard to bring that about. And so it turns into that grasping. Does that make sense?

Let me see if I can show you saying what if someone has a desire for a more healthy way of living,

just living somewhere else or doing something else?

Was he a lot of healthy desires can become unhealthy? It really depends not that sometimes it doesn't depend on the desire itself depends on the way the desires held. So the example I use when I teach a children's program is about trying to teach kids about desire, right? And so I say that if you have this beautiful Bell, and you grasp it really hard, you don't have a nice sound. But if you hold it lightly Give a nice sound. So that way so even the even really beautiful desires and appropriate desires, maybe it's very appropriate to choose a new life a new direction, whatever. And, but then if it if we're grasping on to it, or we're using it also to try to fulfill other needs that are not so healthy, then it can get a headache pretty quickly. Yes.

He was just talking about because I quit my job.

I didn't want to do that. And I started going to school and then I saw all these different things I wanted to do. And then I ended up in a state of confusion.

And I just clicked

I couldn't figure out what I was there for.

And it got really weird.

mean clarity, I didn't know how to add don't want to get clarity around the situation.

It was as I did, that one's kind of in college was I quit. I didn't want anything enough. I wanted a lot of different things, but nothing really strongly enough, I thought, I'm going to pursue a college degree, I should really should be really strong, really strong kind of wish. And really feel right. So I left for two years. And it took me two years to kind of sort through that, and something kind of floated to the top. And meditation can help. There's a very, for example, meditation, anything that helps the mind become quiet, or still so they're not been running around in circles with this confusion, can sometimes help give clarity to those kinds of questions. Sometimes talking with friends and just kind of bouncing off friends for a while and having them if you have a friend who can who's able to ask really good questions of you, and just kind of probably probe and think about it in fresh ways sometimes can help and sometimes asking the question of the deeper motivation You know, sometimes It might be interesting to start with a question, what is the deepest intention you have for your life? What's the deepest thing that you want for your life? When you when you get to your deathbed, and you look back over your lifetime, what do you you know, what would you like to remember that your life was about? Was it about, you know, going to Safeway and you know, buying a lot of good things, you know, or you know, all these things that we could always smoke you know, getting oil change in your

car and you know, it's always things we can kind of get busy with normal life and consumed with but that's we don't you know, that's not what our life should be about. What is your deepest motivation, deepest intention, and sometimes that kind of reflection sometimes with a friend who can help you kind of keep focused on it can sometimes illuminate then from there you can come out of that to and then that case, this is what I want to do is

teach you the pain.

The, the rents are mortgages, and I have to use Because I can live live. And I love children and they're all great. But I, I want to do I want to take vacations.

But that keeps calling me like.

Yeah, all right, I understand this, this is part of this, this is part of this huge suffering and understand that this could be

possible. But again, you know, if you imagine yourself on your deathbed, and you think about over what your life was about, is it oh, you know, I had those really good things. You know, when I was younger, I thought I deserve those things. I was really good. You know, I had, you know, you know, I don't know maybe they're, I don't know what kind of things you want, but, but some of the things that I want. I don't want to be thinking about them on my deathbed. You know, it's a important, but, but but you know, it might be that, you know, when you get to your deathbed, you might want to think, you know, I was a really good teacher. And I really made a big difference in children's lives and I'm so happy for that. And I, otherwise I struggled, you know, and sometimes, you know, had to sacrifice a lot because of it. But we had deep satisfaction in my soul, where I knew that I was following what I really loved. And I really made differences in people's lives. Sometimes that kind of trying to put the coke issue in a different context, sometimes can kind of change how you understand it. But you know, there's a lot of issues involved in your question and you're raising children and you'd like them to be raised in a certain lifestyle that, you know, there's not deprived and so then the balance between you know, following your passion and your interest and, and your passion interest in providing healthy life for your children is a very painful to have those two stuck between those two different things and I You know, I can't, you know, my my tendency is to want to encourage people to follow their deepest motivations and interest at the cost you know and trusting that somehow things will work out. But you know, it's what you're talking about is painful.

I want to ask the question about when I with a personal

friend for many years, I see it in someone else better than myself.

When you're with someone you haven't seen for a long time.

I have a friend I've had for a very long time.

I can project myself as someone else and sometimes see another person or clearly what is really me also.

That's very common. Well, I feel I mean, seeing a bottomless well and desire upon this. Well, of course. You have a beautiful home. As you know you're so loved so many friends. This is so safe and yet never has enough love never just isn't very very painful for me. And I found a pattern where usually I say the call the next day. I don't think exactly the drain but I wonder what what I'm saying.

That is so powerful to

me I see it and it is happening and seeing is someone else's

is almost more like knocks me off.

just incredibly powerful here.

fascinate you. Can you hear that? Yeah. Okay. So what you said is that when she sees she has a friend who she sees herself in her friend, she's coming to communist phenomena, sometimes we project ourselves onto others. And, and, and she's using her friend, a bottomless well of desire and has basically had a successful life and had a lot of wonderful things, but always wants more and more and more. And she sees this tendency in herself. But when you see and it's sometimes exhausting, and, and, but when she sees it in her friend, it has a bigger impact on her. And the next day, sometimes she gets depressed and really, you know, really disturbs her in a deep way. And sometimes you have to kind of just go to bed for the day, right? Yeah. And there's a determined Buddhism for this. That a term in Buddhism for this kind of phenomenon is called hungry ghosts, you know about hungry ghosts. hungry ghosts are beings who have really, really, really, really, really big, sort of kind of four year old language stomachs. And they have throats that are very, very thin. So they can never get enough food down their throats to fill their stomachs. They're always hungry and want more and more and more. And peep some people are driven like there are people are hungry ghosts. Usually, it comes from some very deep need or pain within a person. And what we do in practice is we turn the attention back to what it feels like to be hungry ghost and very. At some point you'll realize the depth of the suffering of the pain or the fear, the emptiness, the feeling of unworthiness, or the feeling of lack or insecurity or some very deep sense of emptiness, perhaps. And then maybe people will recoil from that. And if it's very strong people, sometimes it gets even nauseous from really facing the depths of their own suffering within themselves. And it can be really exhausting to kind of really touch it and see it and people will recoil. And, and there's a number of strategies that Buddhists will offer to in that kind of situation. But one of the ways the most direct way through mindfulness is to go in and sit yourself

right down the middle of the heart of the suffering, the heart of that emptiness, or feeling of non existence or fear, whatever it might be, and sit there and just as long as it takes. Sit down, be very open, very allowing very attentive and see how it evolves. Sooner or later. It'll change.

That's it. Record raising is a very, very important issue and I feel a bit bad even giving you one simple kind of suggestion. It really needs you know, someone to really sit down with you and, and really explore explore it and either Buddhist teacher sometimes can sit with you and talk or perhaps a lot of people do it through therapy, where you can kind of go back over several weeks and really look at this from different angles and have someone ask hopefully, really good questions and. But it's really important and what the mindfulness practice can offer is the skill and the ability and maybe the context for learning how to put yourself right down in the heart of what's really going on. It's interesting that the word wanting in English as a kind of double meaning you can want things but you can also you also say in English that the soup is wanting salt and it means it's lack salt and sometimes desire. From a sense of lack something, a sense of emptiness inside, and what we do with mindfulness as we bring our attention in that place of wanting flack. So, may you all study your desire to become experts understanding and well, and may each of you understand what's on the other side of your desire, that peace and the well being, the tremendous possibility of joy and they, and the feeling of gratitude. Which is really again, one of the beautiful aspects of human life is deep gratitude that is often blocked by our desires. May each of you feel the deep joy and contentment and gratitude that's possible. Thank you.