

# 2003-06-16: Forest Practice

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## SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

So, this Saturday we had a picnic in a local park and Huddart Park. And I was looking forward to it. And probably the biggest surprise for me was how lovely it was to sit and meditate underneath the trees. We had a relatively short meditation of 30 minutes. And the weather was good. insect population was down or asleep. And it was delightful to sit there. And after the sitting ended during the middle, I thought it was going to be the middle of Dharma talk. someone pointed out that there was a probably a falcon up in a tree watching us or meditating with us. And so I talked a little bit about the forest practicing in the forest as part of Very important part of Buddhist practice. And I was kind of inspired by that and thought that two things one that next year, maybe when we May or June next year, maybe we can organize a do a one day sitting up there and hundred Park. There's parts of corners of it where it's feels pretty private, end of end of the road, people don't go there for various reasons. And we can go up there and do one day sitting just you're sitting and walking practice up there. And I think there's something very valuable about practicing in a setting like that in the forest. And the other thing that inspired me to do was to continue the talk here today that talk about the wilderness, the forest, one of our lineages one of the roots of our particular practice, here at As we have a number of different routes coming from Asia to what we do here, and one of the routes is the Thai forest tradition. So the word forest is in the tradition itself and the name and some of the monastics I think all the monastics pretty much who come in Teach for us come out of that forest tradition. And ideally they would spend much of their time living in the forest. And some of them are Jonathan Cicero. He is forest is forest as a avocado orchard in San Diego County. Jonah Moreau and he has a monastery up in Northern California and it's kind of in the woods up there but it's more like Chaparral oak, poison oak, woodland and, and the nun who will come stay at visit with us for about a week or so in the beginning of July, John Syndra. She also comes out of that forest tradition and There's a lot has been historically attention in Buddhism, not always, but occasionally between the forest traditions those monastics who go and practice deep in the forest, and those who stay in urban settings, those are live in the city. And it seems that at least a number of times in Asia in Southeast Asian history, when the Dharma when the monastic communities were kind of on the decline, for

various reasons. The rulers of the times would go into the forest to find monks who were particularly wise and virtuous and there's some deep attainments and bring them back to the capital to help purify and restart the Buddhist traditions as it you know, revive it.

You do find in Given a time of the Buddha, a strong emphasis in going into the woods into the wilderness to practice. And it wasn't just because it was beautiful to do that. There are ancient poetry, some of the eight most ancient poetry of humankind, that are coming out of the Buddhist tradition that extols the virtue of being in the woods being out in nature being in the wilderness. So there certainly was a kind of appreciation of the beauty of the wilderness. But there was also a great appreciation for its danger. And the wilderness in ancient times, apparently, in India, for example, was considered to be a dangerous place, and people would often not go there because, you know, there were lots of dangers to be found there. So those people who went into the forest to practice were maybe somewhat intentionally going into places that were dangerous, and they would have to contend with those danger, dangers and part of the practice part of the spiritual practice spiritual, spiritual cultivation, was contending with those things. dangerousness difficulties that come with living in the woods. It's probably one of these unfortunate things where you people remember the Golden Age, you know, when they were young and practicing whatever every generation thinks back, but the number of us who are my age now Think, think back at the early, you know, 2030 years ago, 40 years ago when people were starting this kind of practice. A lot of people went to Asia or even their retreat centers here in this country were quite rustic and quite a challenge to be at. And now we have these state of the art meditation centers that people sometimes confuse with a Hilton. And, and it's wonderful to have, you know, good lodging and healthy environments, clean environments and all that. But what's lost is the challenge of difficult circumstances to practice under. And, and what happens when circumstances are too easy. That doesn't that's not so conducive for cultivating, developing the character, some of the inner qualities and inner strengths. They're really invaluable for spiritual practice, spiritual practice, just about relaxing and some beautiful place. And you know, it's a lot of people can feel happy. But if it's what you put yourself in situations where it's dangerous or challenging or impoverished, then and to contend with those circumstances. It brings forth a whole other air aspect of a person's personality. And so it's often considered quite valuable. There is a poem, ancient Buddhist poem. When the thundering storm cloud roars out in the midst, and torrents of rain fill the paths of the birds nestled in a mountain cave, the monk meditates no greater contentment than this can be found. When along the rivers of tumbling flowers bloom in winding reefs, adorned with verdant color, seated on the bank. Happy he meditates no greater contentment than this can be found. When in the depths of night in a lonely forest, the rain Gods drizzle and the Fang the beasts cry, nestled in a mountain cave, the monk meditates no greater contentment than this can be found. When restraining himself and his discursive thoughts, dwelling in a hollow in the mountains myths, devoid of fear, he meditates no greater contentment than this can be found. When he is happy. Read stain, waste and grief unobstructed To unencumbered and assailed, having ended all defilements he meditates no greater contentment than this can be found. Such as ethics, a beautiful image of this monastic sitting in the woods sitting in a cave, sometimes with you know, stormy conditions, and being quite safe, you know, kind of protected in this cave, and feeling quite content at peace, I suppose. And no greater contentment than this.

There was another poem composed in the time of the Buddha, and this is attributed to the great God Brahma, and he's talking to the Buddha. Sometimes the gods would come to the Buddha and compose songs or poems as a way of communicating with him I guess.

And the great God Brahma says, Let the wilderness serve for your seat and bed freed from fear and in fearless released. In places where frightening serpents abide. Lightning clashes and the rain God thunders in the blinding darkness of the deepest night. There he sits the monk who's vanquished his fear. And then the second verse, let the wilderness serve for your seat and bed. Go about set free from the ties that bind. But if perchance you don't find there your bliss, then live in a group. But watch over yourself, mindful, proceeding for alms from house to house, mindful with guarded faculties and wise. So here's the out, you know, if the wilderness doesn't work for you, then by all means, you know, practice together in a group of people in the urban environment. But there's a kind of warning there says but if you do that, Watch over, watch over yourself carefully. Sometimes we lower our guard in, maybe sometimes in urban areas in groups like here, right? And we feel it's so safe, and hopefully it is safe here. But, but in terms of the kind of deep spiritual work, kind of attentiveness to what goes on depths of our psyche, and you know how we the subtle forms of attachment that it gets tied to projection, transference, interpretation, fears of being disliked and fears of, you know, what we say and how be received and all these things get played out in the social environment. They come into play when we're in groups like this. And so be very attentive, so that this doesn't get in your way of finding your capacity for greater peace. One of the reasons why people will go into the woods to practice far from people is know to experience Some kind of distance from those kinds of social conditionings. Partly to see through them or to find oneself independent from their social conditioning. It's really a marvelous thing to step outside of our conventional social reality social conventions, to step into Limbo to step into kind of.

There's a word it's called the anthropologist by name of Turner had this wonderful word called liminal space, thank you. And he does. Turner argued that all major kind of lot of ritual, a lot of initiative initiation rites, for example, in traditional societies involved going into kind of a liminal space, a space where some kind of ritual space time and place where the usual conventions of the side you're not operating. And something can happen there. That's different than what can happen. We're always relating to children in normal ways. Remember, we don't live in Japan. People didn't say this but liminal space and public Japan was the public bathhouse public sauna. And because they're the hierarchy that often exists in Japanese culture fell away and everybody, you know, everybody was there naked, except that maybe a towel around them in the sun all these guys and they would relate to each other. The impression I had was as equals. But then they went out into the locker room for their clothes. And then suddenly the you know, all the differentiation of social differences came into play again. So a liminal space to step into noise to get a different perspective of who we are, maybe to see ourselves in a way we can't see ourselves if we're always in relationship to each other. In fact, I would argue that much of the suffering that people experience arises out of the Somehow or other are the relationships we have with each other other people, things we want relationships, we want things we don't want hurts we have expectations we have, there's a lot, you know, a lot of desire, it goes into

human relations, a lot of anger a lot of many different things. And, and part of the kind of radical challenge of Buddhism to us, is pointing us to that part of our psyche, that part of our heart or our being where we could take refuge where you can feel at peace that is not tied to our relationship to other people. And for some people, that's a radical and very frightening message, that somehow we can find happiness it's not tied to the people around us to having something or not having something from people around us. And so what so going into the wilderness sometimes is entering this liminal spaces place with freed from convention social condition. In order to have a very different experience of ourselves, it's also a place. And in doing that in mind, some people can optimize the conditions for their mind getting very still into kind of silence of the mind. For other people who doesn't work, and is better for the practice in urban settings are together groups of people. The other thing that the wilderness does for people is that it calls for the kind of radical simplicity. It's very difficult to go into the, into the wilderness, if you get it, you know, all you can do is carry your own things. You can't bring your refrigerator and you can't bring your, you know, television and I suppose there are people who do it. I see I retired to the television for your watch. You know, you can just kind of you know, but, you know, the you can't bring very much and so, it's a very simple life. And even to this day in Thailand when monastics go into the deep wilderness to marry To date, they go with very, very little, they go with maybe a warm blanket a few robes to where they go with an umbrella, big umbrella that has mosquito netting down the side, the drapes that kind of hangs down the side. And so you might have seen pictures of these monks sitting like you know, meditating underneath these umbrellas, mosquito netting coming down, and then when it's time to sleep, they lay down inside the mosquito netting. And, but if it rains, it's not big enough to lay down umbrellas, they can sit and stay more or less dry. They had used sometimes they build little platforms to sit on. And that's it. You know, they have their bowls, and they're begging bowls. They have to they can't go that far away. There has to be some arrangements with to get the daily food. So because they can't keep food food overnight monastics, so it has to be close enough to some kind of some people living in the woods sometimes hunter gatherers, sometimes forest hunters or farmers or something subsistence delivers someplace or small village where someone will take care of them in providing the food.

Thanissaro Bhikkhu talks about this, who's lived this kind of life. And he sometimes he likes to talk about these forest monks and nuns as being hunter gatherers. Because they're not they're not actually by the rules, they're not allowed to farm. They're not allowed to take fruit from the tree. He's not allowed to cut trees or plants or digging the ground. So they're really dependent on gathering, hunting and gathering for their food, but they can't touch either. So what he means by hunting and gathering is that they have to be, be somehow ethical find those kinds of situations where there are people who want to offer them the food every day. In order to do that, he says, the monastic has to be worthy of those offerings. People have to be inspired by the worthiness of this so that these monastics have to live a life of purity and a life of practice. So people will feel like oh, yeah, I want to help these people. So they really want to see them flourish in their practice. Put some rice in their bowl. And so it's kind of like stepping outside of normal social conventions. But it's also stepping outside of the market economy and living a very different kind of lifestyle than is most people's experience. So it's learning to live a life of radical simplicity, which is a really beautiful thing to have that capacity to know that you

can be happy with just you know, sleeping bag and a backpack. Some of you may be experienced this in your youth. Some of you still are youth, but some of you maybe still are in your backpacks. And the other aspect of living in the woods is it requires a lot of sensitivity, a lot of mindfulness, because if you're not mindful of what goes on around you, it could be the your end There's lots of stories to this day of monks in Thailand where I'm most familiar with the stories of encountering tigers, there's still a few Tigers left in Thailand, and elephants, rhinoceros snakes, you know, animals which are somewhat dangerous, and so they have to contend with a deal that they have to somehow relate to that. So certainly being mindful and awake to what goes on is very important part of just living in the woods. And then once you encounter these animals, there's a whole training on how you relate to them. And maybe, you know, there's a really there's a there's a training, listen Buddhist instructions to relate to them with loving kindness, to relate to them with with being non hot with non harming with non violence. So, the idea is that the animal world responds to your vibes to how you are and you create a safe environment for yourself. If you You know, offer them this kind of wonderful qualities. And someone I think was at the picnic told me a story. Maybe they're here about seeing a documentary about Thai monks in Thailand who were raising tigers. Because the tiger population is quite challenged in Thailand these days because of deforestation and all that. And so in order to protect and preserve the tiger population, there's a monastery I guess that has become a tiger ranch. And so these monks are raising tigers, maybe released in the wilderness. And, and they're showing us in the movie, this big tiger, jumping up on two feet and up putting his hands on the shoulders of one of the monks and kind of being very playful. I guess young tigers are quite playful. And, and the reporter asks you aren't you afraid? Something like that? And the monk says, Oh, no. I trust the tiger completely. And the tiger knows that. And so the tiger trust me that so I can trust the tiger. So it's offering of trust. So maybe not all of us, you know, are convinced in the value of offering trust and loving kindness and non harming to the threatening animals around us. But it's a strong, long belief in Buddhism, this is actually a very powerful thing to do. It's very important not to do this, unless you could really do it. I believe it's Sharon Salzberg. He tells a story of, you know, some vicious dog coming to bark at her and maybe you'll correct me if I'm wrong. And then she started offering loving kindness but, you know, maybe she hadn't been rusty or something she didn't know she was. She was doing it by rote. I guess the practice is the dog better anyway.

You hear you hear reports from Thailand of meeting monks and nuns who spent 20, 30, 40 years practicing loving kindness, and you feel a field of love, loving kindness of compassion or care something around them, you know, shouldn't be long distance around them. palpable people say, and so maybe that's something maybe the animals could pick that up. So, living in the in the wilderness you not only cultivating things like mindfulness, but you're cultivating other qualities also in order to survive. They're one of the qualities you find a lot of references to, is developing concentration in the face of danger. And you find monastics talk about sitting and meditating in the middle of the night, and then hearing some loud animal walking close by, or you are sitting doing walking meditation, and suddenly a tiger appears on your walking path, or, and then continuing with meditation, sitting there and saying, okay, it's Sometimes you hear these statements like oh, Ajahn Chah said this said, if I'm going to die, I want to die in the Dharma, this is a good way, this is a good way to die. So rather than



running away or doing something, they say, Okay, I'm just gonna devote myself to the practice. And if I die, this will be a good death. So maybe you think it's foolish. But this is an attitude that some people will have in their Dharma practice, they're quite serious about it. It's kind of like, you know, do or die kind of thing. They're really serious about trying to attain this place of peace at the, in the depths of their their hearts. So they go into the wilderness to find this to discover it.

And so as the quotes that I read here, the poems they talked about becoming fearless, becoming people have nothing to fear, and discovering how to that capacity of fearlessness, but being in the woods. Some years ago, there was a woman who came to budget Pawnee retreat we teach in August in Boulder. Boulder Creek area up in the redwoods there and a lot of the retreats will stay intense. And she chose to put her tent kind of far away in the woods far from everybody else. And she's come to interviews. really tired. You know, I'm seeing I'm really tired. I you know, it's hard for me to meditate. I'm so sleepy because I'm up most of the night. What's you know, going on? Oh, there's all these animals walking around my tent. Well, you don't you don't the 10th way out there. Why did you come closer without so many animals? So Oh, no, no, then I wouldn't have to deal with my fear. And she was she she was staying there in order to contend with their fear, nor to come to terms with it. I remember having an experience in the wilderness new backpacking, when I was 17 or so, teenager in myself in the Big Sur Big Sur national wilderness and have attached my sleeping bag and I I was trying to hike out and it got dark. So I might as well sleep was dangerous to walk the trail after got dark so, but I couldn't really see where I was putting my sleeping bag down was already so dark. And it was you know, it wasn't gonna roll over the cliff or anything. I knew that it was safe that way. And so I got my sleeping bag, and my impression was a good part of the night. There were these things walking around me, you know, very loud, you know, maybe the leaves were very dry to the you know, but it sounds to me, you know, I had no idea what it was. We think of that. I couldn't get up and leave because there's so too dark to leave. And so I stayed. And I didn't know about practicing fearlessness or loving kindness or concentration or any of those things. But here I am still was probably raccoons is my guess. And

There's also something there's a tradition in Buddhism, of practicing in some environment, whatever the environment is, and then leaving that environment to test your practice. So, you know, if you've been practicing in a monastery for a long time, one way is you go into the wilderness by yourself for two months to test your practice, seeing how good your practices, how good your concentration, your capacity to stay economists. Or another way of practice testing is you go into Bangkok, you go into the city, you come to Redwood City, and you test it here, or you have the capacity to be peaceful here in Redwood City. So then you go to San Francisco, or you go someplace else. But you know, go some environment because it's a challenge for you. You don't just stay in an environment where it's peaceful and safe for you. Use a peaceful, safe environment to develop your practice. And then you kind of venture forth in there to test it to develop it further, a lot of people, there's a long tradition in Buddhism, of doing that, because people can fool themselves as to the degree the depth of their attainment, the depth of their maturation, spiritually. And people will think that they're much more developed, much more resolved and much more committed and much more devoted to practice than they really are.

And it's really tested when you go off in some different environment. You know, you go home to be with your family at Christmas, you know, whatever. And so it's to take that into account, you know, as you go back and forth in different environment, that is actually considered very healthy to go back and forth, back and forth. There are people I've met in Thailand, who would spend years practicing in very pristine, beautiful wilderness areas where And where it was relatively easy relatively, to find a peaceful heart, then they go to Bangkok. And they just fall apart. And their response which to me seemed very sad was to run back into the, into the forest again to the countryside. And as if that's where you know, real practice is and if you're really satisfied with a piece they attain there. The idea is to bring it to Bangkok or the equivalent and develop it there. also find it there also, in whatever environment you're in. When I was first came to San Francisco Zen Center to practice they're in San Francisco in near downtown San Francisco, all asphalt in buildings and almost no trees, and I've been living before that I've been living in the country here in America mostly and living quite poorly for a while and A friend from that rural times came to visit me. And she said, You know, I could never live here. There's no nature here. And I said, No, nature's here to, if we, if we divide up the world too much between what's human made and the nonhuman world and said only that's nature, then we're bifurcating the world to strongly if we're going to find our peace and well being, we have to also find it in the asphalt. Not not, I'm not I'm not championing asphalt or saying it's a beautiful thing or great thing I think we could do with with a lot less, but to find our peace there also is also important thing to do. So we're going back and forth, different environments at different times of phases and when spiritual practice. Here in the West, we have a strong legacy of people championing the wilderness, certain people, especially white people, champion white Protestant people. championing the great virtues of being in the wilderness, you know, Thoreau and people like that. And actually like that kind of literature and like that kind of values, but it tends to be a little bit idyllic and a little bit romantic. What do you see in the Buddhist tradition, when people extol the value of being in nature, they also very much talking about how dangerous it is to be there. And part of you know, and how difficult it is. The great difficulty is not just idyllic and beautiful. There's malaria. You know, the quote that I read on Saturday, there were 20 people in the monastic group that went into the deep forest to practice now exactly together but not exactly a part either. And five of those 20 people got malaria and had to go to the hospital.

So it's not to be kind of romantic about the wilderness that the Buddhist go in it. But it's said that Buddha's that, that wonderful place to cultivate practice. For all the reasons may the reasons you can think of and more in the ones I've talked about, is to go into the wilderness and spend some time there. Practice Sing your meditation. And I hope that next year that we can set aside some time a Saturday perhaps, to go to this very tame area of the wilderness of 100 Park and it is in the range of a mountain lion. So you know we'll have to be a little bit attentive, alert and with any Blue Jays will warn us. The last thing I'll say is the longest that I've done this kind of wilderness practice was a month in Thailand in one of the jungles there, and it wasn't gonna completely off in the wilderness. There wasn't it wasn't a it was a forest monastery and had to follow a path for about 10-15 minutes in the jungle, down to this little cutie It's called little cabin hut that is on stilts, that's about

eight by 12 feet, maybe smaller, smaller than that maybe five by eight feet. It's kind of small as little porch. And, and I would practice there all day, except when I would go and in the morning for one meal a day, I would go in to where the kitchen was and they'd serve people there to go walk in, but otherwise I was deep in the jungles and there was the monkeys and there were snakes, big snakes. Once I stepped on a snake that was as long as the road. I mean road is maybe 678 foot long, you know, and it was dusk. And I was just walking along. And, you know, as far as I knew there was a branch across the road. And so I stepped on it. And I jumped faster than they really jumped in my life. And, you know, and I don't know what kind of things it was, but I do know there are poisonous snakes in that jungle. And it was really lovely to be there in that jungle. And the way I practice, the way I did the practice was that I didn't do very much, it'll be very simple life. And when I first started the month, I would meditate for a few hours in the morning, and then go for my meal and come back may take a bit longer. And then I would take a little bit easier just hanging out. Sometimes I read a little Dharma book, until the evening I settled with more and then I'd go to sleep. And then each day I would meditate a bit more. So I wasn't pushing myself to meditate as much as I could, as quickly as I could, but rather kind of a slow process is kind of easing into it in a sense, by the middle of the retreat. I was meditating all day long and much of the evening, and just being there, either on the porch or being inside, depending on the mosquitoes and the temperature. And it was really a lovely place to be in practice. You find number of things you find you're that kind of way you can find your own rhythms. Practice, if you're always practicing in group environment, you don't find your own rhythms. And you find your own resolve, or determination or discipline. I practice for many years in the Zen tradition, where we always practice as a group. In fact, in the Zen centers, I practice there was actually a kind of a taboo of sorts against practicing alone. This was in the monastery, because you're doing something special kind of outside of it, everybody else was doing and you were supposed to kind of do anything kind of individualistic kind of special or, you know, stand out and be more spiritual in other people, you know, have this Zen stink. And so you're supposed to, you know, just you know, just follow along it's so that's what I did. I just practice with other people for years monastery and it was really lovely for me to do that. I love that time. But what happened then when I went to Thailand and had all those times practicing alone, my little cuts, the first time it happened, I realized I had never practiced alone that intensively. I'd sat alone, you know, at home sometimes before the monastery. But, and I discovered how much I had depended on the group for the support and the momentum of practice with discipline. And it was a whole different game, to find the discipline to practice when I was when no one was watching. And no one was there to support me, it was all had to depend on my own, understanding my own dedication, my own discipline, and had to find that within me to keep it up. And keep on the practice is quite something to practice, you know, all day long. And to make that keep that discipline going. And that was part of the value for me was to grapple with that sense of inner discipline myself and slowly be able to find it for myself so that I have hopefully still have the discipline to go and spend a month basically alone, sitting in jungle, the only company being the monkeys jumping on the roof. So those are my thoughts about the wilderness as part of our tradition. And you can think about it a little bit. Maybe it's Buyers you to do something like that. Your thoughts, your questions, comments. We have five, five minutes or so.



Yeah. Right. So I will turn around, go back. I'm comfortable so I'm not really facing fear but maybe it's wise it could be and I think as good well being I'm not the one to tell you otherwise. That but I do know that human beings have tremendous capacity for fear of imaginary things. Tremendous capacity. Little children afraid of the monsters in the closet. And then to their bed and, and, and you know, all kinds of things. So, you know, do we have to always be afraid, you know, the wilderness, and fear fear has a lot to do with us with familiarity. So someone who's like spend a lot of time in the wilderness is quite comfortable in it. Someone who doesn't know it, for various reasons, is very frightened. My son when he was three years old, we lived up in the woods of the skyline. And he was terrified of the woods. absolutely terrified. We sometimes carry him into the woods and he starts shaking. So we would go in the woods with him. And so I don't know what that was about. But But I know my own situation that as I get familiarity in places of afraid of initially, as I kind of get a sense of the territory, know how to know how to take care of myself there in the area, then I don't feel afraid anymore. And there are times when I'm not, you know, times when things are not so frightening as my imagination tells me And sometimes things are frightening. And it's very, very valuable to learn to have the capacity, even when we're afraid not to be run by the fear not to be controlled by the fear. Sometimes we're afraid by situations where maybe it's healthy, to be afraid, it's not healthy to be afraid, we still have to be in that situation, we don't have the luxury to turn away. There's a lot of people in the world who aren't privileged in the way many of us are here, who fears a daily part of their life experience. And our circle, circumstance could change very radically very quickly and end up in situations where we can't just simply go to shoreline to go hiking. And if we've never kind of been on the edges of our fear and explored it and learned how to develop the patience, the concentration to incense, override it or see it clearly and not make mistakes because of it, then we might end up making mistakes. So I definitely think that there's a place for pushing the edges of fear, but hopefully do it in the wise ways and help you who choose the woman who went into the woods with budget Pani to be at, you know, I think she had the sense of the understanding was this was not a dangerous place for her to be. And I don't think it was dangerous. I mean, there is a mountain line, there are rattlesnakes up there, but the chances of counting on a pretty slim, and I think she knew that logically, there was no fear. And she felt their fear was intensely logical. And it was something she wanted to deal with and continue with. So all kinds of places of fear. I once woke up, I put my sleeping bag down once and simply get in a similar situation was dark, and I just put it down to sleep under a bush someplace. And woke up in the morning to find out I was sleeping on top of a grave in a cemetery. And a lot of people would be afraid to sleep in the cemetery. And maybe I would be now if I knew it, if I'd known it but I didn't know it. So there's in a suit that was in the discourses in a Thai tradition, there's a lot of emphasis on developing fearlessness, and working with fear and finding where to be, how not to be afraid. And there's a lot a lot of things come into play learning how to be fearless, and some of it has to do with very deep seated attachments. So deepest, for example, is our attachment to being alive, that deep, so I don't just sitting there and I'll die anyway. And you know, it's never reasonable to tell people to you know, go out and face those deepest fears. But there are you know, as instructions, but there are individuals who take it on themselves to really you know, that that series in what they're doing, they're serious, but kind of plunging into the depths of the Dharma that they'll take it to those extremes. Is that okay? Answer? What do you think of that? Answer? objections.

fear of public speaking is considered at worse than being almost anything. So to face that fear Are you the

most common?

More? So if you're afraid because it's unfamiliar, I think it helps remember that really murders and things happen more often. Yeah

Yes, please.

encountering loneliness. I don't think I talk about it so much myself. I know there are people who given Dharma talks on that topic. And but I think that's something I've encountered. But you won't ask a question or

probably nothing comes to mind right now. I had to deal with that when I was in my cabin by myself. And anyway, one of the Spirit rock teachers talks about going spending a month in a cabin someplace. And that was really came up really big for him was loneliness. And it's quite reasonable that loneliness would come up in that kind of situation. And some people choose to go into that environment in order to look their loneliness right in the face right in the eye to really deal with it and come to terms with it. It can be very frightening and it could very, you know, it can make a person nauseous to deal with looked at other loneliness and you know, Rawley indirectly. And that's valuable because if we if we, I will, I believe that if we don't have the capacity to be alone, we don't really have the capacity to be together with others and really wise ways in loving ways also to go in my mind if things are to go very closely together. Yeah, I'm afraid of dogs.

Yeah, she's afraid of dogs. And what would I suggest? What would you like me to suggest?

Maybe like I like to walk and maybe when I see a dog owner, I always look to see how they haven't grabbed Usually

so she looks at the cues, subtle cues whether how tightly they're holding the leash. And I guess if the leash is really held tightly you know, then she knows the cues are such that maybe can't be sure. I don't know if I should look at the dog or not look at the dog. The dog should you look at the dog? I think my opinion is that it's a situation of requires great mindfulness. attentiveness being in the present moment and taking in all the cues you can and we're some dogs you want to look at them. In some dogs you want to avoid eye contact. Some dogs, you want to be close and friendly and some dogs you want to, you know, give them a wide berth and each dog is different and And you have to have the presence of mind to kind of psych it out. And if you're in doubt, keep it longer wide berth. So that's, that's, you know. So the first thought occurred to me when you said this was, you know, spend time on

dogs get to know dogs really well. Come at dog whisper. My wife has a book called baby whisper. So thank you all very much.