

# 2004-03-14 Direct Experience

Mon, 7/20 8:26AM • 16:21

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

present moment, experience, liberation, buddhism, river, direct, sense, awareness, relaxing, part, retreat, feel, learn, operates, lived, removed, books, beckons, deeper, noticing

## SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

I am at Spirit Rock most of this month, teaching a month long retreat, and I'm home a little bit on the weekends and our speaker who was scheduled for today couldn't come. So I thought I would stop in to fill in.

The one of the remarkable things about mindfulness practice that's very evident in the long retreats like this month long is that there's a deepening and deep deeper and deeper deepening and deepening connections that people have with our direct experience. And some of that is learned by seeing very clearly how we keep ourselves separate from our immediate experience, our lived experience and then as you People tune in and relax into it. Just the deeper and deeper aspects of what's actually here always here becomes more and more evident this week in that concentrated stillness of the practice and in a lot of it has to do with you see on the retreat, people are having learning a deeper and deeper trust that it's okay to be present for

their lived experience their immediate experiences as as it's actually lived as it's actually experienced. This direct experience becomes evident that many of us live much of our lives, somewhat removed from our direct experience. We can, most obviously thinking about the future a lot or planning or thinking about the past or viewing it

fitting into fantasy, a lot.

But even if we're somewhat in the present moment, we can be somewhat removed from by how we relate to the present moment, we might know that maybe our body has some kind of injury and pain. As we know, that's what's going on. But we haven't really stopped carefully for me to really sense their way feel what that pain is really like in and of itself, we might go off and kind of react and look on the internet about you know, everything we can about that injury and how to heal it and talk to our doctors or whatever, but talk to our friends or you know, something somehow keep ourselves removed from

just relaxing this being what is this experience in and of itself. Emotions are that way a lot. Emotions tend to come together with a lot of stories that we tell ourselves, about why we feel the way we do or why we should or shouldn't feel the way we are feeling.

And,

and so we might somewhat know how we're experiencing what we're experiencing emotionally. But there's also a tendency to keep ourselves removed from it. If it's painful emotions, you know, people are kind of in a brace brace themselves against it or don't want to really feel it fully they want to somehow get rid of it or, or make it you know, different than what it is. And so you see here on the retreat people kind of slowly kind of some people slowly relaxing and after finding the trust or finding they have no no other alternative, but to really feel the immediacy, the directness of what is going on for them.

If you go down

to the banks of a river

and with a bucket

and you

take a bucket full of water out of the river, and then walk around the countryside, telling people that look I have the river here.

I think you know,

doesn't quite work does not have a bucket of water. But it's not really an experience of the river you don't feel the courage don't see the currents of the river you don't see

the boats floating in the river or the fish or

you don't see the way the river kind of the waves and the ripples and the river you don't the whole experience of river Enos

is not in the bucket.

And many of us are sitting kind of at the banks of the direct experience of life as it flows and moves, moves constantly moving. The present moment is a moving moment isn't it's kind of like goes into the

future every moment the future comes to us or whatever land away which goes but you know, it's constantly flowing, things are changing. And then something happens and it's like we pick up the buckets and leave all around. We relate to that memory that thought concerned about something that just happened. And many times our involvement with the present moment. Did you agree with retuned into it is retrospective? Something's happened Oh, so you're, you know you're driving your car. And, and then someone cuts you off in traffic, and which is an unfortunate event, perhaps, but it's possible to spend the next 510 minutes reflecting and thinking about that person about what you're gonna do to that person? Or can you catch up to the person and get a good look and really steer the person in the eyes like, you know, or whatever, you know, various ways in which we are thinking about what just happened. And in a sense, it can take us away from the continuation of the flow of traffic, what's happening in the present moment.

Part of the art of mindfulness is having a trust

of can you stay in

the present moment experience in much more deeper and fuller way. The experience of freedom, as I said in the beginning, in Buddhism is through the doorway of our lived experience, the immediacy of our experience. I heard a story this week. In the early 80s. There was a somewhat eccentric the passionate teacher teaching an ins Guess the three month course. And one day she was going to give a Dharma talk. And she

had the staff there, bring all the library books

and libraries, extensive library and pile them up on the stage where they were the speaker speech speaker said all these books were there.

And then she picked up one

book and open it. I don't think it was at random. And read one line, in line said

the entire

the essence of the Dharma is letting go.

As you close the book, and she left.

With all those books on the stage left, they're

not exactly pointing to direct experience, but the direct experiences where we learned to let go by sensing away feeling of being there. The direct experience is where we find some of the most valuable things of life in the present moment as we live in joy and love, peace and freedom. So what was it like for some of you to spend half an hour with your lived experience?

Trusting Of course you had it right.

So it's your hands is easy to slip back into your stories.

My hands, my hands are too fat or too thin or too this or that. I should I didn't do my nails today and so you know

And then after a while

that's very good.

Awareness itself, in and of itself is a very simple and easy aspect of human life. We want to do something when it's directed a hold a certain way or accomplish something, that sometimes it gets quite difficult. If you did nothing, nothing at all awareness would operate.

You might not be aware of what you would like to be aware of.

But you always need to be aware of what you want to be aware of.

Meditation sometimes to relax your awareness quite deeply and let reality to show itself

is can be quite profound.

years ago, going to

sweep a little more inner direction being you know, having a guided meditation.

so relaxing,

just reading experience of whatever

particular part of the body

Word of God was tricky as we got into awareness, knowing so the wanting to know, there, it didn't feel too much different. I didn't notice a big shift between that

there was sort of a continuity at one point.

I really couldn't

grab it. There wasn't anything there. So it was kind of interesting to see what

that was peaceful.

Thank you.

Anybody have difficulties

Part of the value of leaning to pay attention to the lived experience, the present experience, the bodily experience is to become aware of the things that take us away from it and keep us removed from it. And, and that's part of that really part of the value to see that to really see clearly how the mind operates, how the reactions, the judgments, how the story making operates. And you really get to know that well, I think it's very easy for meditators to somehow and to kind of learn about the present moment experience, learn about being in the body, and then think, Oh, I'm wrong or bad because I can't do that. There's no such thing as being wrong or bad because you can't do that, but it's the attempt to do that can highlight in a clear, all the other things that are going on so we can learn from that and see it. And by seeing it clearly find our way through that.

When

Chinese, when the Chinese received Buddhism,

they, it was very confusing for them, because they expect a received.

They started receiving Buddhism around the first century.

In that time, they've been five or six centuries of developments of Indian Buddhism. And then they got it all at once. The Indians kind of kind of saw all the different schools and all the different historical layers and kind of knew where it all kind of fit. But the Chinese just got it all in a sense. And, and it's a scroller states of the Chinese about 500 years to begin to understand what Buddhism

was about

and But there was a huge intellectual endeavor in China by trying to make sense of

all these different schools of Indian Buddhism, all different, you know,

all that. And around the year around the sixth seventh or eighth century, was kind of the pinnacle of this great intellectual synthesis of Buddhism that's going on in China. There was a famous Zen teacher scholar named Sumi, who was synthesizing all this, and he synthesized it all in one sentence.

And the sentence is

liberation

beckons us

from within everything.

It's not nice. There's a summary of all of Buddhism.

And, and one of the reasons I like it is that everything then everything. That's the thing. Everything was just a lived experience. There's even judgments or thoughts or

sensations of your hands. There's something in there that somehow

can be felt as or seen as understood as, as an invitation to come and be liberated here on your liberation here on how to be free here. So there's nothing, there's no need to turn away from anything. In order to become liberated, in fact, to turn away from anything in the opposite direction of liberation, the movement of towards liberation is one of inclusive activity, of incorporating seeing everything and not shutting down, not turning away, not saying the sense no to anything. But learning how to find liberation, how to find freedom, or your peace in whatever the experience is happening right now.

So right now,

not tomorrow, or the next time you meditate. But as you're sitting here now listening to my voice, sensing and feeling the realness you're In light of the room,

experience of your body against the chair, cushion,

your thoughts you're having, as you're listening to me say this.

All this and the immediacy of right now is where liberation is beckoning you, inviting you, if you'd like to take the opportunity if you want to enter into that in a way that's direct and immediate, to find liberation is there.

Is that possible?

So

I hope that you certainly enjoy your lived experience that you explore.

Play in it.

Practice with it, wake up to it, become more sensitive to it. And certainly appreciate the great opportunity that's inherent in our direct experience

of our lives life

and perhaps in noticing that directly tunity to also start noticing what is lost when we spend a long time away from our direct experience and the longer were away from it, I think the more that is lost so may you all enjoy your direct experience.