

2004-11-10 The Five Faculties (Part 2)

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SPEAKERS

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It tends to cause agitation and restlessness. And that's where it's important for the concentration factor to balance the energy. And so to develop the concentration factor in that case, in that case, maybe really push the calm, kind of feel the calm, let the breath soothe, you kind of hang with a breath, in and out, letting be focused on just on the breath, nothing else can help the mind calm down enough. And then the discernment factor, sometimes to call the wisdom factor. And this is where we use our intelligence in the service of greater mindfulness and greater concentration, greater stillness. It's very easy for people to use their discernment to use their analytical intelligence of the mind to get lost in the world of thought, and thinking and reflecting and analyzing and guessing and this and that, and that's not the function of discernment. So you got to be very discerning how you use discernment. If you start if discerning, discerning is causing you to get more agitated, more distance from your experience, then let go of it. But there's a way of learning how to use your intelligence to help you get more and more focused more concentrated more here. Just like a bicycle rider, is using discernment all the time. But the sermon doesn't make the mind agitated. It's kind of most natural second nature to ride a bike. So in the same way, after a while, becomes second nature and meditation to use our desert desert, our ability to discern what's going on to know what kind of subtle force corrections we need to make. What do you what do we need to do in order to really wake up become freer, be more concentrated more steel.

The discernment factor also tells us that if we get too preoccupied with tracking the five faculties, we'll get we're getting Trouble, that just tie yourself in knots and you kind of you're kind of busy tracking something you know. So it's not supposed to be a big deal to five faculties. But it is something to be attentive to keep in the back of your mind that this is partly what we're tracking a little bit and noticing this. And sometimes it becomes very important to notice some imbalance or some lack of one of these. And sometimes they're operating quite, you know, naturally or on their own. You give them a lot of thought. But you don't want to get tied up, you know, hearing is kind of teaching you you don't wanna, you want to be very, very relaxed about it so you don't get caught up in it. So what was it like to do that guided meditation? When are you able to kind of evoke or find or touch into some of those qualities in yourself or the recognizable qualities company Sorry.

Soften in what was it it helped that particularly.

My attention on it was awesome.

Great. So someone else, please, anybody

noticing where in the body I felt confident that was You know, I really felt confident. body was really helpful. Thank you.

It's the first when when these are taught sequentially. That's the foundation for the others.

Great so then if you really struggle with it, it becomes a strength that you can tap into and utilize and help you with the others

became a sense of satisfaction or accomplishment a sense of satisfaction.

Did you guys have some sense that as you tapped into confidence, there was more effort or energy available to practice. driveway energy. So do is produce iasme and then if you have more energy it was a little bit easier to be mindful To some I find that there's no, no way. It's so hard to be mindful no matter what.

Yeah, it's very hard to come in from, you know, a busy, busy day perhaps and expect to kind of go Right, right, you know, make this easy what I'm asking you to do tonight. But I was hoping that a more evocative approach to teaching these qualities would somehow like you understand what they are better than just kind of, you know, teaching them how to talk. So, any anything else you'd like to say about this? That exercise

So she's concerned that sometimes in the past I've called concentration and more of a unification process, and this evening is more focused on being calm and stable. But they all work together then the more unified a person is, the more or less fragmented the karma would become. The more fragmented video we are, the more agitated we are. Yes,

me with meditating daily, it came up during this exercise all these different experiences and feelings are all coexist. It's not that I'm feeling one way or just another Something has to be there to be experienced, but that there's this choice as to where I put the attention. Yes. And it may not take much for me to be aware of the attention there. It's not there to find it's not there to find but there is this sense of both participating and surrender. Yeah.

There is a question or two. And, and there is a lot of things happening in the, in the present. And so, so, you know that, we put a lot of emphasis on the breath, as I keep saying, but we're also ready to leave the breath. If something else is more compelling and really more pronounced. Something else really feels like it needs acknowledged. And then the quality of how we connect to something is really important. So a lot of things are going on, you don't want to just be kind of casual about it all going nowhere, that whether you really want to feel the kind of a clear, full acknowledgement, this is what's happening now. And the fact that you're not acknowledging other things that time, that's the way it is. So you get their time. And so there is, and then once we're fully present for something, there's also surrender, kind of acceptance, this is what's happening. And it has its own life and I'm gonna get out of the way and just allow myself to be present for it. So there's both a participation and surrendering, but the active side and receptive side, happening at the same time. Sometimes meditation, people focus more on the receptive side. Sometimes they focus more on the active side of meditation for people that have busy lives, or Americans who are so you know, folks, I'm doing doing doing often meditation features will emphasize the receptive quality of qualities in meditation. But that can be overdone. But both when the meditation going really well and really strong, we need the receptive nor nor active. It's neither participatory or, or what are the other words? to use? Surrender? Yes, neither. Yes.

receptive ever accepted. Sometimes, meditation practice is about just receiving what's going on without doing anything. Just relaxing, letting go. Letting, letting, letting things come to awareness of the breath, come on its own to you. And just relaxing and letting things come in and be very accepting. Other times, is much more active approach. I'm not going to let the mind wander. I'm going to hold on to the breath and refocus. I'm going to do This I'm gonna, I'm gonna, I'm not gonna let anything distract me. I'm going to really look at see what's going on here I'm going to go bring myself to really be present for, you know, this experience of the knee aches, I'm going to really kind of go there and really penetrate that ache and really understand and see it is more active as opposed to just more receptive. And, and part of the art of meditation is to negotiate, which is appropriate different times. For people who are stressed, it's usually better to be receptive. Yes,

but I quit understanding of the separation. Okay, good. they overlap strongly. To shine some light on it's probably best not to Not to make a too strong separation between them. Because you can't really practice concentration without some degree of mindfulness. And you can't practice mindfulness about some degree of concentration. So they go together as a team. But mindfulness is more the capacity of the mind to know and understand what's happening, the present moment. Concentration is more than capacity to fixate on what's at one at one aspect of the present moment, and have the mind not really wave or just really penetrate and be present to this one thing. So like, you know, I'm aware of all these people in this room here, I'm aware of you. And so there's awareness of you, but also I'm talking to you so there's also a concentration on you. It's happening. And I'm still aware of the people around me and I'm not concentrating on anybody else I'm concentrating on you. And when it when, by itself, concentration practice is a practice that excludes a lot of things from awareness. And so we can just in favor just focusing on one single thing like the breath or mantra or visualization or, you know, something, just one thing. And you kind of everything else drops away, exclude everything from awareness, mindfulness by itself as an inclusion practice, you don't exclude anything. So he's willing to be open to everything and include everything, just notice what's going on. with pure concentration practice, there tends not to be a lot of knowing or understanding what's going on. Use focus, you know, like if you're focusing on a mantra, you get very concentrated. But there's not much understanding just this words, you're saying, are we focusing on the breath that might vary learner might be very low understanding, but even what's going on with the breath, you just kind of keep the point is to keep the mind kind of locked on. So those are some of the differences between concentration and mindfulness.

My own practice of social sphere. I do like concentration, calm myself

almost feel like the calm or something like that and I almost get more easily agitated. Go from the state of really being unified. The mindfulness there are moments when you like, but then I don't

know why. Sunday I need to develop

Let me say says I mean certainly, if a person is only mostly focusing on developing concentration or developing a calm there's, there's not much wisdom or understanding and calm. And so there is a nice state that people get into people get attached to it. But it doesn't really help us understand how wisely negotiate life so well. mindfulness practice is helping us with his skills, both understanding what's going on, but also learning how to be present for things in a wise way. If you're just focusing on a candle flame, concentrating, fixating on candle flame, you're not gonna understand much about how to have a conversation. So if you get concentrated into concentration practice only and you can get very blissful. Then you leave here at five o'clock and go out and one on one in rush hour traffic, you haven't learned anything about how to be present for anger and frustration and impatience and you know, all these other things. And so because you haven't learned how to be present for that, hold it in mindfulness,

those that those things will tend to take over. So concentration practices can have a big flip side, kind of, you know, back kind of backfire on people. And I've known people who've sometimes done concentration meditation for years. And then they finally kind of let you know there's kind of like putting a lid on some keep stuff in their psyche. They finally take the lid off and let this kind of stuff pop up. And all this stuff they've been ignoring or denying or repressing, concentration practice can be refreshed in practice. Mindfulness is supposed to be the opposite of that. And so mindfulness, learning the skills of mindfulness tends to make a teacher skills of how to engage in uncomfortable situations or pleasant situations in wiser way so that's why we, even though calm is important part of mindfulness is supposed to exist in balance with these other four factors. Whereas, when you do pure concentration practice, it can get in it can be overly, you know that main, the main thrust is concentration. The five faculties kind of as a diagram are kind of done with kind of like a pyramid or a triangle. And mindfulness is in the top, because that's the most important one. And then just leave aside just below is energy and concentration because other appears and they get paired and they get balance, they balance each other out at the base, it's confidence and discernment. And they also set heads exist in balance with each other. If you have too much faith or too much confidence, and no discernment, then you get in trouble. But if you have too much discernment without any confidence, that can also get a person in trouble. You need to have both. The analogy that's used in the ancient texts is confidence and discernment work together like a blind man who's really big and strong, but blind, and then a really small guy who has really sharp eyes. And so, if this small guy goes in the shoulders or the big blind guy, then they can find their way together. But all the short guy is is lame. You can't walk right? So the sermon it's like a lame man can see. And confidence by itself is like a strong person who has no ability to see. And so you need to have both together. And so some people who use the word sometimes the word confidence, and it's translated into English, not as common But as fate and so then people like to say this a faith needs to be balanced with wisdom with the bride called the sermons coffin calls called wisdom. So faith and wisdom need to exist in balance. And there is a danger if you have too much faith without the appropriate amount of balance to go with it. So other things, anything else you'd like to talk about from this? Yes?

How is that? What might experience as your bike crusher Viking meditation? What what are the dangers? I think for me that can be disorienting and frightening sometimes meditation can be how do I?

How much of that is is just a story and how much are there actual real, real.

The it's pretty rare that people get into danger with meditation. Usually, the, the dangerous aspects of meditation is when there's some kind of psychological imbalance beforehand that someone brings with them into into meditation. And then sometimes that imbalance can get exaggerated or, and sometimes meditation is counter indicated it's not actually useful for some people. If there's this kind of psychological imbalance that is gets triggered by the meditation practice, but if a person doesn't Have any obvious you know, psychological imbalance if a person does maybe should talk to someone meditation teacher or therapist to kind of tailor make the practice. But if the person doesn't have any concentration practices of various kinds can prison can crash, because you build up a lot of stillness, lack of focus a lot of concentration. And you know, you're not paying attention things so well. And then suddenly this deep stuff can well from inside and kind of suddenly take a person by surprise, memories and feelings that haven't been tended to. But I think as long as a person is doing mindfulness practice, and maintains them, like mindfulness itself is kind of like having eyes. So it's kind of open eyes. So even though we keep our eyes closed physically, as long as you're developing mindfulness and focusing on the mindfulness, I have never heard of anybody who crashed I've heard of people who've had some really interesting experiences. Sometimes any kind of spiritual life is not a linear life going from, you know, from bad to good linearly, you know, it's kind of like goes in circles and spirals and up

and down, two steps forward and one in three quarters steps back. And then sometimes just two steps forwards, and then it's three steps back and you have to kind of get a job. You know, it's kind of it's not a linear process. But, but you have to have some wisdom, some understanding of this. That's how it is. And sometimes, I mean, the analogy I like to use for this is to say that you're going up elevator and some really wonderful place in the top floor. And but however, the elevator stops at every floor and opens the door, and some floors are like, you know, these entertainment centers, you know, like Carnival, and you're not supposed to get off on those floors, but it's so alluring, you get off and you kind of get lost in the carnival for months and days. And so you have to know, you know, not to get caught. But other floors we come to

no one's cleaned them in 30 years, and they're just really a mess and dirty and the elevator refuses to go any further until, you know, you know, you know, maybe the elevator door opened and all this junk just crashed into the elevator and the doors are closed here to clean everything else, you know, and you can't just push things away because it falls back into guns you have to get out onto the floor and clean things up and organize things. And you know, the floor before was so beautiful that for me The floor was you know, a floor of peace and serenity and it was a great floor. I think I got it made enlightened is about to happen. You get back on the elevator and you go up and you next floor. It's just this mess and the credit card. As a door and critical back to the floor before and can't get there and, and so you have to clean up so sometimes you know, it's a big surprise some of the floors we come to. And so that doesn't mean you've crashed just means you've come to the next floor. Yes,

you're meditating. You just become aware. And the difference is mindfulness meditation. You realize I'm angry but you can observe it as being something entirely new. Yes, as opposed to just being in

So because of that when there are difficult experiences that arise when we get to a difficult floor it can be easier to handle it because because you have to have the wisdom understanding that you don't be caught by it or identified with it. Got a little bit the observer don't look at this. Look at this fascinating it's it's a chaotic floor Wow, look at this. This is the floor gift. You know, bound this skill is amazing. I had no idea there was so much guilt, you know, on this building, you know, as opposed to own you know, who am I? I'm just awful. I hope no one notices. You know, the world Difference between saying, Oh shoot, I'm angry again. That's, you know, just terrible hope no one noticed. Versus Oh, look at this. This is anger. And so that's the second approach we're trying to do in mindfulness. Oh, look at this. And the first approach we're trying to, you know, trying to learn not to do any more. So let's try it a little bit. Again, if you'd like to stand for a few seconds, and then we'll sit down to meditate again. Do a short meditation.

So one of the things to have confidence in is the value of being in the present moment of being present. So taking a comfortable, alert posture Closing the eyes.

And then taking those beginning deep breaths. Relaxing as you exhale is a way of remembering the value of being here in the present. This is where you are. You're going to be awake, the best of your ability to what's happening in the present.

Then when you're ready, you can gently bring the breath, breath back to normal. And then use the breath. As a place to develop and cultivate mindfulness and concentration. cultivate your ability to be present in the present

To apply ourselves with mindfulness, there has to be the effort and making the effort. It's a lot easier if there's confidence

and it's important that that effort, be relaxed that he's focused. So the mindfulness itself that clear recognition to what's happening is at ease is relaxed, spacious and focused.

In order to be mindful, good thorough away. It helps to use our intelligence or discernment or understanding or wisdom to be wise of what's going on. No another take our experience personally. To use it define to define who we are our self image to have the discernment or the wisdom.

simply observe and watch.

Confidence, effort, mindfulness concentration and discernment

So there are two lists in Buddhism that have the same five faculties, the high mister five is what we call the five faculties. And then there's what's called the five powers. And I understand the difference to be the five faculties are really capacities we have, they haven't really been developed so thoroughly. And when these five get developed thoroughly fully, they can become powers that we carry with us. So powers of confidence powers of application of energy powers of mindfulness power of concentration power of discernment, the real powers that strengths or strengths that we have. So, as you develop your mindfulness practice may be supported by these by the other four faculties, and may all five of them become interpersonal strengths. And so next time that you're going to do the equivalent of biked downtown LA, that you have this mindfulness practice, well developed becomes easy. Thank you