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SPEAKERS

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You're all know very well that we're a tradition, spiritual tradition that puts a lot of emphasis on the present moment being present. And a lot of the discovery, a lot of the negotiation, a lot of the struggle in practice has to do with working out. Those working with those forces that keep us from being present. So there are many of them. And one of the most common lists for these forces are the five hindrances. So things like desire, aversion, sloth and torpor, restlessness, anxiety, doubt. And, but there are other things also that can keep us from being present. And so a huge part of the practice is really seeing these things clearly. And learning to work with them. Learning to work with them means seeing them clearly. Repeat the words, seeing seeing them clearly. Over and over again. Because it's so important to study these things and get to know them well, sometimes practitioners are dismissive, or are in a hurry to get beyond the problems of practice. And I think it's sometimes best not to be in a hurry to get beyond the problems. But to take the difficulty struggles with the practice, as being the practice as being the very thing that's probably the most important thing for you to do is to really get to know something really well. So if desire or aversion or doubt, or something is big for you, really, to really make and make it a point to study this takes, you know, just not only in meditation practice, but outside of it. Read books about the topic, because talk to friends about the topic, go for walks in the beach and think about, you know, how it is for you these things, journal about it, whatever you can, whatever resources you have to really study these things really well and get to know them well. Because when you get to know something really well, then it's easier to become free of it. Know what to do with it. But if you're dismissive of it or Get through something quickly if you'd like go quickly, the roots of it or the tentacles of it might still be operating be there ready to jump and ready to ambush you in a moment's notice. And so it's important to you know, study and look at all this the so we were Trishna emphasis is emphasizes a lot the present moment going to be in the present in order to be attentive and mindful. And but I think that it's also very helpful in the practice to have a sense of vision, a sense of what's possible and maybe this gets kind of shortchanged or not notice so much that sense of vision because the intention to practice the aspiration, the practice, the energy we have for practice, has a lot to do with the vision or the sense we have, what the possibility is through the practice. So if

we think that purpose The practice is basically just, you know, to get a little bit of rest, because we didn't get enough sleep last night, then, you know, that seems like a worthwhile thing to do. But, you know, it's not gonna, it's not gonna probably you're not going to be so you know, tremendous, tremendously, tremendously inspired by that as a goal. But if you felt, you know, you really felt that if you could sit and realize something really deep in your sitting, and it would have a huge impact on the well being, for the better there will be for a lot of other people. Maybe you feel you can galvanize, wow, I can, you know, my life can make a difference. I think I'm gonna get you know, there's a vision of possibility. Or if you have a vision of possibility of, you know, touching some very deep or very dramatic or spiritual dimension of life. It's about touch into that. Not just the sense of faith, but the place of faith, the faith or sense of spiritual sacredness that might be really inspiring, you have a vision of what's possible. If you have a vision that is possible or sense that it is possible to become free of greed, hate and delusion. And that is really possible freedom. And this isn't Buddhism says all the time. So greed, hate and delusion. I mean, that's nice, you know, if I could be a monk or nun, and maybe I could kind of scratch the surface of that, but that's not for me, and I'm just content to get some rest, you know, or do something simple here just kind of make my life a little bit better. But if you really felt the possibility, yes, I could do this too. Then that would be you know, maybe be much more inspiring. And people can get kind of a lot of fire. A very strong sense of purpose. This is what I'm doing. This is what I want to do, I'm going to do it. As a spiritual tradition that puts a lot of emphasis on the present moment. We often talk also about a lot of accepting the present moment as it is. And that's a very profound teaching, but it can be sometimes at the expense of having have that kind of teaching I can practice sometimes can put the fire out. You know how this fight is going to this great sense of maybe some people talk about urgency, this great sense of purpose is great sense of this is what I'm going to do. I'm going to be committed and resolved. And yes, this is what it's about. And I think that can be a beautiful part of a person's life, to have that really strong sense of resolve. If it becomes striving, or it's tied to expectation, then a person might suffer a lot. But aspiration does not the same thing as striving. aspiration is not the same thing as as expectation. I think of aspiration as being something that's opens us it's more open ended more open to possibilities than it is cleaning, it closes us down. So for some people, it's very helpful to have some sense of what's possible through the practice, and I know that there are people who can probably most people, the sense of possibility keeps opening and opening, because it's very hard, you know, to have a sense of the full potential of human being spiritually, unless you can go step by step to kind of experience. Some people have like near death experiences. And they have this dramatic kind of experience into some kind of sacred dimension. They sometimes close their socks off. And then they own and then they come out of that and they realize, oh, there's this possibility. And then that experience then shows them the path, the direction they can go for their life, and they're there forever changed by that. Some people it's much slower. Some people feel either tormented by their mind tormented by their thoughts. And they have some sense that it's possible, maybe not to be so tormented. Just that's the vision. And so somehow they practice and the mind settles and somehow that inner conflict relaxes and Some people who have to know, you know, I know that part of my life is settled and I'll come back to my normal life and just take care of things. When I was practicing at San Francisco Zen Center in the 70s, I remember one of the senior teachers telling me that there was a pattern to how people came through Zen center.

And that was we had the fact that there was a lot of young people that came through. I came in early 20s. And the, the person told me that that a lot of people come, the first five years that they're here, three to five years, they're here. They're just trying to find themselves, find who they are, find who they are in relationship to society to other people and kind of find out who they are. And, and a community like sensitive was a great place for people to bump into each other and they're given jobs and sense of purpose and community and Conflict of all kinds. And so you kind of learn all about yourself and get established in various ways. Then this teacher told me, well, that's a three to five years of weakness, people find themselves. A lot of people then leave, they kind of did what they wanted to do, they kind of found themselves they feel somehow settled. And then they go back back into the community to go back to college or they go back to the work, whatever, and they can do something. And then the interesting thing is teacher said, we shouldn't take him to literally like he's no, but what he said was, if they stayed after that three to five year period, that's when they started practicing Buddhism. And so, you know, so what's the point you know, so have a some sense of the possibilities that can't get opens and opens and opens for some people. As we go along here. Some people are shy to imagine what's possible for them? They for some reason, they're self effacing. And for some reason they feel inadequate or they feel like it's inappropriate, or they feel like it's maybe egotistical or something so they hold that like that's, you know, it's fine and goal for you know, the Dalai Lama, or some great spiritual teacher, but, you know, I'm just this bumbling fool who am I to kind of have some great aspiration. And so some people hold themselves back from eating, allowing themselves to see, you know, possibility potential. It's been pointed out that for many years in psychotherapy developed in America, in the West, it was primarily focusing on pathology and somehow overcoming pathology, psychological problems. And then at some point, maybe with Abraham Maslow or that there was an idea, let's look beyond pathology. Let's look and see, you know, once a person gets pathology free, you know, kind of an ordinary person, then, you know, are there higher and greater possibilities beyond to simply becoming free of suffering. And it's been pointed out that religions like Buddhism, certain kinds of spiritual traditions are really pointing in that direction. Some people even say that he's pointing that direction that we're looking at what's possible to kind of the upper end of possibilities now to somebody becoming more accommodating, you know, or fitting into society just well and getting along with our neighbors and, you know, and just to be able to cope, but much more than that. So, for each of you, do you have a sense of possibility? sense of potential, your potential that maybe is more than the alleviation of suffering? Do you have a sense of a vision of what your what your spiritual life can lead you to where you're going? Not everyone does have that. And I'm not saying that to say that people should have that. Some people's spiritual life is not about where they're going, or what's happening, but it's about how they are in their life. And I know some people who are some here in the West, sometimes that can be a kind of neurotic attitude around finding your place in life, finding your job, your destiny, the purpose of your life. And, and some people have struggled with that and trying to find what it is. And I've known people for whom a sense of purpose, a sense of the job that they have there, their work, their career, whatever, finding some thing was not working. Their life was about it's about their life was about how they live their life, not what they did. And so it doesn't really matter what some people I've met doesn't really matter what they do. They could work, any kind of job at all. And sometimes I've met people who've worked very humble jobs, but it's, it's how they are, is really what

inspires them. That's really where the sense of possibility is, how they are now. Are they kind? Are they generous? Are they compassionate? Are they free? Are they present? That's what their life is about. Maybe their sense of possibility, there are two you know, possibility of a how and for other people, a sense of potential possibility of some direction of life can take is really important part of who they are. And you see, oh, I can, you know, I could, you know, experience a very deep sense of spiritual peace. I could live a life eight, there's possibility that I could be of service to my community, I could engage in my community in some way. And so you might think about a little bit, you know, how are you how is it for you is vision or potential or sense of possibility. Something that is useful and wise for you to hold is something you can hold any more conscious way and clear away. And when you hold it into conscious, more conscious clear away, is the main gift for you to even coming here and practicing on this non residential retreat. So, you're really here and this, this fits into kind of my sense of potential. I'm going to really try to be present. You have to let go of the potential vision in the moment of practice, but that vision possibility can feel the aspiration so can really engage here in a very, very wholehearted way. Now be very curious to hear. I probably have not time this week, but I'd be curious to hear from all of you some point or other, if you have some sense of a potential potential you have or potential the spiritual life has for you. And is that potential something that inspires you or presses you? Does it frighten you? Or does it meaning for you? Or do you have or I'd like to know that you have no sense of potential? You know, that's not something how you are if you don't think that way. You just like practicing just seems to be feel at home in it that feels right. And that's enough for you. It's enough for me to know it doesn't have to be anything more than that. But it's nice to know and nice to be clear about these things. And to know what's what's what And then one of the interesting questions if we have a sense of potential sense of possibility, that sense of vision is, what are we willing to do? And what are we willing to let go of, to follow through on that. I mean, in some ways, there's an infinite number of potentials within each of us. You know, you could probably all you all have the potential becoming better chess players. Right. And you all have you know, potentials of You know, memorizing the initials for every television channel there is no you don't have the potential. I was many years ago with I stayed at someone's house and she said, I pipe her channels in. So I went through each. I don't think there were 500 because you skipped over whole numbers. But you got to 500 and started again one. So we have a lot of potentials. So what are we willing to let go of? What are we are willing to put aside so that we really kind of follow through with some clarity and some emphasis on those things which are really important for us. I think the greater sense of Purpose a person has, the greater is their willingness to let go even have wonderful things. So they can really follow through with that purpose. So it's also going to talk a little bit there's an encouragement for all of you to dare to have a vision, there to have a to imagine what possibilities can be for you. possibilities for things to be different somehow and what they are and then in, in having that sense of possibility, then understanding how the practice of mindfulness of loving kindness, concentration precepts, departees the practices we do that how that's both support going in that direction. So that's what I that's what's my mind and perhaps we can go around the room again, and everyone can say their names Hilda Gail, Gail, Lisa, Bill Penny Sharon, David, Kendra and Armand. Sergio, Pat. Hey me, Maureen, Michelle, Carol. anything anyone else? Anyone who wants to bring up comment or question or concern about potential Oh yeah. From their enemy the so you know, all these things have traps. And

so one of them is to be egotistical. And my hope is that when mindfulness is incorporated into spiritual practice, that mindfulness will correct for that, because of the mindfulness is really honest and really careful and really looking carefully, eventually, that contraction, that suffering that that comes from the egotistical, self centered is revealed shows itself and then when you see that suffering, then it'll be complain just or clean, purifying that point. So I have a lot of hype, a lot of faith in the power of the mindfulness practice. So that I don't think necessarily that certain things need to be taken care of right away. I might pick up that someone has egotistical in the practice, but I might not feel need to say anything about it might be not even helpful to say anything, but just lets the practice, develop, see, take its course. And then sooner or later they'll see it. Remember my earliest machines, early Zen retreats that I had, you know, it was really, you know, I would practice everyday at home, who did practicing for several years, but myself practicing, you know, on daily basis, and I had all kinds of attitudes, understandings about what I was doing and practice attitudes, understanding who I was in relation to the practice. And as long as I practiced, you know, one or two meditation sessions, a day at home, the stress or attention the way or way that those attitudes were off, didn't show themselves didn't really themselves. But I went and did it on retreat and practice, you know, all day long. And then those attitudes started twisting me. You know, and they were, they were untenable they were they were unsustainable in the retreat context, because things that get intensified. And so it was really valuable for me to be on retreat to see. To have these things become really clear, because I've gone on for a couple of years without these things, including egotism showing itself. So, retreats are, you know, one place to work with this. There's not so you know, so egotism is one thing. There's something which is a form of egotism, which is really hard to work with. And that is narcissism. Because that's sometimes very hard to see. And, and it's sometimes it's very hard to differentiate between healthy spiritual self concern narcissism because they kind of look the same. The I don't know so much about narcissism, but I've seen people who the whole, the whole world centers around them, and everything is referred back to them and to their, their needs, their self image, their self identity. He constantly needs to be referred back to referring back to her back. And, and, and everybody in the world serves that purpose for that reflection or that support for who they are as a person. And so that probably qualifies as narcissism practitioners when Nothing to help you. I mean, I know narcissistic people who are very much in community but but they're really kind of in the community in order to kind of have the community support them. That's what they're trying to get. They're getting that from everybody else. Yes narcissistic. I don't know I don't have a good definition, more granular said is that it's a excessive preoccupation with oneself and one's own self and Narcissus, Narcissus Narcissus, Narcissus, Narcissus was this Greek guy who saw his reflection I guess in the water and a mirror and fell in love with himself and it was completely enamored with himself. So it's kind of weird being self enamored speaking from my own experience, I find it quite interesting to see where I'm coming from a child's sense of self useful when I was involved in developing this concept of self it's so much opens up you can learn so much. Yeah developing yourself legal the side down Where one doesn't see oneself as somebody who can do this. I really can identify with that one. I'm going to say that 12 years ago, get exactly that was my first retreat. And I could not think of myself as somebody who was amended people can be a meditator who could. Who could aspire to all this and my teacher, one of them was James barrows. And he told everybody that

he in when he started, I never thought that he would be a meditator himself. And it just came right up. It was like a stone fell into the pool at the right moment and it just it just Change the treat you freed me up? Yeah. Great. Yeah. I've heard it from so many other people. Nice to know we're not alone in that it's, it's still powerful sometimes. In the Sure. Yeah. It was very meaningful to me to hear kind of a traditional Zen teaching where they say that all the Buddha's and ancestors answers meaning that enlightening people before us. At some point in their life, they're all like us. And, you know, so they started with same material. And now and with one little story about my practice, hopefully it's encouraging. So in 1979, I think I signed up for my first seven days, then retreat to sushi at the San Francisco Zen Center in the summer. And I've been practicing Zen for some years. But you know, I have never sat outside one day of machines but never sat down seven day session. And no noticed before that was 1977. And I signed up to go. And then a week before the session started, I called up the Zen center, and I said, something really important. Something really important is come up, and I can't come to this issue. I said, Okay, we'll take you off the list. And the important thing that came up was fear. So I chickened out in my first retreat. And it was too years or a year and a half before I sat, my first one after that. I don't know. pain, pain and suffering. So I'm the ones having a problem right here staying away. I've meditated for years, whatever, not with this one. I took this on thinking that this would be fine because I've meditated since I was in my 20s, or my teens, and I realized Sunday night that I was afraid. And I just sat there for a long time. I just thought that was very strange because not very many times in my life, that afraid of me. And so unfortunately the last two days so have you noticed that I can't stay away and I apologize, but we can work with it. I'm deciding my decision. Hopefully, with your permission. Go through this and see if I can get over that terrifying thought of being quiet. I understand it very well. I know you're wanting your wanted here. It's fine to be here. It's and everyone has their own struggles and And, and if that's what you're up against that kind of fear, this is a great place to sit with it. And I've known people who've had to sleep for days before they could face something. I've known people who spent a whole week and retreat crying, and all kinds of things that go on to release it sisters. So you know, you should feel comfortable here. You're not unusual, but you're going through. Yes, yes, absolutely. Get Started. In my teenage years. I studied Transcendental Meditation care of me ever So, thank you very much for today. And may whatever strength has come from your intention of the day may be something that you take with you and to water the seeds of the society around you. So there are goodness here supports others and if someone, few people could stay behind and do some tidying up for few minutes, that would be greatly appreciated and it's managing today again. And thank you very much