

2007-07-16 What Can You Let Go Of

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SPEAKERS

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Sometimes when I am considering coming down here, like Monday evening to teach, I'm assuming that I'm supposed to have something to teach. And as was explained something and but sometimes I think that maybe more useful for you and to be taught something like be taught and answer something is too be given a question and go home with the question. Another question that perplexes you, but a question that helps kind of probe or point you to something that's maybe more essential that you can only do by kind of going at yourself going into through that reality. into deeply into reality in the way that question can do. And so the question I'd like to offer you this week, maybe some of you would like to take it home with you, and use it during the course of the week, or for the rest of your life. And, and that is there's a very simple question. Maybe that's part of the beauty and that is what is it that you can let go of right now. So you can feel free or what is that you can let go of right now. So you discover freedom here right now. Now, freedom is kind of the measure of all thing boosts and freedoms really the heart of one of the hearts of Buddhism. And it's both goal of British compassion and it's the A lot of which Buddhist compassion arises is freedom itself. Freedom is synonymous with peace. liberation is another word for it. It's also synonymous in Buddhist terms for happiness. And it's really wonderful to me, how happy you can be with nothing but very little. And I know for some people, that that idea of being happy with nothing is perplexing is impossible idea. pdf sitting still, for some people is impossible, and do sit still and nothing happened. And it'd be happy is foreign because to sit still and then nothing happened. The deeper conditioning deeper complexes, the deeper assumptions that we live our life by. Our assumptions are complex or conditionings, which are often not so pleasant enough. So happy assumptions of insects assumptions of building xiety assumptions of that the world is a threatening place. And so if you do nothing leak brings the person back to those places inside of them where they feel most threatened, almost less. But even there, you can ask the question, what can you let go have to find your freedom? And, and this is kind of, I think one of the hardest questions in Buddhism, because you let go enough. You'll define freedom. If you could let go a little bit and you're not happy, you haven't left let go enough. And so, some people can let go a little bit. And I was, I discovered at a time that if I let go and was grumpy then I really hadn't let them go. I thought I had and, and then there was once I let go of my resentment towards some And it took me a long time to realize that I hadn't really let go because I let go of resentment. And I came to a neutral place I was neutral toward the person. I thought neutral was, you know, I was free. But actually neutral was still a kind of resistance kind of defensiveness or something still holding on to something. And if I'd really like to go well, which I eventually want to do, then I have goodwill, friendly feelings towards a person or family attitude, at least approach that person. So to let go, you know, thoroughly enough to receive the sweetness or the beauty or the happiness that can come. So what is it you have to let go? now part of the sexual exploration perhaps it helps to understand what it is what's the opposite of freedom. And so, you know, obvious obvious obvious opposes bondage. And certainly in the Buddhist texts, they talk a lot about the use of words like bondage or fetters. that people have.

And one of the places to discover how we're in bondage or how we're caught or grip and are not free, isn't meditation practice is a very simple test you can do to find out how free you might be. And that is, can you sit still? And not engage in discursive thinking? Can you sit still and not have a conversation? In your mind? Can you sit still and not have images or you can move these spin in front of you about the future or the past or whatever? Can you choose to stop doing that? to drop it to let go of it? And then let the next next moment just arrives on its own. If you can't do that, then you're not free. And because then something's wrong. Driving you driving your mind. You've lost your choice. And you might let go for a moment and feel a moment's respite. And then the thinking big starts over again conversation starts up again. So it's a very interesting place to find out and part of the value of meditation is you can find out where you're not free in a way you can't very well maybe couldn't can't do so as well in daily life. Because in daily life, if you're busy all the time, it might mask how unfree you are, you're always doing and doing and doing. You know, it's always like if someone is a live their whole life on a trampoline trampoline in their backyard. So if you live your whole life in the trampoline, you might never have the opportunity to sit still and quiet. And then notice that your fingers are always tapping your your Like you're really nervous to trampoline, you're so busy, you know, jumping up and around, you don't notice this underlying kind of layer of anxiety that's there. So sitting still is an interesting place to discover it. I think a lot of you will discover places you're not free in daily life. And another kind of way of discovering your unfairness is if you're unhappy, if you're suffering, the Buddhist idea is that if you're suffering, if you're unhappy, it represents someplace, you're not free. And so you can ask the question for yourself. When you notice you're not happy. What is it that you can let go of right now? So you can be free? What is your let go of right now so you can be happy? It's certainly the questions easy. Sometimes the answer is easy. Sometimes fulfilling the answer is hard. It's not always so easy. Just drop something because you see it. But I think for me, it's been a very helpful question. Because, you know, I'm content let go of what I can. So sometimes I can't let go of everything I see all the places that attachment and holding. But sometimes it's enough to let go of my judgments that it shouldn't be that way. Oh, I'm a Buddhist teacher. All these people wonderful people are gonna listen to me, I should be the embodiment of freedom. And I could irritate it with a long life, the post office. And well, I should, and I did today like go very quickly. But you know, but also I can let go of my assumptions that I have to be somebody because it adds a layer of suffering. I have to be a person who has certain kind of way. I have to be a person who doesn't get attached. And then it's easier Of course, if you let go of that assumption that belief is easier than to make You find where the key is to let go of the deeper assumptions. So given what's happening, what do we let go of so that we can be freer? So sometimes another another way to kind of feel your way into this question to the answer to the question is through your body. Because the body is also a wonderful teacher for how we are unfree, and one of the ways that unforgiveness manifests in the body is tension in the body. And so I was sitting here with you all, and I was feeling pretty peaceful pretty still. For a while and, and this little thought arise, you know, I'm sitting very still and very nice, this is good. And, and then, when I saw that thought, go through my mind, I said, well, let's not pat myself on the shoulder too quickly. Let's look around here and see what else is going on here. And a little bit to my surprise I, I found there's this tension on my eyes. And when I noticed attention to my eyes, then I noticed that there was actually even though I thought I wasn't thinking mellifera ducks even I thought I wasn't thinking there was a very subtle kind of very subtle layer thinking going on. It was kind of like the stage director kind of behind the stage. And that which was being expressed in this little this tension on my eyes. so in this situation, that was my attention, my body, which showed me where the holding was, where the bondage was, where their compulsion was. To sometimes it's your thoughts. Sometimes it's your feelings. Sometimes there's obsessions, or feelings that just doesn't want to let up. Unhappy feelings isn't like you're sad or angry or depressed, and just doesn't want to let up and you know, you're, you should like to feel better. And it might be interesting to ask what is it you can let go of right now? That makes you free or happier. And

it's basically different ways of holding this question the question, what is it? What can you let go of? is not the same question. What should you let go? If you're a good Buddhist, you should let go at all. And if you can't, you should just beat yourself up. Oh, I'm not a good Buddhist. No, of course not. You shouldn't do that. But, but, so there's things maybe we ideally should let go of, but sometimes we have to let go of idealism. Sometimes our idealism is the very cause of our bondage, the too idealistic. So then the question is, what can you let go of? What can you let go of so you can feel a little bit Maybe that's a good question. better question, what can you like? Have you feel a little bit freer? And the assumption I have behind offering you this question is that more often than not, people are over overlook or don't give themselves a chance to let go of what's easy to let go. And there's lots and lots opportunities to let go of thousands of the course of the day that you probably can draw things you can drop really easily. And we're so busy or so caught up or so wrapped up or so anxious are so you know, so something that we don't, we allow ourselves of the places we can lighten up a little bit.

One of the great Things to let go of is to let go of the neurotic concerned about what other people think about you. Can you do that there was a time I couldn't. And that was painful.

And there's letting go of anxiety about the future. I used to have a lot of anxiety about the future. One of the things that helped with that was I spent a lot of time planning the future. Planning, whatever and concerned about what it's going to meant was going to happen. And after a while, it dawned on me that more often than not, the future didn't occur the way that I envisioned it was going to happen. Some meeting I was worried about the meeting was canceled or the people went there and it's something you notice there's always something go different. And after a while, I started over and over and over again. Maybe because I'm kind of not very intelligent in my planning my imagination if some of you probably brilliant. It turns out to be exactly as predicted. But I wasn't so smart at it. So which was very lucky. Because then, after a while I caught on, oh, wait a minute, I can't do this very well. So mice will not try. So then I kind of let go, I don't know what's going to happen in the future. It's often different than what I expect anyway. So it's more useful just to kind of be present and figure it out then in there without being anxious about it. So what is it you can let go of right now? So you can be happier? So you can take that question home with you over the week and ask yourself that question. Or you can do even better. And you can answer the question right now.

Wait, does anybody have any answers for us? You'd like to share? Not too embarrassed to share. Yeah.

Can you hear me?

Well for me

what a rose was letting go of letting go. surrendering to surrender

to letting go on a second by minute by hour day basis works really well, because things happen. I mean, just gotten a little bit of a fender bender on the way here.

wasn't in a rush but I was

taking time with someone and in the course I don't like to rush and do anything in a rush thing or spend more time than is necessary for any task. So I laughed and jumped in the shower and came here and myself was pulling out. I hit my neighbor's bumper on the back of my door and I was thinking about somebody out somebody else at the time

and

I stopped pulled over called my neighbor and some hate bumper Well, this is a big construction truck of mines big construction fan,

so we kind of like Fender bended in his was

kind of bent up anyway. So he just said I'll just buy me a beer. And I said that was great. And at the same time are saying, Oh, my, my daughter is just you know, it's Miss mangoes. You know Now I have to deal with that and stuff and I had to let go of meaning control the situation, because I'm not. There's more being concentrated in the moment. Just relaxing and saying, hey, everything's

okay.

You know, you're just gonna have to take care of that. And then of course, I came here and sat down. And it was just that moment of constant surrender and letting go letting go.

Is that is that control

issue thing? The judgment, I'm in control.

Am I in control? I'm never in control.

I think so. So a wonderful variation of letting go practice is letting be practice. Just letting things be. Thank you. appear in the front for discourse.

See now I'm supposed to not worry what people think of me because I didn't turn the microphone on.

You know?

You know that DVD the sacred it

because that many people may know of it it's about manifestation and how to ask and create your future from the law of attraction. And it's kind of like the divine teachings of the Masters where you just I guess you believe you have what you'd like from your heart as if it's here before it ever arrives. So I'm so very very confused between letting go and letting God surrendering to God's

will, my will because they tell you to do your bliss.

And, you know, in life, there's a lot of growth and I don't understand too about like karma, and I always believed they were past

lives and things.

Well, I call their prayer lines. And there was a movie made, and it's sold also at the bookstore at full circle and it's sold on DVD. And it shows how people like a lady who healed herself from breast cancer she just believed in gratitude that was gone. And like Norman Cousins watch movies and funny movies

and raised your vibration and it was gone. And about people attracting their dreams. So they say live as though it's already here and then put the vibrations I had in the past have to do that. I would just ask God and release. You know what I mean? Like prayer to me was constipated. consternation. I didn't care was constipated. consternation.

Well, what it was

was I think it was that I didn't understand that a prayer was the same thing as a wish is that if I wish to thought and God heard it, that you know, so as if this is now than a plea and a cry for help, because my brother told me move, I will pay your rent on going I did and you breached his promise and I'm a nice Jewish girl. That's Buddhists, everything, I'm everything. I'm not a religion. You know, I mean, I'm just a human and who's on this homeless on the street.

This question this evening, how, what, what what can we what can the lack of now,

my body could be okay? Someone doesn't help me, I may lose it. See, see, I don't want to lose my cat. And I don't want to lose my body. And I don't want to harm anything. I can't hurt myself and kill myself and you can't escape. So I am in an endangered species list. So if I don't tell that to people and say that I'm looking for a room maybe as a share rental, where it with one as a purebred

Persian cat

and one person to rent with so that I can move forward.

So if what you're asking for tonight is you're hoping to find a place to rent,

perhaps Yes. Because if I cannot maintain and that the person made a change of heart and I, I just want our family to heal and then my friend who was married to the sheriff tried to call for help. So excuse me, he went

on to dramas

you won't believe this. Yes, me. So there's a question here for the whole group. And you're kind of veering off a little bit. Yes. So I need to kind of just remind the whole group, that the question for all of you is, what can you let go of right now, so that you're a little bit happier. And then the question that I posed to you to all of you is that very simple question is I wonder if you're okay with you, if we kind of continue going around the room? Why does that

if I put that

out, and I put out the fear that I try to let go of fear? That is very difficult, in my case, very good to let go and let God

but to ask and if

I told people here, maybe somebody could say you never know in manifestation circles.

People do things to help others or say hey, I have a job for you.

My job is if you're new to here to our center, one of the primary values or approaches to practice we have here is not actually letting go, but is rather be very honest about what's happening. And it's beautiful what you said, you talked about your fear, even though maybe you can't let go of your fear. In the practice of mindfulness here. We use the honesty about fear as a door into that freedom. So you said you spoke your fare very well. So I appreciate that. Yeah.

Well, I don't want to live in fear is the worst vibration, you know what I mean? And so it's a little different in different groups and beliefs. But

meanwhile,

I didn't know I'd say all that but that DVD the secrets very popular and I don't know the answers, you know, thank you.

For me it's two things one, food, you know, eat too much. The other one is excessive exercise.

Maybe they go together. Thank you.

Actually,

I don't know if I have an answer to. I mean, I do have an answer about what to let go right now. But one of the things I don't let go when I'm in meditation is is my mind. My mind gets into this relaxed state that I start getting creative, like really creative thoughts. And at one point during one of your teachings, you you I read a passage where the Buddha said if it's something that that, you know, makes you happy and open and joyous to do more of that. And if it if it does it, then do less of that. And so when I get into that creative space, when I'm being creative inside my head, I just sort of just, I guess, just let it happen.

Because it gives me joy. And then I see myself watching my thoughts go, Oh, I'm in this space right now, I should just let this go and just relax a little bit. And it makes me think back of one of your teachers when you said it's like, it's like watching the sheep and you yourself as the shepherd and the sheep. It's kind of that and relaxation sort of that that opened me up. I don't know if that's something that I should let go or someday it might be something you would like go. I think if you keep watching, keep being mindful of this whole process. At some point, you'll find that there's a

better, greater, more satisfying sense of well being that comes when you let go of creativity as well. The creativity can come with a nice feeling to it. But when you're when you're when you know, even a nicer feeling more peaceful, more settled, more place within, then the pleasure of creativity will not be solar. So interesting. But until you know something better than, of course, it seems pretty promising. Okay, nice.

So why not?

So, so one approach, which is, you know, it's just go with it. And sooner or later, you'll have enough of it. Sooner or later you'll find that keep continue to do this. And meditation is kind of dead end. But until you see that for yourself, you can keep doing it, but sooner or later, you'll see it's kind of a dead end

and it's not as nice as it is, at some point. You know, it's like seems like some people have a lot of sexual fantasies and meditation, sexual fantasies, excellent sexual fantasies can for some people be very pleasant but give yourself over. It's To over to it for non stop for 96 hours. And after a while you get pretty tired. And you know, there's plenty of people who've been meditators, after a while saying enough of this, this is getting driving me batty. It was nice initially. So just like that, So something which initially might seem very pleasant or happiness producing might be it might change his tone, or you can just indicate your idea but might change over time. But you don't have to be in a hurry. You know, it'll all unfold in its own way. Especially if you're honest and look carefully what is this? What is this? So it makes sense. during most

of the meditation after the bell rang, I realized I just missed

most of it. So

I felt like I had such an awful meditation and that judgment came in

and I would love to let go without

judgment.

Yes. And I guess wanting something different than what I'm experiencing.

So you'd love to let go of your judgment. But would you say that because you can't do it so easily? You can't

let go of it?

Well, it just pops up automatically. You know, it just Oh, that was

the worst meditation I've had in a long long time.

Says lingers there doesn't you can't just drop it and kind of lingers and kind of causes you to feel kind of uneasy.

I don't know if it's uneasy. I mean, it's just I have a feeling it's there about a lot of things.

You know, it's not just the meditation, but I have a feeling it's there automatically. A lot

of things Yes. So then the question might be, what can you let go? You can't let go of the judgment.

What quickly Could you just be okay with

whatever is happening, but you can be okay with being a judging person. Okay, we have lousy meditation, okay. Anything

like that. I mean, the minute it came in, I'm like, Well, you know, don't let go of it so soon because they're probably something you're going to learn from this, you know, so don't

want to get rid of it, but maybe explore it or something, you know,

in that approach, when you feel lighter, you feel lighter and you do it. Well,

I'm, I'm attached to a person that I need to detach from, but I have noticed that I'm attached to the attachment and in so that there's a certain kind of energy, I guess it's some kind of pleasure

in that attachment. So it's kind

of like, it's not so much about the person.

It's about the attachment to the attachment that makes sense.

So part of the benefit of that attachment to attachment is pleasure. Are there any other benefits you're getting from staying attached?

Well, there is pain as well. So I don't know it just almost almost as if there's a reservoir of energy that I could, by letting go of and I could tap into and maybe I'm a little bit afraid of

the potential with

I had maybe been afraid of the freedom I don't know.

So the so the attachments protects you from the risk that comes from letting your energy your freedom kind of flow flow freely.

Yeah, it's kind of going into freefall. In a way, just

Can you imagine any situation in life or any kind of conditions you can create around you, so that you can let go of your attachment sacred even temporarily. And when you can let that free flow or that flow stuff just happened. What was it? What would you have to put in place? So you could do that? I'll think about, I'll think about that. I'm not sure. What do you think about and see if you can create a safe environment where it's safe to let go.

Okay, thank you.

I could let go of my

glass of wine tonight.

I can let go of my net. My

usual glass of wine at night.

I can let go of that tonight. Glad to hear that. Hope you sleep better.

My mother died of cancer in January and I've been going through the process of letting go of her and my relationship with her. And I have discovered that it's a very big task. And if I try to let it go all at once,

it's very difficult. And the other thing that I've discovered for sitting is that part of the attachment is not necessarily to her, but to myself. And that the idea of who I am as a being was attached very strongly to her as my mother.

And so, every little bit every day

I'm letting go of a little piece of, of her and of myself in the process, and that letting go of myself is about who I'm supposed to be and who I was through her eyes. And it is a very intense process and makes for many painful meditations. But What I can let go of his little pieces at a time? It sounds

like also you're letting go of perhaps some kind of idea that is supposed to be going faster.

Yes.

That someone sent me a book that said one thing about breathing is that it always takes longer than anyone wants. So that's

something else that can might go off

longer than most people, I would say Why? Because some people actually hold on to the grief forever. They don't want it to go, because it's comforting or something. So not everyone wants it to go. But certainly, to go slower than most people want it to go. And to some degree, yeah, just choice. But it's very hard to see the place of choice. I mean, this is part of the part of the function of mindfulness practice, and sitting still enough, so you can go into that into your psyche deep enough to see where the place of choices If you don't see where there's a choice, then you have no choice. And so but you know, for example, with grief and a lot of letting go, there's a natural process that goes on as well. And so part of the function, mindfulness practice is to make the optimal conditions to allow this natural process to go and your job is to make the right conditions, not to direct the show. Thank you.

The thing that occurs to me

and it just happened to come up this choice.

Because letting go sometimes

it's hard to understand what it is. It's easy when you see that you're thinking this way or that you're feeling anger and you know that you can, you know, see that and let go of that but on subtler levels for me, I'm finding that choosing choosing to think differently about something, to frame something differently. To hold something differently is actually letting go. But it doesn't seem in this it doesn't fit the description of letting go.

I found that out today.

Something triggered a deep reaction in me. And I found myself going down almost like a memory trace or an emotional trace

and experiencing this just very strange

but familiar pain

and I found myself doing it and I saw the process and I and I actually was able to choose and it took time and it was uncomfortable for a little bit. But it did pass and I was conscious of not forcing it to go away. not forcing it to change By choosing to frame it differently, and that was letting go,

sometimes letting go and choosing a different direction. So I'd like to like to end with a little story. But if someone else else wants to say something, maybe

I really appreciate it.

I really appreciated this question because it's actually one that I've been working with myself for about a year I frame it is, what would I have to let go of to make this easier? And what I like about it, I just want to point out what I've noticed in working with it is that it has an immediacy to it that tunes the mind towards detecting suffering, which is really important. And so there can be the sense of Just knowing that that question is there in the mind, makes it easier to notice suffering, because then I become aware that I remember that there might be a way out of it. And so that's a big motivator for seeing it. And I find that it doesn't really require analysis of saying, oh, what could this be what, you know what, in the past clauses, etc. It's really more yoga like, sort of breathe into the tension and just try to imagine what needs to open. Sometimes it does.

Beautiful. Thank you. And also Well, I just want to pick up from one word, you use the word immediacy, a question that has immediacy to it. And that's that's the intention a little bit behind this offering you this question for this week, is not ask the question in some abstract way or potentially Oh, yeah, I can like go. Yes, I could let go. have, you know some? Yes, you know, someday I'll be able to let go of some big thing. But what what in here and now, here and now, in the immediacy of now, what can you let go, so you feel happier or freer and don't get, don't think it has to be big, we can be small, may be as subtle as subtle, but it can be you know how you eat your meal. Maybe there's a way of maybe something you'd let go of while you're eating your meal, you know, trying to finish as quickly as possible. So you get on the television show or something, I don't know. What can you let go of what's simple let go of what what gives letting go so to me, what's what's immediately possible? And I that's you find all kinds of things you do. If you ask this question, you start getting a hang of it, and you became easier and easier and easier to find all these little ways. And as you find a little ways more easy. You start finding the bigger ways and bigger What can you let go? So in the story, if I may, there was a monastery that had a statue of Manjushri Bodhisattva glacadh face great being celestial kind of be of compassion, of wisdom, and you should use the being of wisdom and in one hand, and you shouldn't hold a sword, a sword of wisdom that can cut through delusions. On the other hand, sometimes he holds a book, because all the wisdom in the book and this this monastery, this particular statue was famous across the lands because if people came up to it with people who are really troubled or something in their life, and they came to the statue with sincerity, the statue would speak to them, say something. So that was the story. So there was a man who'd come to the monastery from the local village in Cape years and mostly he was very devoted to the monks there. And he would every few days combined bring some foods, some food to them, make offerings. And then there was a period of time when he was really upset about something really upset. And he was visibly upset the habit saw that he was upset, wondering what they could do for him. So at some point, he came in the episode he was still upset to have it said, you know, today, when you come with you're offering food to the monks, rather than offering it to the kitchen, go up to that statue of Manjushri and offer it at the altar there. And the man was quite dedicated, sincere, devoted. So he came and made his offering there. No doubt about it was office food there on the altar. And then when he looked up, he saw that the statue and leaned forward towards him in a way you

would if you were going to whisper a secret in someone's ear. And you looked at Got euphemistic statues going down. And then the statue said to him, whispered to him, why not? Why not? And immediately he was flooded with excuses. I don't have time. Not now later. I'm not capable. I can't do it. I don't deserve to all this just a justification and rationale of why not? Well.

Why not? What's the

question? So the statue asked him again. Why not? And he jumped up screaming and ran out of there and no one ever saw him again. And he wasn't out there not live happily ever after. So that's the unfortunate story for tonight. So the question for you, is that lean forward with a secret question Why not? Why not let go. So thank you very much.