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SPEAKERS

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So, if someone meditates and becomes maybe a little bit calmer than they usually would. It's a fair question to ask, what do you do with that calm? And one of the answers could be that, with that calm you investigate or more carefully, some matter something going on in your life, try to understand something with the idea that when you when the mind is calmer, less agitated, it gives you a better vantage point to understand what is happening with you and the world around you. So one of the areas to investigate with the combine or not, come on Is the realm of speech. And so I want to talk about three different areas of speech, kind of inner speech, outer speech, and the bridge between them. And then I want to end the evening with telling you a story from the Buddhist scriptures. The point being, that Buddhists are not always nice. Do you think of that? So now having to do a speech so I think one of the things has been very interesting for me in doing this meditation practice mindfulness practice. It can people hear Okay, speakers working okay. is. So one of the things that's been interesting for me is the investigation of the whole realm of thinking. And, and more specifically, but many areas of thinking that's interesting to look at. But in terms of speech, some of us when we think we're kind of like talking to ourselves, some people think more than images. And it's very interesting to investigate or explore how we talk to ourselves, what's the nature, what's the quality of the inner voice that does that inner thinking. And, you know, you can listen to someone, talk a foreign language that you don't understand. And you can listen to the quality of their voice as they speak. And you can kind of tell sometimes, you know, whether it's a really harsh voice, they're angry. They're really shy, they're hesitant. They're, you know, Very quiet. There's all kinds of things, you can notice the tone of the voice, the speed in which you're speaking, the energy with which you're speaking, even without understanding the content of what they say. So in the same way we can, many of us are kind of caught up in the content of our thinking, the subject that ideas were thinking about. But with a little bit of a combine, it's possible to step back and get a sense to feel sense. The quality of that inner voice, the tone. And some people are quite surprised when they start paying attention to the way in which you talk to yourself the way you talk in there. Some people find it means a whole range of what's possible, right? But sometimes it can be quite harsh. And so there are people who I meet who I know who seem like very, very kind, gentle souls people and they report how incredibly harsh and judgmental and critical. They are inside their own heads towards themselves often. And kind of guys, sometimes I'm surprised that the difference between the gentleness and the outside and what they report on the inside.

And so you can you can sometimes you can if you listen to your own tone of your own voice, sometimes you might find different days different times different kind of intensities, different tones, different kind of emotions almost expressed in the voice itself that's doing talking. So you might notice that, you know, a lot of your thinking is anxious. You might notice a lot of your thinking is regret. You might think a lot of your thinking is, is very hesitant, like you're unsure of yourself, and you don't know quite sure where to stand, where to go and kind of just jumping around looking for something. A lot of

thinking is kind of looking and searching or they might be the thinking is very confident, very clear. And so you should have a sense of confidence and clarity gentleness or kindness in the inner voice. So you can kind of feel the tone. Sometimes the inner voice can be very large, large lot aloud, like you're kind of, you know, screaming in there. And sometimes it can be very soft, and like a faint whisper. So it's possible notice these things, it's also possible notice something about the common themes that we think about. And not getting caught up in the details of any particular thought that you had thought when you're having that kind of kind of, you know, it's noticed that over the course of a day or a course of a month, or course, a period of time, it seems that regularly you're thinking about the same kind of kind of thing. So some people are very much future thinkers. It's been a lot of time planning. And that's kind of like the most common default place their mind goes. Some people's minds go more into remembering some people's minds go more To fantasy. And so it's possible to, you know, to combine to begin to kind of noticing a little bit about what goes on in your, in your mind and your thinking is a very important skill to have very important ability to do. Because without that ability to track oneself, some people can be strangers to themselves, they don't really they don't quite don't quite understand what motivates them, what drives them, what they're, you know, what their beliefs are, what their feelings are, and a whole range of things. And so sometimes people act, you know, subconsciously or subconsciously or, you know, not knowingly, because they don't even know what they think or what's going on in there. Or they're surprised. I have known people, plenty of people who, especially if they go on retreat, will spend a lot of time being uninterrupted from yourself. And, and they're surprised by how persistent some of the activity their own minds is they had no idea for some people have no idea how judgmental it can be in there. And you know, is judging all the time I'm judging everyone or myself or this or that. Or I know I have no idea that fear was such a basic persistent foundation for what's happening with me. You know, the variety of things, usually the people who are most surprised and the ones surprised by how unhealthy or what they discover. So it's possible then to notice you know, what's going on inside and your inner voice, you know, dialogue, these kinds of things going on. And all the different Buddhist teachings on wise or Right Speech applied to oneself as well. Some sometimes people think that the Buddhist teachings on right speech, have already do with the verbal speeches through out loud, but it's very interesting attorney towards yourself and say, you know, the way I'm talking to myself, is it true? Is it kind is it really healthy or beneficial for myself? is a timely, these are the four the four basic guidelines that the Buddha gave for speeches to speak the things that are true, that are kind that are helpful and that are timely. Speak at the right time. So, you know, spending a lot of time in fantasy or maybe isn't so true. spending a lot of time being critical or angry, maybe it's not kind of spending a lot of time rehearsing all the reasons why you should be guilty. Maybe it's not helpful. The I regularly tell people that being guilty is a waste of good energy. And that you're much better off channeling the energy that's going into guilt into trying to do better in the future. Make amends and rather than kind of stay there lingering in the past so you know, to look at all these things in ourselves. And then there's outer speech, and how we engage in the world.

And so to notice what we say, how we say it to notice the tone, the voice of our own voice, the motivations and the quality or voices we speak. And that can vary in the course of the day in the course of the conversation, which is quite appropriate to vary. But sometimes we speak in ways that maybe we'd rather not speak. I'm very fond of the couple of little sayings about speech. One of them is it can take years and years to develop a good friend. And it can take 30 seconds to ruin the friendship with our speech to speech is very, very powerful. And then trying to take back your words after this, after you've said them, is like closing the barn door after the after the horse has run away. You know, it doesn't help that much after you've spoken it. So develop an ability to track ourselves and be present for as we speak, then we can sometimes speak in a wiser way more useful way. And that's part of the ability to look at oneself and one's own inner mind when we're thinking. One is thinking and feeling, planning to say, one can, you know, make some choices before one person hangs out?

So part of the reason why mindfulness of speaking is such a very helpful practice of mindfulness is that it can give you a very quick window into the depths of what makes you work as a person, what motivates you and a very intuitive very simple question, very quick, simple exercise. And that is nasm. So simple to do, but a very simple question. That is start questioning why you say what you say. And you might go through a day and ask yourself, why am I saying this? Why am I saying this? Why my sadness, and probably you'll find that a lot of things you say, are not just generally useful public service announcements. That behind what you're saying, you're trying to accomplish something, you're trying to have an influence on someone, maybe you're trying to get them to get them to see you in a certain way. Really trying to protect yourself in a certain way. Perhaps you're trying to get them to do what you want them to do what you want them to do. And so you're saying something to kind of, you know, kind of have an influence of some sort or other. And so start questioning and looking, why am I saying what I'm doing? You might discover that some of the things you say are not as innocent as you thought. And as you start discovering what motivates you to speak, you start again, you start discovering some depth of yourself and counting yourself in a way that is Very, very helpful in a Buddhist path for clarifying, purifying, deepening oneself. So there's inner speech, there's outer speech, and then there's a bridge between them. And the bridge between them is somehow already been covered. But the bridge between them has to do with intention. And so one of the key areas of mindfulness practice is considering what is the motivation or the intention for what you're going to say. And so is it kind is it way back? Somehow I disappear. Change suddenly. Is it kind is it? Is it true? Is it helpful? And is it timely? What we're going to say? So, these are very important things to explore and see what's new. Is the intention to be helpful? Is the intention to be kind? Is it is it true here? So to look at the intention, the motivation, and it's much easier to look at the motivation and intentionality. If we have a comp, combine the combine, we have enough time to consider these things and look at them. So a lot of Buddhists hear these things. A lot of Buddhists hear about the importance of being speaking who has these guidelines? kind, true, helpful, and timely. So, does that mean that Buddhists are always nice?

I say this because I think that a lot of people who encounter Buddhist practice and try to live this way, sometimes try too hard to be nice at the expense of 71 time, expense so there was a discourse of the Buddhist, where a man come, Prince comes to the Buddha. And he thinks he has a trick question. The prince is a disciple of another spiritual teacher. And so he thinks he's going to kind of trick the Buddha. And he says to the Buddha, do you ever say anything unwelcome or disagreeable to others? Or unwelcome and unpleasant for others? And the reason he thinks is a trick question is that if he's the Buddha says, No, I never say anything unwelcome and unpleasant. Then he says, Ah, but once you reprimanded one of your monks named Devadatta, and he was really upset, so you're contradicting yourself you're lying, because in fact you did once say something unwelcome was very unwelcome and unpleasant. Have a doctor who was a bad guy. But still it was unpleasant to hear, we recommend recommended. And so he says he says he never says anything unpleasant than He's lying. If he says he does occasionally say things which are unwelcome and unpleasant, then how can he be a Buddha? Because you know, Buddhists are supposed to be all good. So he goes to the Buddha and kind of all prepared to trick the Buddha put him in a tight spot. And the Buddha hears the question and the Buddha says, Oh, that's the kind of question that can't be answered with one answer. The simple answer and then the princess are, I've been seeing through you know, how well so much for that. And then the Buddha goes on to explain the longer answer, which, in short, he says the Buddha will only say things if there True. Only say things if they're kind of maybe timely forget the whole thing that gives there.

But if it's, if it's true, if it's kind if it's helpful and if it's unpleasant and unwelcome for the person is going to hear it. Then the Buddha knows the time to say that. What do you think of that? So that's how

Buddhists sometimes are not nice. You know, sometimes we say things which are unpleasant and unwelcome to others. Now, I gave us today's talk similar to this yesterday at spirit rock, with a Family Retreat up there. And this seems very interesting to a lot of the parents. And the impression I got the discussion afterwards, that there were quite a few, quite a few parents Buddhist practitioner types who have been struggling with the idea that they're never supposed to say anything, never say anything unpleasant to their children, that you know, Buddhists are supposed to be smiling and nice. This you know, and if you if your kid gets hurt or feels upset or angry, then you haven't figured out the skillful thing to say, you know, there's just the right skillful thing that diffuses the problem and gets them to be, you know, be well behaved, I guess. And so it's kind of surprised to hear that the Buddha sometimes said things which were not nice, which is my way of saying something crucial with which were unpleasant for the person to hear or unwelcome.

And so, now, when do we say things when is it okay? To say things to people which are unwelcome by them How do we know how do we have the wisdom to know that it's okay to say to someone? That's a big question. And that's the question, at least to you. How do you think what do you think? What are what are the critical criteria do you use to decide when it's appropriate and helpful to say something which is unwelcome and unpleasant for you're here, your person listening to here? So hopefully some of you have submit some thoughts about that.

Yes, so if you could use a mic some people have a hearing system device thoughts. I can't hear unless you must hear.

I guess I guess I would do it. If I say something. If I thought someone Who's going to hurt themselves or someone else?

Someone's going to hurt themselves or someone else. Right? Thank you. If I'm in the light underneath the bottom is on.

Think it also depends on the

relationship.

Your parents are responsible

even before coming to the point of

Hurricane

depends it depends on the relationship that you have. So some with children, parents, especially with children, to be assumed responsibility to direct the kids in certain direction even when it isn't immediately unhealth harmful. So the relationship is important here in the front

I do struggle with this a lot. And I've made I've really caused some big problems in our extended family by believing that I, I've met all of those criteria. And I mean, it's, you know, like one set one whole group as a family just completely shut me out for 15 years at one point, because you

were true. You were kind, you were timely, and you thought you were being helpful.

Yes.

And so recently, I have really, really, really truly reevaluated how I answer those questions. So one example is that we have a teenage cousin whom I believe is selling drugs. And I chose made the very difficult decision to keep my mouth shut about truly, not knowing if doing more harm than by doing that, but by not by not opening my mouth. But as I have made so many mistakes, I really come to realize more and more that life has a path. And that, in some ways, letting people live out that path and suffer their natural consequences is in some ways wiser than believing that you have the power within your words and within yourself to make a change in them. So not

taking responsibility for other people sometimes. Thank you very much. So I had in the front I signed up to pass it to the front here, or there's another mic here

was just thinking that it may have something to do with well what Motivation what is what's going on in my heart? is there is there hostility involved in my not being nice or saying something nice? what's the what's a motivated by?

So it was what's motivation is the hostility and not being nice? Or maybe I made it was a mistake to use the word nice.

Maybe sometimes

you know we can be we can nicely say things are unpleasant. So it looks straight back. We can pass the mic back. Well, I I lead a creative team and I don't know if

it makes us easier. But

when I'm talking to my team, I sort of like

where every time we start a project, I sort of start the meeting with like anything, anything you say or do that. I guarantee you, I will not take purse

personally.

And they but it's sort of also a two way street, it's guaranteed that I'm giving

them

that.

You know everything I say or do they should not take personally as well. So it's a two way street, I always have to be clear

that there's nothing

I will say or do that is designed to hurt you.

So you set up you say you set an agreement beforehand. Yeah, I set up an environment where everything is always welcome. Expect. It's good, it's nice. So. So sometimes, you might be in agreement to request even from someone give me feedback. I don't think I don't think I don't want to really hear it, but you don't exactly want to hear it, but I really want some feedback. And so then you have permission then you can say all kinds of unpleasant things. Thank you

I think it's okay to be unpleasant when you're trying to get someone's attention.

Be unpleasant when you're trying to get someone's attention. Keep an example.

Well,

yeah, when someone doesn't understand that you're angry and you need them to know that or that you feel they've come across the line or via email, let them know that they're

violating your boundaries.

Never. Good. Great, thank you.

message with a messenger.

They might not like what I have to say, but I don't have to. If I truly believe that what I'm saying is coming being motivated out of a space of love It's I have to walk through my fear of whether they're gonna like me or not. I mean I have a lot of people have a lot of stuff about whether people are gonna like them and there's a lot of codependency issues like that. But you know, if somebody can separate the message from from the message and realize that they can still love me even though they don't like what I have to tell them at the time. So that's kind of how I deal with that. So and then I don't have to have everybody like me either, because so

thanks. So sometimes it does say something unpleasant to necessarily say something unpleasant to someone or unwelcome to someone. Then it's good to know what their relationship is someone said earlier. So is it a situation a family situation or work situation or friend situation where there's space, space permission for that where people don't understand what's, how it's gonna, how it's gonna be? how it's being offered. If you try to give feedback to someone, when there isn't an understanding or permission or a context for doing that, it can be misunderstood dramatically. I think the

the fourth things to watch for

or good start with would think sometime if I hit two or three out of four

maybe maybe I could

put a disclaimer that I'm not certain This is the right time to say this or not

just expose the other part that I I have doubts about. It's maybe this is not true, but I think

it's necessary and is the right time. And I think it's

true or something. Thank you.

We have a my kid and they all wondered two bikes.

I think short term and long term considerations come up for me. If in postponing a conversation today means I'm heavy likely to have a more difficult conversation in the future. I sit with how to have it today. Okay, thank you.

pass the mic back.

I believe that if you're going to tell someone something, if it's true from your heart, you should not be concerned about the past. That other individual will take it because you can never tell. You may be telling someone what you see, or you have observed, that individual will be taken either the right way or the wrong way. So then you may need to look at that person and determine force said the right way you're talking about the correct speech. So if you use the correct speech, then you may be able to give your speaker statement or have that statement taken away that shouldn't be taken without any emotional feeling emotion in your voice or Yeah, being judgmental. I think that's one of the issues that we have. All I've heard is that we are being judgmental because we're wondering how that person will take it, whether it's right or wrong.

To stay away from your heart. I think that we can express

Thank you. So there's certainly we're speaking from our heart then there's the other side of that, which I think you alluded to. You didn't say it this way, but that that are we in touch with a person enough to notice how it's received. Because sometimes people are so different from each other. So there's so many different states situations in their life and sometimes you can say something that's quite even friendly and nice. But, you know, you think it's coming from the heart, but you have not really tuned into the person to know what their situation is. And I went example many years ago and went to work and there was a shift change and I was leaving and because someone was coming in to their due to his shift, and when the changing room and I said something kind of jovial, it was kind of a little bit kind of jovial and fun. To him, and it really was painful for him to hear, because one of his best friends had just died. And so he had come to the door and I had assumed to just everything was like, how often been there, and I didn't take the time to really tune into him to know where he was at. So the idea of being in touch with the person you're speaking to, and really being able to hear deeply because there's, you know, in a discourse it says the Buddha sometimes says things which are unwelcome and unpleasant. It doesn't say unwelcome and hurtful. And I think that hurtful has there's two parties to hurt. There's your intention. You cannot you can have the intention not to hurt but not knowing how a person is going to receive it. Another example of comes to mind is money Mommy, they will tell you the story. wage story was something like this that we don't retreat. And sometimes on meditation retreats, people will go through some emotional catharsis. And there was a woman who was crying quite a bit sobbing in the hallway and retreat center. And the guideline and retreat center in the past nurseries did you leave people alone lesson was being heard or something with, you know, someone's crying you leave them alone. If you're really concerned, you go tell a teacher and the teacher can look into it. And there's one person retreating, saw another one crying. And so he went over and put his arm around her work, you touched her nicely, seemed like a very nice, comforting thing to do. But what he didn't didn't know was that the kind of person he was, was very similar to the kind of person who had abused this woman early in life. And so the association was so strong for her that He's actually tripped me out even more. You know, so. So in terms of what is what is what causes pain or hurt, it's kind of, you know, involves not only our intention but also with situation of the person who we're speaking to. So, I think that in order to

give feedback to people or say something unpleasant, if you don't get turned into the person to some degree, then then maybe it's not the right time. Yes.

Maybe question about men, no speech become Jonesy.

No speech becomes wrong.

And I asked that because I typically err

especially if

you can think of very specific personal relationships or for whatever reason I have difficulty connecting or overcoming my own ill will.

And

I err on the side of just not saying anything at the cost of making the relationship I feel much more.

So maybe I don't have to answer your question. It's a really good question when to be quiet is a really good question.

And quite too often.

And there's a lot of wisdom that can go into being quiet and knowing when to be quiet. But it's also learning different skills of how to speak. And so sometimes, you know, same thing and making eye statements can be very helpful. So, sometimes instead of saying, you know, you know, if you feel like you just want to tell someone, you're just lousy. You know, you say, when you said that, I felt really hurt. And so I think that's more often than not probably, you could find a way to reword your concern in a way that that isn't that doesn't feel like you're offending or criticizing someone, but you're making in the first person terms, but this is how it's like for me and if you can say in first Person terms what it's like for you in the relationship, then I have some questions about the relationship.

Some relationships can't be avoided.

Sometimes there's a clip. And then sometimes it's sometimes there's a time for silence. The, you know, is that is it kind? Is it true? Is it helpful? It is not helpful. The suggestion is, don't say it. Some people feel the need to say get it off your chest or say something, but it is clearly not going to help the situation, then sometimes it's better to if you don't have a way to say if it's helpful, it's better to be quiet. There's occasionally I do that sometimes I don't say anything. And sometimes I did my time. And I spent time reflecting about it, wondering about it feeling my way, see what's going on. And, and then I try not to ignore a situation I try to kind of live with it. And then maybe some points Some wisdom will come up some a better understanding, and I can come back and engage in the conversation. And as I do this, I've done this sometimes when I've been angry with someone, I've gone off and on my own go for a long walk or something, being with my anger, not to avoiding that I'm not avoiding a situation, you know, once and for all, I realize this has to be addressed, this issue has to be addressed. But right now I'm too angry to address it. And so make me be with myself for a while. And then I'll be with the anger. Walking helps me a lot in this. And then at some point, if there's a shift of understanding, where I kind of dropped below the anger and realize that there's either fear or hurt, connected to the anger, then I find

it I can go back and have a much more productive conversation and say, Oh, you know, when you said x, I felt really afraid. I felt really hurt. You know, they're very different conversations saying I'm angry with you.

One kind of inner argument or debate I have about what, what you've been talking about is, to what extent do you respect the integrity of the other person and just not say anything? So if, for example, it was something that you thought the person could improve on, and you thought it met all the criteria that you mentioned, to what extent do you just not say anything? Because that other person has the right to be who they are?

Yeah. That's a good question.

And are you simply just expressing your personal opinion? That's a

good question. So it's a little bit related to a little bit related to what you said. Sometimes, just It's useful to ask permission before you say something, you know, have some you know, I have something I'd like to tell you. It's just you'd be open for some, you know, open open now you open for business or you open. Like, I noticed some, some Buddhist teachers I know who, when their colleagues hear them give a Dharma talk. They say the colleagues might go to them and say, you know, I'd like to say something about your talk. You know, is this a good time? And I know some teachers say, no, not not, not tomorrow. I just gave it I feel kind of vulnerable. Tomorrow, you can come and do it. So you have to ask permission sometimes works is the right time. This is a good time. I'd like to say something special one more, although in the back

In business and say you're leading a company or where it's quite chaotic, you're having to deal with multiple problems. You your, your, say your Buddhist training isn't quite up to where it ought to be for you to be a leader. But you're shooting from the hip and you're you're having enormous problems just getting say your product out and then you start sniping at your people and then there are a few people you ought to fire these to think you ought to fire and then your own self doubt comes in and I, I just would say, you know, I'm not trying to I'm just Saying what personally happened to me I start being really a son of a bitch.

So it will so when you're a son of a bitch Yeah.

Conscious on your conscious on it

a bit how would you like it? How would you like to be? What kind of what kind of feedback would be helpful for you

at that time?

Well

I think you know my, you know people

enough that

I think they give me enough time to, to calm down.

Give him a wide pasture. Yeah.

Yeah. Okay. Thank you. Okay.

So thank you for this evening, and I hope that Don't succumb to this very common Buddhist trap of trying excessively to be nice. Though if you need to err it's probably better to err on the side of being nice. Thank you