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SPEAKERS

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So I said earlier in my introduction about the loving kindness retreat, that loving kindness in some ways are different from the mindfulness practice. And sometimes they don't seem so different. Sometimes they blend together in a very nice way. And little bit that's the theme of today's talk. And I want to start once again with a Zen story. Union asked though, what does the Bodhisattva have great compassion use so many hands and eyes for so I will look attached for cornea and some of the descriptions they are conic descriptions. I don't know why I pointed there but sometimes you know that they're sometimes on the wall right. And, and there's a big picture of you know, sometimes spared rock. They have one of Kuan Yin with all these different hands. I can thousand hands. And each hand has a different tool. And also each hand also often has an eye. So what is our catch for doing all these hands and eyes? and you know, the usual answer is that above locash first, but he starts for the great being of compassion, and she has all these hands. In order to help people the best. Each hand is a different tool to help in different ways and all the hands all the eyes are there to see all the suffering of the world. So the monk asks, What is the Bodhisattva great compassion use so many hands and eyes for? I've heard this read this question other ways. What is it like for the test right to have all these hands and eyes? We replied. It is like someone reaching back groping for a pillow in the middle of the night. You know, that's a non sequitur. And so part of the explanation of that is that when you grow up with you kind of little bit uncomfortable at night, and you're going to kind of bunch up the pillow to make it more comfortable. You have to sleep and you do it unselfconsciously. There's no sense of maybe separation between you and the pillow or your sense of me, I'm the great pillow bunch of rubber. You know, I'm not gonna impress anybody with what you're doing with a pillow just kind of unselfconsciously, you know, just kind of effortlessly kind of range the pillow. So it's kind of like that, that's about that bodhisatta compassion response to the suffering of the world, and that kind of effortless waste, unselfconscious way to just kind of what what she does what he does. So, the first monk says, I understand. It's a dangerous thing to say in the Zen world. So, Wu said, How do you understand it? Yan said all over the body, our hands and eyes. And we've said, You've said quite a bit there. But you've only said 80% of it. The Zen teachers, they'd like to rate your answers by percentages. I, the teacher in Japan who he asked me a question and he said, Well, it's 50% you know, so it could give grades I guess. And but you only said 80% of it. And yen said, Well, what would you say elder brother and woo said, throughout the body, our hands and eyes. So the first one said, you know that the, the movement of compassion of care for others is resides throughout the hands and eyes, the sensitivity to that resides all over the all over the body and so it's really an embodied thing. And he says, that's a good answer, but it's not complete. Because all over the body simply because the implication is on the surface of your body, your skin. And 100% answer is it's throughout your body isn't just you know, just so it's not something you think about. It's not something that that's kind of separate from who you are so deeply embedded in who you are. That just comes out from your pores, your muscles, your bones, your marrow, various places. The

Jennifer block who's coming here to do the workshop on Saturday, you might not notice because it's cold, and so she'll probably have socks on. But she has a tattoo on her ankle, in

center left ankle. And so she doesn't explain to me all the reasons why it's there, but but my idea is that when you sit cross legged in meditation, you can look down What you see is the tattoo in her ankle. And that the two inner ankle is of a tortoise turtle. And the shell is turtle has the Dharma wheel, the wheel, the Dharma symbol for Buddhism. And I love that tattoo of hers because reminds me of that the tortoise wins the race. You know, slow and steady. So here she is, you know, kind of reminding her it's a good reminder when you sit down to meditate and not to be in a you know, to be patient not to be in a hurry. Take your time. And I think there's something very profound about taking your time and being nothing in a hurry. It certainly being in a hurry in practice is a syndrome of our time and time where people are always in a hurry the most efficient way, getting it over with we have other things to do after all. Once the Dalai Lama was asked that a big auditorium about some question around what's the fastest Way to enlighten.

And I was very touched. It wasn't there, but at least I heard it. And I was very touched by his response. Where I was told was that he didn't respond at first. He just stood really still quiet for quite a while. So I guess it was kind of poignant, powerful moment. And, and then I was told that he started crying. And then he said something like, I know exactly what he said, I apologize for not knowing and telling your story. But there's something approximately like, you know, it's to be in a hurry is not really to understand what the Dharma is, and to be to do it quickly. It kind of so much comes along with maybe a self centered approach to practice or, you know, greedy, greedy approach or something. And there's something very, very significant about taking your time. And I want to tell you another story then that I read in Daniel Goldman's great book called social intelligence, his new book, if you notice the study, psychological experiment, they took 40 theology students from Princeton theology seminary, and they gave them the assignments going to the library, I guess. And 20 of them had to prepare a very short sermon like 10 minute sermon on a random passage from the Bible. And another 20 of them had to do a 10 minute sermon on the story of the Good Samaritan. The Good Samaritan has a story in the Bible where this person is distressed or injured or sick or something on the road. And I guess most people pass the person die. But the Good Samaritan stops in age the person so, and unbeknownst to students there was they were part of experiment. They just thought it was an assignment for a class I guess. And then a 15 minute intervals, they were sent out in the library, across campus someplace where they were supposed to give a little talk to some teachers or someone who was going. And on their way there in a doorway was a man in distress, an actor in distress laying in the doorway, thick and groaning and all that. And the experiment really was a sea with a stop. And we're the ones who did this the talk on the Good Samaritan, for those students stop more than the students who were just doing a random passage from the Bible. And they found that 24 students stopped out of 40. But there was no difference between the ones who did the Good Samaritan and the ones who did the random passage. So that's interesting in itself, but they did find it I guess they did experiments in different ways as well. They did find that one thing made a big difference. The students who were told they were late, and they had to hurry to get to the top give their talk. Those 10 students, only one of them stopped. Those students who said, we're told we have lots of time to get over there. Take your time whenever six of them stopped. So the ones who took the time the ones who felt they had time, they're more likely to respond from care, compassion. Those who felt they were in a hurry, were caught up, you know, they they're preoccupied. They're to hurry not paying attention. They have important things to do. There's a variety of reasons why they might not be paying attention or offer their attention or stopping to care. And then Daniel Goldman after talking about this, in his book, he says that he had experience in New York City coming out of the subway, and there was a man shirtless, laying flat on the ground, out there, ugly face down, and the crowds of people just stepping over and so he stopped in research, he stopped, then lots of

other people stopped. And then people started helping lots of people started helping, but he felt that it was his attention stopping giving attention, that then became the magnet for other people's attention to pay attention. Otherwise, people's attention weren't going there for a variety of reasons. They're busy, they're preoccupied, they're frayed. Who knows what it means. I want to talk for someone in San Francisco. I was 18 I think. And I was visiting San Francisco but myself and Chinatown area and this guy was out more or less out to control it, you know, and kind of hacking the gutter or something inside of the gutter sidewalk. And so I stopped to go over and try to take care of him. And because I've never seen anything like that before, and I said can I help you something Closer, closer.

So I got closer, can I help you anyway? Come closer. So I got really close to him. He said to me, kiss me.

So maybe now I would kiss him. But when I was 18 when I was 18 when I was 18, that quite didn't quite compute and I didn't quite know what to do at that point. So I got up and left. Maybe I'd maybe I'd do something differently now, but you never know what you get. But so the seat of our attention, I think is a really important thing here. That there's a correlation between having time and Attention, and how we how well we pay attention to things and how well we let things register. If we have a time, if we don't give ourselves a time, then things don't sink in. They don't we don't digest them. They don't get processed in our psyche. We don't understand the depth of it, of what's really happening to us. And I think it's so easy in our life, many people like to have to live undigested lives because we're so busy we are always doing and part of the function of meditation is to help digest what's going on to process what's happening. But I think also more importantly, it's also to help us pay attention in deeper way more four way to really take in what's happening. And, and then we take in, we're fully we also then, such as taking in and paying attention, there's two sides to this. There's one is the paying attention, noticing what's there, but it's also having a chance for deeper places of motivation, deeper places of motivation to arise out of us and respond to what we see out there. I think it's very easy when we're busy to respond even from unkind places, probably all of you can identify with the least the imaginary situation of being late for some very important things in a day of being harried and frustrated, and, and you're, you know, you're trying to get this place and there's a lot of traffic on the freeway and small gets hot, your condition doesn't work and you know, just like you have a headache and go on right, but I should spare you and, and then you're on the freeway and someone cuts you off. And it's very easy for people to do something than with, you know, for you to do something with your finger. That you would never do if you were calm and relaxed and centered, but somehow, you know, you're caught up in your anxiety and frustration. We don't necessarily respond from the places that we respond to for relax and settle deeply in ourselves. And The suggestion is that when we're settled deeply in ourselves, that we respond from beautiful places, we tend to at least, so again, to borrow from Daniel Goldman's book, he tells the story of an experiment done with monkeys, rhesus monkeys, like pronounces rhesus and apparently they took six monkeys. And they train them that they can get the most amount of food from their particular each one have their own particular cord they pulled and they get the most amount of food was delivered if they pulled their cord. And so they train they got pretty good at that they pulled the cord and they got lots of food. And then they introduced the seven monkey and the seven monkey also had a cord that when that monkey pulled the cord, no, no, when when any of them pulled their cord. The seventh monkey got an electrical shock and very quickly The monkeys, which stop using the cord, super vent the other monkey from getting shocked, and one monkey stopped eating for six days and other 12 days because of the connection to the other monkey. So the suggestion is that in the title of the thing that I read was called something like we're hardwired for compassion. You know, it's kind of like, you know, kind of deeply ingrained. It's not just software we add, it's something there. But I think it's there when we are settled and relaxed. So we allow these things to have a chance to come forth, rather than, you know, other things. And that's certainly been my experience in my years of practice. I

did not come to Buddhism, with any interest in compassion, or with loving kindness to Central kind of motivations and responses to the world. Buddhist practice in those things, snuck up on me. And, like, the compassion was awakened for me through my Zen practice, not necessarily inherent to Zen practice. But those happen to be what I did first. And I think Zen was the Zen training, my practice that exempts my practice while I was doing this in period

was in many ways, very painful. A lot of suffering and struggles and difficulties. And, and as I sat with all that, I said a lot, you know, sit, sit every day, we sit hours, sometimes in the monastery, days and days and sitting, sitting. So in terms of having time, there was a lot of time. So this stuff is able to process to digest. And one of the things that happened was that as I sat with all that, some of my armor, my resistance, my fear, my start to soften and soften, fall away. And I got to sit with the struggles of my own struggles also other people's pain like I think very sensitive to other people's suffering. I got the sit to it with this very soft heart. And in that soft heart, the response was compassion. It wasn't like I was trying to be compassionate. And I thought it was a good idea. I just noticed that after a while that that was more and more became who I was or what the response was. And I thought of it as not, not again, not as a choice, but more of who I became who I was. Some people say it's non dualistic. It's like, not out of my sense of self from choice. Sounds like a person's out there, and I'm the one here, you're supposed to be compassionate. It just kind of seemed to be kind of a natural response. In fact, I told one of my teachers that I felt that was becoming a response machine. And now that's not a very pretty analogy machine. But what I had was I was broke the coping with was trying to explain how it was just was it wasn't me doing it. It was just kind of natural, innate kind of thing. thing moving through me and to respond. And then when I started doing that, starting when after I didn't be passionate practice for a period of time. Because when I was doing the personal practice, that phase of my practice, you know, again, it's not inherent in center because that has to do with where people are at in their life. But in that particular phase of my practice, I sat with a lot of, I didn't sit with a lot of suffering anymore. That phase of my practice that we worked through in some ways, and I sat now with a lot of delight and joy and ease or peace, a strong sense of well being. And I remember when I was first introduced to loving kindness meditation by my teachers, and I tuned them out. And I was I came from the Zen background, this love stuff, it's artificial, it's sentimental, and I wasn't gonna, you know, try to correct for broke through this practice, you know, wasn't there naturally that just, you know, I was still as any right to the heart of things. So I just tuned my teachers out and ignored that part of the practice. Until, as I kept doing the Vipassana practice, again, this time, the quote there subtleness, in the falling away of, again, the armor, the barriers, the resistance, the sense of self, the self identity that kind of stayed between me and the open heart, all fell away. And then lo and behold, in the midst of all this mindfulness practice, there bubbled up this tremendous feeling of loving kindness. And I was just kind of amazed. And then when the teacher started talking about loving kindness, practice, it made sense to me. And now I love it. Now, I think it's a great practice, but it kind of came out of that quiet and that sensitivity and that kind of openness that took a lot of me my situation took a lot of time, in order for that to happen. So I don't know if this is, you know, so imagine that, you know, here's an analogy.

There's a town that is really afraid of the threats. Maybe there are real world threats out there. The Huns are invading. And so the townspeople wall off the city, like a walled city, and they do a really good job in walling off the city, and they're really safe. And the marauding masses can't get in. It's really safe in that town. They feel good and safe and comfortable. And they've done such a good job walling off the city, they even forgot to make a door, the gate, just the wall and after a while, the marauding invaders leave and it becomes safe to leave the walled city. But they forgot to make a gate. And so they don't know how to get out. So what do they have to do? The first thing they're gonna have to do is focus on that wall and do something about that wall. Because there's no gate. So maybe they take hammers and chisels, whatever they have available to themselves and start working on that, that wall until it kind of

comes crumbling down. And then they could step over the crumble walls and walk out into the world. So I think to some degree, you know, that often happens to us that the world we feel the world is a threatening place. And a lot of a lot of things get built up that prevent us from having an open Clear Channel between our heart and the people in the world experiences around us. And so to the degree to which that happens, it's important to look at that barrier, what that is all about. And for sometimes it's so Fear, maybe there has been real threats and real danger, real problems has happened in the world to you. And that's the close up. Sometimes there's imagined threats the world provides. And so we're reacting to that. Sometimes. It's not so much a threat to the world, but it's all the ways in which we build up tension and stress in our muscles into the muscles get tight. And so all that tension keeps us from really connecting to what's deeper below that muscular level. And then there is so at some points, we realize it's safe enough to open up. And there's two reasons I can imagine someone feeling safe. One is there's that the invaders have gone through that safe out there. And the other is that the threats out there and are gone. But they have enough confidence in themselves, that they don't have to worry about going out and facing the invaders facing the I think both are very important. It's not one or the other. And as we get older, certainly, I think many of us develop the skills, the street smarts, the wisdom, the maturity, to be able to go into situations that in the past were threatening to us but are no longer threatening. So it's not just a matter of feeling, you know, the threats out there changing, it's also a matter of us changing as well. But one way or the other, at some point, we feel it's okay to lower our guard to drop this. And so a big part of practice for many people fish initially, is not about focusing on the world out there, but it's about focusing here. And it says, you can coolcolour say focus on oneself. But, that sense of focus on itself is very interesting, because as the, the armor of the barriers of resistance, the walls attention falls away. One of the things that has to fall away is a strong a strong sense of self strong, strong sense of self and a sense of egotistical self or self centered self for or, you know, the kind of typing Arrow sets of self. And that has to fall away as well. And so if we're doing if we're doing practicing this self absorbed way self, you know, neurotic kind of way that has the effect will naturally fall away. And then it's wonderful thing happens when the when the walls fall down, then the people can go out and you can really feel connection to the, to the world, you can feel it. It's kind of like this magic thing where you kind of go in for a while. And if you go in far enough, it's like, you know, going through the looking glass house go through Looking Glass, you go into the looking glass, you go into here, and then you come out there because you know, the sense that sense of separation falls away.

So this is kind of focusing and so we focus here first, and I think to a large large degree, whether we focus on it directly or indirectly. This is centering ourselves, being with our breath being present, giving yourself time to be present, being giving us time or not getting Input all the time, or giving us time or we're not always doing in acting and reacting and responding, allows things to begin to settle, fall away. It's kind of like a vacation allows things to settle away. But hopefully meditation is deeper than a vacation. Because if you go through enough meditation, it allows things to go fall away, drop away, relax, in deeper and deeper place. And then as we drop all the extra stuff, then this real beauty that's within us gets a chance to have a chance to come out in the sun, it gets a chance to respond, react, feel sense, the world, the world we live in. And the idea here is that there's all this beauty there. And I would say compassion is beautiful. loving kindness is beautiful. And those things are there waiting for us. If we can do the work of settling all this stuff, it's a kind of natural thing to be there throughout the body. So last thing I want to say is you I want to teach you about distinction that the Buddha made that I think is important in the early Buddhist tradition. And first I'll teach you the Pali word. The word is Nisa. A is a, Lisa and the word means flesh or wrong beat. And the word sub means with samosa beans with flesh, and near beans without for near, near Anisa means without flesh. And this distinction is used for two kinds of feelings that people can have. There's feelings that we can have, that are over the flesh and feelings we can have that are not of the flesh. It's a little bit hard, I think with our kind of English

and cultural understandings to get a complete sentence. of what the Buddha was talking about. But it's, it's like this, that of the flesh are those experiences those feelings, pleasure, pain, variety of things that can come that are experienced through our five senses. Smell, sounds, tastes, tactile. So when it's through the five senses, that it's of the flesh, in this ancient way of talking. And then there's a whole series of things, of feelings. Pleasant, unpleasant feelings we can have, that are not born of the flesh, but are not are not of the flesh, not of the skin of the muscles. So when the muscles follow muscles relax enough. When we're not resetting simple, that centered enough, then these other feelings begin bubbling up. And this is something that happens a lot in meditation. When you get somewhat focused and centered on yourself a meditation, a sense of well being begins to bubble up. And that's well being that bubbles up from the inside out, is said to be it's not being stimulated by a sense object, no one's coming along and massaging you, or stroking you or you know having this wonderful sound or something. And so it's not of this five senses, but it's this non non sensory in a sense, feelings that arise. And so there are so in this way the Buddha distinction distinguished between this sensory and non sensory feelings the sensory feelings he called domestic and the and the non sensory he called renunciant. And, and you have to hopefully you're generous with these distinctions of the Buddha with these distinctions. So, you don't kind of kind of say, wait a minute, my domestic life is great. But if you understand the household life or domestic life to be one with a lot of activity, a lot of doing, you know fixing and doing this and that you get to come to my house taken me six months, I think, to fit I have to often have to figure out how to get the kids to school or myself in the morning to kids. It took me about six months to learn how to do that without feeling frazzled. Because there's all this is pretty complicated, you want to make sure they stay sleep as long as possible. But you don't want them to stay. If they stay if you stay sleep too long. Then you have to learn over window to get them dressed and fed. But

but then also you have to take into account the fact that a five year old no is too reasonable. You know doesn't want to get dressed doesn't you know this and that you know and ended up getting the shoes on sometimes can take a while and then there's my meditation like to do in the morning and I like to have a bit quiet time to read the paper as well. So there's a lot had to be fixed fit into the, into the into that before I got the kids out of the door at 10 to eight to wherever they have to go school stuff. It took me six months before I felt some mastery of that. And I felt this fair amount of stress around this domestic issue, especially the last 10 minutes. And so this so that, you know, the domestic world, through an unseen world, you know, is the world necessarily where you leave the domestic life. But it's those pleasures, those feelings that arise when we're not caught up, preoccupied in all the things in the world. Now, I know plenty of monastics who are caught up in the domestic life of the monastery in the same way as people are in domestic life. So it's not a hard and fast distinction here. But the distinction is being caught up and preoccupied with things and activities. versus those things that come out of us who were not preoccupied and caught up. So one of the instructions for cultivating loving kindness practice is you want you don't want to be too busy to have too many projects it's hard to let go of and kindness practice developed. So what is it that what is beautiful in your life that can arise and be their most effectively most helpful for others, when you give yourself lots of time. And so I like to think of the Sabbath as creating sacred leisure. leisure as maybe not the right word, best word, but the idea of leisure free time of empty time, that sacred that allows something else to happen. That can't happen. We fill every possible minute when we're efficient. So I'd encourage you all to be inefficient. And take your time and remember that the tortoise When the race Lily Tomlin said, If you win the rat race, you're still a rat. So in that spirit I should end early. So we have five whole minutes, take our time, set up for for the potluck, hang out with each other, say hello. And so we don't feel rushed or anything. So thank you very much.