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SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsda

So it's one ounce. So this is a you know, a celebration of spirit rock little bit and by talking about emptiness compassion and being here for the day. And spirit rock is going to do two more of these kinds of events. And one of them is coming up next week at in San Francisco. There's a San Francisco be passionate groups spirit rock connected groups are banding together and they're going to do Saturday from 10 to five a day of celebration meditation and community. And it's being taught by Eugene cash and how he Cohen who are the two, the two big groups up there in San Francisco and Vinnie Ferraro who also has a group in San Francisco says big city Vinnie. Vinnie stocked here. He's kind of coming out of that. No 11 lineage. So with Dharma with tattoos and Pam Weiss and so you know if you want to celebrate some more and this is dāna event, it's free. And then in September guy and I will reappear for another benefits or another celebration. September 13 your David's here

and jack kornfield Sylvia Borstein guy Armstrong, Deborah Chamberlain Taylor Sally cloth a Douglas Gil Fronsda West New skirt, Mary Grace or Donald Rothberg and Keisha bell. So that's a big gathering, all in one place. It says spirit rock on September 13. Two, that's I guess the formal official or the most official, most concentrated 20th anniversary celebration of spirit rock. And, and also, in terms of benefits know that something gets, you know, inspires me quite a bit is that many of you know Steven Levine and his wife Andrea Levine. Steven Devine was one of the founders founders. Exactly. That's kind of one of the foundational features for the western kind of our kind of vipassana teachings world that we know, in some ways. According to jack kornfield. Steven Devine was partly responsible for the initial introduction of metta and the way that it's the waste kind of taught in our seeing much more than almost anyone else back in early mid 70s. And does this jack says he got a lot of from him the emphasis and the heart and the warmth. And, anyway, whether that's true or not, Steven the line and his work in hospice and his books and retreats, he thought was very important for many of us and both his wife and him got ill elderly now. And they have almost no money. And so there's been all kinds of efforts to raise money for their medical bills and to support them in variety of ways. And so there's going to be a benefit of spirit rock on June 14, with jack kornfield and Francis iski and Gru tall. Deborah Chima Taylor and Julie Westar to kind of two. It's called the heart that holds it all transforming loss, death and difficulty into grace. And so, wonderful things. One of the things I've discovered is that to do too many Dharma activities and dharmic. So it is wonderful. It's really marvelous, wonderful Dharma things to do, and it's wonderful if people are interested, but do them in a measured way. Including coming here.

So let's do a sitting

and

taking a comfortable alert posture, gently closing your eyes. Since after lunch is often a sleepy time can be helpful if you sit up a little bit more upright than you normally would. giving some emphasis on the alertness of your spine feeling the weight of Your body balanced on your spine. So, you know, center gravity's not forward behind the spine, but kind of traveling through it in the traveling down to the bottom of the spine near the lower curve, bottom of the lower curve, maybe to give a little bit of strength, maybe teeny teeny bit, millimeter or so accentuating that lower curve can sometimes be helpful. So some feeling of strength base of your spine and then traveling up your spine to the space between your shoulder blades. Feeling the spine there and very gently going maybe just a millimeter or so. To pull the spine. They're in so the chest a little bit that is more open. A heart full of more open, available

and in keeping your spine alert upright. Take me a few long slow deep breaths.

feeling connected to yourself through your breathing

and then letting your attention in your breath return to normal and let your attention settle within And then your ability to be attentive, be aware. Perhaps let it mingle in your body with tenderness or care, compassion.

And as you breathe in and breathe out the awareness of your breathing in and out and your care, your tenderness can all mingle together. Breath, awareness and compassion. One breath at a time.

As part of this meditation taking advantage of whatever settled and calm state you might have I'm going to offer you some contemplative or reflective questions, topics. Take in the questions and reflect on them. Think about them as you wish or just let them kind of move around inside your mind and see what bubbles up in response.

So first, bring to mind, some experience you've had in your life of someone who was some situation where you felt touched, move. Be the recipient of someone's compassion for you. Same situation with a compassionate care felt clean. helpful. Remember the circumstances the situation you were in? Could be a minor issue. Stranger help you some point or it could be a big issue. Someone stepped up and helped him big way. Recall the time the situation the event.

Remember the person or the person related to you

Remembering a situation where there was a clean form of compassion directed to you, what were some of the characteristics that helped this become a clean act of compassion?

What is it like what, what what, what ingredients come together or what gradients are absent? When you receive compassion for someone, and there's no stickiness to it, there's no problems with it. It just feels right helpful.

And then turning this around, see if you can remember a time in your life where you had compassion, compassionate care for someone else. See if you remember a time when you the best of your abilities the best, closest approximation that this act of compassion felt clean your port, healthy, wholesome, healthy. Remember what his situation was like when you had this clean compassion for someone else? remembering how you felt what happened

Again, give some thought now reflect a little bit, but what are the ingredients that come together? What characterizes clean compassion? How would you recognize it?

What would be absent?

And when you consider clean compassion, kindness, compassion, you feel just good. goes right and you continue to contemplate the existence. have such compassion in the world and others or maybe in you yourself?

Do you really kind of take that in appreciate the existence the possibility of this clean compassion? How does that make you feel knowing that it exists in this world

So if you're willing to go along with this term, clean compassion with someone like to share a little bit, what are some of the ingredients or characteristics of themed compassion?

no expectation of reciprocity. So no

it's not an exchange. Like getting something back. Okay, thank you. Hello in the back, maybe speak speak up no judgment and no shame. Thank you responsive, it's responsive as opposed to

not doing anything.

Something in action is called for

response. So the action is called for. There's this natural response okay? straight back

to recognize that compassion is not same same thing as pity and what is pity?

Putting yourself

it's working just had to close to the now let's say

I would you pity as putting yourself at a different level than the other person feeling sorry for them

which immediately changed Just the relationship rather than compassion is feeling with them, being with them and whatever

sorrow

arises. Beautiful, thank you and the friend Mike, he's an American mic.

I think there's a certain evaporation of sec feeling of separateness,

separation of separateness when the compassion is clean.

Yeah, it's a feeling of being met.

Feeling the Met, nice. healing. So clean compassion is healing. Thank you. Yes. So a clear seeing of suffering. So clean compassion is a clear seeing of the suffering.

She's really simple, clean compassion is simple. Thank you

first and offering the compassion is not trying to look good. Look at me how compassionate Yeah,

they're sticky compassion. And they're kept there can be an motivation to help someone. But connected to that motivation is I want all my neighbors and friends to see how wonderful I am and what my status to be Hi. I think that human beings can have mixed motivations, multiple motivations at the same time. And I think there can be a pure a kind of pure feeling of wanting to help someone, but it goes along side by side but other baggage so rather than saying that, you know, if you're helping some, if you're helping someone, because you want your status to improve in your, your community, not most people. That's not compassion. It's just that that's the only reason there's not compassion to look good. But it can be mixed people can have multiple motivations. And one of the one of the things about this complicated compassion. The senator, the opposite of clean is not dirty, but it's complicated, or sticky. And complicated would be, for example, if the motivation is not really to alleviate someone else's suffering, but the motivation to help is to alleviate one's own suffering. So people have anxiety and distress around suffering they see out there, and they really want to take care of things because they're really trying to change what's going on inside themselves. So I wouldn't call that clean compassion because it's not Not about the person, that person, it's about yourself. It looks like compassion. So I want to make sure she's satisfied.

They don't think

compassion has

its own definition

without the need to add an extra word, such as clean or complicated.

Perhaps they have other words. Yeah, beautiful. I think so. I agree. And I don't clean compassion is not a technical word. I just thought, you know, I just thought that, that having that little adjective, which kind of just kind of helped with a heart and help with kind of make clear what we're trying to get that here and yes,

without needing to change it. So compassion has a quality of accepting what is without the need to change it, even though compassion is the motivation to try to change something, it's kind of a double thing there, right? So the lack of expectation, so one more all the way in the back for the mic.

Again, a soup kitchen is designed to do religious evangelization. That might be compassion, but it may also be trying to change people. So just

for some people that wouldn't feel so clean. Feel like a sticky then or something else. Mixed motivations there. Yeah.

Doesn't it depends on the person providing the compassion and the person receiving it.

Okay. Well, maybe you'll get more chance for me to say a few things.

I read something recently about compassion. That certainly made a lot of sense to me. So there's a lot of science scientists studying compassion now, in the field. Just like the happiness research, there's compassion research. And one of these researchers was saying that that compassion doesn't inherently exist in people. What inherently exists is the potential or capacity for compassion. And there's a difference between the two. And certain conditions bring forth the compassion and certain conditions covered over are making are not covered over but just don't. Don't, don't give birth to it. So, you know, a seed has the potential to become a plant. But the plant does not exist in the seed, but just right conditions in the plant becomes a seed. So rather than saying that there's some kind of metaphysical, pure compassion that resides in our hearts, I think this according to the early Buddha, the early Buddhism, it's more like compassion is a capacity that we have. And we can develop it, we can grow it, we can nourish it and support it. Some people certainly have the experience of relaxing and deep way and feeling if they discover compassion within them, although lo and behold, there it is, as if it's an eight there. But I think it's more like it's not really there unless we nourish it, or support it or make the conditions for it. And one of the beautiful aspects of Buddhist practice is a way in which it creates a conditions for the growth and support development of compassion. If we don't appreciate one of the one of the primary supports for growth is the appreciation of it. I am most likely I've been thinking that that we become what we appreciate, are the little, little bitty small degree, we take on some of the qualities of what we appreciate. So if you appreciate violence that has a very different effect on us, than if we appreciate non violence or compassion. And so to appreciate compassion and its value, there's more things that lets us beautiful quality grow. To say that we all are compassionate by nature. As if it's already there, maybe it does a little disservice, because it kind of suggests that we don't have to spend any time cultivating growing it, nourishing it, nurturing it. We have no responsibility in relationship to it. Oh, I already have it don't have to do anything. But Maybe there's a beautiful way, healthy way of taking responsibility for compassion, and seeing as a beautiful capacity that can be developed and then developing it. And I think we don't have to leave it to chance. Some of this go grow, I think almost naturally out of Buddhist practice itself. And some of that will happen as we create the conditions for it. So in my situation, when I came to Buddhism, Buddhist practice, I had no interest in compassion. I knew what the word meant, kind of, but it wasn't my it wasn't my, you know, using use using vocabulary. I never thought of using the word in any kind of conversation. And, and no idea that I, you know, was had any real, real important relevance. And so I sat and meditated for years, number of years with a lot of my own suffering, and I suffered a lot and you There's no traditional practice and we were not given any tools, practices, how to be with our suffering, so just be with it. And I got to be with it, and be with it. And, and retrospect, I'm very grateful for that time. Because I didn't I was I wasn't so smart either. So it never occurred to me we should be getting different either. I just sat through the suffering as opposed to sit. And so I thought what happened with that presence, being present being present. Certainly, I was letting go of all the ways in which I was trying to change it or fix it or, you know, fix myself just be here, be present, be present for it. A very simple, direct way. And with time, it started to soften me and relax something inside of me. And at first what I realized in retrospect, when I look back in those early years, was that I was being compassionate. Rather than getting enlightened, I was getting compassion.

And, and I think it was so precious, so valuable to me that I was getting more and more compassionate by the practice. And some people who focus so much on enlightenment, you know, that's what I want awakening. But maybe it's as important to get compassion, really good and compassion and, and for me in my situation was just that presence for the suffering. And at first I didn't you know, I said, I didn't think I needed it. But what happened was my unconscious knew I needed it. And so I started gravitating to compassionate things around me. And, and I would get real I got really interested in in bodhisatta of compassion Have a look attach for Kuan Yin and I would kind of look whenever I would draw her draw pictures of it and do different things and kind of have them went to some of my wall and look And it never didn't, it didn't reflect on why I was interested in this I just nice art. It was nice, that is nice art on

my wall. But really it was this, I was looking for compassion. And I would gravitate towards people who I'd see who I thought were really compassionate. And I've just kind of kind of gravitate towards them just to kind of notice them appreciate them. And there were times when even I would feel that even the breeze of the wind against my cheek was an act of compassion towards me. And then over time, more and more this the armor around my heart started to melt away. And what was left from all this time of working with me with my suffering was a heart that was warm up more and more compassion, more love. And I'm very grateful for this felt very sweet, very wonderful folk very significant for me to this happened. And now I think of compassion as something which is inseparable. From if I do use this kind of non Buddhist language for who I am it isn't like it you know that you know this is maybe it could seem very kind of arrogant to say it this way so you'll be forgiving of me good I don't mean it this way I hope but it's almost like I am compassion. I don't mean some big Kemet that compassionate but it but it's it's like it what I'm trying to say is it doesn't feel like it's something that they add to me at this point or something that I could think about or something that's, you know, it's like, like second nature. It's like this is kind of like, you know, what, what's with what's going on? Because what I mean? So a lot of that came from just being present, being mindful. That happened a lot with Zen practice. When I did vipassana practice. The mindfulness had the same impact on me effect on me, but then I wasn't suffering so much. And then as the mindfulness helps soften the heart and open the heart for me Then what's got born out of that space or came up out of that was loving kindness. So Zen for me, brought forth compassion, and mindfulness brought forth loving kindness. And I'm sure for other people it can be, it could easily be turned around like once does, it just makes by circumstances that it was like that. And it said that one of the sources of compassion is the experience of emptiness. And little bit we understand that, that when we're empty of greed, hate and delusion, empty of ambition and feel all these barriers and defenses and heart and things, the heart is much more sensitive. And we the mindful is much clearer and cleaner take in much more directly what's there. So we feel the suffering more of what's in the world. And as we feel the suffering in the world, if we let go of enough of it. judgments of worries and anxieties, despair and reactions to it, then we're not gonna be motivated by those unskillful responses. Rather we're more likely to motivate, be motivated by wanting to levy a 25th be helpful, some direct way. So as as we've come emptier in this kind of way, it's many people find the experience of compassion loving kindness goes forth much more clearly.

There seems to be far as I know, so far, two primary sources for how people are compassionate. One is that it comes with development, no that but it's triggered by contact with suffering, as lofty as compassion is, and greats ideal it seems to be. The very unfortunate thing about it is that it comes with contact with suffering. So what you're allowing yourself to connect to suffering, not being defensive, not destroying escape, not trying to push it away, but have a very, very open relationship to suffering is a very important part of any kind of Buddhist practice at all. And part of that then is learning about ourselves well enough to be able to tell the difference between empathy and anxiety. Mmm, empathy versus despair over the suffering we see. It said that, that empathy and compassion, when it's clean, if I'm allowed to use the word tends to bring with it a sense of rightness. Even though the situation is wrong, it's a person suffering to be something there's something about that it responds to the kinds of right feeling to it. As opposed to feeling personally, some personal anxiety or horrified or No, that doesn't open up some wound of our own. So the mindfulness practice is a very important practice to help to work through all the different reactions and responses to clean up our act enough. So we can be present in this kind of cleaner, more direct way, then with that, so wait, so when we contact suffering, then there's a greater chance that we have empathy. That's the first thing. And empathy is a beautiful thing. Because empathy means in a sense, kind of feeling with something, feeling it as if it's almost our own. As opposed to like pity where you feel it not as your own, but the poor weak person down there. And then, and then from that empathy, there can be a number of responses. And one of the responses is compassion, which is defined as the combination of empathy and wanting to help want to make a

difference. So one of the ways that compassion is triggered, is is triggered by The contact was suffering when we have that ability to meet it in a clean way, clean enough way. The other way is a little bit more mysterious. And this is where in some Buddhist traditions they talk about how they talked about the commingling of emptiness and compassion. And there's something about the experience of emptiness that seems to have it within it are part of it are synonymous with it. A sense of compassion. It doesn't require necessarily contact with the world of suffering to feel compassion. So, when the mind has a deep contact with emptiness so that our clinging is we're freed of clinging, there's no more clinging and grasping the mind is very empty in that way. very still. There seems to be there's like, like this amazing sweetness in there. That's what witness is called compassion. It's compassion without an object. Because it's not towards any suffering. It just kind of has quality. Some people call that quality its sweetness or something like that. compassion. I don't know if that's always the case. I don't know if it's universal. Maybe sometimes it's loving kindness or love, you know what it is? These two sources is contact with kind of clean, clean, clean enough contact with suffering. And then this cleaned up contact with emptiness is what gives birth to compassion. And then, but what are some of the supporting elements that support the growth and the appearance of compassion in their lives? So I want to give you tell you a story. Apologize to IMC. People have heard this a couple of times now. Of that Daniel Goleman talks about in this book, social intelligence of A study dinner experiment done at a seminary were 40 seminary students were given the task of going to the library and preparing 10 minutes sermon. And half the students were given time to write a sermon on the biblical story of the Good Samaritan who helped this person was down and out in the street. And the other 20 were just given random passages in the Bible to do a sermon on

students did not know they were part of an experiment. They just thought they had to be give the sermon. Then every 10 minutes or every 15 minutes they were sent in the library to where they had to give their talk. And on their way there, there was an actor but they didn't know that there was an actor but the actor was in a doorway, down the notes groaning and moaning off, you know, laying down and then the researchers were hot behind the bush. I guess. And they were going to see who stopped to help the person who was gonna be the Good Samaritan. And the researchers found there was no difference between those who did random passages in the Bible and the ones who were going to give a talk on the Good Samaritan. So in other words, thinking about preparing a sermon, the Dharma talk on give us kind of caring for strangers and all that didn't make necessarily people more prone to be helpful. It's very, it's very humbling for Dharma teacher. And, but then they try and experiment in other way and they told some of the students that they could they had to hurry and because they're gonna be late for them, and other ones, they said, you have lots of time, take your time. And they found that great majority of the students who were in a hurry, did not Stop. But a slight majority of those who were told that time would stop. There was a correlation. So there was no correlation with a theme. But there was a correlation how much time we had. So what's more important, studying theology or biology, or giving yourself more time. And so one of the conditions for things like compassion is giving ourselves time. And if we're doing too many things, being too busy, multitasking and all these things, it might be very efficient getting a lot of things done in the world, perhaps, but it might prevent the possibility of some deep shy responses motivations that come from us. And so in one of those is compassion. So if you want love and compassion, to be a motivating force or force in your life, one of the very simple support For that, is to slow down and give yourself more time to allow that to happen. And I know there can be tremendous challenges to that. Because the demands, the lawyers, the lawyers, but the, the, you know, the lawyers, his lawyers of the mind. Maybe it's not fair to say the lawyers, the politicians of the mind, will give you all kinds of reasons why it's so essential to do a lot, get busy and take care of things. And, and I kind of think one of the primary things that will give birth to these beautiful qualities of heart is giving ourselves time. So you know, the quality of emptiness, empty time, give yourself some time to be empty. And it to some degree, that's what we do in meditation. Hopefully, if you have too many

techniques and practices and too many things to try to accomplish a meditation, then you're also maybe blocking the ability for this innate tacit have since since sensitivity of empathy of connection to arise in so much kind of rise on its own. But it's not just a matter of on its own. It's also how it's supported. And I would like to give you a couple of studies that were done and how plastic compassion is, how malleable it is, and how it's shaped by causes and conditions around us. And these are studies done of children, and the cultivation or the presence of compassion in kids. They found that by time kids were three and a half years old, they could feel empathy and compassion for fellow kids. And what they found was that the children who grew up where they had secure attachments, in not Buddhist language now felt secure attachment to their parents. They were the ones who are much more likely to have compassion at the age of three and a half. Those who had insecure Attachment insecure connections with their parents were much less likely to feel compassion at this young age. They also found that children, I don't know what age but children who were raised with

kind of discipline through through power, you know, you know, reprimanded and told, you know, just go to your room are kind of using an assertion of power, that they ended up being much more competitive, much less compassionate than those kids who are used, whose parents would explain to them. You know, when you hit Joey, you see that how hurt he is, as opposed to you've hit Joey Go to your room. So those parents who explained took the time to explain things. So it's both these studies to me are indication that that how we are really an influence on our lives, has a big impact on how compassionate we are. The third study Was that of they compared the level of compassion and individual with how compassionate their parents were, you could argue is genetic. But they did find that, that more compassionate parents were, the more likely their parents were. And I think some of it might be genetic. But some of it might be just an example having the models and know that for me, there was a formative moment in my life, around compassion with that kind of care. That was a very small thing. Maybe it's, you know, it's almost too small to worth mentioning, in terms of the world, the example. But maybe it came to just sort of formative moment in my life. And it had changed changed me in some way. We were living in Italy, and my mother had a habit of stopping and helping out and when there was automobile accidents, which there were a fair number. And that was nice and it didn't that you know, but Good one day, she went and bought a large box of first aid stuff. She said she got it because she wants to have in the car for when she stopped to help some accident situation. And that little thing of buying a box of first aid stuff that touched me, why would you Why would you do that? That model that example, kind of opened something in me that you know that you know, some ways that has been valuable, meaningful, meaningful for me the rest of my life. So a small example small model. So, having models it's helpful. Having having a kind considerate explanation of things rather than using power is helpful and, and feeling secure and safe. Since a place helpful so These things are things we can cultivate for ourselves. We can become our own model. If we're interested in compassion, then act on your compassion. Live from that place whenever you can. And become your own model. If you're interested in compassion, then talk to yourself in a nicer way. I guess you're not explain that more. And the last thing, I think, if you're interested in compassion, and this is where it ties again with emptiness is cultivate a sense of safety. Each body safety feel safe, so safe that the idea of being safe disappears. And I think that emptiness at its heart is the safest place to be. The safest realizations are tremendous place. It's meant experience of safety with plenty of people, maybe That experience of emptiness. And don't don't think about safety as being part of it because you don't need safety. So it hasn't occurred to them. But to have this very deep sense of peace and well being, where the hearts deep inside itself feel secure. And from that security, then comes the ability to have the willingness and capacity to connect, to feel empathy, to respond to act in the world. If we feeling insecure, it's a lot harder to come that way. So a big part of Dharma practice.

And it's not an easy thing. And that says it's easy to be a teacher sometimes, because you say things, but it's a lot harder to do it. So I want to just make that clear. But it's it's hard to do the inner work to do the practice that creates the conditions of deep inner safety. We're really surfers certainly feel safe from ourselves. Which is a big step, but also say from, from any kind of heart, any kind of harm, that can be done to our heart or to that essential place inside of, of freedom, luminosity or transparency or wakefulness or something. So, a lot of the a lot of the Buddhist practice is about beginning to create these conditions of safety. So again, ethics, ethical practices, precepts, help create safety. practices of loving kindness and compassion are partly there to help create conditions of safety, security. Mindfulness itself is preeminent in Buddhism, mindfulness considered one of the preeminent ways of being protected, being safe. So what is it about an emptiness? What is it about abiding without clinging to anything? What is it about a not resting? The mind the heart, attaching the heart and the mind to anything at all? That makes it safe? That's the question. You don't have to answer that question, but we cannot take it open. If you have questions or comments you'd like to make or anything. Would you like any responses?

Yes, please. There's a mic there. Bye.

Can you contrast loving kindness with compassion?

Similar?

Yeah, they're similar. And different teachers will emphasize different relationships between these tendencies. Theravada Buddhism is that loving kindness is like the base motivator. The base attitude. And then it's basically the attitude of wishing happiness for others wishing well being for others, and that well being could take the form of happiness, safety, health, a variety of things ease. So it's mostly It's said to be whereas compassion is when that care that love that is loving kindness meets suffering, then it morphs itself into feeling that empathy versus suffering and wanting to alleviate that suffering, May that person be free of their suffering. So rather than saying, may you be happy, it's more like May you be free of that suffering. Just leave it at that suffering. If someone is, is really happy already, then you don't necessarily wish them more happiness because they're happy. So then you have more data for them. You have sympathetic joy is so love takes the form of sympathetic joy and so the analogy that's given in the ancient texts is that when a baby is born a baby, then the parents, you know, basically the baby's healthy and good. Then the parents just have a lot of goodwill loving kindness for them, they want the child to grow up the best for the child is not the best. If the if the child grows, one of their children goes to the you know, goes up a little bit speed kid and becomes a cripple. Somehow. Then the parents would have compassion for that person. Rather than the community, like a like an adapter, like a baby blessing, people are mostly celebrating and wishing a kid Well, that's loving kindness. The person isn't as sick. The kid is sick and then there's compassion. And the analogy goes on and says well name in person. Child is as reaches young adulthood and And, you know, success with career and family, it's all going well, initially, then there's a lot of sympathetic joy and delight in that. That's the right feeling. And then once the child grows up old enough, and their careers well established, their families are well established, whatever the things, then the parents just had acronyms it was taken care of, I've done my job. You know, I think we know they're okay. And then there's much more feeling like when a love takes the form of equanimity. So to answer your question,

what do you think? Or in your view, is the relationship between self compassion or compassion for yourself, and compassion for others? And do you feel that the former is necessary for the latter? Or is there any relationship important relationship between the two besides difficulty,

I suppose, depending on the person, all kinds of ways of answering that question. It's a little bit shy to answer it kind of in a simple way, this is how it is. But the if a person has a lot of suffering, a lot of anxiety, a lot of distress, I think it's really beautiful, and maybe necessary helpful for that person to have self compassion. And maybe for someone in a lot of distress, it's gonna be hard for them to have compassion for someone, some people, some of them might have a hard time compassion for others, unless it's self compassion is their first. But I can also imagine there's some people for whom they can't do it for themselves at all. And it's very healing to do it for someone else. And once they've done it for someone else and develop it there, then they can somebody to some point, do a little like keto move and bring it back to themselves. So it's kind of berries, how it is. And then there's some people who have no inner real distress. That's not really the issue. So they don't need to have self compassion. Yeah.

Can you hear me? Something that you just said? Because when I was working with people with trauma and anxiety, and definitely, when there's a compassion for themselves, that it's actually we're able to begin to work with people that have done some things to them that they've been victims of. And it was pretty neat to watch that. But on the other token when someone I noticed Sometimes just having compassion for this person over here and not for themselves, and I asked them how that feels, and it goes, it feels good. And that's a sensation. I said that sensation is within you. And they never look at it that way. So I go that compassion is your compassion. It's not that you're just giving it to that person. It's actually within you. They're just not recognizing it yet. So it's interesting, just going back, a guy was saying, you know what that felt sense.

Reminds me of a Steven line headed in conversation with someone where when something like this the person was talking about something like you know, how hard is he what he wasn't himself and how he can't have any compassion and he wish he had some compassion for himself. And even the line said something like that must be really difficult. And that just broke the person's heart and started crying. And that's when the compassion was there. Okay.

Yeah, I feel like some of this is so close that we're talking about like, like taking the hair and trying to split it like, Is it this? Or is it that, and it's so mixed together? You know, even in the suffering, I think it's like the one thing that I recognized you were saying that when you really do feel deep suffering, and I've been learning that more and more from my work, how more open I have become, it's kind of blown me away my willingness to go into suffering, how it's changed me. You know, more so one way you said it was, I think was the thing Ram Dass, it kind of said that it goes, my willingness to go into my own suffering, never knew the joy and freedom that came from his own willingness to fill that in himself, which is kind of what you're really talking about here. And I've been finding that.

Thank you. straight back

is a light on underneath on the bottom look at the bottom of it

should be a light on it. Has that yeah

I've been dealing with my family lately in difficult situation. And I've been finding that very often there's a conflict between self compassion and compassion towards others that there's a point where

trying to do both at the same time is challenging.

So I want to know if you would address that.

Yeah, where

where you feel like

you have to take care of yourself, but you also have to take care of someone else and there's sort of equally compelling.

know what to say except Good luck. I appreciate that. It's a struggle that sometimes we have. And it's not easy. Sometimes it's obvious sometimes you know that, it seems kind of clear where the emphasis needs to be. Because sometimes it's clear that if we don't take care of ourselves well enough, that we're not going to be helpful for others at all. So we have to do the inner work or take care of ourselves first, sometimes works out the equation differently. And sometimes it's hard to know. And one of the things I like about I was gonna say Buddhist practice, but maybe we shouldn't say it that way. You know, practicing in our life, is we learned through trial and error.

the hard way.

I appreciate the dilemma. Bear with me.

So I wanted to get back to something you said at the beginning of this talk who you doing this for? And is it really for your benefit or for someone else's and I was thinking about my work in grief counseling. Were my intentions of big compassion are always very pure. But sometimes the byproduct is it empties may have my own suffering. And is that is that selfish? I can go into it knowing I'm going to feel better if I do this because I get healed from healing.

I suspect that if it was selfish motivation Couldn't be, could be people do compassionate things for their own sake, they're really concerned with the other person as much as doing some for themselves. So it has a kind of self centered kind of motivation. It's not going to be as helpful for you.

But what if it's, if you're really clear that your intentions of being compassionate, are very pure, yeah, but it's just a byproduct. And that's okay. I would

I would celebrate that. Yeah. Great. And not only that, I think I think it's actually Okay, maybe it wasn't healthy, to actually want our compassionate hope that our compassionate response to the world also benefits us. And as I read the teachings of the Buddha, the early teachings, that the Buddha doesn't have the divide between altruism and selfishness, selfishness, that makes up much of certain certain currents of modern thinking. And often we read that back into Buddhism, that always supposed to be altruistic and not so in our selfish, but there is early Indian tradition talks about the mutual benefit of all this. And so as much more integrated, that as we benefit ourselves spiritually, we are then also benefiting others. And as we benefit others, we're benefiting ourselves. And we don't have to make some kind of seal between the two worlds. It's okay to want some benefit for ourselves as we help others and help develop ourselves and grow ourselves. But if it's done selfishly, or with greed, or with clinging, that's going to interfere with that mutual flow of benefit. So we have to have the mindfulness Nic of ourselves to know what's actually going on. And, and then have to make a decision, you know, and then and then work, work, work and resolve the places we feel there might be some attachment. Maybe one more here.

I guess I've given a lot more thought to loving kindness practice than to compassion and compassion practice. And I'm just reflecting on that in this discussion. And I guess, I'm thinking about how with doing a lot of loving kindness practice, one gets very in touch with just not wanting others to suffer and also not wanting oneself to suffer. And I guess I'm thinking about how orienting that can be for compassion like that. Because it's just the very presence of suffering that brings up the compassion. It's not a certain type of suffering a certain person suffering. And so I don't know, I guess I just wanted to add that as kind of a resource in terms of

a way of orienting around beautiful passion. That's beautiful and lovely, you were orienting, because some people orient their whole life around that. That's kind of the orientation that defines their life is the orientation around suffering and the response to it compassionate response to it. It's what gives meaning to their life and the

So, most guys, in my last words before we take a break, I think it's helpful to differentiate between empathy and compassion. Empathy being the feeling, to contact with other people's situation, their feelings in case of suffering, feeling of suffering in a way, and compassion, the motivation to do something about it to help. And then what do we, whenever we feel like motivation to do something about it? What do we actually do? Because this world is full of suffering, and we can't respond to all of it. So what do we do and we, hopefully we respond some places. So I have a couple of responses to this. One is that few responses. One is that when the suffering is immense that we encounter, I think that I feel like the heart almost half To respond in some way, like after 911 I think that did not tell him how been changed or something like that. That, you know, I think it does a kind of disservice to our hearts. Because it's such a big intent. That's my sense, I changed my life because of that, because of that. What I did was, I started a chaplaincy training program. Because of that, as a response to that. And the, I think, having someplace, you know, not necessarily responding to all the places, but choosing one or two or someplace that this is my area. And then when you see suffering elsewhere, that motivates you. It doesn't necessarily get you to change that situation. But it inspires you It gives you energy to put more energy and focus on your area. Let me do it my area even better. That's what that's one the other Is this kind of an unusual response to suffering in this whole compassionate thing? And that is, rather than translating it into helping someone or something. It's take that energy and channel into our own practice. And try to get down to the roots of our own hearts, our own minds, and transform that heal that change that. And I think it's a very powerful thing to say, oh, there's suffering in the world. I'm going to respond to that suffering. The way I'm going to do it, is I'm going to try to get to the bottom of it in this heart here. Because some people, someone there, hopefully, there are people in this world who do that work. If no one does that work. I don't know. And I'm worried. It's really important. Some people do it. So in so that motive the motivation to practice. stray strong motivation to practice could come out of that contact with suffering as well as my thoughts