

2008-11-07 The Five Hindrances Desire 2 of 4

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SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

Okay, for the next little section before lunch, I would like to start by a little exercise in meditation. So, be short meditation on how long maybe 10 minutes at the most. And then we will continue from there. So Make yourselves comfortable. Gently Close your eyes.

Perhaps taking a few long slow deep breaths relaxing with your breathing

Letting your breathing be normal and checking in with all the aspects of your breathing to see if there's any way in which your breathing is restricted or held or limited.

If it's easy to let go or relax your stomach or the chest

The exercise for this meditation is relies on your memory. And see if you can remember a time in your life recently or long ago where you felt relatively high quality, sense pleasure. The sense pleasure was healthy was good was right was very satisfying. to six an experience of just in the moment, it felt like to take in and feel the sense pleasure. See what you can remember about that. Maybe even there's a physical memory of that time was easy to have it was just there. Nothing needed to do or just simply stay there and feel the pleasure

With your memory with evoking this memory, try to get a kind of a physical or kinesthetic sense of what it felt like for you to experience that pleasure.

And then taking a deep breath and letting go of that memory and all that.

And now See if you can recall sometime recently you're long ago where you had a very strong desire for some sense pleasure. That wasn't really available. But there was a strong desire for it. And then see if you can remember what it felt like in your body, your mind and your feelings have a strong desire for a sense of pleasure. That wasn't it was not present

And then what's the contrast between these two memories? How does it feel differently to feel? sensual pleasure here and now a nice way? And what does it feel? How is it different to feel the desire for it? strong desire for it. How's it different in your body and your mind and your feelings?

exploration now is to explore the difference between sensual pleasure the actual presence of sensual pleasure in and of itself versus the desire for sensual pleasure. Sometimes these overlap, they rise together, there's both pleasure in the desire at the same time. Sometimes there's confusion between

the two of them. Sometimes the desire is almost taken as a substitute for the pleasure and sometimes there's no confusion. It's very clear to be very different. But I think it's very important to begin understanding something of the nature, the quality of the impact The feeling of desire as opposed to the actual pleasure. Now

one of the things I thought of doing today, if I had more time to prepare was to make up like a graph or something for you to fill out where you calculated how much of your day is spent in the pursuit of sensual pleasure. So, you might do this on your own. So for example, you could just you know, make a very quick dinner, that would take 10 minutes to put together just so you can feel nourished. But you spend 30 minutes or 40 minutes or an hour, making a meal for yourself, and one of the primary reasons for the extra time so that it can be really a pleasant meal, pleasant experience. So you've added 20 minutes to your day focus just on the meal, but then there was time spent shopping. And you could have just bought, you know, some quick thing, but because it's more pleasant, more enjoyable to get fresh produce, and so you take an extra drive and go someplace because you want that pleasure of the freshness or something. And you could just have a glass of water in the morning when you wake up, but you know, you want to have sit there and have tea because it's so pleasant. And I wonder if it would have happened if you added up all the times that you spent doing things that because you involve sensual pleasure, pursue sensual pleasure, how much of your day is actually spent with doing that? And I think that some people would be surprised how much it adds up to before they're doing that they would think well, you know, I'm not so motivated by sensual pleasure. It's not a big deal for me. But then they added up as well, gee, this is a lot adds up. And then so there's this enjoying of sensual pleasure. And then there's the desire for the pursuit of it. And sometimes the pursuit is successful and sometimes not. But the pursuit of the desire for it is a different phenomena than actually experiencing it. So what I'd like to do is to break you up into some groups, and in your groups would each group to to explore the same thing. And that is to come up with maybe one person can be this the note taker, maybe, and come up with a list of ways that the desire for sensual pleasure is experienced differently than the sensual pleasure itself. So there's, you know, this is such a big domain, not just one way it's different days, different kinds of pleasures, different kinds of things. Can you kind of come up with a list of ways that the desire for sense pleasure is experienced differently than the actual sense pleasure itself? That makes sense. So what I'd like to do is to have four groups. And, and one group can maybe meet over here or in group can meet, maybe over on that side of the room, and then spread out as far apart as possible to groups in the outer Hall. And there are more chairs in the tall cabinet just around the corner here as you go out, maybe NAS can show you when it's time. And you can take chairs out from there and set up two circles out there. And in order to get into the four groups, we can just count off them so 124 so

or 123412 or 1234124123412344.

Okay, everyone have a number. Okay, so group number one is over here, group two is over there. in this hall, and three maybe is over by the kitchen, and four is over by the door to the library. And you'll have about 10 minutes 15 minutes to a group to discuss it. Then we'll come back and then we'll share what we come up with.

for eating

call You're watching

is good you know

So I'm hoping we can have a representative from each of the four groups give us a little report about what your group came up with. For the differences between having sensual pleasure versus desiring it. anybody like to start? probably have about two or two minutes for each, each report so it shouldn't be too long. Yes. group number one,

I represent group number one, can you hear me? And I realized at the end of the group that I had written a half a page on how you feel when your desire is fulfilled, and a page and a half on the frustration. So that indicates something and I have quite a long list of the outs start with the fulfilled part which There was some satisfaction and excitement, contentment. With a good mood. The person said they would be generous, happy and expansive. Alive alert. The sense of time often disappears when being present for pleasure and pleasure doesn't last that long but the craving seems to last.

And so the sense of time came up several times.

When when the object of your desire is not available there there's a long list your frustration, discontent, loss of peacefulness, stress, tension, discomfort, short of breath, contracted, wishing for certain outcomes and feeling manipulative yearning, emptiness, like a hole needs to be fulfilled. entertaining the illusion of permanence, it leads to disappointment like When, when I get that thing, it'll be like that forever and ever. And I'll always be happy. But it doesn't work out like that time or a lack of understanding is a source of suffering, like when you're meditating and you're in pain, waiting for the bell to ring that came up.

That's familiar.

Hoping for the pleasure to last feeling at the mercy of elements remain vulnerable, not in control instead of being present. craving gets in the way of being present for pleasure. And then we started talking about our culture in general and having so much input and like, in contrast to being in the wilderness or being in a third world country where you're not stimulated by so much simulants as we are here, and how

different depths

sometimes it's, it's it's been said many times I think that compared to all the sense pleasures available to the Emperor's of Rome. You walk into a supermarket United States, and there's so much more available than, you know, the rulers of the known world 2000 2000 years ago. So, group number two,

we had pretty much senses that the desire takes you out of yourself by pleasure. You're much more in your body, in your body in your awareness. We had one example where somebody said if she sees a beautiful work of art in the museum, The pleasure is so immediate she can feel it. Her body and then the thought comes, I want this I want to take this home and it be felt that it would take it would take away the pleasure it would get it pull that person away from the pleasure so often the desire was much more an empty often connected with, with agitation and, and negative a negative energy while the pleasure itself was very positive energy. And one of us said that he loves desire. He's a pig for desire. Only he gets

the more he loves it.

And he had two examples, but I thought what came up was that why was it not negative for him, but for us, for many of us it was the fact was, as in is pointed out, the difference is you cling to it or you don't

claim to If you desire something, you just enjoying the feeling of wanting in this is fine as long as you don't say, I want this forever, I want this to last. And this is when the negative energy comes in. So if you're not clinging, it was fine to feel that

great thank you know, I've known people who the anticipation of things was a part of the joy of the thing happening and then actually enjoy the anticipation and once it comes, it doesn't kind of pay us look forward to next thing to anticipate. Okay.

I think in groups therapy we echoed a lot of what has been said already in 2005 little metaphysical so I'll just read through

so the

the desire for sensual pleasure feelings come from a lack a feeling of absence in oneself. This was said by a lot of people that the anticipation of the object seems greater than when it's realized.

From boredom,

the desire for sense pleasures come up, find the process better than the outcome or the goal. Woman mentioned that she spends a lot of a day at work and suddenly she has these intrusive thoughts about dinner and what she should cook and where she should buy. Which vegetables in there and although she enjoys cooking that she finds these intrusions very

uncomfortable.

When you desire something, you start feeling agitated.

Someone stated that the state of distraction or a state of

Give me my own writing.

The state of distraction will lead to

desires arising.

Desire is black enjoyment, and someone gave an example of a kid eating a cookie by grabbing the next one. And they can't even enjoy the one they're eating because they want the next one so that the desire itself blocks the enjoyment of the experience. The process is more in the moment. And that seems more enjoyable for some people than the actual reaching of the goal. A lot of people talked about the political campaign and how much they were into the process and

was over when he won.

They got less enjoyment at the end,

then some

consequences that you really have to start looking at The consequences of your desire and the difference between your desire and when it gets and the different experiences when it's unfulfilled or fulfilled, is different from the desire itself. So somebody who's making the differentiation between the various levels of the desire and what, what the experience is, it has it changes. people decide or some people felt that the desires are hardwired into ourselves and there's nothing we can do about not having them. It's just as someone said before getting attached to it or hooking into it. And that the frustration about not getting desires Some people also felt was high hard wired. It's the attachments to desires that are problematic. If you get mindful of the outcomes, you have to recall that the present experience from the past set the example was if you ate the whole chocolate cake last time and suffered when the chocolate cake is offered this time to remember your last experience so that to be mindful of what you learned so that the next time around, you do it differently, hopefully, the difference between wholesome versus unwholesome desires and at what point does that change at what point to be aware of what with a wholesome desire may switch over to something that becomes attachment or addiction or painful. Where you put put your attention eliminates other areas of your life. So if you're spending a lot of time

meditating,

that there are other areas of your life that aren't being focused on so just to be aware of where your attention goes during the day. And this is where it got a little metaphysical, someone brought up that desire has some kind of extra energy. And he was using the example that the pangs of hunger or just physiology, that it's not desire that's being stimulated. If you have these sensations in your stomach or your stomach gurgling or whatever. And then you label this as hunger. And then you label it because you've been conditioned to eat food. And that if you just stay with the experience of the sensations that the desires then become this desires get you away from your actual experience. And if you're mindful of that, then allegedly you can make more wholesome choices.

Allegedly, then

it's true for us. It's true. in which my truth Okay,

mine, this isn't good. Mindfulness without desire, mindful.

Without mindfulness, you can get lost in desire.

And that was our group.

Thank you for

I think there's a obviously a lot of repetition.

On a summary, most of the descriptors towards the desire were more narrow ness. losing focus, edginess, not necessarily I think somebody said before a wholesome or unwholesome but I think that was more the intent of the energy but not necessarily a good energy that a little bit of an edge to it depending on the outcome, whereas the terms used for the experience was more of an openness, subtleness and lightness as opposed to often there was more of a subtle heaviness or wait to the desire itself. A good term that I thought was a nice one to use was the idealization of expectation for the desire that often was not matched by the actual experience. Something that just came out again was the as soon as the awareness of desire came in the power of it seemed to would could drop away

some that didn't have as much intensity and just bringing the awareness back in half then you had this then you had the presence of now instead of being

lost in delusion somewhere else.

There's most of the things have already been said. Just a lot of repetition on that that was the main thing. There was more of a discomfort heaviness. Most of the adjectives used for the desire side were not as pleasant and as settled and as conscious And as being aware of that, once you just became aware, great,

that was great. So thank you, for all groups for all of you for contributing to that they hope you saw and that the diversity of ways in which both pleasure and desire can be experienced. But the desire for sexual pleasure, different people in different situations is experienced differently. And therefore, there's different ways of handling it and relating to it. So some people find that like in meditation, some desire for something come up. And the very desire itself having a desire so pleasant, it's so seductive, maybe 1012 is a very pleasant fantasy. And so it's so just so nice to be there. It's much better than just being there with my knee pain. And so you know, it's very attractive. Other times the desire masks how unpleasant it is, is actually unpleasant but we're focusing on the object what we want, and we don't notice how contracted we've gotten around it or tight or something. And And so that has kind of blinding, camouflaging effect. And then sometimes, if you're aware, if you're aware of how unpleasant it is, it's easy to let go of. So when it's pleasant, it's hard to let go when it's unpleasant, maybe it's easy to let go of. And so in meditation, if what you're trying to do is not to be lost in desire, you need to kind of work with it differently. If you're attached to the pleasure that comes with the desire, then you have to learn how to overcome that pleasure. And there's no pleasure involves the desire, then it's useful to understand the uncomfortable aspects of it, because that might help loosen you up from it. And sometimes it's mixed. There's both pleasure and it's been pleasant and unpleasant, involved in some kind of desire that we want to have. So, you know, the topic today is a sensual desire since desire as a hindrance. So it requires a Focusing on that it requires having some good understanding of the difference between sense pleasure and the desire for it. And then there needs to be some greater range of understanding of how, what this experience of sense desire is actually like. And as you have a sense of the greater range and the more fullness without experiences like, I think it's a lot easier to have awareness of it, and also not be seduced by it or be caught by it. Now, because in such a way that interferes with a purpose that you have chosen to pursue, follow through. So make some sense. So let's take an hour for lunch. Let's start again in here at 120. And you're welcome. Take chairs outside if you want to sit outside in the parking lot, or even the tables you take out there if you'd like and sit around the tables or bring the tables out and sit around the inside here as you wish and Please enjoy joy, your, your, your, your company, each other's company. Oh, and also one more one more thing. It'll be available the end of the day also, but some of you might want to pick it up. Now there's two handouts for this month. One is a series of reflections for just things to think about during the month and then the other is a series of practices to do a one for each week. Until the next time we meet. Thank you