

2008-11-07 The Five Hindrances Desire 3 of 4

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SPEAKERS

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So we're going to do sitting and but I'd like to offer ask you to do something during the sitting. Sit the way you normally would meditate the way you normally would. But then keep an eye open and keep an inner eye open to notice every time your mind goes off in the direction of sensual desire. So it could be something as simple as you know, wanting a smoother exhale, because a more pleasant exhale or you want a more comfortable thinking about the nice, more comfortable cushion to sit on. Or wishing that, you know, put the IMC in the countryside so we can hear birds rather than the cars And or, you know, wishing for more of your lunch or wishing so you know anything at all that would qualify as a desire for sense pleasure. Just notice it. And if it's not if it doesn't make you too busy, too much, try to keep a running tab you know running count of how many things you can identify happening, that more or less and it can be very big. It doesn't have to be exact. You don't have to just essential desire, because it vaguely seems to fit the category of sensual desire. Then give it a count 123456 and, and, you know, maybe some of you will get to one some of you will get You know what you'll get to. Maybe some of you have no desires at all sitting here and a nap and so

let's sit

So, was anybody able to get an accounts? Yes. How many 22 probably had the same one.

And someone else? Yeah. Good. Okay. At

falling asleep, okay. Yes, that's me to a couple of times. I know. 25 So about one minute about one minute we sat for 25 minutes

any higher number numberless number this last count

there was an interesting to those of you able to do that after we did it. Was it interesting to run a count of how many central desires you had in this city whatever What did they teach you? They go away well that's interesting the way that the mind can let go of some sense desires that come along. But some the mind is not inclined to like go and park because there's Strong and perfectly because sometimes the mind will find various ways to justify that it's okay. And most one of the more common ones, especially on retreat, is, I deserve to have a break. You know, I've been doing this practice for a while my knees have been hurting for a while this is, you know, it's been hard. And I think that, you know, I just need a nice vacation. Let's have a nice sexual fantasy. And because that's, you know, more pleasant bunnies. And, or it might seem that it just whatever the desire is sexual desire. It's really important. Somehow it's sido. You know, there's a lot of value in it, because of the great value that we invest in it. It seems like

it's worthwhile considering and thinking about it, planning for it or whatever. There's nothing inherently wrong with having desire for sense pleasure, and that was pointed out earlier. That there was there's both wholesome and wholesome. And you could sit here and meditate and have completely innocent, or maybe not some even better than innocent, some nice desires for sensual pleasure that maybe even helpful and healing and variety of ways. And it's also possible to have sensual desire, which is unwholesome or unskillful, if it followed through and it would cause harm to people. The idea in meditation, Buddhism is not to judge sensual desires, particularly, you know, that's not really the point here. But rather, what we're looking at is the consequences of the sexual desire in the context of meditation. And so it might seem like it's a judgment like you shouldn't, that's bad because you shouldn't you shouldn't do it, therefore, it's bad. But it's more like, we don't want to do that. If we're trying if we don't want to do why we're trying to do X. You know, if you want to go south walks out, don't walk north. And so so it's not meant to be dismissive, or you know judgmental about it. It's just meant to do the better thing that your particular thing we're trying to do at this particular time. Now, it's possible it is possible and it's helpful to distinguish between healthy sense desires and unhealthy sense desires. Sometimes that distinction can help us get loosen up the grip that we have sometimes on the desire, the way we hold on to it typically see, oh, this is this, if I continue this, it's going to have very deleterious effects. The consequences are not good. There's danger here, and that just being aware of the dangers enough, okay, I think I'll leave that alone. Sometimes. And sometimes there's no danger involved at all. Just disappointing thing to have. But in the context of meditation, it's just not useful then there. What's interesting about meditation, is that things that you are, which in daily life would not be a big thing. Become a big thing. With the mind is relatively quiet. We talked about that last time. So you might desire you know maybe you desire a nap, right? That's nice. But say that you desire you know those yummy rice cakes and so outside Do you have a desire for a rice cake you know, you can, you can let go that easily you know just there's all this stuff going on during your card take take care of the traffic lights, you know and it doesn't it doesn't linger very long doesn't really interfere with what you're doing. But sit and meditate and very quiet and very peaceful. And you're getting settled and concentrated. And then thoughts about rice cake, you know, you know they start with flavor and sesame or is it you know and it comes up and it kind of begins to agitate the mind pulls the mind away from I'm trying to stay present on the breath and stay there. And there's not a lot of reality interfering looks like traffic lights or people talking to you or to stuff. So it's easy to kind of start following along those sensual desires. And something which is mildly, very mild day life and not a big deal becomes a big big deal meditation because the mind is so still. And so that stillness, calm, just a little bit can can push you off center into a lose, lose your focus.

So again, it's not meant to be a judgement about the sexual desires, it's meant to look at the consequences of it, and so that we can stay on track and do what you want. sent your some people you know, central desires like their mid number one thing and some people it's not a big deal at all. Some people you know, it takes the fino extreme forms, it becomes addiction and addiction causes a lot of problems for society and for individuals. But there are some desires, essential desires, which have very strong influence on people. And one of them is sexual desire. Very powerful force. And many people have been humbled by how powerful that force can be. And another one is, for some people, his whole constellation of desires around food. And both food and sex can represent a lot of other things as part of the reason why it's so can be so powerful. It's not just sexual desire in and of itself, but sometimes they represent are connected to other things. And I know that there is no shortage of people who have spent a lot of time on the cushion, somehow or other under the influence or being caught by sexual desire sexual fantasy or sexual feelings, and as well as feelings and thoughts around food or alcohol, or drugs can be pulled this way and that with it. And I feel like though that we'd be remiss not to really kind of spend a little bit time on the details of some of the more powerful things that come up in meditation for people and people I work with. And sometimes selling retreats especially there are people who

might spend hours struggling with some of these very powerful sexual desires and might come up like sexual desire. And, and it's not necessarily easy. It's sometimes it gets very unpleasant after three, four hours. What was initially very pleasant, it's like, give me a break. And it seems like you've lost control. There's something powerful going through you. And sometimes on retreat or in meditation, you can see the tremendous power and control that forces within us have that attachments desire hormones, I don't know what it is always, you can see it more clearly in retreat meditation, because it doesn't get interrupted so easily. You know, you might go around your day life and have very strong desire. But then all the stuff happens, you know, someone calls you, you know, or you get the letter from the IRS or you get Oh, you get, you know, you, you know, you back into some car. And, and so whatever you're fantasizing about just goes away right easily. So like, Well, you know, forget about that, but on retreat, not much happened. Like that they interrupt you. And so the forces are much more kind of, you know, flowing much more and so, some people have to grapple with this very, very strongly in order to come to terms with it, understand it, you know, work with it. So what I thought we would do for the next while, is break into groups to discuss some of this stuff. And what I thought was, we'd have three groups, one group of just the men, because it's about eight or nine men, so nice size for group. And they can meet in the conference room in there. And then two groups for the women. And in here in May additional here is a group of women who would like to discuss the role, the place the relationship, what happens around sexual feelings, sexual desire and sexual fantasy and other things sexual like that, in meditation itself, in the relationship meditation, so how it can impact the sexuality or that have in meditation itself. The other group of women can meet out in the outer Hall, and then talk about food, alcohol, drugs, and other kind of very strong You know, sexual desires that might come into play also in the context of meditation itself. So not just in daily life, this is not about daily life and how it works there, but how it, how it plays out, when you sit down to try to meditate. That makes sense. Now, I think there'll be some large groups if they divide up these, you know, evenly the women. So if that's the case,

not everyone has to speak. And like if you're interested in the one the sexual group, some people whose sexuality is a very private thing, and just naturally private, there's nothing wrong with that. So you don't want to talk about it but you like to like to hear because it's important for you but you do or you know, you just want to be able to see that it's okay not to speak any of these groups. It's but I suppose the default if no one speaks to us meditate and or change the topic, you know? Is this acceptable?

The men, the men, the men are gonna get secret instructions. I'm not gonna I can't do this in public. So when the men hiring Gil, so when the men go in the Congress come along and give you your instruction there. I just gave you instruction. Let me do it again. So so if there's so there's two groups in here is two women divided in on their own? Yeah.

Oh no, no, no, no, no No, no, no, no you You're not getting the short end of this video. Don't worry. Don't worry. And it's not really a secret. I you know, but but, you know, there's a small group, I can't divide the men into two groups because it's so small. So we're going to sort out that 20 in there, you know what we're going to do. So don't worry about it. It's nothing special or secret or, you know, it's just you're not missing out. So this is this. Does it feel like it's doable? Seems doable. So men can go into competent there's more chairs in the closet that you can pull out. Exploration of sexuality meditation in here, make a circle here, and other women can go in the outer Hall and make a circle out there. And you'll have about probably probably have about 25. Flip a coin or go to the group at smallest If it's hard to decide if it's hard to decide for the women, then then stay in the room here. If it's hard for you to decide which group to go to stay in this group in here.

So, just for the several women know, I asked the men to talk about sexuality. So the, in meditation, whatever role or relationship or influence sexuality has a meditation, sexual fence, in the sexual fantasies, sexual desire sexual, you know, feelings. So I didn't go to any of the groups didn't go for the men's group. I don't stay I stay out and we able to keep the focus of the conversation on meditation. Some people, yeah, some people did. Some people didn't.

Yeah. And they went further afield. Damn. And anything I wasn't in any of the groups anything that anybody wants to say or share that seems appropriate in the bigger group here about what that explosion was like. Probably shouldn't be any comments about the group discussion but but your own experience in it and your own reflections or

I just can't started it saying well, it's not really an issue for me in meditation, but the more there was discussion going around, the more I became aware of how much it is an issue for me so it was revealing. Great, thank you.

Do you sit use a mic some people can't hear unless we have that.

I have a Christian I, I hear this meditation teacher are John Brown. And he always said that jhana is better than sex. And I was just wondering if you can, you know,

explain this

or teach me about this?

I mean, how can you compare with sex and that sort of question? You know,

it's a good question. How can you can? So it's a good question. I think it's a fair question. How can you compare apples and oranges? How can you compare sex and enjoy the experience, but it's fairly common common, but it's common enough for people who have strong genetic experience to make that comparison, because the level of pleasure and rapture that comes with strong meditative experience is generally much stronger than orgasm can be Stronger than orgasm. So it's not just simply the ordinary pleasures of sex, but they are the pleasures of orgasm itself. It's because again, very, very intense, but strong jhana and because it's more intense, and also, it tends to be last longer than orgasm. And generally, generally it comes as much more satisfying. It's a much deeper level of satisfaction that comes with that kind of pleasure that could come out of that deep meditative state. So, some people prefer it. But you don't have to compare them and you don't have to prove one or the other each neuron time and place

that's really motivate

Anybody else?

from someone who came to me first started coming to any of these practices, and then you said, you're gonna speak to each other. And that was not while I was here and had fear, and real aversion to any dialogue and discussion, the comfort that I feel in talking on these kind of groups having a group and the kind of discussion we have is just so I'm just so grateful for having that having the song to have to sit with it's just so great. And there's just now I look forward to you say there's gonna be dialogue instead of like, Oh, God.

Can I leave

yet? Don't I have my pager go off?

So thank you

very much. I didn't know I wasn't, you know, listening in to the conversations. But I had today. But I did. I did. had a strong sense that I was leaving you too short of time to have your conversation that this was a pretty unusual group have a topic and group to have explore this topic, the groups were fairly large. And it might have been valuable to have had much longer time to have this kind of discussion. But, you know, it's kind of the nature of this kind of Dharma practice day, we don't have that much open time. So, you know, I don't know what the expected experience was, but that's how I kind of interpreted it. Anything else?

Yeah. Yes, maybe there's no need to break up the two different groups. It could have just stayed in one. Part of the reason I did it, to be honest, I mean, no need to know but is, is I asked my wife, what she thought about doing just the groups on sexuality. And she felt fairly structured, not prudish, but she felt very strongly that this is a very private matter. And that and there should be some, you know, it's kind of awkward to have someone go into a group like this. If they don't want to be part of it? And so I know some people, it's not so relevant as it is for other people and a variety of different things. And so I thought it was actually better, more respectful of all of you. I was actually in SS ID, if I may say, to, to have two different groups, so that it comes of choice and take off the pressure for people who was inappropriate to go to one of the groups. So that was the idea. I didn't want to force people to be part of a discussion about sex. Didn't want to Yes.

Yes. Yeah. I think that's very interesting.

We do a lot

of very happy to hear and, and some of you might also continue these conversations. She's outside of here some of you might invite someone for tea or for a walk and say you know that we started a conversation on this topic and maybe we can have continue discussion. And okay, so is that enough for this section feel complete enough and in terms of the sexuality part it is a huge part of human experience in humans who people are and it's often not talked about much in Buddhism and Buddhist practice place sometimes people come in interviews and talk to the teacher about it if it's an issue, but you know, otherwise we wouldn't hear about it on Dharma talks too much my care by the passionate romances. This makes a little bit different and, and it's nice to listen name and put out there the fact that For some people this, this is a very important part of their experience and part of what they're normally experienced with what they're working with and try and resolve and work through in order to be able to meditate well. So, we've now we've named it and hopefully that's helpful for you. So let's take 15 minutes and then we'll come back for last half hour.