

2009-01-23 The Five Hindrances Aversion 7 of 8

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SPEAKERS

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Start with a sitting

So in the last few minutes of is sitting, like to offer you something to contemplate on one hand. On one hand there is anger and the other hand there's your relationship tank Someone might be angry and be afraid of their anger. Someone else be angry and they're embarrassed. Someone might be angry. And the relationship to the anger is to believe it. The relationship to anger might be to let the anger define who they are. angry person.

Someone's relationship my anger might be to give it infinite permission. Let it be, let it rip regardless of contract so in one hand there's anger and the other hand, it's the ways we relate to it as we hold it. What are some of the ways that you relate to anger

In different circumstances are there different ways that you tend to relate to your age

And then to change the reflection a little bit.

There is

anger when someone's angry towards you when you're receiving anger and then there's your relationship to being the recipient of anger.

Some people

run away, close down some people attack.

Some people first instinct is to believe that they've done something wrong. Their first instinct is to defend themselves. What are some of the ways in which you will late to receiving anger from others

I believe that often enough when there is anger and someone's feeling angry, that how they relate to the anger is entangled with the anger And part of the value of mindfulness being mindful of anger, is it possible to tease apart the anger in and of itself, and then how we're relating to the anger. So for example, like to say that resentment is frozen anger, there's anger, but then somehow it's locked down. So there's a relationship of holding, gripping it, resisting it. Something and for some people, sometimes

the anger is not the really the issue or the real place of suffering, but rather the suffering comes with the relationship to anger. So, I'd like to hear from some of you. Be nice to hear from all of you.

It doesn't have to be personal.

But be nice to hear a list so we can all kind of expand our The possibilities of what we see what are some of the ways that people you or others relate to being angry when you're angry yourself? Yes.

I until recently, I think I was the queen of resentment.

And the way I related to anger was to deny that I felt it, pretend it wasn't there. ignore it.

Run away from it. I don't know. You could. Anything you can imagine, even though I knew the whole time that it was there. I was doing that

and through this practices,

Some of my experiences in life

I'm learning that I do have anger,

that it's normal and it's okay to be angry sometimes. And I'm learning how to create that space between me and my anger, which is really great when I can do that. It's so liberating and also to set up no that would be with somebody else.

The second question

but to learn how to express my feelings,

without hostility into my myself, no and maybe the other person No.

What what's really the issue

Great, thank you.

That was a great list. But we add to that list of ways in which people relate to anger.

I have several self judgments

and trying to change myself very quickly to adapt to the other person. And then lately, I've found a new way that I have to be careful and I call it the spiritual bypass where I just realized I need to kind of experience the anger and not just quickly

could you hear that? So she said that she, I think maybe didn't say that. But can you hear it this time? You're sad. You're sad again, or?

Okay, the first one was self judgment.

The second was to immediately try to adapt and change to meet what the other person needs. And the third was spiritual bypass, which is quickly labeling it Dukha and it can be a way to resist or avoid experiencing the anger. And so I've learned to be cautious about Thank you.

Yeah, there's a tendency, I have to deny it on first, first happens and enter into just go off into a story.

And I found that that I was doing that during the meditation and you were asking the question, I would start to ask, I would ask the question, and then all of a sudden, I was off somewhere else, you know, looking back at some some story. So it's like, Oh, God, I do that like so quickly.

So for you, anger is closely connected to story making. Yes. You're a good storyteller. Well, I don't think so someone

I think this relates to anger, but not necessarily I usually want. I want to fix things. I want them to be better. Can you hear me? Yeah.

Yeah. So that's

so what angers there. Your first instinct is something needs to be fixed and I should fix it. Right?

Yeah. whatever that might be, whether it's being conciliatory or rather than just being with the anger or being with the interaction, I want to fix it.

Make it nice. Make it Okay. Do you have any sense of what is lost? by quickly trying to fix it?

I get the sense that I sort of missed the full experience of what's happening and what's just what's going on. Thank you.

So we talking about unskillful ways of dealing thing, it could be anything it could be any well what skillful way

is I go to sleep, go to sleep.

But a skillful way is

I stay with the feeling in my body.

And

I might have to go to that by myself for a while. But if I stay with that feeling something usually arises that tells

me what I'm really

what's really underneath.

Thank you, John.

Something that I

heard Sylvia Borstein say a long time ago was or this is the way I remember it was that anger is message that, too, there's something that you don't like, that is true, or is happening. And that to see if you can use anger as an indicator that there's something going on that you're not comfortable with in some way or, and I sometimes have found that very, very useful way to relate to the anger. Probably if it's a lighter sense of anger, and if I can pause and reflect on that if there's something that I'm not accepting and there's something that's true that, you know, I'm need to open up to or something I just don't like going on and I can just see that and then it can do the spell the anchor very quickly. And then one thing I was thinking and sort of formally in Buddhist practice to that I Maybe we would like to explore more is just noting whether something is pleasant, unpleasant or neither pleasant, unpleasant and to be able to say this is unpleasant, but that's it could be very useful. But then I find sometimes that when I make this inquiry as to what is it that I need to open up to? It actually then just turns into some sort of repression of the anger, self judgment of it? Because there must be something that I'm not opening up to, you better open up to it. And what's your problem without opening up to it?

Where are we gonna finally open up to it?

And so it's taking it and becoming very

corrosive with the beginning. You talked about using anger as a signal, yes, that we need to pay attention to this more deeply at something. But then it comes to the bias that if you understand more deeply, you know It'll go away, and you must be doing something terribly wrong. It's persisting. So yeah, I

think I think there can be that, but also the task of trying to find, well, what is it? And it might involve a very complicated storyline or investigation. And it's making it very complex that and probably reinforcing all of it in some way.

So so is it fair to say that for you that if you're investigating anger, there's already a suspicion a supposition of guilt? Yeah.

When it doesn't work, so Well,

yeah. And I think in some cases, what Sylvia was pointing to, like, wow, yeah, that's unpleasant, or pleasant.

Yeah. It's simple. But yeah, then it becomes all messed up in that and what you were saying about feeling it in your body, maybe just letting it pass through could be a lot better.

To me. Thank you, Ursula.

I think if anger is directed at me, my first response would be to become defensive. And tell myself that other person is wrong. And, and I have learned that if I look at it, I realize that there's fear underneath that defensiveness because I think maybe I'm not okay. Maybe they're right and I'm not really okay. And that's unpleasant. And so I try to look a little more deeply nowadays. If it scares me to have somebody be angry with me. And so it's good to be able to step back and say, Okay, what is really going

along with

what people have been saying about story and investigation, and so on. I think what happens to me a lot of times, is that I get very confused about what's really going on so I'm not sure you know, where the other person is coming from and what I kind of think of the sort of what arises is, is a co creation so it's not just on one side but it's as a manifestation of something in the relationship that's coming up for both people. And so then I get confused about what's really going on with them or with me or you know, what's really happening here. And so Well, anyway, so that's just something that I like to recognize now. And, and sometimes recognizing it and stepping away from it helps to understand or get some clarity on things.

Great. Beautiful. So for you when, when there's when there's anger, one of the first assumptions of First things that operates for you is the belief that there must be something here that we both doing something in the system. So that's

that's right. Well, as you said earlier, there's a lot of different kinds of anger and you know, it arises in different ways and different things, but sometimes it's really clear, you know, what I might be angry about and, and other times, it's confusing. Because a lot of times when it's interpersonal interrelationships thing, I think it's more confusing, because I think the situation is often corporate is not just coming down in person,

that's for sure. Thank you. So there's a lot of different relationships we can have to anger and some of them stem from we are personally going our personal dispositions or something. And some of them also are learned from others from society. And sometimes they're kind of crazy producing what comes from society. There are people who have in this conventional sense at least certainly Cause to be angry people society treats certain members of it's pretty badly and underclass of people. And then when they, when people who are being oppressed, get angry, then they're told that that's not acceptable. So that's, they're doing something wrong. And then perhaps some of you who are women have had that experience. There's been reasons for women to have been treated pretty badly. And you get angry, but if you've got it in, but you get angry with it, that just proves the fact that you are you know, something, something. And so and so then and so then this is a person person that guy situation is kind of a catch 22 you know, you either you know, you something terrible is happening, but if you speak about it, then it's even worse. And then you're, you're to blame. You're telling us something's wrong with you. So although all those things you know, has to do with how people relate to anger, how you relate to anger, what we internalize What happens either? So it's a whole world? Yes.

International, between the Israeli issues

is being played out just how one response to

stimulus, I respond to them back and forth. Yeah.

So so I think in order to look at it, to practice with and be wise about anger, I think it really helps to look at the relationship we have to anger, how do we tend to respond to it? And that opens up the door to a whole series of different alternative ways. There's a lot of different relationships we could have with it. And I think the idea that anger is a single signal is a really wise one. That because that says, Oh, it's something for me to learn here. And there's a lot of things possibly to learn it means sometimes, you might learn about how you are wrong. You I've learned that you're really off, you know, some kind of some kind of way. Or you might learn something about your society or you might learn something with a wise or there's a lot of things, there's a lot of there's a whole learning process. And so, to be interested in anger in that sense, what is it here? What is it I can learn is, you know, is one whole approach. So, the other aspect of anger is to kind of I think it helps the whole explanation and practicing with it, becoming free of it also. So, it's not a hindrance is to understand the angry in and of itself. What is the anger and I would like to propose here that anger is a composite event. It's made up of many different composite parts, physical parts, emotional parts, cognitive parts, beliefs, ideas, motivational parts, things that we want to happen. A lot of different things It's made up of. And I would like, they partly just need me to this, this is a very important topic. I don't want to be little it, but also maybe so we won't get too serious here today I thought we'd have a contest.

And so what I had in mind was break into groups of maybe seven or eight properties a good size for this. And, and in your group, one person is the recorder. And the person who writes down and the group tries their best to come up with a list of all the different things that can make up experience of anger, all the component parts, and you know it with as much differentiation and subtlety. It's, you know, you can do and then we'll see who

has the best list

the most the most complete list

something and 10

and I will decide who wins

depends I have friends it's a serious objective on my part

there's no real external kind of scrape

No, it's gonna be so subjective

everyone points it's just gonna be subjective here. So um so you gain the most they've been mostly we want to just just I mean, I think it's a very interesting to kind of start understanding some of the all the different things that could make it up and partly I hope through this lecture sighs is it makes you more sensitive in the future to, to, you know, to all the things you can explore when you explore or present for anger? I so what what are the component parts of anger? What are the different things that make up the experience of anger? So what is it like experience? You know, the experience of it. So what's it like physically? What's it like, energetically? What's it like, emotionally? What's it like cognitively? What's it like, mentally? What's it like? motivationally What kind of intentions come with it? You know, we're all the elements that can come together to create this thing we call anger, distinct these things we call anger. And, and all they take the idea of a contest seriously enough to lighten the mood. Otherwise, don't get serious about it. So, enjoy. So as we said, rate is probably a good number of people. One person said a quarter.

So are we.

Okay, so I think we have a quorum. And

so

can one of the recorders volunteer to be first

Okay, here it is. aggression, adrenalin rush, comparing judging mind

with a alphabetised

so far so good. Here

heat and energy, oppression, irritation,

self judgment, self protection or self protective self judgment vacation. Defensive, shame, guilt, hurt. Separation isolation.

Unlike me, or not being like me

mental assumptions, rationalizing, fault blame, not liking the anger, aversion to the anger, not liking being seen as angry unspiritual

bad food is

tightness in

the chest racing heart, blood pressure up, powerlessness, tension, rapid breathing, agitation, anxiety, flushing in the face, ignorance, impatience, disappointment. frustration, self righteous attachment to outcome perfectionist, not present, seeing read narrow focus, clenching jaw or clenching this pain, hurt feelings reaching for comfort food

can contracted shut down, fight or flight, protectiveness mother bear fighting freezing, tendon D tend and befriend. So going to your friends. Make it go away. fix it. impatience, fatigue, tired, hungry, vulnerable competition, spiked hostility ill will attacking disappointment yelling, spitting holding breath

stop breathing,

tantrum. Hiding withdrawal, suicide, depression, getting even revenge retribution, getting rid of the object that's causing the anger. Story making jealousy. Confusion, not thinking clearly irrational, blind rage, annoyance, trembling, tears, clenching that stomachache, power or empowering strength. energized, shaking, tightness, upset, nervous. biliousness puffed up, tight and self important.

There you go, now

Well, maybe there was a long list maybe that other people have can win by quality. Yes. From your group, are you couponing is one list? One record or for each group or different group? Yeah, yeah. For this one group you already predict the next group. Okay, I thought you were in the same group. Okay. Okay.

So we split up. We split up physical from some of the other emotional, cognitive

shorter physical furrowed brows. Oh, I have to read my own writing, stomach tightness,

teeth,

teeth, teeth, clenching. Finger clenching making them into fist shallow breathing, tight chest voice tight. Tension overall especially face, nausea, vomiting, quietly, intensely angry. overall body language folded arms, glaring, steaming boiling voice myon, squeaky, shouting, raising voice, terror, destructive violence. Some of the categories are going to cross anger with sexual energy, adrenalin, physical energy, nervous laughter, showing teeth, screaming, speaking very fast, speaking very slowly, speaking very intensely sarcastic, testy.

Chip and shoulder

acceleration into a very acute and sharp ability to verbalize I think that is what we put it under physical adrenaline rush tears shaking, shaking voice throbbing. heartbeat up, red face bulging eyes, veins, something emotional fear, fury frustrated and helpless, powerless sadness threatened. Feeling misunderstood, feeling angry, sad. Sorry, I'm not reading this depressed, feeling of failure confused, unable to reason judgmental, isolated, violated, oppressed, exploited, vulnerable, ashamed, guilty, hostile, self righteous, satisfying, empathizing, no empowering hatred detesting objectify, rage, fury vicious, jealousy, vindictive, vengeful and revenge. compulsion and sympathizing while feeling all these other things. Cognitive imagining horrible things, storytelling, repeated storytelling verbalizing, screaming yelling victimizing self and others, justifying, rationalizing, fueling with stories. Repetition with stories conniving, plotting, controlling, fantasizing, blaming.

Can't read my writing. Sorry.

We'll get that one and acting out.

Striking, hitting, screaming shooting physical violence, shouting condescending, hurting self or other suicide accusing road rage, alcoholic driving and intentionality. I want to be seen I want to be acknowledged I want to be heard. I want to control insulting, threatening

Harvest had all of those, of course.

But we were looking at them and they did come into different categories physical, emotional, cognitive feeling, and we're trying to

see how they flow were triggered and flowed. So first there was an instance where sense contact and generally there's a pleasant, unpleasant or neutral And then just the interpretation. And then there's the action or reaction. So the action reaction would be the hitting back the recommendation, just whatever you do for that.

And then after that there's an initial replaying or retriggering, that would continue that anger continue the emotion that would, you could, if you were mindful enough, you could choose to pick up or not pick up. And invariably, from that action, there's a real rebounding and recrimination that happens from an act of anger. So that's our

concise list. So not just not just individual things happening typically happening, but also they they happen together as a process. There's a flow, there's an unfolding of them

reduced. There's a individual who mentioned that

when anger is triggered, it causes That

takes 190 seconds for it to course through your body from a

chemical point of view.

So if you can just hang out without re instigating or involving it, it can pass.

Great, thank you. So I think we have one more group.

Green helps

storytelling, clenched jaw and hands tight gut, heat, tight face, hot flashes.

Going into heat in the body judgmental notice that there's

judgmental ness or they're wrong. self righteousness shoulds things should be other than they are. Fear. Increases in energy decreases in energy. helplessness, embarrassment, resignation, disrespect, rejection, hostility, denial, revenge, reactivity, sarcasm, passive aggressive. Cynicism, adrenaline rush, fantasy,

rehearsing and post harassing

yelling icy tone you name calling emotional destroying property. Somebody told a story about a husband putting his car the other way around cars.

Destroyed property

factionalized them versus us. Violence, pain, inflammation, resistance, cognitive dissonance bhaile threatened and feeling threatened. War motivation, boundary protection from boundary invasion tension headache. A positive action was something like the woman who founded Mothers Against drunk drivers because her daughter was killed by a drunk driver. Sadness, makeup sex.

apathy since the cup,

remember the couple that fights and it makes it

anxiety,

impatience, aggressive driving, punch a wall food, comfort food, addictions craving, depression, apathy, and a decrease in energy

that was exhausting.

So I'm sure that list could be longer. No, the one word I didn't hear is suffering. I guess it's so obvious. And

the

so I think that hopefully this exercise is interesting because part of the task of mindfulness is to be looked more carefully, at any experience, but to look more carefully at the experience of anger, and begin seeing that it's there's different elements to it, different parts of it. And once we start seeing different parts of it, we started having a different relationship to it. It's, it's a becomes becomes a different thing. So one of the things that I do with anger, excuse me is if you know if I'm angry enough that's sticking around. I'll I like to go for a walk. And what I like about walking is it the flow The Walking it kind of keeps me fluid with it. And I started kind of be there angry and I'll think about it or reflect about it, I'll feel it I'll be present for it. I'll think about situation you know just kind of freely can kind of free away that sometimes I can just go for a walk and stay with it until I can see what seems to underlie it are some different elements are. And the two underlying elements that I find most common for me is either fear or hurt. And then once it once I just once I find fear and hurt, then it becomes a whole different animal, because a whole different thing to explore. And I find that becomes something much more more productive to be present for us we're useful to present at the, at the root of it, the foundation of it than it is at the branches of it. And anger I think of think of anger as branches rather than the root and once there's there's some field Fear hurt, then there can be a different motivation. If there's hurt, there can be compassion. And so then motivation to act can come out of compassion in some way. If there's fear, then the motivation can be protection, or cortisol, you know, protect or make the situation better. And if I'm angry with somebody, then going back to the person talking while I'm angry, I don't find so generally so useful. But for me to go back to the into the conversation with the person and say, you know, that really frightened me or I felt hurt, then I often find it's a much more productive way to have a conversation and find our way forward. So this the A teasing apart. Also. The very important part of teasing anger apart is to see the role that the story making mind has and if someone I think pointed out in the list This idea is 90 seconds. If you do if you do nothing for 90 seconds, it'll pass. I don't know how long it should pass how long it takes. But anger is a new order to continue through time has to be reactivated over and over again. It isn't like you get angry once, and then it just stays there for the rest of the day. It's actually many little movements of anger being reasserted over and over and over again. And, and so. So what is it? That's how we asserting it thoroughly reliving it, how are we reactivating it over and over and over again. And one of the primary ways is through the stories we tell ourselves that ideas, all that some of you might have had the experience I've had the experience of sitting in meditation, minding my own business. You know, being calm and settled and peaceful and who knows why But suddenly, this thought arises about this event that happened 20 years ago or, you know, or yesterday or something, some point sometimes. And then it's like a volcano in there. Well, you know, I didn't know I had so much energy I was sleepy, and marinara. You know, I'm plugged in now. And there's so much energy kind of that can come from that story that our story arising. And so if I let go of the story, then that energy, just chance dissipate. But if I stay rehearsing the story, then we rehearse the feelings of feelings come up over and over again. And, and if in fact, the feelings we're having come a lot from the stories we tell ourselves, that might be accurate stories doesn't mean that they're

inaccurate. What is it? What are the choices we're making, that keeps us rehearsing the stories involved in the stories repeating it over and over again? Is it really the most useful thing to do to continue living that story. This is what this is why I think some amongst some psychologists these days, they're less than know how long 20 years.

The idea of expressing your anger is not as popular as it used to be. And so that will tell me about your angry or tell me and show me how angry you are and tell me about it. And, and used to be like catharsis and expressing and getting it out there was considered really great. And what people have found is more often than not, it tends to reinforce that very tendency to be angry, keeps it going, and reinforces video so you know, the habit of being angry and all that. And so how we tell ourselves a story, what we say and has a big impact. And because there's some degree to some degree, or maybe a big degree, when we get angry. It has to do with how we're interpreting or perceiving. particular situation. And, and so are there different ways of perceiving it different ways of interpreting a story? Are there different different meanings within which the whole the event and so that the different meaning of holding the event, then maybe anger is not going to be elicited. So, you know, if someone you know, comes along down the street and starts hitting you know, with the fist, some people get afraid to reasonable, some people would perhaps get angry at you know, what, I didn't do anything. I'm just here in the street and someone's beating me up. What's going on here. And as I said, I think was last Monday, I was on retreat teaching retreat once and this woman came to me and told me of going to the deep south in 1963. And protesting segregation there and, and standing on a street street street corner and a demonstration piece. demonstration. And these rednecks came along, you know, pick up truck and jumped out and beat up the demonstrators that because there's non violent protesting, they didn't defend themselves. And then they went back to the protesters came back to the same place the next day, did the same thing. Same thing happened again, they got beat up with the same people came back the next day. Some people think it's foolish to do that a third time, but they came back next day you stood in the same place the same rednecks came along. And one of them was standing above her with his fist ready to hit her in the face. And their eyes met. And they looked each other in the eyes. It's a great way to human connection. And the guy looked at her and said, What are you doing? What's going on here? I could just do this. And that was the beginning of the conversation and the demo. And then there was no more fighting. They just were out there was a discussion about segregation and racism and things like that. So that you know, they're you know, different Meaning, I don't know if he was angry. But there was a different meaning of the situation, the context, it would have seemed very easy to justify anger in that situation, someone's beating you up. But it's seen in a very different way. Very, very different purpose, and very different goal. And so how do we hold it? How do we look at it is the situation. And I think what Buddhism teaches us is that we can be correct quite. It's helpful, it's helpful to be questioning of the very way in which we see a situation, don't take it to their first perception or first interpretation is necessarily the most useful one. But how can we be present here and kind of see it in a different way. And part of the classic Buddhist way of working with anger has to do with with reframing, or the understanding of what's going on looking at it from a different perspective perception preceptive perspective? And the very question the very investigation of what are the different elements that make up anger, just that is to look at it from a different perspective. It means we're kind of now not looking at it the usual way that we're kind of beginning to tease it apart. And then once we start doing that, there's a different relationship to it. So there's, so it's a reframing in and of itself. So I'd like to spend the last few minutes talking a few, a little bit about the classic Buddhist approaches to working with anger. And, but I think maybe it's good to take a short break before we do that. So maybe a 10 minute break. Now we'd be good. And then we'll come for the closing session.