

2011-02-04 The Paramis Patience Part 2

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SPEAKERS

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So it might be helpful to know that in the Buddhist tradition when they emphasize patience, what it's very strongly connected to, not giving into anger. So rather than the idea of being patient with situations outside, with, you know, being passive or whatever is supposed to do, that a lot of it has to do with focusing on the arising of anger in yourself, and what you do about that. And so, we mean, I know people have a lot of opinions about anger, but often enough, anger gets us in trouble. You know, anger causes harm and suffering for ourselves or for other people. And it's counterproductive, certainly, oftentimes for the spiritual path. And the anger that that Buddhism focuses on, is because it's ambiguous or it's people have different associations, but anger means But as the anchor that has hostility in it, and if you can be angry without being hostile, then perhaps it's okay. There's a maybe wise ferocity where you know very strongly and with a lot of energy, but but when Buddhism talks about you in Buddhist English, if you use the word anger, you should translate it as, as this is the kind of anger that has hostility as part of it. So it's easy to let for that to arise. And so a big part of this quality of patience has to do with not giving in to your anger, not letting it have the upper hand keeping your anger in check enough so that it doesn't anger doesn't drive you you don't act impulsively or automatically from your anger, and have the ability to have the clarity the openness or the stability, to have anger arise, but not have it. Take over. not have it affect what you say or do is a really big, important aspect of this patient's quality is candy. So this has been quotations you'll get from the handout. Patience is the unimpeded weapon of the good in the development of noble qualities for a dispels without residue anger, the opposite of all such qualities. So, anger is the opposite of all the noble qualities that get developed in practice. It is the adornment of those capable of vanquishing the foe, the strength of recluse and Brahmins, a stream of water extinguishing the fire of anger, a mantra for quelling the quelling the poisonous speech of evil people, the Supreme source of constancy and those established in restraint. Patient patience is an ocean on account of its depth, ashore on account of bout bounding, the great ocean of hatred, limiting the great ocean of hatred. So good There's a lot goes on here. But so the connection with it, you know, anger is important and one important aspect of it and then then it becomes maybe a little bit easier because it's not necessarily you know, was was being patient with things external to us. Maybe, and maybe not anymore who knows what the external world needs. But even if we're going to engage in the world with something, can we do it without being being influenced by our anger or being caught in our anger as we do it? And that's the one of the great benefits of this patience. And the same thing also with mindfulness itself, the way it's defined in the West, is it a kind of ability to have nonreactive presence nonreactive awareness nonreactive wareness means that you're not reacting anger is this kind of anger is a kind of reactivity. And so can you not get into that reactivity. And then we have maybe hopefully access to to wisdom, and so the wisdom can take at the upper hand rather than the reactivity So, the here it says, patience is is the supreme source for constancy. So constantly being able to maintain a constant effort to keep practicing and agree with, with practicing or engaging in some endeavor that you've set yourself to do, and be able to persist in it,

it's a very important quality. So it's not meant to be patient's not meant to be only something that makes you passive. It also isn't meant to be empowering, because it gives you this the capacity to continue with what you've set yourself to do. And there are times in life where that's, you know, really helpful, especially when we when we when we want to give up and I, you know, in many situations in life I've been in where I said, I can't do it, you know, so like, what comes to mind right now is when I did my doctoral dissertation, all all all evidence, this is not something I could have

done. And, and I regularly would think to myself as I was working on my dissertation, I can't do this. This is too much, it's impossible. And, and, but I didn't let those thoughts get in the way. I just let them be like pesky flies in the background. And they'll start to be there regularly, but I just didn't listen to them. And they had no power over me. And I just spoke focused on the next literally, the next half sentence. And there's sometimes a footnote. And if you do enough half sentences, eventually you get a dissertation.

And so there was just to use persisted, you know, and so in that patience, patient persistence had a lot to do with not listening to all those that all the doubts I had, and all the doubts or all kinds of doubts that I had with this, not worthwhile, I shouldn't be doing this. Like I can do it in all kinds of thoughts that came up and I said myself Do this. And I committed that I, I kind of said, I don't know, you know, I think it's good to follow through on what I've started. And then that idea I should follow through and what I started to kind of really carried me through to the end of that dissertation. So with practice as well, what's the follow through the capacity to follow through, I know, it's easy with practice, whether it's daily sitting practice, whether it's practicing in daily life, whether it's going on retreat and personal retreat, it can be a lot of things that come up, that can stand in the way of our persistence or regularity, to hang in there. Some of the same things like they're just there's this, you know, this is too hard, then spiritual mountain is too high. You know, you hear some teachers talking about, you know, going off on doing three year retreats and how wonderful that is and how the deep insights they could have and you scratch your heads. Well, it's I can't do that and it's impossible and you know, I'm lucky if I get you know, To my cushion once a day, you know this this this Buddhism seems like it's made for these people who have other lives and eyeline, I don't know where they where they came off with what they got off with, you know, you know, so I can't do it, I might as well watch television.

And, or, you know, there's all kinds of reasons or my, my family doesn't understand my family doesn't like it, you know, they're threatened because I'm supposed to, I grew up in this other religion and now I'm involved this this religion, my family, my spouse feels like I'm gonna change, and it gets so it's getting so uncomfortable. Now, I think I can continue. And I know when I was a new practitioner, I gave up my practice at one point, because my friends that I was living with, I didn't have a way of kind of harmonizing with them as I practiced. And so because I didn't know how to do it, my solution was to give up the practice was living with him for about six months and so what are some of the things that allows us to persist? I think one of the one of them is, is to not allow the obstacles to get in the way. So, when the obstacles are thoughts and beliefs and doubts, there's a way of sometimes there's simply not listening to them, and not letting them kind of have to burrow into our mind and take control. Sometimes I think of mindfulness as an umbrella, that if you're mindful that, you know, the relative ranges falls off, you're gonna do great. So mindfulness is an umbrella that allows all these doubts and resistances we have just kind of wash wash off because you know, when I've listened to them, like I had my dissertation thoughts, you know, David, it wasn't like umbrella was more like these flies are but I just didn't let them stick anywhere, affect me. And sometimes persistence comes from having some strength as well. Some ability to have strength of confidence that this is really worthwhile, you know, Comes the obstacles, strength to persevere even when it is a lot of work, sometimes spiritual life spiritual practice is heavy labor. And sometimes people associate spiritual life with floating on a cloud

and just being easy and relaxed and detached. And, you know, monnier doing this practice, right, if, you know, I'm one of those people who can kind of just kind of float through life and be smile and easy, everything's easy and nice and relaxed. And, you know, and but, you know, sometimes it's not that way at all. Sometimes, Buddhist practice is really hard work, heavy labor. Some people say it's not uncommon for some people to say that there are times and phases and doing Buddhist practice, that it's the hardest thing they've ever done in their life. And you know, if they had known, they wouldn't have started. And part of the reason it's hard is sometimes not everyone has the same degree of difficulty, but what's makes it As you don't really know the fact that, you know, the challenge internal challenges that you have yourself. But if there's strength of character, strength, inner strength, that kind of just persevere and keep going, keep going. It's phenomenal how much of the benefits of practice comes from just the continuity of practice doing it. You don't have to be a great, brilliant practitioner. All you have to do is to keep doing it. And you know, keep doing it. Day after day, hour after hour, minute after minute, just you just keep at it, keep at it. And sometimes, you can see that there's there's shifts and changes in growth that happen in perceptively slowly, slowly over time, that only happened because of the persistence. And if you don't keep it up, then something it doesn't kind of build and I've seen a lot of practitioners who who But I'm thinking of one person now, who was having having a really common a lot of retreats with me. And I was starting to have some doubts whether he should even be on retreat, and maybe he should do something else I was about to tell him, you know, I know you're having such a hard time with this, it's so difficult for you that, you know, maybe, you know, you keep trying and trying and you keep coming back every retreat and just same difficulties. It's a real struggle for you and, and you leave kind of a wreck. And, and maybe, you know, maybe you should do something different. But I didn't say anything, partly because there was so much faith and so much confidence and so much effort being put in, I had so much respect for it. I said, I have to be really careful with this. I'm a teacher, he looks up to me in some way. I have to be really careful and that maybe I should be maybe starting debating and myself, what should I do? Should I do have the responsibility to tell this person to give it up? You know, or do you have a responsibility to kind of just keep supporting the person so I didn't say anything.

And that person because of the persistence of keeping at the difficulty and, you know, because of this because of that, that person was changed dramatically, and found tremendous benefits in the way that his rest of his life unfolded, because of how he negotiate and hung in there was patient and just worked hard against this tremendous challenges on retreat. It really changed the rest of his life dramatically. There was a maturing that happened in him that you know, and, and, you know, it beautiful what happened over time. And so, you know, the persistence thing in there doing it doing it is such an important quality. And I know for my own practice, it's, I think that one of the most important things is the continuity of practice of persistence. Because I don't take credit a lot of credit for the good that comes Practice for me, because I don't quite, you know, it's kind of like a little bit mysterious how the good how I get changed or how I get concentrated or how, you know, I can't quite take responsibility for it. But what I tank can't take responsibility for is persistence is continuity. Just keep doing it. If you keep doing it, then something gets aligned, different things can happen. So it makes it possible for something to happen. And the last thing I'll say, it's kind of like that movie Field of Dreams, where it says build it, then he will come. And, you know, so you build it, you practice your persistence, build something, create something, and then something else begins to happening. That's not necessarily yours you're doing but it has to be have to have this continuity. So the patient persistence, with the capacity to persist against odds of all kinds. So that's the topic for discussion among you and what I'd like now For you to go into groups of four. And I don't know for, if we're multiples of four here, but we'll see if, if you if you don't fit into a group of four. And hopefully you all know how to count. I've noticed in past Dharma practice days that some of you didn't get you know, one of these Dharma practice days, we'll have to do demos, practice days, a numbers and but if you could kind of, you know, figure out, maybe, if you don't know,

ask the other person around and get in groups of four. And then, and then if there's some people who don't fit into group of four, why don't you come up here to the front, you can move towards the front so we can see who you are. And then if there's one or two or three, I'll help you figure out what to do. And, and there's a topic for the discussion is for you to discuss your challenges. In persisting and doing spiritual practice, or doing meditation practice or Buddhist practice, whatever kind. Some people don't like the word spiritual. So what are the challenges you have in persisting? And what abilities understandings wisdom do you have in order to persist? Say what are the challenges? What are your challenges in persisting? And what are your abilities to persist? What supports you to persist? Make sense? So if one of the values or somebody says valuable sometimes when the questions are not so clear, because it is for you to find yourself in it, and discover something about yourself, you don't answer it's not a test. Are you supposed to answer the question, you know, the right way. It's more like these, these are excuses to explore something in yourself so and so what I recommend, as you group before discusses it, is that you want to be careful that no one kind of dominates. He talks a lot, but have some sense of flow you, you're going around in a circle clockwise, and someone contributes something to the group discussion, some topic, you know how it is for them, their challenges are what sustains them helps them and then allow someone else to contribute something about themselves. And then someone else they'll come back to you and have a go around. It doesn't mean you have to just say a few, you know, one sentence, but it can be a little more discussion than that, but some idea that you're you're doing it as a group, you're creating kind of having a conversation or creating a group process or grape group kind of kind of opportunity to let something emerge as you kind of go around the circle and explore this topic. So if you don't understand what I said, don't worry. Just just have the discussion. Yes.

As we go around,

just sharing from within, or do you envision us

Mostly not responding. But but it could be a little bit I mean, it's okay to have some. But But, but natural, you'll respond to me if you go around, someone will say something, it'll remind you of something else that you hadn't thought about. And so you'll come and say something new. And that's part of the value of the circular thing is that you're being changed and being affected by what you hear. And if you only if you're the first person to speak and you speak for 10 minutes, you know, that's nice, I'm sure. But but then you don't you don't you don't benefit from the group process and what's happening in the group, and how people reacting and responding. And so when the time comes back to you, you'll have a whole different place to offer something new, like that, right. Okay. So why don't you find groups of four and the Thank you. So perhaps now we can have some, someone who can check in a little bit about what that was like for them. And when Have a range of people I'm sure different groups went different directions or a different experience. Be nice to hear a little bit what it was like to have that discussion and what came up.

We were talking about

sometimes

we're talking about sometimes

losing ourselves in our thoughts and

getting so wrapped up in some

dealing with a perceived crisis, strategically, analytically, whatever, that we lose touch with our practice. And afterwards, I was thinking of a metaphor that's like a helium balloon and we're holding We got a helium balloon and we are the helium balloon and we go off into the sky. And how do we get back? And something some of my

friends said,

made me think. If you've always got a tether

you won't fly too far.

The tether being

tethered to your heart and to your body your breathing so that your mind can wander off. infinitely

beautiful. Thank you.

I guess nothing much happened in those groups.

What came up in our group was

making a habit out of practice, and how to establish that habit and having a faith for me. And for another member in our group. It was the neuroscience, which has proven that practice really works and rewiring your brain. So it's kind of putting those two things together, keeping that goal, that knowledge that faith based on science that it works, and then establishing the habit.

Beautiful. Thank you.

Just one of the things that came For us, is getting I that's what I heard in the last speaker too, about getting in touch with our intention, original intention for practice. And using that as a jumping off point, you know, in the day to day practice, like why am I really doing this? And, and that's helpful in the harder times when, you know, you don't want to sit down.

Beautiful, thank you. So important attention is so important and coming back to it to re establish yourselves be reminded of it is so important.

So another thing that came up in our group is the challenge of continuing with the practice or you know, being persistent at it. That oftentimes is the fear of not knowing what is on the other side if you actually decide to do it because You know, we all know who we are as unpleasant as we have these cleanings, we know what they are. And if we decide to change, then it's like, What's going to happen? And you know, not knowing can be a big turn.

So sticking with a familiar can be a reason for not to keep the path to practice. Exactly. Because the unknown is Who knows? Yep.

Yep.

Let's say I try to summarize for our group, meditating in the morning, not putting it off. I'm trying to make two spiritual retreats a year.

Starting to meditate for 40 days at lent

wasn't mine

joining with other people because there's something essentially lonely about meditation and for people who live alone.

Do that.

And we discovered that two of us know each other from 45 years ago.

The hair the front,

I think is we talked and learned thinking the practice I think it went from this concept of a form more practice to actually the practice is just living and how are we actually just showing up in each moment in our life? And then I think we were all we're trying to break that down. And it got down to how do we actually just show up more honestly, with the truth and not the lies are the things that the mind wants to think but you know, okay, patience is the uncomfortable patience is not letting you know the mind puts chatter to take you away from what's really happening. And is, you know, these pieces just dropped away then here's the practice how am I living my life? Showing up this moment, being honest, beautiful, thank you.

So

was it interesting for you to do this kind of process of going around in a circle and just kind of you find that it kind of somehow built itself and you kind of your your, your, your reactions, your your responses changed as you heard other people today Thanks very powerful process and I don't think we have enough opportunities to in a healthy way kind of have a group process where we, it's kinda like a group mind gets great if you do enough time. So you kind of group mind and group understanding and as beautiful process be done. Sometimes when communities have difficulties in the community, that process of called Counsel of going around and talking and learning from each other and hearing each other out, well, there's a group mind group understanding group kind of process kind of unfold in an organic way that is sometimes a lot wiser than any one person could have planned ahead of time. Okay, so let's take our hour for lunch. And suppose we just started here at 10 minutes after one. Finally more than an hour and those of you who are new people know have been here before they'll set up tables Inside or outside