

# 2011-03-04 The Paramis Truthfulness Part 1

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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## SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

So as you sit here, you might take two or three deeper breaths. And as you exhale, let go of whatever you're thinking about or concerned about.

Take a deep breath. And as you exhale, settle in to your body and feel your body.

Feel your body and see if you can relax into it. settle into it.

Feel the contact of your body with your question or your chair or the floor as a reminder that you're here

in this place at this time in this body

and then I'm going to bring up some different themes concepts. And as you hear these ideas, see what responses arise within you and your body Your belly and your heart, your mind what responses what gets moved or activated? Or even what thoughts occur?

The theme for today is truth. truthfulness what resonates inside of you with the word truth

There are other words closely connected ideas concepts. What happens within you with a word? The idea of honesty to be honest

your body and your heart and your mind what resonates with the word honesty?

And then what about with the word authenticity

resonates inside of you with the idea of being authentic

One of the very helpful responses to truth helpful for the practice This mindfulness, the practice of becoming free. One of the most helpful responses is to have a love of truth.

What responds within you? What reacts within you to the concept of loving the truth?

And then the final statement

listen carefully to what I'm going to say. With this still and open a full mind as you can see you can don't automatically think about this. Let's see what bubbles up from inside. What shifts or changes inside when you hear this statement.

for freedom the love of truth is more important than the love of self.

Love of truth is more important than loving oneself.

Then to end this setting, you can take a few long deep breaths you'll connect it to your body. When you're ready, open your eyes

So welcome to what we call at IMC Dharma practice days. And Dharma practice days are days where we practice the Dharma. But in a wider understanding of what practices than just meditation practice. Practice involves any activity that we do. Where we are practicing to be free. We're practicing to express our freedom. We're practicing to be the truth in some deep way. And there's many ways of practicing and very important part in Buddhism is practicing community. without practicing community, there probably really is no practice. It's very hard to practice as a hermit and some of the great some of the really important things that can happen in Buddhist practice happens best when we're practicing together with other people. And we discuss the Dharma with other people, we get ourselves reflected in other people. We share ourselves with other people. We're able to kind of engage in a very personal way with the Dharma, the Dharma practice and themes in a way that maybe doesn't quite happen if we just sit and read or just listening to a Dharma talk or sit and meditate by ourselves. You're not necessarily challenged the same way You don't necessarily surprise yourself with what comes out of yourself when you speak or when you engage as you do when you're talking with people. So part of these days Dharma practice days this year particularly, is involved with a little bit of teaching from Ynez and I, but to help you offer you a variety of discussion topics or exercises, so that with your fellow community here, you can engage in some hopefully deeply penetrating way for yourself around these themes and topics. The theme for the year is the power of these, what's called the perfections, which are 10 qualities of character, which support the practice of freedom and support the practice of compassion. And what's quite beautiful is that the same 10 qualities are said to be supportive. For both freedom and compassion, with the idea, at least I feel that compassion, compassion, activity, freedom, the practice and expression of freedom are like two hands that wash each other. I guess you could wash ahead with one hand, but it's you know, a little bit hard but you wash yourself best with two hands. They're they're mutually supportive. They're mutually connected. They kind of arise together. And I think is one of the hallmarks of the especially the Theravada tradition is this intimacy or this unity or this inseparability of personal freedom, enlightenment and compassion, compassionate work in the world. The and so of these 10 qualities we are now On the seventh, which is truthfulness, truth, such as in Pali Satya in Sanskrit. It's a powerful word, because there's power behind truth. And in fact, the Mahatma Gandhi coined this term Satyagraha, which is usually translated into English as the power of truth or truth, power, the force of truth. It was then kind of read ridden by Martin Luther King, and his efforts to do in America Civil Rights times, to become sole power. And so the word such on soul are almost considered, you know, close enough connected that that Martin Luther King called the soul there's a power and strength to, to truth for many reasons, but without truth Without the support of truth, there is no Buddhist practice. It's really a prerequisite for Buddhist practices, a commitment or a love of truth, truthfulness. And it's much more than just you know, being honest with the people you talk to.

It's much more because it, the higher requirement is more difficult requirement that practice causing us on us to do is not just to be honest to other people, but more importantly, to be honest with ourselves. And that's kind of you know, there can be much more challenging, and so hard to have to discover

what's true in ourselves what's really true. And then not only discover it and see it, but to become it. And so the task of Buddhism traditionally is to become someone who's true. To become authentic become true. So we are, who we are, how we speak, how we live, is not only aligned with what's true, but In this instance is true. There's no separate separation between the two. All the other parties are really supported a lot by a commitment to truth by the love of truth. So, ethics or integrity is closely connected to it. generosity I hope is connected to truth. renunciation is only healthy if there's truth. Wisdom is all about truth. effort. Hopefully effort is to be true. And then patience. We got to be patient with truth. Truth is a hard, hard partner to dance with. And then truth. And then next month it's resolve or determination, strong intention and then loving kindness. Ecuador. So today's truth, beautiful topic. And and, you know, for the most part, I want you to engage in the topic to explore it for yourself what it means for you. And, and other times, perhaps we'll do a lot of teaching, I'll do a fair amount of teaching about it, maybe Sunday morning or something. But I think it's more important to kind of not give you too much to mess you up with other people's ideas of truth and let it be. It's a process of discovery, which is a big part of what we're trying to do in mindfulness practice or Buddhism. And discovery sometimes is interfered by getting too many teachings. And it's one of the shortcomings of the Vipassana movement is that we teach too much. So with that, let us teach a little bit

So the truth was, my mind was just absolutely blank there.

So that's how

that's how it is to be with the truth of the moment. I wasn't planning to say something at that at this point, you know, so and, you know, so the thoughts that come up are okay, you know, you know, I should say some things, you know, brilliant Of course. Yeah.

And you know, one of the

I don't know I've shared this with you before, but one of the really, really important turning points in my practice was one of the Dharma talks that Gil gave in, I think was 1994. And he was giving a talk in the middle of the talk. He, he went blank, you know, he lied, he forgot what he was saying. And He kind of looks around and, and he goes, Oh, that that's a bit awkward. And then just kind of went back to this talk. And, and, you know, I remember my feeling in my gut, Oh, my God. He said, it was awkward. And it was a very, you know, it, but he was so comfortable being uncomfortable, you know, just being really authentic in the way he presented himself. And it's actually been a reference point to me. You know, throughout throughout the years, you know, always you know, that 10 years See, to want to present ourselves a certain way to, you know, make her image appear a certain way. And that's always been that reference point in the in the back. So, the moment of authenticity, really, this very powerful, incredibly powerful teaching.

We'll just pass it back and forth all day.

Try to avoid the topic.

The So, what I'd like you to do is to have a discussion amongst yourself now. And I thought it'd be nice if you would break into groups of five and then discuss among yourself, the value and the importance of truth, your ideas about it. Now in order to have their comments the discussion be part partly process is kind of a group mind. It isn't just like one person holding forth with their opinions, but rather somehow you're influencing each other, affecting each other and opening doors to each other, and listening new ideas that you contribute to the group and kind of you see where the group goes as you kind of unfold

the journey that the group takes together, you might want to start by going around in the circle a few times in a maybe clockwise way. And, and someone offer something that's not a long speech. Something you know, doesn't have to be just one sentence, but something is relatively brief about how you feel. what you feel is valuable or important about truth. And then someone else offers something. And each time somebody someone offers something, it's going to affect the other people there. They're going to have associations can remind them of something it's going to, you know, suggest something to them and then when it comes back to you, again, what you've heard from the other four will somehow maybe inform what you contribute next time. And so and so you go around that a few times. And you might be surprised, but what comes out of your mouth as you keep going around because you're being influenced or affected by the group, this group process going on. At some point, after doing that a few times, it feels, you know, natural, easy enough, you can break the circle and just kind of have a more of a cross kind of talk or whatever. But just be careful, one person doesn't talk a lot to should be really be a shared thing. And so if you could please give some care to try to do five people in a group. And if someone doesn't find a group of five, why don't you walk towards the front and that way you can find each other. And if there's some not a multiple of five here, I'll help us, you know, figure out what to do because of that. So Oh, you're welcome. Take chairs out. The other Hall and sit out there spread rapidly get in or even go in the conference room if you want. And we'll probably do this about

probably have 20 minutes for this and then we'll come back and have a discussion how that went.

So I was hoping, take about five minutes to hear some brief comments from some of you what it was like to do those conversations. What came out what was surprising what was new for you new ideas.

I felt like I kept going longer. It was

a topic that

really resonated for all of us. I think we all had a lot to say that meant something to us. And there were a lot of different ways of looking at the truth. So we were in doing that.

Beautiful. Thank you.

straight back

Well, some of us

became kind of an uncomfortable with the word truth in itself. It's a really tricky word. Because there's your truth and your truth in your truth. And we we felt like honesty and authenticity. Were were were better words.

To bring up is a very interesting topic I've noticed and somehow in the last 1015 years, this expression, people often use you as my truth and your truth. And I don't think they're really referring to truth when referring true is people's opinion or people's experience. And it's interesting to differentiate between what we directly experiencing what's true or what we how we perceive and what's true. Sometimes what we perceive is not necessarily true and, but to say, my truth is what I perceive or my truth is what I think, or what I believe, makes the boundaries between or experts what truth is pretty fuzzy. And so I think they'd be very careful with language and sometimes we want to use a language segue, I believe. As opposed to, it's my truth. Anyway, that's someone else please.

Well, I had the same trouble with the word truth. Did it mean historic truth that it means scientific truth, or does it mean my personal truth at this moment

Good, good question.

I

got kind of excited about the idea that

kind of came from our out of our group of compassion is inherent in the truth,

compassion. Compassion is inherently true. Beautiful.

Yeah, I think our our group

struggled with that concept to what you know, or perspective versus the truth and

what is the truth, you know, because the blind man and the elephant syndrome.

So, we came to a point in the conversation when we were actually looking, what is what is universally true for all of us, and I just want to share, one that came up that I just think is wonderful. One of the things that we could all really readily agree on. It's just the fragile nature. Thanks, Richard, the fragile nature of the body and just how fragile we are in and that includes the mind but the fragile nature of the body in particular. And beyond that we couldn't we there wasn't like a long Christmas list of truths that we were fighting it was okay fragility. And then we just worked with that and

massage that.

So, we all had the same issues and confliction about truth so for me, what I ultimately think that will make sense to me, is one of the things that you said, the very last instruction that you said or thought that you had is think it's important to start with being truthful with myself first. And perhaps that will resolve assault with in truthful with other people in not just being always right. But may perhaps been taking compassion into consideration and other people's feelings into consideration even though the facts may be correct. It may not be the right thing to be truthful. So, but in order for that happen, I need to be truthful to myself first, so that I'm not clinging on to something that's not supposed to be. So that's kind of where I'm coming to understand how

to approach this. Beautiful, thank you. So he points out that there's an interesting distinction between fact and truth. They say that truth has power, but facts don't necessarily have power. So what's the difference between facts and truth? So, yes, please.

In our group, we talked about

some of the emotions that you get in regards to truth or not truth. And, and we were talking about unit when somebody lies to you and in that the feelings that you get inside that anger you might feel, or that hurt. So we dealt with some of the emotional kinds of things that you might have, and living with. If you're raised in the south or the Midwest, there's a lot of social truth, things that go on. And games that are played with how you're supposed to live your life. And I think the best was truth should be simple.

Although we've realized

it's lovely in the abstract, but in reality that may be much more difficult, and that to be comfortable in your own truth. And one gentleman in particular said he felt that in meditation practice and doing the practice by becoming more aware, you notice when people have the truth, and you can kind of step back a little bit, and how you live with that.

Beautiful, thank you very much. So one more here, Dawn in front.

So one thing that came up in our group was the notion of the search for truth as the whole process. And that they're almost kind of a homing instinct or an orientation to the world that comes forth in That process. And that kind of paradoxically, part of that is letting go of any notion of truth with a capital T for ourselves. And just letting go of opinions and being this process of open inquiry that happens.

Thank you. So, that was the beginning warming you up in this topic of truth. And so let's take a break for 20 minutes. So let me start again it may be the clock clock is now working. minutes are correct. Yes. I started at 11am