

2011-07-17 Exploring Pleasant And Unpleasant

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SPEAKERS

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This morning, can you hear okay? Everyone here is fine. Okay, so this morning, I would like to go back to basics, one of the basic instructions aspects of mindfulness practice, which is the practice of bringing attention to the feeling tone of our experience. The word is better now. It's an interesting word the better now because it's a closely connected to the word VEDA, that ancient Vedic tradition or to Vedanta, like the Vedanta tradition of Hinduism. They all kind of have one of the meanings. The root meaning is the word read, which is to know. But in Buddhism, at least in Sanskrit, sometimes the word then from Vidya also means to experience and so it's a particular way of experiencing Life is a way of knowing what's happening in the present moment. That can be extremely helpful. So to get to that I want to so in the ancient world, both in India, and in Greece around the same time, there were philosophers, if we can use it as lover of lovers of wisdom, who were trying to understand what may makes up a wonderful life, a thriving life, worthwhile life. And many people have done that. And in the religious world, it's not uncommon for people to answer that question with some kind of reference to the supernatural, some kind of reference to a deity or deities or to heavens or something. But for whatever reason, there was this period In the ancient time, both Greece and India, were there were people who are not answering that question of how do we have a successful or a wonderful life in reference to Gods or theology or heavens or hells, but rather in the directness of our life as it's lived here. And some of you know that Greek philosopher, I'm not sure how you pronounce it exactly. I think, Epicurus who focused on this very much so and, and he defined a happy life or successful life a good life, as a life which is without pain. And I think, you know, from that came the idea of being Epicurean, experiencing pleasure, savoring pleasure. And it might seem a little strange to many of us to think of that a good life is measured by the absence of pain, and perhaps a pleasant presents a certain kind of pleasure. But there's There's a peace to be experienced a sense of well being to be experienced in the absence of conflict, stress, and the absence of pain that some people find extremely meaningful, meaningful enough that it kind of becomes our definition of a good life. The Buddha in his time was kind of instantly his way, coming to somewhat the same conclusion. For the most part, early Buddhism was not looking towards good life in terms of a future life or rebirth and heavens or hells, or in reference to Gods and deities, but rather a good life is something that can be found here and now in this lifetime right here. And one of the ways and to attain that experience that or the experience of that, in that good life, successful life, meaningful life, was most commonly described as a life of peace, to experience peace, profound peace. And so how is it we can experience profound peace that's meaningful for us that we really experience our life now is good or that this is a wonderful way of living? And how is it that that experience of peace, you know, is considered to be the highest kind of experience an individual can experience for him or herself? I think partly because if you don't resort to abstraction, so you don't resort to imagination, don't resort to abstract ideas or other people's authoritative claims of what's real. And don't look into the future lives for some kind of definition of a good life or meaningful direction. And you're left with your direct experience here now. And what is it about the direct experience here now

when it's a direct experience of now provides a sense of completion or wholeness or peace or profound peace. I think that that sense of peace, the absence of conflict that happens absence of strife, the absence of stress

is, is can be very, very meaningful for people. So how so in Buddhism that's the direction that's the kind of goal in a sentence is how to experience here now, a profoundly meaningful piece in order to attain that peace, Boudin says it helps if you use your attention but to use your attention in particular ways, you don't just let your attention be just kind of you pay attention kind of as you always pay attention. Because attention in Buddhism is not a neutral phenomenon. We're not neutral attenders to our experience, but when we pay attention to our experience, we often pay attention to it through the filter of our conditioning, our values, our agendas, our desires, our aversions, our sense of self For our definitions of what it means to be a human being, and so it's often filtered through. For now we'll say ideas, conditioning. And it's the, and the unexamined way we pay attention is often a source or reason for why we suffer, why we end up in conflict or strife or living in fear that, you know, it isn't so much that the world provides difficulties, but it's how we attend to the experience of the world. That has a lot to do with how much we suffer how much one conflict or, or feel upset about things. And so, Buddhism says that you need to learn to pay to notice how you pay attention, and learn how to pay attention in more useful ways or attend to our experience in in new ways, rather than just how we happen to kind I grew up to do it. And one of the ways that one of the teachings in the from the Buddha was it can be helpful for this purpose of experiencing peace, to notice that aspect of our experience, which where it's either pleasant or unpleasant. One of the now I can seem kind of reduction listing some simplistic to do that. And people can protest say, my life is much more sophisticated than that. And much more you don't understand how complicated my issues are. And let me sit down and tell you and this is not a this is not to dismiss the importance of attending to the complexity of life. But if what we want to do is not to be entangled with the complexity of his life entangled with our experience of life and Tangled of what's going on, we need to find some Some perspective that can help free us from that entanglement. Not to get this entangled so that we kind of just become aloof or distant, but perhaps disentangle so we're not suffering about it. And maybe if we're not suffering, if we're not entangled, we can see the situation more clearly. And so a big part of Buddhist spirituality is disentangling the tangles that we have, and to disentangle the entangles it helps to know how to pay attention what to pay attention to, and there's many ways to pay attention that are useful. And the Buddha said basically, that one of those of the many ways that are useful to pay attention very is to pay attention to whether your experience this moment is pleasant or unpleasant. And the it's rather vague. In the suttas and the teaching Buddha exactly what the formal definition of pleasant and unpleasant is And I think that's the way it should be. Because it isn't a technical definition we want. We just want an operational definition of how we, as individuals, they experience things as pleasant and unpleasant. Most of us have some, you know, that's a pretty basic, you know, duality that we may times experience. And, and it's good enough the operational sense of how is it that we experience it right now, because it's based on how we experience pleasant and unpleasant pleasure and pain. That is a basis for how we relate to that pleasure and pain. So there, it's not uncommon for people to experience things that are unpleasant, and want to avoid it. The experience it's very rarely as common people to have pleasure and want to have more of it.

And again, one of the great kind of philosophers, if you may, lovers of wisdom or psychology or something was Freud. And a big part of his teaching also was the pleasure principle was he pointed out how, how people pursue pleasure and avoid pain, and how there's sometimes a feedback mechanism to pleasure principle, where we do behaviors, we do activities in order to stimulate the pleasure centers. And we you know, and sometimes that gets us into trouble. The opposite for Freud, of the pleasure principle was, I think, called the reality principle. And for Freud, the reality principle has a lot to do with delayed gratification. And that as we grow up, we have to learn some degree of relating to

pleasure and pain in a wise way, and not kind of going headlong into pleasure at every opportunity is a wise part of maturing. You see that in young kids. There's a pick up too. particular age, if you put a cookie in front of a kid and even tell them you know, you'll get more cookies or something better in the future if you just don't eat that cookie right now. They've done these experiments in the left kids alone in rooms. And, and up to a certain age, it's too tempting. The kids will go for that cookie. Though there was one remarkable kid in one study, where if they're watching through the mirror, right. And, and one one kid and early he understood somehow that the better off not eating the cookie, but it was very hard. So what he did was he crawled under the table and hid I guess they couldn't see the cookie or something because the ethics is grappling with a strong maybe desire. So some of us are grappling with strong desires, desires for pleasure and desires to avoid pain. And some people you know, haven't learned to go on to the table yet, or haven't learned how to cope with it. I've been learned delayed gratified. keishon or avoidance of unhealthy pursuits, even as adults. And the humbling thing is that even a lot of people who think they have haven't. It's quite humbling, I think, to start focusing on how our mind reacts to pleasure and pain, pleasant and unpleasant to see actually how much of our reaction to life is based on this very simple Amoeba like, avoidance of pain and an approach to pleasure. We might think we're much more sophisticated, we might think there's so much more rationality thinking behind it. But often that can be that simple. That so much is based on that. And so, because we get pushed around to some degree or the mind kind of react so strongly to things that are unpleasant, unpleasant, it often then colors our picture of what's happening. We don't see very clearly and Sometimes it's we end up doing things and acting in ways that are not healthy for us or helpful for us. And when we stay in a reactive mode to pleasure and pain, when we get kind of preoccupied with it then and pushed around by it, the heart The mind is not at peace. And so, to start paying attention to the simple simplicity of is this a pleasant experience right now an unpleasant experience can make the our whole relationship to the present moment. much simpler for the purposes of getting disentangled, if that's what you want. So, you can be in phenomenally difficult situation, you know, big social situation. It can be phenomenally complex, all the relatives are there and all the history of all the relatives and, and, and all the complexity that goes involved and be very difficult and unpleasant what's going on. And you could spend a lot of time analyzing and strategizing and figuring out Do you know the details of all that complexity? Which might be useful, but it's also possible sometimes to, in a sense, step back and recognize this is an unpleasant situation. I'm experiencing a lot of unease a lot of unpleasantness in being in this situation. Now, given that it's unpleasant, can I find a different way of relating to the unpleasantness, then the way I'm cringing or tightening up or pulling back or getting angry or something? Can I just bring my attention to just the sense of unpleasantness

and the hearing here is we're using our attention in particular ways for the purposes of getting disentangled. And it's and sometimes it's useful to just bring our attention to that aspect of the experience that's unpleasant. And some people will find if they do that, that there starts to be a little bit of distance from the experience a little bit disentangling from that area. perience and a little bit more sense of freedom in that moment. And that is because it's so simple, pleasant and unpleasant. It doesn't, doesn't kind of seduce us into spinning out in all our thoughts and ideas and feelings about the complexity of the situation. It kind of reduces it in a sense to something very simple. And some people find that simplicity, they can breathe. They can just be mindful, they can get quiet, and just experience the unpleasantness. Now, maybe it's easy for me to say that, but for some people, it's a whole training to learn how to be present for something that's unpleasant, without reacting to it without automatically trying to push it away or trying to avoid it or do something else. Or it's a training to learn that you're better off Seeing the unpleasantness directly and feeling it directly This is unpleasant as opposed to ignoring it. One of the one of the cliches or slogans in our scene is ignoring suffering is suffering. Ignoring suffering, when you're when you are suffering, perpetuate your suffering as more suffering that needs to be there's another layer on top. And there's something again about how we use our attention

when we can bring our attention fully and completely to the experience of pain or unpleasantness, and there's less suffering in that. It might be counterintuitive, because some people think that then that, you know, now I'm feeling directly, it must be more, in some ways, it might be more acute because it's direct. But when we're when we're suffering when they're we're reacting, and we're not really conscious of it fully. It's kind of operating in the background. There's a lot of unconscious subconscious conditioning comes into play of being forward against the proliferation of thinking, anxiety of imagination and all kinds of things going on, that adds to the suffering. If we get simple and just be present for the unpleasantness, and maybe feel the immediacy of it maybe more acutely, it more likely than not helps begin put to rest all the associated ways in which we're reacting and then it kind of subconscious or, you know, in the background of the operating what's going on. So there's something about turning directly and experience this is just unpleasant and holding it in our awareness. I've done this with headaches, I've tried to ignore headaches or kind of just go along with life, you know, something and if the headaches kind of acute, you know, I find it's actually better to turn my attention and feel the headache directly and completely. And if I do that completely indirectly, then I don't proliferate my thinking. I don't there's some way in the background of my thinking mind. I'm thinking, Oh, this is terrible and poor Gil and how am I gonna manage? And, and this and that, you know, and what are people gonna think about me and, and, you know or you know, whatever. And, and, but if I kind of take and just take it in very directly immediately This is unpleasant and stay with the unpleasant this something around it can relax and settle. And in addition to this, the periphery kind of relaxing peripheral reactions relaxing and settling as we pay attention directly. There's something about the nature of awareness, that awareness tends to get broader and wider. It's kind of like we make space around the experience. And so both the periphery gets more settled. And this the wonderful delight and pleasure of awareness becoming more expensive. At the same time, if you again, how would you pay attention to these important if you pay attention to the quality of your awareness, and that, again is a training to learn that awareness itself has a quality and it's useful to pay attention to that.

And one of the very pleasant things to experience is an open, expansive, pleasant state of mind of awareness. So what do we pay attention to there's, there's a infinite number of things you could pay attention to in the present moment. And you could just kind of randomly pay attention to whatever's going on. But it seems that what the Buddha was saying there's a particular things which are more useful to patient attention to other things. And that one of the things is useful as a pleasant, unpleasant experience. Now as we pay attention to what's pleasant and unpleasant, that allows us also to evaluate this is this useful to pay attention to this pleasure. So you To pursue this pleasure or not, is it useful to stay present for this unpleasantness? Or is it not? Some things which are pleasant or useful to pursue some things which are pleasant or not? Some of us haven't had the experience of pursuing five minutes of great pleasure. Wonderful, blissful pleasure. And then had months and years of suffering as a consequence. What was I thinking? You know, just think of some of the things I some of my pursuits as a teenager. So I've got to tell you that you can imagine and, and I would have been better off, you know, seeing that this is temporary pleasure and just the pursuit of pleasure in and of itself. You know, there's other content, other situations setting into motion other things as well. And so maybe this pleasure, this pursuit is not worth the promise the allure or the for it, let's leave it alone. Other pleasures are very nourishing and meaningful. And sometimes even the pleasure of a sunset is useful to stop and pay attention to because it soothes the heart, the mind, if you're stressed and anxious, maybe it's good to be soothed and settled. Going into a peaceful environment. It can be very pleasant and enjoyable, looking at art, talking with a friend. Certain kinds of sensual experiences meditation can be pleasant many things. Sometimes it's healthy to pursue that because you can feel and see how it's settling in like nourishing you feel like being fed. And this is good to be fed this way. There are certain kinds of unpleasant or painful situations that are useful to avoid And certain kinds of unpleasant situations that are useful to bring our attention to the field more fully and experience. And so can we just know the

difference between it we know when to pay attention to pleasure, when to avoid the pursuit of pleasure, we know when to pay attention to pain, and when to try to avoid the pain or not experience it or do something about it. So that that evaluation that wisdom works a lot better. If you in a calm, relaxed way. bring your attention to the feeling tone of the experience. So you kind of look you've learned how to bring your attention and feel this is pleasant. This is unpleasant, just feel it. As we train ourselves that way, one of the important things to learn is all the ways which we don't allow ourselves to feel the simplicity of this is pleasant, unpleasant. All the judgments, all the fears, all the beliefs, all the assumptions, all the emotions that come into play. They kind of cloud the view cloud division of, of what's actually going on and learn, you know, and one of the very interesting questions, too, I think all of us to ask is to try to imagine yourself in a situation where you have no access to any of your wisdom. And maybe you can imagine situation when you're harried and upset and late for something and nothing's working and, and you're kind of you're kind of reminds kind of crazy or something. And, and, and, in that kind of state of mind, if you suddenly experience something unpleasant, what's your kind of unwise gut kind of instinct of how to react and different people will react different ways and that kind of gut instinct unwise way, depending maybe your personality, how you're wired. Some people will get angry at the what's going on out there, at the experience at the thing, thing, or at some person who somehow names must be responsible as someone's responsible, it's not me.

Some people get angry at themselves. And they get angry in many ways. They get angry, they feel shame, they feel upset, they feel discouraged. They feel like something's wrong with me. The fact that I'm experiencing pain or something unpleasant, must be a sign of personal spiritual failure. Because if I'm really a good spiritual person, I'm supposed to be floating on a cloud. Just experiencing cosmic joy. And because I haven't, you know, because I'm feeling some pain, it must mean I'm a Buddhist failure. And so, you know, so that that kind of thinking just gets in the way. You know, so to be able to weed out that simplify it and Experience the discomfort, the pain, the very simple way. Just this, just this, and there's peace to be found and just experiencing it like this. This is how it is. So important part of the training is to begin understanding how is it that we can and when we're not we're not wise, how do we react? So some people get angry. Some people the instinct is to go to desire and pursue pleasure. Things are unpleasant, and let's replace it with pleasure. Now, it's okay. It's, it can be okay to do that in and of itself. But we have a society that has plenty of examples of people who have done that move, replacing unpleasantness with pleasantness in a way that's caused a tremendous amount of harm. There's not a few people in our prisons, who are there because of that, pursuing drugs, problems with alcohol Whole. There's a whole society of addicts of all kinds in our society we have, you know, recovery programs for galore in our society. I mean, not just, you know, a but na, is it sa fixers sex addicts kind of anonymous or something. And there's probably I should be there probably is like computer computer recovery. I mean, that's quite intense pleasure principle operating there with computer games and quite a few parents have come to me parents have teenage children. And were young or young adult parents of the young adults. Talk about how their teenager young adults are staying up all night. on their computer games, they can't get them off. The and so it's some of that just the pursuit of pleasure because it feels so good. And it's kind of addiction to feel good to feel good to feel good. not recognizing that in the bigger picture of our life, things are getting worse and worse. And sometimes it's so it's a replacement or trying to it's a reaction to feeling unpleasant. The pursuit of desire. Some people shut down when things are unpleasant. That's their, their gut reaction, they just kind of numb out or shut down, put their head in the sand like an ostrich or something. And your pool in become introverted. And, you know, and they just kind of like it's hard to reach because they're kind of like, it comes so internal. So what is your way? Or, you know, do the top three ways it's useful to know that and see that to get wise, it's sometimes hard to admit it that oh, I have a I have some unwise ways of but to really see that everyone has, I think everyone has a kind of basic instinct of how they would operate when their wisdom is not operating. To see that and is very helpful because then you can see it

coming or you can see it operating say Oh, there it is. And then perhaps you don't have to get so entangled you can step back and not be so involved in it. And then the question is, what's the opposite? When you are wise, say you're not harried and frantic so you're calm, relaxed, you've had enough sleep, you don't have a lot of concerns. When you enter into a difficult situation, you can you know, you have a presence of mind to see what's going on. And, and so it's an unpleasant situation, how do you react them? what it what are some of the some of the sources of wisdom and understanding you have to help you be wise about being pleasant present for unpleasant? So the same thing with pleasant situations? How do you how do you tend to react to pleasant situations when you're not wise? And usually, it's a good thought experiment. I'd recommend that when you get home Talk to your friend. And then how what are some of the sources of wisdom and wise understanding you have for how to relate to pleasant situations, a variety of pleasant situations, just the pleasantness of the situations independent of the rest of what's going on in the situation.

Then remember, the principle here is to use focusing on the pleasant and unpleasant experience as a way of helping us become disentangled with it. Because entanglement is the opposite of peace. There's no peace in being entangled. And so to learn how to get disentangled, to be more peaceful, it can be very hard in certain situations, to be convinced that it's worthwhile to disentangle and experience peace because sometimes we feel it's necessary to be entangled. We have sometimes strong beliefs. It's important to be disentangled. So one of the ways, you know, so worrying. If I if I don't worry about the situation, then something will go wrong. If I don't worry about the situation, people will believe that I'm cold and aloof, people won't see that I love them. Some people are phenomenally loyal to their worrying. Because they think it's so important and, and the worrying because that loyalty to their worrying or loyalty to a particular entanglement, because it's familiar. Even comforting, sometimes can make it very hard to feel that it's worthwhile to step out of the disentanglement and experience peace. One of the fears some people have about this disentanglement is if I'm not entangled, that that piece will make me somehow neutral. That piece will make me somehow disconnected from the people the experiences that are so important for me. And, you know, I would suggest maybe the opposite is the true that the more you can experience peace, the more experienced disentanglement that the more luminous or the more clear the communication, the contact the connection can be. So how to convey the deep satisfaction of a peaceful heart and a peaceful mind that it's worthwhile. I'm not sure how but I think of it it's kind of like the satisfaction of really clear water. You see looking water and so pure and you spent a long time sometimes looking into a Clear Lake, it's looking at the bottom something quite beautiful about it, or drinking really pure water that has no chlorine in it or anything. Just to just to or Yesterday I was driving around the Bay Area, and it was relatively smog free. And I was on the East Bay and looking up in the hills, East Bay hills. And they were kind of golden in their kind of yellow way or something. And they're really beautiful in that the clarity of seeing. So there's something about peace, that has a lot to do with the absence of strife, the absence of entanglement, the absence of being caught, and in that absence, it's kind of it has a clarity and a purity and a satisfaction and a joy and delight that is among the most meaningful that any person can experience. And it's the vehicle through which some of the best qualities of the human heart can come forth into the world. love and compassion, generosity and ethics and things like that. And what Buddhism I think one of the one of the important aspects of Buddhism is in the example of the Buddha or their great practitioners is how far it's possible to go to experience this peace, and how meaningful it is that it's possible to experience profound peace that frees us from entanglement with all the things of life, so that no matter what happens to us in life, no matter how difficult the external circumstances of our life gets, terms that we carry within us, that peace we carry within us, this deep sense of well being, that no matter what happens around us are with us. We're there and present in that well being here and now. Here and now. It's really the place where peace can be experienced. If we're thinking about about the future,

thinking about the past. It's too easy, too, not too easy to lose touch with that the wonderful luminous piece that's available here.

So that's my thoughts around Buddhist teachings on pleasantness and unpleasantness. So if any of you have any questions, I'd be very happy to take some questions. Okay. A little bit a little bit of where you came in pretty late. Right? So I wonder, you know, let's try see what see what what

I understood the idea of evaluating each situation pleasant or unpleasant and whether my reaction was wise or unwise. But the last comment you made about the idea that you could have sort of a reservoir of peace inside of yourself, do you mean I understand sort of situationally adjusting but do you mean you can actually hold that and not have to? situationally, adjust that it becomes more of a steady state? Yes.

Yes.

How?

I want that.

Yeah. Well, you practice. So. So that's what that you know, one one, there's Buddhism offers a lot of perspectives on how to do that, a lot of approaches to that. So the teaching of today was one way to do that which can seem very simple work for some people is to start training yourself. being familiar, train yourself to notice how experiences either pleasant or unpleasant. And then what your relationship is pleasant or unpleasant. Because it's your relationship to it, which is the key. what the experience is, that's where you have to have your street smarts and figure out what to do, you know, it's wise. But, you know, but your relationship is your, you know, that's what you have the most responsibility for in terms of this path to peace. And so, you know, you know, practically take care of your life, for sure. But it's your relationships, that's where the path is found. And so some people get blinded by what's happening in the world. So they don't actually pay attention to the relationship part with how they're relating. And when we sort through and understand in a very deep way and subtle and, and, and help that inner heart, that inner space, feel safe, that safety is found there, and to be nourished by that one The great forms of pleasure is a nourishment of deep inner safety and well being. And then something can relax. And then as with things, relax, then there's a reservoir, a piece waiting for you. Please.

So I related to the example of if you're around family and it's unpleasant situation. And so to step back and be able to reflect on whether it's pleasant or unpleasant, would you do that? Would you say, I'm going to go to the bathroom and do it for five minutes? Because I would have a hard time being able to recognize that and engage with everybody and the attendant have been talking and so when would you recommend being able to reflect on that?

Yeah, yeah. So you know, it's nice to be able to do it in the moment as happening it's possible sometimes to just kind of in the present moment kind of kind of, you know privately in your own mind that this is unpleasant and breathe and open up and feel it and find certain balance by doing that and then staying in a situation. But if you're feeling overwhelmed, then it's not useful to be overwhelmed. The bathroom technique is great. Because you know, most people most people are going to you know, if you're going to say I need to go meditate for five minutes. People are going to love what this is important meeting because we're finally all together in one place, please stay. But if you say you know, can I, you know, I need to go to the bathroom. Most people will allow you to go and most people are not going to ask you what you're going to do in the bathroom. That's a private thing, right? So you know

you're going to sit on the toilet, maybe with a lid down because you're going to sit down you know, just check in and breathe and it's a wise thing to do. And sometimes it's a bit sometimes useful, take bigger breaks, you know, take a walk around the block. Sometimes I know people who've gone through intense family situations with it over many days, and they needed to take an afternoon or even a whole day to be away, because it was just too difficult to stay in there in the fire all the time.

Can you take it over here? I realize I'm the ostrich. But I think you answered half of my question. So I was trying to figure it out. So let's say you're sitting on the toilet seat, like what am I able to get there? And I'm just ostrich right? So what is going on in my mind? Like how am I how am I feeling the whole situation like, I'm trying to figure out how to disentangle so like what is happening in my mind or what am I trying to do? Good Yeah. So there's a you know, if I can answer your question in different ways so this is one way here now say you've made it to the toilet and you know, the bathroom's a good place when ostrich, right, you've kind of escaped, you've done that as you get good. So that's good. So then, so I would start to kind of try to first take the bird's eye view of the whole situation as wide as you can. And so, just kind of the just overall general kind of sense of how it is. And then begin to kind of look a little bit more closely. And so you might look a little bit at what are the thoughts going on for you? And then what are the emotions going on for you? And the kind of work your way in until you're close into your body and then what's happening in my body in relationship to all this and, and feel the tension, the tightness, the energies in your body, and I find that one of the most useful things to do is to do mindfulness to the body. Just hold in my awareness, my attention, how the body is experiencing at all. Because our reactive mind when we get caught up in reactive and entangled, it often gets expressed or gets has an effect on our physical body. And, and a shortcut way of kind of finding some peaceful place or resolving it or, or dissolving some of the tension is not to problem solve, but rather to begin to relax the tension in your body. And as the body tends to relax and get, then it comes easier to deal with the mental aspects of it as then and so I would sit there in the toilet, and this is you know, I just feel feel to feel the shoulders, feel the jaws feel the stomach. And if it's easy to relax, relax, but it was not easy. Just hold it and an image that are like is to kind of like you'd like you'd hold something very gently in your open palms of your hands. You kind of let awareness be soft, open palms, it comes from underneath the tension, or the energy that's coursing through you. And just hold it and be there as if it's okay for it to be there. And just let it let it just feel like you're present and see what happens and chances are it will begin slowly to soften. And if it doesn't soften fast enough in your five minutes early, then it just it's very valuable just to know that it's there. And to know that you're tense, and then when you go back into the difficult situation, you carry with you the knowledge you know, I'm really tense. I think I have to be a little bit more careful what I say. I think I'll do maybe I'll, you know, be slower to speak but I want to say yes, should be should be a green light.

Okay, green, the green light.

You hold it in the button until turns green.

Okay, can you hear me now? Okay.

I've noted notes noticed recently that I use the thought of impermanence.

When I'm having a

bad experience or emotional experience, if I click into this is impermanent, it frees me to then deal with the situation or the emotion with some space.

Beautiful. Yes. Yeah, I've had that experience I'd done that as well. Because I sometimes my mind falls into the delusion of permanence. I know better. I know it's not good. I know it's not made I know logically, it's not gonna last forever. But But my mind functions as if this is it. I'm gonna be this way forever. And, and but and then to be reminded, no, I think really to remind No, this is how it is now. But tomorrow, next month, next year, it's gonna be quite different is a very helpful.

I, I have previously heard this teaching with the categorizations being pleasant, unpleasant and neutral. I noticed that you didn't include neutral today's lesson for that.

Well, it just you know is complicated enough to talk

and They said that it's it's, you know, it seems, it seems that in their kind of Buddhist psychology, they say they claim that the neutral or the they don't usually were neutral, they say neither pleasant or unpleasant, is actually quite rare. But operationally how, you know, we often have it much more often, you know, then often enough. And it's interesting to also look how we relate to so called neutral or so for example, is very sad. And probably some of us had experience of, of maybe being in the wrong end of this, maybe it's all of the wrong end. But some people get energized when you're being praised or, and you get energized if you're being criticized. If your status or well being somehow is either threatened or supported. It's you know, you're alert. But if you're with someone who doesn't do anything for you, there's no benefit for you personally from being with them. Then it's a new you know, A pleasant or unpleasant, and so people can turn off, you know, to be dismissive of the neutral people. Or Same thing with experiences, you know, it's pleasant or unpleasant. We're motivated. For some people pleasant and unpleasant. This is the caffeine of the soul. And that's what keeps them going. And you know, they feel like they're, but when things are either unpleasant or unpleasant, and then they fall asleep. They get dogged, they get discouraged. Sometimes I think the neutral experiences are experienced as being more unpleasant than unpleasant. Because it's frightening. It's disturbing. It's disorienting, you don't know what to do if you're always focused on pleasant and unpleasant. So it's an important thing to look at. And so I appreciate you brought it up.

Related to that, I

was wondering, as you develop this, whereas of our reservoir of peace, Do your reactions to the pleasant and unpleasant tend towards, um, do they start to appear more neutral?

neutral, I think is a dangerous word to use, because I think people sometimes refer to neutral as being kind of cold or disinterested or indifferent or something. As we get wiser and more capable in this world, our reactions to pleasant unpleasant tends to be freer. There's more freedom or independence in relationship to them. And there's two ways that can happen in variety of ways. One way is that we still might have reactions for against it that are not so wise, you know, reactive mode, but we can see it much more clearly and we don't buy into it. And so you know, you might want to push something away or push it push a person away is unpleasant. But you see that tendency and you say, you know, I don't have to give in to that. I have enough presence of mind to just see that and just let it go or operate in a different way. And then certain things, certain reactions that we have, when we become free of them in the sense that we don't react that way anymore. We can see, we see something in the past we were addicted to, and there's no movement towards it, or no movement away from it just you just there and free, you're free. And when you're free, then you're free to respond in a way that's wise, or respond in ways that's compassionate or helpful. And so there's still a response. But, you know, there's more, much more choice.

Over here. Over this is about this will be the last one.

So I'm practicing what he just said.

And I have a question. So I was thinking, I want to ask something and I have a reaction. In my body, my heart was beating fast and, and I'm like unpleasant, unpleasant, unpleasant. And as I was filling my body more and more and my bones and my blood and my heart, I was getting more anxious about it. Oh, so I went into my thoughts and then I thought, no identity needed no identity needed nothing to prove no identity needed. I came back to my heart. I breathed slower and then I then I was shifting from in I'm still a little shaky, but you know I'm if this is shifting to pleasantness I'm now I feel, I feel traces of peace. So my question is used said going into the body and feel your body I also noticed that for me to fill in that flow in the body and then noticing what I'm thinking, and seeing what other ways of thinking would be more useful, then assist me in going back to awareness of the body and beautiful feeling piece. Is that okay, so beautiful. Okay, so yeah, yes.

I think that I mean, so it was a beautiful example of how you use attention to notice what was going on. And you found that by feeling your, your anxiety and your body made you more anxious. And so seeing that, that you realize to continuing on that track was not going to be useful for you. And so you chose to pay attention to something else that brought you helped you ABS help settle you. So that worked for you. And another situation it might work differently for you or for another, another person, their whole situation might work differently for them. Feeling the anxiety in the body, that's what settles them. So it's very important not to have a pre established formula of practice. This is how it supposed to be. But we learn from what happens we learn from our what, how it works for us, and then we kind of adjust and find a way that's helpful for us. And so you did a beautiful job. Okay, so I hope it hasn't been too unpleasant. And thank you very much.