

# 2012-05-28 Love And Compassion

Thu, 8/20 6:40PM • 21:07

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

compassion, groups, love, practice, imc, part, important, learned, loving kindness, life, safeway, mindfulness, talk, people, reluctant, animals, very strong feelings, question, badminton, walk

## SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

So I had two things in mind for today. One is to do a little bit of follow up. Talk about the concentration series that I've done the last three, Monday's, I've been here, and then not speak for too long, but then have time for questions about that and anything else that you want to do. But also, it's kind of unusual to have so few people here on Mondays, and that provides us with an opportunity to do something a little bit more community building kind of talking or something with each other or something. And so those are the two options you have. It's hard to ask but you have a preference which way we go.

Those are the loudest voices Yeah. So let me start then by this way, that one of the really important things that I've learned or cultivated or developed through my Buddhist practice was growing capacity for compassion, and then a growing capacity and capacity for love. It kind of happened in that order for me. And I wasn't looking for either one. I wasn't looking to increase my compassion. In fact that you know, was had no interest for me. And, but as I practiced and press practice and practice did a lot of practice. That's one of the consequences of doing that practice, I was changed in ways that I hadn't intended. And one of the ways was the growth of compassion. And I realized this after the fact, but I look back over my early years of practices, oh, I, I'm being compassionate. And that was a very important part of and very grateful for this a very important part of who I, who I am what I became. And it certainly stands behind. The motivation I have to do this work that I do that to be a Buddhist teacher and to teach was the compassion that grew in me over time. And then at some point, and then, later, my capacity for love grew as well. And some of it certainly came out of the practice in a dramatic way. I remember when I was first introduced to the practice of loving kindness, on retreat. I'd come out of Zen practice. We don't do those sentimental things. And so we did it. I did have a personal practice and it is loving kindness stuff. So I mostly just tune the teachers out. And it wasn't gonna be part of this kind of mushy stuff. And, and so, But lo and behold, as I went deep or into rent pre thorough wholeheartedly into the Vipassana practice, one of the surprises for me was that bubbling out of my heart bubbling out of my interior was a very strong feelings of loving kindness, that didn't really necessarily have an object it wasn't like, originally directed towards anybody, which is a strong feeling. And, and, you know, again, I was surprised I wasn't looking or intending for that to happen. I had other things in mind for practice. And, and here, this strong feeling of love and kindness and tenderness came up. And that became a very important part of my practice, then my life since then. Then, I think being a teacher and encountering people in so many different situations in life, so much suffering so much joy, so many different, so much sincerity and dedication. And, you know, one of the I feel one of the privileges of being a teacher is to, I get to see how beautiful people are. And sometimes people come and say, Tell me, Gil, you don't understand people because when they come to you, they always show you the best, their best side. And I don't, you know, I don't think I can see through that, you know, see, you know, they're just showing your best side I see everything, it's dramatic when I see so. So, you know, so from that I think has come with a lot of care and love and compassion for people. I've been since I had kids,

I've been around a lot of children and have all kinds of types of kids. And I've regularly you know, seeing kids who have or there's so much differences among kids. So many differences. And regular refrain in my mind, or my heart has been, you know, all you can do is love them. You know what else is there to do, but to love them for who they are. And so for me, I've learned a lot I've been changed by love by come by, by practice, by change by love by compassion is becoming important part of my life, as I've grown. And now I think now it's kind of inconceivable to me, that a path of liberation, the path of wisdom, would not include compassion and love as part of it. And, and that was kind of like, what I was kind of, in a sense, you know, when I was ignoring compassion, loving kindness, I wasn't this like, you know, wisdom and liberation, you know, path I thought I was. And, and so then the other thing happened to me, which the two go hand in hand, I feel it's very important to see them together. So that was that's my introduction for what I thought we would do, then. Here.

And I, and some people when we break out into groups to talk to each other, which is community building, some people want to bolt and you're welcome to bolt. You can you can bolt from IMC anytime you want. We're not holding you hear. But, but it's really a good thing to hang in there because so many people here and I'm seeing when we've done these kinds of breaking into groups or into dyads and things, and they don't they resist it, they inevitably at the end nuclide they stayed for the part of it. And there's a whole growth and training that happens about learning to speak to people. That's important part of practice, learn to speak from people from a practice point of view and mindful way and also to be able to engage with people in a deeper kind of conversations or in the theme that people or other people often have in their normal life. And so we do that here that you said IMC kind of regular basis, not necessarily When denied, because it's just so many people here. It's hard if so many people are talking. But on the Friday Dharma practice days, once a month, parts of the year, we have these days from 930 to 330, where we explore some particular theme. And in exploring that theme, we will sometimes break into groups, small groups have discussions, or into pair up or something. And it's been a very valuable training for so many people here at IMC, to go through these different practice days and learn how to talk and communicate and share themselves in this way. So what I'd like to ask you to do then is to break up into groups of five and then go around the group of five now, no, I you hopefully you'll forgive me if I say it this way. But I've learned that maybe I need to say it in a way that gets your attention, people. Now, it's really important that you know how to count to five. It's it's, it's Usually 12345 You got that? Because I'll regularly say let's break into groups of four or five or something, I'll say a number, right? And it's amazing how people seemingly don't know how to count. We end up with groups of six, even I want five or groups of three, when I say four, you know, the whole thing, you know? And so, you know, I don't think we have to do it together, right? So groups try to give a five and when we and if you don't find a group of five, easily walk towards the front towards me. And then that you'll find each other as you bump, you know, walk to the front, you kind of and then if there turns out to be not quite, you know, some multiple of five in the room here, then I'll help us figure out what to do with that all sorted out. Okay. So the theme in your groups of five is, is to begin with this question. What the course of your lifetime? Which is, you know, maybe long enough? What have you learned about love and compassion? Now, when you talk, I think it's important not to give a long story and take up a lot of time. Short story might be okay if it's important teaching about, but say what you've learned, and go around the circle. And if you've come to that around the circle, everyone I think will be have been affected by what was said before. And then do it again, and see what comes out the second time. And you might, it might occur to you to say something different. And don't the first time go through the whole list of all the things you've possibly could have learned over your lifetime. I mean, just to say one or two things kind of and say something off or something you what you're doing is correct. offering something into the circle, and creating a circle creating something together as a group of five. So you want to be offer something and listen really intently as other people speak. And when it comes back to your turn to offer a second time offer something else about that topic. And then when other people

Speak, listen carefully in the listening carefully is important because that's how you're going to be affected by what's being said. And so you'll be surprised perhaps the second time around, but what comes out of you, you'll get a new perspective or something maybe. And you might, we might, you might do that this this going around two or three times until I ringabel. This makes sense. And do you have any questions about it? So what have you learned about love and compassion? So why don't you form groups of five and you can start

So is anyone happily surprised by some of the things that came out in that kind of conversation? And if so, would you be willing to share with that was

Nice for me to hear a little bit because I wasn't part of any of the groups.

Well, animals happen to be a very central theme in our group

about

how they brought that out and helped us develop compassion and love Nice. And one person said I thought I was going to be the only person that mentioned it in the ended up. Almost everyone did.

And what is it about animals that brings up the love and compassion?

Oh, well, for me it's sort of a purity of spirit and

lack of judgment. It's easier to love things if you don't feel like you're being judged.

That's it. We think she's gonna feed me.

Thank you

If no one else is going to go

I found a common Is

it is it is a green light on. Yes. All the close then close yes there is

a common theme was that love, get love as a basis of strength, allowing you to do things and sometimes putting things into perspective. It just gives a different it helps give a great foundation for everything else to be built upon. And then from that compassion allows you to connect with people in complete and total strangers across the planet. You know animals, non sentient things, your jacket You know all these things in ways that

you might not normally think possible.

Great, wonderful. So I'd love as a basis for strengthen for possibilities and connections all across the globe. Thank you any comments at all about doing the exercise what came up for you or what it was like or any kind of debriefing sharing continuing thoughts you might have if you can finish them

I love to experience

when personnel group talked about if you get to know somebody, you know, it's, it's easy to love them are that's the basis of love getting to really know somebody, so to get to know you know, five other people, even for a short time, I mean, I'm gonna love these guys. So

yeah, it was a valuable

experience. I think it's really interesting if you have the right topic of conversation, the right focus, you can get deeply connected to even strangers very quickly, and have very strong feelings for them and you know, open the heart in beautiful ways. And it doesn't take much

than that. But how often do we allow that to happen as we go about our life?

Turn around to the other person waiting in Safeway in line behind you, and what do you do? What have you learned about love? It would be a very different world.

Posey doesn't work. So Recently, sweetie, come here and it's safe to do it.

their thoughts? A couple of minutes left.

very wonderful to see in our little group how it was very, very short. I don't know how many minutes we were talking but as the minutes went by, I could feel the

lift in everyone's mood and

the loving kindness was actually going around

palpable way.

Thank you. Question Yes.

In order to experience

okay. Aiming

to experience love and compassion in the general public. I mean, do we have to behave in a certain way, you know, walk a certain way, look a certain way, in order to how can how can this manifest? I think? I don't know.

I mean, if your question is if you want to manifest love as you go about in society, that the question is, you want to have love or you want to experience love, receive love

being loving and compassionate as you move through life? Yes. I mean, is there a way to walk? Is there a way is there? No, I don't mean it's facetiously after we talk, you know, is there Yeah, I don't dress you know, I

would, I would, I wouldn't want to limit it or define it too carefully. I almost prefer to define it by what you don't do. You wouldn't you wouldn't Were people you wouldn't steal from them you wouldn't, you know,

lie to them and take advantage of them. You get there's a lot of things you wouldn't do. But actually what, what the activity of loving would actually look like if positive, you know, I'm reluctant to define it, the actual activity because different situations that would look very different. And as soon as you have some idea you're supposed to be loving in a particular way, then people start conforming and, you know, it's, you know, it's I'd rather have it just be discovered in the process. What's different situations requires different things. You know, like today, I discovered that with my nine year old son, I didn't discover this since I came home, but for me to have a loving connection with him today. What was required was playing badminton with him badminton with him, you know, and he wasn't very good.

And so to hang in there and playing with him was, you know, a beautiful, lovely thing and nice connection between the two of us. And so that's the form it took there. If I had different idea of what below with my son was gonna look like him, we're gonna sit, you're going to sit next to me, I'm going to read a book to you. You know, and I probably would have missed them. But this is what he wanted to do. I think one of the one of the things that requires is wanting to and keeping it close enough to the hardest being close enough connected to the intention, and be mindful enough to know when that intentions gets clouded over by other things. If you can catch those clouds, then maybe you can clear them. So I think it helps to stay mindful. And that was a second question. If you had more time I would have. I was going to ask Have you discuss and the second question, I'll let you go home with And you can reflect on and turn to someone in Safeway and ask them. And that is what? How does mindfulness support, compassion and love? What role does mindfulness have for the presence, the cultivation, the manifestation of love and compassion in our lives? So what have you understood so far about the role of mindfulness? Okay, well, thank you very much. I was glad that we had the chance to do this. And it's been something I want to do more often. But I, as I said earlier, I'm reluctant to do it and when the room is really full, because it starts sounding like a cocktail party here. And, but this was a good number today to do it. So thank you for participating and I do hope it helps create a more sense of community here among the people and if you didn't introduce yourself by name, during your new group, please do that before you leave. Such a nice thing to do. So, thank you