

# 2013-07-15 Here

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

desire, freedom, meditation, people, caught, practice, conflict, aversion, meditating, happening, meditator, emotions, mind, present, thinking, difficult, operating, mindfulness, simple, notice

## SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

I think that is some of you. If you didn't know, we had this Sangha member by the name of Victor Medina, who passed away some time ago, about a week ago, a little over a week ago, I didn't make the announcement last Monday for those of you who might have known him, sorry about that. We're going to have a memorial for him here this Sunday, at one o'clock. And Victor was a big part of our big volunteer in our community for many years strong practitioner. And he kind of pretty much probably has touched in one way or other almost. I feel like almost everyone's lives who comes here who connects to audio Dharma, because for years, he was setting it up and organizing it and kind of establishing that a holes. way it's, we make talks available here. So he did a great service for our community.

So, the mood I'm in as I'm sitting here with you is simple. I don't have simple as a mood. Exactly but unlisted unlisted moods is that allowed. I'm feeling simple. So we'll see if it's a simple talk. Certainly the hope and one of the simple places to begin is to evoke the simplicity of mindfulness practice. There's a little kind of cliché in our scene that mindfulness is simple. What's difficult is remembering to do it. But mindfulness to be mindful. And one of the practices of mindfulness that I find useful for myself from time to time, is the practice of saying here. And the reason I find it I find it useful when I sit down to meditate in my mind is not here, but is only there and then and I'm thinking about other times, and other places, and I'm caught up in my thoughts. So much so that I might come back for a moment my breath but it seems like I just go off in my thinking, again, my thinking is quite strong. And I when it's that when that happens, I find it's not so useful for me to keep kind of coming back to the breath coming back to the breath. Almost like intention or in opposition to what's going on. But what I find useful is to stay simple. Not to try to do too much. But what I'll do is, say the word in my quietly to myself here, just here. And I'll repeat it over and over again. And they're kind of easygoing, relaxed pace here. And when I say the word here, then I become curious for a moment or two, however long again, to what is here. What's the experience here now, of this moment of myself right now, is as I tend to do this, saying here, at times, my mind is thinking a lot. What I noticed here is a person is thinking. And then I might notice what it's like to be thinking, the energy behind it, the feelings behind it, that thing was you know, what's going on. And then I'll say it again here. And for me the word here In saying it it's not like a command to a dog come here and it's a little bit a little bit it's it's he he but it's as little spirit of here like ah already spelled ha IR not that's not right right ha ha Are you here to listen and so to say here and then to listen what's here or to notice what is here and may do is to be conscious of allowing to be very allowing it permissive whatever is going on for me when I sit down to meditate this way to be very permissive, very allowing I'm not trying to change anything or fix anything or get away from anything. I don't have the idea that I definitely agree with the idea that it's wrong to have a mind that's spinning out. I'm a bad person or a bad person or a bad meditator. I just kind of say here in the middle of that, and then I just noticed what it's like to be that way, for However, for however long I can, which may be not very long. Because I have these very important things to think about. And so then I'll say it again here. It's a kind

of as a way, it's not I'm not in conflict with what's going on. I'm just kind of placing myself in the middle of it here and now to notice what is here. And the idea of being present, without being in conflict with oneself is one of the great pleasures of life. It's one of the great things to not feel like you have to fix or change or be bad or push your way, but also that you don't have to indulge in it either. If you have to fix and do something, get something done, which is very simple click here. And then what is here? Notice, this is what it's like now. This is what it's like now.

And so what happens for me when I do this is after a while doing it, the momentum of my thinking begins to abate. I'm not getting a lot of energy to continue to think thinking might be going on, but part of me as disengaged with the thinking, because I'm just noticing what it's like to be here part of me is engaged and noticing, nothing thinking. And so the fuel for the thinking begins to abate. And when it's quiet enough, that nothing kind of pulled around by the nose by my thoughts. Then I'll stop saying here, and I'll come back and usually for me what it means then as I come and center myself in my breathing but then I'm not I found myself in the breathing without struggling against something else because the other stuff as a beta is enough. One of the things that this simple practice of saying here and just opening up and feeling and noticing what is here can do for you, is to give you a visceral sense of what it's like to not be in conflict with your experience. Whether you're feeling whether you're spinning out in thoughts or whether you're feeling angry, or you're filled with desire, or you're restless or you're filled with doubt, or you're sitting in pain, there's a lot of things that can happen here in the present moment. And this little word here and then opening to feel that, for even a few instances, can be an experience of not being in conflict with that can be very powerful to do with pain. Pain, if many people have very strong habitual reactions to and pain can be quite monumental and difficult to see To be, especially if it persists over time, because I'm thinking of physical pain, but also emotional pain. But here, just opening for an instant, is not meant to be a long term solution. It's not meant to be something you could do for a long time. But for a couple instances, perhaps you can kind of step back or relax or open up and allow without conflict. And that sense of experiencing what's going on without conflict. And getting a sense of the value of that the possibility of that is something it's really good to let it register like appreciate that, Oh, this is what it's like not to be in conflict. Many people spend their lives in conflict, wanting things to be different, wanting something that they don't have, not wanting what they want, what they have. regretting, upset, angry, all kinds of things going on. That represent not being at ease and at peace with this moment here. So perhaps if you do this kind of here, practice, it points this getting a hint or a sense of what it's like to sit without being in conflict. The other thing that can happen and you sit with any kind of mindfulness practice but with us here practice is you might notice how difficult it is to be here. You might notice how many judgments and ideas and feelings you have about how things should be different. One way or the other. That it's not that common for your mind to just be content and happy with how it is right now. So, if you notice that what should you do? get upset. Bad meditator I was supposed to sit here and not be in conflict to the present moment and be here in the present moment. This is proof that I'm a bad meditator I guess I think I should just bear down more with myself into shape for see what's in the television. So I'd like to make a very what I think significant Statement two provocative statements for you. And that is that insight practice, the practice of mindfulness meditation leading to insight the insight practice, which is a practice of brick moving towards freedom, that the path of liberty so the path of freedom begins when you recognize you're having trouble meditating. It's not provocative that the path of freedom begins when you notice that you have trouble meditating, being trouble being in the present moment trouble being focused or being here. You properly provoked. So why do you think I said that? Why do you think that's so important to say in such a strong way? How is it that the data freedom opens begins when you have trouble being present? Using the mic please. find you. The green light.

Can you say your name first Samir

I think it's very proud product even important to start there because that's what's real.

So that's what's real and usually the path of freedom starts where it's real not where it's fantasy. Good. What else? Yes, you didn't put the pass the mic back there. No, some people have hearing devices and they can't hear if we want everyone to hear. Excuse me, the green green light.

Oh, hi I'm Cici. I think once you start to accept that you are having a hard time meditating then there is that, that freedom of then there's one,

that freedom the freedom right there so they didn't accept and so but nothing accomplished without seeing it clearly that begins to be freedom. Okay. Good. straight back in the Back out a row. Please say your names know that.

Abraham

I think when you see how difficult it is

to be present,

you start to appreciate how conditioned Your mind is to following every little whim and that's a wonderful realization to see how caught you are

and not free.

It sounds painful to me. Why is that wonderful?

Because if you continue practicing

with time, your ability to to be present even with the distractions grows

So if you can recognize how distracted you're caught you are, then there's a possibility of outgrowing that and moving with that moving through it. Good. Thank you. Someone up here on the stage.

For me, I can imagine my name is My name is William, if you hold it vertically then people because like that, yeah, even talking to the top of it, thank you. For me, I can imagine that. That becoming the object of my, my attention. I detach from it and become less, less connected or invested in the difficulty with meditation. And it by itself can become a focus for my meditation, which will be an aid to me rather than a detriment. beautiful, wonderful answer. So one of the ways of not being free is to have your attention As hijacked by your concerns by our preoccupations, if you claim your attention, engage it by using the using your attention to focus on the very thing, which is a distraction, the various distracted tendency, then you're claiming your freedom, you're finding your free two minute. So this is kind of this Judo move, where you clearly see the very thing, which is the problem that's keeping you caught, and then you're not so caught anymore to something like that. You were saying, right.

Hello, Tom. Sandra said that propaganda lies, the truth will set you free. And how does that work? Well, by seeing things as they are. So we see things Clearly for what they are, and then it sets us free. Yeah, so it's it's more. It's not we're not so easily fooled by things if we see clearly what they are. But if we

don't look at things clearly don't stop and really look. It's easy to have fantasies about it. I think it's important. It's easy to be blinded by all kinds of things.

Anything else? Please.

My name is Sonia. And I'm thinking it's about awareness. The

difference so

when you said when You realize how difficult it is to meditate. That's when you begin the road to freedom? backwards. But so what struck me is that if you if you never become aware that you're not

here,

then

you're not on the road.

That's right. You're not on the road at all. Thank you. Thank you there.

Stop. And I guess I think I react to that. It's kind of simple. You can't solve a problem if you don't acknowledge that you've got the problem. So if you're having a hard time meditating, and you go watch TV, you're not acknowledging you got the problem. So you're not going to follow that path. You're on a different path.

Great. Wonderful. These are great responses. Thank you. So One of the ways One of the things that's very important in doing mindfulness practice is not to be too preoccupied or caught up in ideal and idealism. And one of the ways we can get caught up in idealism in MIT for meditators is to focus too much on having a good meditation experience is to think that there's some great, wonderful, deep, concentrated state some wonderful experience of cosmic consciousness and bliss, something. Because what happens then, is that it's easy then to overlook the careful mindfulness of the very thing that's making it difficult for to be present. The forces of distraction, the forces of desire and aversion that operate that make the whole meditation difficult or make the present difficult to put us in conflict with our experience is something that's very important to understand. A big part of the wisdom that traditionally in Buddhism is to the wisdom to understand how we get caught to understand how desire operates within us to understand how aversion operates within us. So to keep us caught and trapped and perpetuating the cycles of distractions, distractibility, and all this. And so by recognizing when meditation doesn't work, because you're, you can study what's going on more carefully. And generally, in Buddhism, in shorthand, we say generally, it's two primary mental forces operating something under the fits under the categories of desires, or something that fits under the category of aversion. And somehow that's behind or fueling the activity of being caught, being attached, being preoccupied with whatever we're preoccupied with. And so the task of people who do mindfulness meditation is when when it should happen. The rare occasion, when you find yourself caught up in something is to very contentedly. study that phenomenon get to know it better. Don't be in a hurry to fix it Don't be in a hurry to overcome the distracted mind or what's going on to kind of keeps you caught in some some preoccupation. But can you turn your attention towards it? And in turning your attention towards it, a number of things happen. One of the things happens as I said earlier, you begin taking some control of your awareness itself. Rather than having your awareness taken over by your concerns, and blinded by it, you're beginning to take a little bit of charge of your own experience. I'm going to pay attention to this

you say, rather than being lost in it, and that's that's kind of taking charge like that is a very important thing. Generally in Buddhism was put as much circles, eventually pay, we don't like the language of taking charge. But provisionally, it's a good idea. You know, to do this. And then as we begin, and then we can once we can kind of use it applying our attention to look at the distractions and difficulties, then we can start learning what they are more carefully. And one of the big tasks for people on the path of freedom in Buddhism is to become really familiar with how their mind desires things, how desire functions in our minds. How does what are the tricks? Who does what is what tricks does desire have for you? How does it what are the things you desire? How do you get hooked into desire? What's the energy that gets involved when you have desire? What are the beliefs that are involved when you have desire? What's the self identity that comes into play when you have desire and the same thing with ever If you really have a version of stability, you'll Will you really dislike something? Look at that. study that What's that like? What's going on inside of you really look at it. As you spend time looking at it, well, you're strengthening this capacity to take charge. If you can, if you can look at it without adding a version on top of a version or desire and top of desire, if you can stay very simple. This is why this the idea of simplicity is so important. You want to look at it carefully. We want to stay very simple. We want to look at what goes on and not be in conflict with it. We don't look at what's going on, and there's no need to add a layer of self identification on top of it. This means I'm bad. This means that I'm this kind of person.

It's possible rather than saying oh, I'm a desirous person, or that's me that didn't come across right. I'm a desiring person. Sometimes I have trouble with English the I'm a desiring person. If a person has desire, it's much simpler just say recognize there's desire operating. To add the layer I'm I'm person with desire makes it more complicated than it needs to be. It's very simple. Just say there's desire happening, and then look and see how it operates. And part of the reason to stop and look at all this carefully, is that the more familiar we are with how this works, the more we can see the subtlety of how it works. We can see the tricks of how it works. Even very good meditator, so called good meditators who have deep, deep, quiet, focused experiences. desire and aversion can still be operating, but they operate so subtly that they don't see how they operate under They kind of trip over it and crash and fall. And so by learning by taking the time to get familiar with it, then we can recognize it more readily when it happens. And one of the places where I think it's very useful to see for example, desire really recognize what desire is like and desire recognize that is that there are some people who confuse spiritual freedom with the unhindered freedom to act on desires. Were where we have desires and the idea of freedom is to not have anything in the way of fulfilling those desires. The freedom to shop you know, if you just have an unlimited credit card, that's freedom but but desire still operating and when is that As unhindered and you can pursue and unhindered away your desire. You don't see the cost you don't see how the there's a loss of freedom, spiritual freedom in that kind of being pulled away by it. But if you really understand how desire works, you're not going to be tricked into the idea that on hinder desire is a kind of freedom. The same thing can happen with a very little bit with a version. I believe I have a sense that some people have tremendous capacity for very clear, very determined conviction behind their aversion, great clarity and precision and incisive, convicted, convicted, confident aversion, sometimes can still think that they're really wise can think that there's a kind of awakening and beings in that kind of clarity of the version. But if you're really taking time to get to know and understand how a version works, then you might notice when that strong conviction around your version is operating, that there is a version happening. Some people are much better having desires than aversions. And some people are much better having versions than desires. It's probably best not to take one kind of being one kind of person as being better or worse than others. But in case the people have tend to focus on the aversion type, usually desire is kind of pleasant, you know, kind of aversion tends to be more painful and reversion tends to be less socially accepted than desire. So I'll kind of give a plug for a version. The, in the Buddhist tradition, it said that it's it's more danger. To be an aversive personality



than a desire, desiring personality. But it's so it's more dangerous because you can do more harm in the world. But it's more beneficial as a practitioner because you're less patient with your shenanigans in your mind. So you're not going to put up with it. So you can more likely to kind of, you know, come back with and, you know, continue with your path. So part of the task of people on a path of freedom is to understand how you're not free.

Some people find this kind of discouraging because they would rather live in utopia they'd rather live in some wonderful bliss state or a wonderful place that There's no problems at all. But I think that there is freedom to be experienced, there is wonderful states to be experienced. But the freedom which is wise is, is freedom that comes with understanding. understands how the mind works understands the tricks of the mind, because chances are very, very, very good. That if you experience have some experience of spiritual freedom, there's not going to last that long. And it's not going to last that long. Sooner or later, you're going to find yourself not so free, caught up again and your desires and your versions, your thoughts and all that. And so, if you've taken your time to study and get familiar with how you not free then when you lose your freedom, you're familiar the territory not to work with it. You're not going to be tricked and fooled by it. get upset by it so quickly. You can work with it. You have the tools and the ability to keep working with it. And this ability to keep coming back and working wisely, with how we actually are, in any given situation, is one of the great gifts of this practice to have those tools. And if the focus is too much on freedom, and not on how we are not free, we won't develop those tools. We won't develop that understanding those insights because on. So generally it's useful in them, especially when people are practicing mindfulness to not be on the spiritual fast track. Take your time. Remember, it's supposed to be simple. It isn't it isn't really that different than being here. Just hear, hear what's this. And in fact, there's a kind of a freedom in the moment of saying here, and then opening yourself up to recognize and see what is here without conflict. There's a freedom, a teeny small freedom there. And to begin kind of recognizing that and using that space to begin looking more deeply at what goes on in the structures of our minds how we get caught our attachments, our cleanings, our versions, then we develop the wisdom that makes freedom more realistic and more useful. So this is why the path of freedom when you're a meditator, let's say just from meditation, the path of freedom begins. When the meditation doesn't work isn't that good news? Can't you just wait to go home and meditate now and can you look forward to when it doesn't work? Now when it does work, whatever that means, just be happy with that. But when it doesn't work, be happy with that. You can't lose. If you take whatever is happening in the moment, as the material of practice, take whatever was happening in the moment is what you can explore, be present for. So I hope that made some sense. So now we have about 10 minutes. If you have any questions about this or comments or testimonials.

Maybe you can That to kind of pass that one forward during the stage. So it's closer

been like you've spoken a lot about, um thoughts and how being present is a way to respond to that. What is your opinion on emotion emotions and whether or not this can actually be a way of centering yourself during that,

I think it works pretty much the same way. Sometimes emotions are the predominant thing they were caught in, sometimes attached to something being pushed around by involved with. And so the same thing, they're here and just feel the emotional body feel what's going on, and the feelings in the body and make space for it not sometimes people are very claustrophobic around the emotions sometimes they're really big and troublesome, and, and a moment of mindfulness can create the space around it and make it a lot easier. And then to look at the emotion study those and get familiar with them. It's a big part of it. A hugely important part of this practice as well. The answer since the contrast you made to emotions was my discussions about thoughts. There's not a strong absolute separation from the world

of thinking in the world of emotions. The two kind of come together work together. So, if you go deeply into the world of thoughts, you probably at some point come into the world of emotions. If you go deeply into the world of emotions, you come into the world of thoughts, they come out to each other, they have to look at both of them.

Yes, over the corner.

When you talk about understanding the how the mind works, and going deep into The, the, the feelings and the emotions, but but more how the mind works. Is that is that an exercise a rational exercise? Or is it? Is it meditation or is it contemplation? How How could you give some more light on?

Yeah, very good question. Generally we're in the mindfulness meditation, we don't think about things. We don't analyze things that way. We don't go deep that way. But we rely more on the ability of silent observation or silent presence, being being greater presence to the experience. So if there's a strong emotion, there's no need to be thinking about it to figuring it out and what's going on that way, but rather, to feel it more and more deeply in the body. So where is it in the body, and then we're kind of silent feeling a silent observation. Let it register more fully what that experience is like, and as we do that kind of deeper register deeper feeling deeper sense of silent observation of it, whatever needs to be revealed about it will reveal itself. We don't have to go, we don't have to be the one who figures it out. It's more gets revealed we see with as we go into it.

So that's when you have. That's why when you have a problem with meditation, that's the good news that you have something to experience more in this

type of Yes, exactly. If you have problem meditation, so if you have problem with me a meditation, some you know, whatever that means. You want to study that you want to be present for what what that difficulty feels like in the present moment. You don't need to go start thinking about it and trying to solve it in your mind, but rather what's happening in the present moment. That's making it difficult. You know, what, what's, what's taking you away? What's grabbing your attention, what's spinning you out

all the way in the outer Hall. credit.

So

as I turn and look at my aversion, and my desire, and really look at it, and kind of turn and face myself, as I experienced these things, what I'm increasingly aware of is that it seems to come from a lack of confidence in myself in doubt in myself and that when I really am within myself, the aversion and the desire drop away, because there's nothing more needed and there's, you know, whatever the reverse of status, there's, you know, it's becomes unimportant and so You know, I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about self doubt, as a major hindrance, because as I continue to practice, that actually seems to me like it's more of the foundation.

For you great name, I think it's wonderful to see that. So there's layers in our psyche and our minds. And so as we state that, so as we stay present for granted, again, we don't analyze or figure out, just very quietly, this kind of not not in conflict, just be with his experience. An image that I use for occasionally for some people, is, is that of cupping your hands to hands, your hands together, like you're going to hold something precious. Just like bring your attention underneath your experience, whatever is happening and hold it there gently, as if it's allowed to be there. So and then it kind of reveals itself, it show itself where they are the outer elements of it, relax and soften. And so for you, you

started with desire and aversion and that began to fall away or Burn up and you saw that the see the roots of that was yourself out. So that's great. So then do the same thing with self doubt, go and bring careful attention to that, and hold that in your hands of awareness, and just be with it, that tremendous value and just being with things. The analogy might be, you know, if you're having a difficult time in your life, and a friend just comes and sits with you, and just with you, they don't solve anything for you. They don't probe into you try to figure what's going on. They're just there with you. And it's really meaningful, you kind of relax. So we offer that kind of meditation, that's the kind of quiet silent, being with ourselves that we offer. So you be with the self doubt. And other kind of idea that I offer people sometimes, is the idea of Place yourself, find out where the feelings of doubt are in your body. Generally, these things have a location. Is there a location, you know, and location is probably not happening your little toe and so it's Problem is, you know, is it above your waist is below your neck or is in your head or, you know, where is it in your body approximately. And then when you find the location for it, where it more or less associated where there's energy around it. Imagine you sit you sit yourself down right in the middle of it, and are quiet. Sitting there middle of the doubt and be quiet. Stay there. See what happens.

I'll draw on

that sense of sitting here. Quietly while you're meditating in your mind distract. You can go in different places is an audio cue. What about something kinesthetic, like if You know, there's some teachers I've talked to say, you know, props can be okay. Certainly its props, props, a prop. So

what if I had a little plaque or a little card or something I held with me and it was a kinesthetic cue. And it said here, okay? We know I mean, the most common kinesthetic thing that tradition in Buddhism people use as a mala rosary. And they just kind of move it through their fingers. And, you know, so to remind them, and there's, you know, a prop is a good thing, it can be a useful thing. So remember, when I talked about using it, I use it I use this here, only when my mind is spinning out that it's anything else doesn't seem to be useful. And then I stopped doing it once I'm present. So there could be all kinds of things can be supported that way to bring you kind of in the present moment in a good way. But what's with this kind of Prop if you call a prop of here does, it helps me to do it by putting me in the middle of my experience. Some other someone else Myself, I like listening to music. And that really puts me but what music does it does put you in the present moment, but you bypass the challenges you have you relax and bypass rather than sitting in the middle of the challenges and facing them. And I kind of so it's fine to do that sometimes it's useful to get a little bit grounded and then turn off the music and then be present for what's there. But I really like the idea of, of having some support that helps you put you put you right in the middle of what's actually happening. And not bypassing anything. Thank you. Okay, so Well, thank you. And if you don't have a good meditation this week, I hope you have a bad one.

So that you have something to study something. Look at Thank you