

2014-07-09 It Is Not About Me

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SPEAKERS

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So I mentioned earlier this principle that when we do insight practice or mindfulness practice or liberation practice, that it's not about having a new experience, as it is about seeing and experiencing a new way. And so to explore what does it mean to see our experience in a new way, and it can mean in many ways we can see things fresh a new way. And I don't want to say there's one way it's part of the richness of life that there's so many different perspectives that we can have. And some perspectives are liberating from our attachments being caught up in what's happening and some perspectives keep us attached or get us attached even more. But for people who are you know, practicing a path of liberation The idea that it's possible to be free of clinging or free of attachment free of being a meshed or caught up in our experience is meant to be a very important guideline, just a idea of that, because then you can with that idea present, then you can explore your experience where is the freedom here what what would be what would be like to be free in this situation? Or what would be like not to be in meshed or entangled in this situation? And, and, and then, you know, what perspective do I bring that helps me, be realistic, be present, be connected in a useful way for the same time and not in meshed or entangled, be free. So one perspective that is kind of a radical perspective that the Buddhist tradition offers can be summarized in a very simple four four words. And that is, it's not about me. So it's not about me. So what you know, that can be applied to just about everything. It's a very powerful thing, not about me. So, you know, if someone is noisy, in the meditation hall you're sitting, and that's not about me. You know, as opposed to my meditation, I was on the brink of enlightenment, I was getting concentrated. And I put a lot of effort and time to come here and it's really important my meditation, and this person is disturbing my meditation. You know, this person's being disrespectful to me, and this person has it out to get me you know, and keep me from getting concentrated or, you know, it's all this Me, me, me, right? But it's not about me. It's not about me, it's not about me. All kinds of things and that about me. So it's you know, it's maybe a little bit easier to do that with the external world. It's not about me. And if someone says something unkind to you, and you take it personally, but then you remind yourself, it's not about me. I don't you know, any of taking it personally, is maybe not needed. Not about me, it's about them. It's about them being mean, or being diluted or doing something. But it's not about me, it just doesn't have to touch me sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never touch me, right? So how do we you don't have to take things in. We don't have to take them personally. Or you leave you leave here today. And if you ever parked your car nearby, and you have a flat tire, it's not about me. It's just a flat tire and I have to take care of it. But you don't have to kind of make a whole drama story of your life around the flat tire. There's something very powerful about not taking things personally. Doesn't mean that we become a loop for disconnected or, or we don't take responsibility for I don't care for what's going on. But for many human beings, there's a strong identification, where we use the experience to define ourselves. We use our experience, what's going on, to represent who we are, and how we represented to the world to ourselves, becomes kind of, you know, we're very invested

in it, we very much define ourselves certain ways. And then our well being or happiness or unhappiness is connected to that definition, or that things things are personal. So it's, you know, it's not about me. So, earlier I talked about this idea of the lotus and Muddy Waters is a wonderful image from Buddhism.

That as a, just as a lotus can grow out of muddy water. And the blossom blossoms above the water but the stock is connected to the muddy water but the blossom is untouched by the mud. In the same way we're connected to this world and all the shenanigans and difficulties of this world we're not disconnected from it. But we can find a freedom from it but not away from it freedom within it, like like, you know the heart can blossom and the petals can open. There's another image that's kind of nice and romantic image right? There's a you know, x rated image or more, you know, adult image that is kind of graphic that can be meaningful sometimes because spark because it's so dramatic. And that is the image from the Buddha. And that is that is have a have a butcher who has the cow. That's been Which Richard has been killed. And so the first thing my butcher does is I guess in the old world is to take a knife and separate the hide from the cow. So, really skilled butcher can maybe take the knife underneath the hide and just loosen it all from the flesh. And so the whole hide comes off in one piece. And once that is that hide, has not come off the carcass. And since it's a hide belongs to the cow, the carcass there, you know, you could you could kind of put it back on again, it would kind of fit because that's where it came from. You know, it's but if you put it back on, it's never going to be connected again. It's not going to grow back on you right? It's always going to be disconnected now. In the same way the Buddha said if you become If you don't take things personally, there's a way in which the entanglements the way in which we have grown and meshed with the world. No longer has been severed has been cut. And we're no longer in master caught in what's going on. And so, how do we, the there's, I don't know if the word separation is a good word to use. No, we feel separate. There's no sense of separation. There's no sense of being aloof or distant from the experience. But there's a way in which it's not personal or it's not. there's a there's a freedom from the midst of it. It's like, it's like phenomena is happening. All kinds of things are happening. But it doesn't. It doesn't. It doesn't touch us. It doesn't do or say different than maybe in a more nicer way. Our heart is at peace. And all the things that happen in the world. Don't disturb the hearts peace. Are the heart is open a consciousness is open awareness is open and fluid and things just arise.

So if if you make a sound like that the sound travels through the air in an unobstructed way right in the air doesn't protest or doesn't take it personally or doesn't you know just just just they're just there in the space of the of the room the sound. So in the same way the sound can be in this space of our awareness it can just be awareness can be unobstructed, it doesn't obstruct it. Awareness doesn't take it personally awareness but it allows for it it just travels in the field. In the space of awareness. So, the same way all our experiences can be just there, they're fully present fully experiencing them and we take responsibility for them. But the heart the mind, the awareness doesn't get entangled and get caught in it. There's a freedom from it, there's a separation from it, there's a so we see it a different way, we don't see it anymore. As this is, this defines me, this is what I'm about. So I have a glass of water here. And I could drink a glass of water. But then I could, because I'm, you know, concerned about my talk and all of you watching you know that so I could spill the water right down my shirt, and I'm all wet. And so one, one option would be you know, you know, I'm a mindfulness teachers, what sort of things mindfully and, you know, here, I wasn't mindful enough and I spilled in front all these good people. I'm a mindfulness teacher. And this is a disaster for my reputation. And the, the, you know, the word will get out, you know, kills not so mindful. Yeah, yeah, yeah, probably I'll tell you Twitter before we ended up sitting inside. You tweeted, right? And everyone knows and that's the end. You know, I take it very personally, right? Or it's, you know, it's just like, Oh, it's phenomena. It's like sound going through the room, the bell is rung, there's wetness on my shirt. You know, and maybe some of you do think what skill up doing it supposed to be mindful. You know, maybe you do you think that by just people having

thoughts, those thoughts, maybe it's a reasonable thought, but it's not about me, it's like me, me it is about me in a certain way, but I don't have to take it about me to do anything with it. So you're responsible for those thoughts. And that's all concerned about what you think about so there's a freedom and independence in the middle of it. I don't have to take it personally. I have to kind of make all the story about it. I just have to get dry. My shirt. So there's something about freedom that helps us not to take things so personally, that helps us to be present for experience. But there is a I don't want to use the word separation, but there's a freedom there's a kind of a gap between us and experience. And where it's most hard to do this is not with the world experiences around us, but with what goes on inside of us. With our thoughts, our feelings, our sensations, our bodies experience, it's the inner life, to be able to see a thought to see a feeling to see reaction response and attitude to see how we're feeling to be present for it. And not to say it's not about me, when it's clearly not about someone else. You know who else is going to be him? It's not about me, then who is it? You It's not like you don't deny that someone says how you're feeling you say I'm grumpy, you know that that's honest, you know, you're, it's, you're the one who's grumpy. But on the inside, you don't have to take it personally you don't have to, it doesn't have to be about you. Your hearts at peace or your awareness holds it all without being caught in it. The fact that you have a thought that I think you have a feeling or a thought that you're grumpy or something, just you have to just phenomenon it just just stuff that arises and let it be. So part of freedom is to see that differently. See it, just, that's how it is. And many people have very powerful beliefs around what is wrong to experience inside. It's not okay to be a certain way. It's not okay to have certain thoughts. not okay to have certain feelings. It's not okay to be depressed. It's not okay to be grumpy or angry. All this is not okay. And then we get it but as soon as it's not okay. You're identified with you're immersed in it. And it is possible to step back and just see it and see it without identify.

See it though it's not about me see it as just phenomenon like the sound of a bell ringing it just, it's not it's just there. Of course, the psychophysical system we have will have thoughts and feelings and stuff. But we don't have to be identified by caught by it. And then if you do this, well, this idea of kind of not being it's not personal, it's not about me. The you know, and this is why I partly I don't like to do the separation idea. It isn't like there's experience, thoughts, feelings, sounds, people are what they are and me and I'm going to hold myself free and independent, you know, and I'm not going to be caught by just have me here that says that that just disappears in this process. There's nothing, nothing here that nothing here that needs to be a reference. Nothing needs to be a reference for anything, something here that needs to be defined in any way. There's nothing here There needs to be identified or by anything is more like that just space. And all this phenomena, all this stuff arises and passes and rises and passes. And it can rise and pass freely. And we can be like, and it's almost as if there's no bonus blossom. It's just just things are as they are and there's freedom in the midst of it. So I hope that gives you a little bit of challenge around this idea that I challenge you in the morning and that is the passion is not about having a new experience. This response scene in a new way. So you might pick it there during this week, carry that little expression with you and explore that and how can that be? How can you in the situation you're in? How can you see the situation in new way, rather than getting rid of it to changing it? And if it helps, you might also add to that exploration. What does it mean? What killed mean by? It's not about me, is how is that relevant? How's that freeing? How's that makes me How does that make me? How can that make me happy about me. And if you get happy, it's not about you either. So thank you. And now what