

2014-08-13 Dharmette The Practice Coming Through Us

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SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsda

One of the so as guff continue a little bit with a theme that I talked about earlier. There's a balance to be found between what you offer the practice and what you allow for what you do to practice and what the practice does to you. And some people actually prefer not to use the expression, you know that I'm practicing meditation, but rather they prefer to say, I'm being practiced. Because there's this idea of that something inside of us will begin to unfold. If we get out of the way if we allow for it. And I don't know if it's peculiar to us. Western society. But there's a lot of people who are very fixated on taking personal responsibility for every possible thing. And it's all up to them. And they have to make the effort and they have to be successful and they have to be good and they have to avoid and they have to get rid of and they have to fix. And so in terms of the balance between we have to offer the practice and what the practice has to offer us. They err on the side of making too much effort trying too hard. And I can tell you there's all these wonderfully gory war stories, on retreats, especially, of people who strive to too much striving and expectation and wanting to have something and inevitably that in that particular war, it's you that lose is the practitioner the losers and, and so making too much so it'd be an air too much in that side. And certainly some people air too much in the side of allowing, oh, it's not about me just trusting life and reality getting out of the way. Let's just move through me and everything's okay. And they just, you know, I did that for a while and my practice and I just fell asleep most of the time. You know, I was, you know, not always nodding and nodding and it was just complacency. And when other people let their mind drift a lot, so there are people who hear our teachings or instructions and take it to be just let everything just be mindful, let everything be and they interpret that to be just let their mind continue to think whatever they're thinking and just kind of somehow ride on the tail of your dog that horse you know, or let the horse gallop off. Just hold on to the tail, and then it's okay so, your mind gallops off and thought and you're somehow connected, right? You're kind of there but you're holding on by the tail. And that's not true. You know, that's not practice either. So you can be too allowing you can be too much trying to do something but how to find that right balance of what we have to offer we what we do and what you know what we allow something to happen. And so I like the word trust, we trust the Dharma unfolding. Some people use the word confidence Some people use the word wisdom is important to have wisdom of how things work. And one tradition in Buddhism is to emphasize karma. To have the wisdom understanding how karma works at karma has to do with putting together putting in place the conditions that allow what's optimal to move through you to occur. So if you spend your day stealing from work and from your friends and from your neighbors and stealing is like what you do that doesn't create very optimal conditions.

To sit down and meditate and open up and allow, and have a good time. And my teacher in Burma, he was very fond of telling us stories of people who came to meditate at a center, do retreats, who had

been involved in some of the fighting, that that used to happen, still happens in Burma. But there used to be these, these independence fighters who were trying to fight for independence from Burma, and then the Burmese army was fighting them. And he said, people on both sides would retire from fighting. And they would come be monks or come to meditate in his monastery. And he would then he would love to describe it to get tell stories of what their meditation was like. or once he told a story about a butcher, a person who spent his career being a butcher, and then what his meditation was like, and always, always a happy ending. But they had to go through a tremendous amount of coming to terms with what they had done the killing the torturing that whatever they had to do that karma was still with them. And so they had to work through that then it was a wild ride as they did that. So hopefully none of you are involved in those kinds of activities, but there's probably regular activities you some people or society involved in. It's not uncommon for people to come to me and talk about some of the addictive patterns, involvements that they're involved in or involved in. So alcohol or drugs or buying or eating, or maybe because of the internet, I don't know why. But I get more and more people coming telling me talking to me about their problems with pornography. And it's you know, it's a really debilitating for some people. And so you know, the karma that sit down to meditate and the momentum and that being drained and be challenged and being caught in giving into your desires. It there's karma involved into karma in the sense that there's etc. habit, it sets conditioning, it creates memories, it kind of doesn't create good conditions for what's you know what to connect what you know. And then on the opposite side, we can put the conditions that allow us to feel good about ourselves, we can do those kinds of things, then we sit down to meditate, there has conditioned us in a good way. And the classic one in Buddhism is to practice generosity, to wise generosity. But to do generous things, not just because it's good to do in and of itself, but because it creates a karmically or karma just means that creates the consequences in ourselves in our hearts and our minds and our conditioning and our habits, in our memories. That when they come up, are they're nourish us, support us, you feel happy, you don't feel worried and anxious and bad about yourself. And so there's a whole series of things that Buddhism suggested we do that create good content. Create good karma, good conditions. So that we have this reservoir within us, then we sit down and open up, sit down and allow what's in there to move through us. That what's in there is beneficial for us rather than being harmful for us, you know. Either way, if you when you sit down to meditate, if it's if you have this difficult karma in your background, it can be very, very helpful to make space for that difficulty to arise and surface. And in the Buddhist tradition, we talk sometimes about meditation can be purifying. So it's a purification process. One of the biggest manuals of meditation manuals in our tradition, that was written in this in like the fifth century, big fat book is called the path of purification. So we know so sometimes we have to learn how to sit with this difficult energies, difficult feelings, and let them move through us so they can be purified. Let them move out and Part of the wisdom is to know, I have to live with my karma. And I have to know not to escape it not run away, not deny it, but I have to give time for it to work itself out. And I'm gonna sit here and just be with it. And feel this and, and, you know, it's my karma, it's my consequence of how I lived that now I have to purify this work through this. And then but then if you do this, if you do the create the conditions that allow for a healthy inner sense of being, then when you sit down to meditate, that is available for you, and that kind of supports you and goes on. And part of this teaching of karma is, is aiming at the importance of not creating more of it than negative karma. So a lot of difficulty arises when you sit to meditate. You don't want to be critical. You don't be angry at yourself. You don't want to be hateful. You don't want to get discouraged or you don't wanna get caught up in strong desire. You want to kind of be mindful of it in and allowing an open way. And there's something very, very, very powerful. I can't underscore how powerful it is to take this posture or cheers, fine. Sit still sit upright, in a, you know, moderately dignified posture. And Don't move.

Don't get into anything not moving means you don't get into anything. But you also don't deny anything. Something about this posture, you're kind of relatively open in the chest, you're present, you're upright,

and you allow whatever is in there to, to be there. That's the allowing part, but you don't get involved in it. So one way to get involved with it would be to collapse. For me, for me, Oh, no, it's so hard. It's so Hurt, oh, I don't know if I can do this, you know that then you're involved, right? If you you might feel like you want to do that tremendous energy inside of us a collapse, but you're committed to not moving. And so you you don't move, it might be hard It takes a lot not to break out in the sweat. I've known people who've broken into sweat. By not moving, it can be difficult because of this powerful energies inside. But it's something very freeing and very meaningful to let this move and move through and not get involved. And sometimes there are very pleasant energies that arise very beautiful things that arise feelings of love and joy. And then the art of this is to relate to that the same way upright, dignified, allowing it to be there. But don't get into it. Don't start going ha you know, oh, this is gray. I should tell my friends. I think I'll just open I'll just I go out on the streets of Redwood City now and, you know, I'll just kind of like smile and open my heart, it'll be so great. And I'll be the saint of spreads in Redwood City. And the mind goes off, that's getting involved. Right? But it is not to be just just let it be. So we create conditions. And we live our lives, hopefully in ways that create the beneficial conditions to support us. When we sit down to practice we have that support. So how you live your life is very important in Buddhism. So we care for how we live our lives behavior. And then when we sit down to sit down to meditate, we know that we begin to learn over time the difference between being involved and entangled, interfering with what's there. And leaving things alone and we learn how to that one of the conditions we have to contribute to is to be present. So you have to come back and be here. This whole thing of allowing, it doesn't work if you're not present. So you have to be here. So Jack Kornfield love to, to quote this, it over and over again, quote this sign that someone saw in in Las Vegas, you have to be present to win. So you have to be present. So you have to do the work to be present. That's your contribution. And your contribution is to be present in an economists way and in a dignified way in an upright way, in a kind of unmoving way. upright unmoving presence. So you have to do your part, have to relax, relax your belly, relax your shoulders, that you have to do your part. But don't over to Don't take too much responsibility. So you're doing your part mostly to get out of the way. And once you're out of the way in a good effective way, then you could start trusting the unfolding of what goes on. You can entrust the unfolding which difficult when it arises, and trust the unfolding of what's really wonderful as you're sitting here. But you can trust the Dharma, trust the heart to trust what needs to move through you. And that's the balance. So, and where you find yourself in that balance and that spectrum varies from day to day. Sometimes more effort is needed in your part, sometimes less effort or need, but it's good to know this principle, that we're looking for the balance that both things are needed. Don't take too much responsibility. Don't take too little responsibility. Good. So