

2014-10-01 Everything You Do Is Important

Tue, 9/15 3:22PM • 12:13

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

important, conceit, arrogance, count, importance, cup, life, mats, day, care, offer, zen, straightened, sense, present moment, caste, sitting, experience, dignity, meditation posture

SPEAKERS

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So as a CMA is a big, let's see that's now. Okay. So as an introduction to my words this morning I'd like to say that you are much too important of a person to bother being conceited. That arrogance and conceit, and the opposite, being somehow feeling less than or inadequate or whatever the opposite of arrogance and conceit are. Are, can be seen as signs of not really taking yourself as being important. You are very important. In some ways, you're the most important person in the world for yourself, because you're the only one you have to live with all the time. And you're the only one you really have a capacity, ability to care for it in a deep way. And you also the person that you can have the most probably causing the most harm to as well. Buddhist spirituality begins with the notion that you're you who you are and your experience your well being is really important. Did you diminish it your importance by the contraction, the contracted state that is represented by conceit and the contracted state that's represented by somehow being self negating or self demeaning. That there's something very important going on here in this moment. And as I said this morning, anything that's outside of your present moment experience, while it might have some important in some role in your life, is a kind of virtual reality. And what is not a virtual reality is what we can see and touch and feel and experience right here. And through the medium of our senses, our experience here, and one of the things that we experienced here and now is the quality of our own inner life. The quality of Hearts the qualities of our mind state. And it's the quality of our inner life, which is one of the most precious and valuable aspects of anybody's life. Everyone's important. And we're asked in Buddhism to take this seriously, that this is a very important to be the caretakers of our own inner heart, their own well being. And that and that, to take the time to tend it, to care for it, to let it grow, to, to do that which lets our own heart or an inner life, the quality of our inner being, flourish in a nice way. And as I kind of was implying, if you do it from a place of arrogance and conceit, it actually interferes with this flourishing or the inner life. But the opposite of, you know, letting go of arrogance and conceit is not that you're not you don't count that you're not Yeah, you're not important. You count so much. It's like the issue as you count so much. You don't bother, don't bother with a conceit and arrogance thing. It just kind of doesn't work. And so you're to give a lot of emphasis on the importance of yourself. And the present moment is one of the ways to really let this Buddhist practice thrive, for you unfold for you. And everything you do is important. When kind of little maybe it's a little silly example. But but it had a big impact on me when I was just just beginning to get interested in Buddhist practices in students that was probably 2021 years old. And I went to visit the Los Angeles Zen center to and they had an evening sitting so I had a Dharma talk. And I don't remember anything about the Dharma talk. The only thing I remember from 40 years ago and that's it. We had we did a period of two periods of meditation with a little period of walking meditation in between. And so we were walking around this zendo this little this room and in a single file to what we're doing walking meditation. And then they sit on these black mats, like I'm sitting on here this. And so everyone had these black mats all around the floor. And as we walked, as we were walking along, the woman who was in front of me bent down and straightened out one of the mats. And I thought,

That's weird. Why would she do that? Who cares whether the mats are a little bit crooked. And it was so out of my you know, 20 year old hippie kind of way of being to think that, you know, anything needs to be done, it was all fine. And it was all fine. But, but there was something about that care.

To straightening out is up a ton of math, that that's such a big impact on me. It made me think a lot about what does it mean to care for this world was it mean to be present and pay attention and, and respond to and take care of things. And it's one of the great lessons of Zen training is that everything that you do is important. And so how you where you put something down, if you're holding something, how you hold is important, where you place it is important. Everything kind of has a place a position, everything has its, you know, if you're tuned into the harmony of the situation, in what situation calls for, everything has its place, everything has its value. One of the one other great lesson I had in the Zen meditation hall was when we did a seven day retreat. And there's no kind of ritual way of drinking tea in the meditation. In the afternoon of the seven day retreats, and you sit meditation posture and they come in and they offer you tea and a cookie back then and, and you couldn't eat right away, but you had to kind of put it in front of you doodles chant and you bow to the cookie in the tea and then you drink it. And then, but So, the way it worked the first day, that's bring you an empty cup, and you keep the empty cup for seven days next to your seat. The last day he used it, they came with a tray and collected it. So you're sitting there and meditation posture and they're coming to collect your, your, your use cup. There was a Japanese Zen priest, who was visiting who was doing this machine he was sitting next to me. And when it was his turn to get up the cup, he bowed to the cup. And I go What about the people you're about the cups, and but it had a big impact on me was it for him the cup was very important that he was offering his gratitude with respect to the end he picked up The cup with two hands and, and put it on the tray. So they did that there's something very important going on here. There's something you're important, your experience is important. And the world is important. And what goes on in the world is important how you respond to the world and important. And so we're how you put your shoes how you do anything to do it as if it counts, as opposed to do it casually as opposed to do with like, doesn't really count or you get through it as quickly as you can to get on to the real thing, the important things to really to offer yourself for this activity when you're doing this activity as if this activity is important. Because if this activity is important, if the important things are somewhere else, and this activity doesn't really count, then you're probably going to lose everything. Each thing is important and if you learn to wash your dishes, As if the dishes is important to just really there for that, then you'll learn how to be present for the experiences that are, you know conventionally considered much more important, how to treat things as important to treat yourself as important. So, to walk through the world, you know the, to walk through the world with a certain dignity or value or uprightness the Buddha came from a way very, in some sense dignified caste or clan caste in ancient India, called the warrior caste. And often traditional cultures warriors carry themselves with certain dignity. So, how to carry ourselves with dignity with value with importance we are important without doing it in a way that has conceit, or arrogance. But it also doesn't demean us are under minus, but just and part of it is just that it's we can be unapologetically defended Lee just show up and just be, we can be here we're allowed to be here. We don't have to pretend we're not we're not to be shy. We don't have to think, well, I don't really count everyone else counts. We also have to force ourselves on people and make ourselves count more than anybody else. But just to be, to be fully and completely here as if we count. And if we really are here fully and completely as if we count, then we don't have to do the counting.

Then we can just be so I offer you these words for today to challenge you a little bit as you go through your day and through your week. That look and see how you relate to yourselves. And, and, and how much value and importance and respect you give to yourself as a human being. And can you come forward into this world as if you're here with you, you are important. Your experience is important. Your inner life is important. The world is important. And everything that you touch and see and hear is

important is important. This whole thing about being alive is important. It's not a casual affair. So how do you live? If this is important, if what you see is what's inside if what you see is outside. This is important, but not too important. There is a wonderful saying by Suzuki Roshi, they go something like life is too important to take seriously. So how to do just the right balance. So I hope that that's something that can infuse your mindfulness practice, and that your mindfulness practice can be supported by the sense that yes, it's important to be here and be present and that and that and that sense of importance of everything the wonderful sense of importance helps you to engage more mindfully with your life as well. So, thank you