

2014-12-03 Obstacles As Doors

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SPEAKERS

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One of the principles of mindfulness practice is that obstacles are doors to go through. So there's many obstacles to being mindful. Many things that interfere with our ability to be present. And one of the things that were one of the approaches, approaches of mindfulness is not to make a problem. Out of the challenges, you have to be mindful, but rather see those challenges as things to recognize, and to learn to recognize what is it what happens to you, when you get lost in your thoughts What's going on? What when you get pulled in Do something. So you're not really present? What's that? What's that about what's going on in that time? Take your time to notice that for some people, it's very easy to think that, you know, we're supposed to be mindful supposed to be present. And so everything that takes you away should be pushed aside should be discounted, and, and somehow, you know, is proof that something is wrong if you're wrong or something. And but every obstacle is a door to go through here in our practice. So to tremendous value and importance of learning to recognize what's happening when you wander off what happened. What keeps you distracted. Why did what is the obstacle for being present what's the obstacle to being peaceful with this? What's happening right now? It's very easy in a spiritual circles like this, too for people to be idealistic. We have these Wonderful ideals that we're trying to live up to our reach to. And but ideals can be deadly. If we, you know, do it in a way that bifurcates our life that divides our life between what's good and bad and we want to be whole, we want to be able to have an awareness that can hold it all. And so one of the great opportunities to become home is to not dismiss the challenges not to miss the things which are non ideal, but whatever is not ideal, to learn to recognize it and see that clearly. Get to know it, study it, see it as a door you go through, not to accept and just continue doing things that you know, are not good to do. But also not to see difficult things about ourselves and be critical of ourselves for it, that you would rather see it as something to recognize and this is what I said earlier today about recognition is so important that we're trying to learn to recognize whatever is happening in such a way that we're independent from it, we're not caught by it. We're also part of being independent is, so we're not in conflict with audience. So to see clearly what's happening and really kind of the one of the great doors, one of the great paths of this practice, is to start recognizing the challenges you have, when you're trying to be present and make that the path. That's the way you wake up. That's where you end up being present. So one of the lists we have in Buddhism is the five hindrances. And these are the five are five common forces of the mind, that make it difficult for us to be present to hinder our ability to be mindful, hinder our ability to be concentrated or also said that that hinders our ability to be wise. And so it's important to get to understand how these work for us how it works for you as an individual what is the How does this work? How does desire work for you? What's your relationship to desire? What's the relationship desire to you? And how did you get caught by desire? What desires Do you caught with? And what is it like to clearly recognize desire? Without condemning it or pushing it away, but clearly recognize it and, and in the recognition, you're independent, in their recognition, you're not in you're not in conflict with it. In recognition, you're not caught and pushed around by the desire, just desire. And then there's ill will, what's it like to be

angry or hostile or have ill will and to see how that pulls us away from the present moment keeps us from being present in a good way. But to turn towards it, and see it turn towards it. And in the in the seeing it, you're present. You're no longer distracted. When you're present for something maybe it's not so pleasant, but to see it, but then to experiment to find your way out. What is it like to have a Recognition of it. That's independent. What's it like to have a recognition that's not in conflict? What's it like to have a recognition, it's like you've pulled yourself out of the water and you're in the dry shore, and you're looking back at the current as the reverse it goes by, but you're not in the current.

And then the third hindrances, usually translated to English as sloth and torpor. I like to think of it maybe as lethargy and resistance, their strategies, there's kind of reactions we have to things, that they're kind of drain our vitality. And so rather than going and getting just distracting ourselves even more because it's so uncomfortable to have this return towards lethargy and to stand in, you know, sloth and torpor, lethargy and resistance, and really feel it towards it like to feel resistance to what's happening and shutting down and pulling back. What's it like to be mindful of it to hold it in the field of mindfulness. We Without making it a problem, but not making a problem also not condoning it not believing it but just finding your independence with it. This is resistance. And then there's restlessness and remorse and regret very powerful forces to go on. What would like to step back enough to see restlessness and regrets, remorse which to see it really clearly and not allow it to be there but to kind of pull back or step away or open up wider in such a way that it can be there but you're not being pushed around by it you're not believing it you're not you're not content it's scripted. You see it see it really clearly for what it is. And the last one is doubt. To see doubt as is operates. doubts are quite powerful a doubt about yourself but the practice what's going on, kind of ambivalence uncertainly not remember the inability to find your way and also like to step back from that and see doubt recognized out clearly. And so, all these five hindrances are things to recognize, and it can be even even be done literally with the phrase, this is, this is desire, desire is like this, this is a version, this is resistance, this is restlessness, this is doubt, sometimes saying a full sentence like this is, makes it actually easier for the mind the heart to not quite be enmeshed or entangled or, or clearly identified with it like, this is who I really am and I guess I can't really separate myself from it, but this is, this is desire, this is anger. And then they keep doing it. This is this is like this. It's like this until you start feeling that Healthy separation, unhealthy independence. So you're not in you're not being pushed or controlled by it too strongly. And so this is an approach, where nothing is seen as being inappropriate for mindfulness for attention. the very things that make it difficult to be attentive, difficult to be wise it difficult to be focused in the present, difficult to be grounded, whatever it is, makes it difficult. We think this is difficult for me that as soon as you said, this is a difficulty, I can't do this. So this is the challenge I have. That's your door that you turn towards that. And then and then you do the experimentation, that extra adventure of discovering What's it like to identify to recognize this? What's it like to have a recognition which is free, that is not caught by it, but it's just sees it and you do this in small ways do this the easy things. Lift the one pound weights first. And then slowly you'll learn to the power of recognition. And the day will come when there's a real challenging thing that you're in a really big storm in the mind. But you've learned the art and the skill and the muscle of recognition that you can learn how to recognize the big storm that comes you step back, oh, it's a storm. Just Just another, you know, just more strong. And then what I've been doing all along, recognizing is you step back, oh, it's a storm. This is what a storm is like a storm is like this. Stepping back, oh, it's like this. And then you find yourself in you are not the storm. You are not the desire. You are not the aversion. You're not the regret, the regret, the regret, the version, the desire. They can be as they are, but you're not being defined by it. You're not limited by it. You're not caught by it.

So the principle that whatever is the obstacle to practice is a door. And we want to learn step by step through the door. Be and if you don't step through the door, I can actually be more dangerous because

chances are if you avoid doors, that then you won't go to the other side and you actually bifurcate or separate out the parts of your life one from the other. And, you know, you sometimes you can go in nice directions for a while, but it's not really going to work in the big picture. So sooner or later you have to kind of be willing to step towards the challenges to see what they are and then cut through the door to the other side. Those are my thoughts for this morning. And with that kind of idea. I hope you have lots of doors that you stepped through. Don't be afraid of your doors. Look for doors step through them. So, now we now have 40 to 50