

2015-01-18 Living In The Present Moment

Thu, 9/17 10:04PM • 35:24

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

present moment, future, mind, thoughts, present, kinds, freshness, thinking, meditation, calvin, fresh, baggage, dharma, menus, feels, anxiety, people, talk, clear, smog

SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsda

Good morning. So I'm regularly when I come here to give a talk and I sit like I am just now and see a room full of expecting people looking at me I find that a little bit odd and one of the reasons it's odd is that you know, I look out and you know or look in or look around and what is there to say you know, I'm pretty content are you content and here, we are and here we are is a very profound statement. Here we are.

So here and now, it's pretty special. And one of the things that I have learned maybe slowly over my years of practice is how amazingly fresh the present moment is. And I don't think it always was so fresh, because I brought a lot of baggage with me into the present moment. And so we bring in, it's interesting to look at what you bring with you to the present moment. And we can bring along a lot of the past, past experiences which condition and influence how we sit right now. We bring along our conditioning are the values and beliefs that we've acquired over lifetime. They come along here. We bring along. I see try another one. Because you tried another hearing system devices work for people. Yeah, we're gonna see what's going on

Where they working First, it suddenly stopped working. That didn't work at all.

So turn off the amplifier all the way to one channel.

You see it's not good enough just to be in the present moment. You have to be in the present moment and on the right channel. While we're waiting, yeah, but we'll see. The one there have to change the channel, they said. So the one of my favorite Calvin and Hobbes cartoons is Calvin and Hobbes are having a blast climbing a tree. And they're out in a branch and, and Calvin says something like, you know, I don't know what he said exactly. But all you have to do to really enjoy life is to really be in the present moment fully here for this experience. And Hobbs looks at Calvin and says, Yes, but you're supposed to be at school right now.

It's kind of funny, right? If I do, remember what I said when what I want to say is, you know how fresh and wonderful it is to be just present. What is Now brings like baggage right? Look back into the past wasn't I said and drag it into the present. So here we are fresh. And one of the things I've learned is, you know, to how wonderful it is to be fresh in this moment. It's so here we are. And I'm fond of those that all English phrases, the past was the future will be in the present is and then the, those the tenses of those words are, you know, important. The past was and so do we bring it the past with us in all kinds of ways? And of course we do. But how do we bring it and what's our relationship to that? The future will be and do we haul in the future into the present moment? And if we do, then it's mostly your

imagination. It might have some reality. But you know, the future is always an imagination. It's an assumption. And I know that my relationship to the future, one of the ways it changed was when I became aware of that, what a very poor track record I had at predicting it. And I would have anxiety and all kinds of ideas and ne plans about what was going to happen. And some of them are necessary to plan and think ahead, for sure, but, but especially when I had anxiety, I noticed that thing would happen and what happened so different than the scenario I created in my mind. So then, after a while when I realized, you know, how poor I was. predicting the future and how what a waste of waste of good anxiety I had towards something and never happened. I decided I could let go of my anxiety and, and a lot of thinking about the future. So the past was Jack Kornfield has this wonderful teaching that yesterday, what happened to you yesterday has gone in to the same place as the Roman Empire, as the pharaohs of ancient Egypt and the Buddhist monastics you know that they have the time of the Buddha and all these things in the past they all Where did where are they in the past? Is the past kind of crowded with all those past that's like claustrophobic past or is it the past huge, you know? What's the size of the past? big enough to hold everything that happened to the past. And so as I use years that I've meditated in or things I've learned to do is to let go of my past enough so that when I sit, I'm here. And I've also learned to let go of my future spec planning. A great planning story that I had I thought was the one that where I was in the monastery and I spent a year working in the kitchen and one of the plum jobs in the monastery was to work as I was called a guest cook the summer there all these guests who came big groups of people and we would make this very good food for them. Like considered kind of prestigious job to be the guest cook. And I knew I was the most qualified person. I've been in the kitchen I eat for a whole year. And so I spent so I knew it was gonna be that it was following some so from the end of one summer to falling summer, I spent a lot of my free time thinking about menus and planning, you know, and, and we would eat in meditation hall and sitting and posture like this, and a platform kind of like this except much longer. And you have bowls in front of you, and you would eat in a very ritualized way, choreographed way and very meditative, very mindful ways. Very nice. And that was the time where I would spend a lot of time thinking about my menus in the recipes and all that and how great there's going to be a wonderful would be to be the cook. So I spent, I guess, probably about eight months doing that.

And and then, the day came and they have this ritualized way in which they do the assignments. So it's in meditation hall, they're standing around the edges and they read out your name and your assignment for the summer and I was going to be the guest cook came my assignment and there was nothing about my Simon but cooking at all. What and, and what I. And the thing that struck me the biggest was, what was I doing those last eight months? I could have been meditating I could have been sitting still I could have been all that all that mental time that went by planning menus, thinking about imaginary future. You know, it never happened. What was I doing with my life? living in those thoughts? What are you doing with your life living in your thoughts? What life are you living in your thoughts? Is that a future life that you're hoping for? Are you still living in the past your past reviewing it, improving on it, arguing with it. regretting it What kind of future Are you living in? Are you living in a hopeful future an anxious future in a dangerous future and a promising future? How do you see the future that you live in? And then what about the present? Here? The present is really the only thing that really exists, the past doesn't exist anymore. The future doesn't exist yet. But here, this is real. And the sense of the present moment to me is expensive. The past for me is a little bit small, and the future is even smaller. Even though it gets maybes, lots of potential, because it's mostly just in small, little two dimensional world of my thoughts is where I kind of find it. You have a different place for finding the past in the future. Besides your thoughts and your images and stuff, But the present moment is not restricted or limited by the thoughts that I imagined or I remember. And so the present moment when ice is feels boundless and in a very nice way there's a sense that visceral felt sense I have a being and I'm really here in the present is kind of like being you know, on the edge of our high up in the mountain talk. And there's a

vast open expanse in front of us, you know, some great this stuff. That's how the present moment feels. Wow, just are full of potential possibility. Just full and spacious. Lots of space. very open. What is your present moment like? What does it feel like for you? Do you do something that feels a lot And something that feels meaningful or three dimensional or, or is the present moment a place that is, you know, unfortunate transit zone on the way to the future. In Transit, life and transit, some people live their whole life in transit. Because the present moment is, you know, not the place to arrive at. It's the way to get someplace where you're trying to get to. So here so one of the tasks of mindfulness practice is to become acutely aware of what you do with the past in the future, how it lives for you in the present, to be able to watch your mind enough that you know what kind of thought And images you hear are being pulled away? And are most of your thoughts about the future, or most of them about the past, or most of them have to do with fantasy has nothing to do with past or future, or most of them. The thoughts about the present moment, is it a present moment, which is here and now, or the present moment, which is here, and they're now in here now, and they're now in there? You know, it's certainly now but it's, you know, you're thinking about, you know, someone else somewhere else.

So what goes on what how does your mind work? Or how does your thinking work? And then how, What's your relationship to those thoughts in the past, the future you have? And most importantly, what's the cost of spending a lot of time thinking about the past? What are the limitations of it? What are the costs of paying a lot of time in the future and what are the limitations of that? We have to think about the past some and we had to think about the future some and some Thinking is great. So some of it's quite nice and not good. That's a nice thing. But are you aware of the limitations of spending a lot of time in the past in the future? To what degree does it limit you and narrow your world? To what degree does it kind of put blinders on? So you don't really sense and feel the fullness of who you are right here now. The I've spent time thinking about the future and being anxious about it. And I didn't really appreciate the present moment. So there was blinders on where I couldn't really appreciate what was here now. The I've been involved in lost in the past and you know, some conflict I had with someone and being caught in that conflict. I couldn't see the full picture of what what was going on in the present. I couldn't feel the fullness of what was going on for me because I was rolling around in the thoughts. I couldn't see the fullness of the other person I was in conflict with because all my About what we have a conversation happened before interferes with being here now. So to learn how learn limitation, learn what your mind does, learn the limitations of it, and then learn to be able to let go. not let go because necessarily it's bad to do all these kinds of thinking, but learn to let go. So we're not limited by it. And then begin to have a fresh eyes, be able to see here to be content and really look around here. And what do you see what's your relationship to the here and now to the present moment? And that's another thing to explore in this practice to really understand what is your relationship to it? Because you probably have some default relationship to it. My underlying basic attitude towards the present moment, as you know, a present moment you know, is a drag or the present moment is boring, or the present moment is Not really where life is found, for a long time, I kind of had the underlying attitude that no matter what happened to me, whatever was going on, it was never good enough. Not this, I can't be good enough. And related to that was the idea that the grass is greener somewhere else. So whatever I'm doing, you know, it's not quite the best, there's not quite the right version of whatever. And so I was never settled on the present moment. You know, it's like, always looking ahead or looking beyond so what is your attitude to be Do you have a default attitude? Some people that's fear, a lot of anxiety in our society. Some people it's greed, wanting in the present moment, it's just a vehicle for to get something and like me. What is you know is Do you have an instinct, you know, is the present moment just instrument for getting what you want. So you're going to using whatever is going on the present to kind of move on to get something. What is your attitude at the present? Because without understanding what your attitude your relationship is to the present, you're not gonna be able to let go of that attitude and that relationship. And one of the great things is to begin

to let go enough that you're present without an attitude. That isn't, now that could seem kind of boring in itself. That can seem like how could that be any value, but there's a freshness to it. There's a lightness to it. There's not a limitation there's not a constriction to this here. And at the sense of, of making space for just being here in our live this in the situation we're in so a great thing.

Generally when I get up in the morning in general especially when I met it after I meditate it doesn't occur to me that there any problems does that make me weird? But the idea there's problems certainly have problems, you know? I can, I can give you my litany if you'd like. You know, I have practical thing, all kinds of things like teenagers. But the but, you know, coming out of meditation, I don't have any problems because My mind is not engaged or involved in constructing them or thinking about them or having them. And it's a great feeling to have this freshness and presence and contentment, just here. Here we are. And then to run into the circumstances of our lives, to meet them, not as if they're a problem, pre decided problem, but just just to be there in an open, relaxed, available presence, and to figure out what needed in that moment, what's the response from that moment. And I think that's one of the gifts that meditation can give is this ability to learn to let go, let go the thoughts let go of the past the go the future, let go of the psychological needs that we constantly swirling and involved in and have a fresh mind and an open mind a relaxed mind what some people called a beginner's mind, ready to see and be fresh and new and beginner and whatever goes on and just it just here.

In Buddhism where there's a lot of historically at least, a lot of emphasis on developing your meditation practice to get something, to get concentrated, to get to insight, to get certain levels of enlightenment and all that. And, that kind of paradox is that in order to follow a path to those kinds of attainments, you have to learn not to be caught up in the world of thoughts about the future. You're going to get and what you're going to acquire how what's going to happen in your practice, get caught up in thoughts of your identity and you know, you're going to be the most enlightened person on your block and this will be great. Or caught up in thoughts that you're not making enough progress or should be different through not making any progress or you're, you're going backwards. You have to kind of the path is learning to not get caught by any of those thoughts like oh, and then there's a freshness that happens. That in that have a freedom and ease begins happening, where it doesn't really matter. If you get enlightened, you become enlightened people. Because that's not how you see the world. You're not seeing the world through those. That lens. You're not seeing the world through the lens of needing something because the lens of needing Something is a narrow lens. And the wide lens is just to be seeing just to be here in the present. I love the experience of the Bay Area when there's absolutely no smog. And the party is nice, you know, the air is fresh and yes, you know, I don't always realize there's mountains across the bay. But really, you know, suddenly you see even the crystal clear and the Fremont hills over there and they seem so close. I kind of even though I might intellectually know there's nothing's over there, don't realize how close they are until the air is clear. But what I like about the clear that when there's no smog at all, is that clarity, that openness. And for me, it's akin to the clear mind. The mind has no smog in it. The mind has no i think there obscures it. So it's just a sense of openness fullness. And it's so satisfying that anything that that starts feeling like I need I want the past the future just feels like it's not necessary to have that go into the mind and necessary unnecessary just you know, leave it alone. Why, why why make the Why make the air smoky again, when it's so clear, why make the mind smoggy Why make the mind contracted again when it's relaxed and open. And we have some things that happen to us that comes with a lot of authority like this is so important. You know, at this, this is this needs to be taken care of this needs. And it's going to take care of things. It's important to take care of things, but do we have to lose the clarity of our mind, the ease of Reminds because of it. I've had physical challenges and physical pain and health concerns and it's like that. And it's I can watch the authority of all this is important. Like I got to get involved in this. And I practiced on this practice long enough that I could watch and say, I don't have to do that. I don't have to admit sooner or later I have to address these

things. But I don't have to let my mind become involved in those thoughts are caught in those thoughts. I can just hold everything, let everything just be in this open, wide, clear mind. Just there and have to pick it up but don't get involved.

Notions of success and failure.

Big room people looking at me?

And I'm supposed to be giving a talk. And not, maybe I'm failing? Maybe some of you think I'm failing? Or maybe I'm succeeding. Oh, wow. So, you know why, you know, certainly I should take that into account. And if I'm really completely not support helping you in any kind of way with this, maybe I should recalibrate because I want to be supportive. But the idea of success and failure just seems like to be a successful person or failing person. It just seems like it's not very interesting to kind of pick that up in my mind and have it swirl around. It just kind of pales it pales in importance or value pales in justness compared to useful relax open mind. So, learning to let go and meditation learn to see clearly what's there. Learning to be ease fall over what's there, not to be judgmental, not to be critical not to be upset, not to get entangled in what you see in your mind, your thinking mind, your feeling, mind, whatever. And then learning to begin to maybe let go of it or see it so clearly that the clarity or the ease of the mind begins to stand out. Until such a time that reference point, a very important restaurant reference point for your life is the sense of peace or ease or clarity, openness, with just being here. You really feel like you're here with this clarity and peace and then have that as a reference point. To begin questioning why you lose it? What do you do that causes you to lose that clarity or that peace? How important is it? Whatever you're thinking about or involved in is important enough to lose the peace and clarity. It's important enough to lose your ease. And what are the important things? What is so important, you got to lose your ease. And what this implies, what I'm saying is that you have a choice. But but to come to a point where you see that one place of choice, takes a lot of practice takes a lot of ability to let go to be present and to see. But it's a magic point to come to this place. Oh, I don't have to take that up. I don't have to be involved in that. That limits me. That's not so nice. It's not so good. Rather than rather than spending eight months thinking about menus, maybe could be aware, maybe I could have been aware of that. This you know, it's actually limited my life. You know, after a month or a week or a day or a few minutes would have been good. menus are fine to think about but within limits. So it's best not to pick up at some point it becomes a tipping point where the value of ease or peace or clarity or freshness in the present moment, it has such a clear and visceral immediate sense of value. That it's not so it's not so you're not so readily going automatically, to anxiety, fear, desire, greed, past future, just because you're gone. This is good. This is good. Here it is. here and there's a kind of then contentment with the press.

A kind of happiness in the present regardless of what the present is. And when there's generally if there's unhappiness with the present moment. You want to look and see. Are you overlaying the present moment? With value with ideas with past with future? Are you bringing into the present moment all kinds of assumptions and desires and wishes and fears? Which don't have to be there. Some of the impatience we have the boredom we have the fear we have this extra. So, here we are. Here you are. what's the what's your experience? Of being here and now. Now. Where's the center of your attention? How fully Are you present with your body, your mind your heart? If awareness is something that radiates from you, what comes to you? What? What is your experience of yourself?

I think I think one of the central purposes of the teaching the Dharma, giving Dharma talks is in fact to put a mirror to you, so that you see yourself better. And what better place to see yourself to know what's happening for you. Put right here

In terms of success and failure, some of the very best Dharma talks underline the word dharma. The best Dharma talks that are most effective are the worst ones.

Because if you're a good Dharma student, they make up the best mirror, where you get to see what goes on in you. What happens in you, what expectations you had for the talk, what your hopes were, what you know, all the stuff that you bring. And when it's a really compelling and inspiring Dharma talk. You're swept along and you're emotionally inspired and all this wonderful stuff and you leave out That was great. You might not learn anything about yourself. It might have actually distracted you from yourself. But if it's boring Are there other ways it's conventionally awful talk? Maybe you're forced to, you know, the best option you have then is to really check and see what's going on for you. And how is he How is your experience of being there for the talk colored by your expectations, your desires, your all kinds of extra baggage you bring along. And you need to have all that baggage. And maybe just sit there with and be completely happy and relaxed content open. Just listening to someone else, blab. Just you know, find your peace here. Or you're only going to find your deep peace with the present moment when you meditate. As soon as there's someone talking, then there's a whole other thing that goes on. So the idea of the talk is to be a mirror. So I hope that this emphasis today have asked me how are you right now? What's going on for you? What's your experience now? What baggage values thoughts reactions, do you have that get in the way of you just being a piece this moment? here now, you take some responsibility for how the power piece and settled you are now. Or do you tie your piece inside on this too? What goes on around you or what goes on to talk? So here we are.

The image one image of freedom in Buddhism is a person who's walking along Carrying a very big bag over the shoulder.

The person struggling along and then comes across someone. Let's talk a little bit on the road. The person with a big bags has such a big struggle to carry this bag and the other person says you know it's okay if you want to put the bag down. Really. So may you put your baggage down. May you put that from time to time really put down what you're carrying. And just be here, simple way. So thank you for being being such good listeners and being part of this and Thank you for sitting together this morning. I wish you a wonderful week. And I hope that you discover that the present moment is a wonderful place to be. If you're not in the present moment, I hope that you discover It's wonderful to be mindful of where you are not the present. Thank you