

2015-03-07 Doing Being Knowing Loving

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SPEAKERS

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Recently I talked with a man who was having some challenges in his life. And given that particular challenge that he was having, one of the important things for him was to get grounded to kind of get back in his body and get present, not be spinning out so much. And then at. So he was working on that little bit to take those instructions. And he came back some days later to me and said that he noticed something. He noticed that he started thinking a lot, then he would spin out, get a very energized lots of energy. But when he was mindful, he would get grounded. It seemed like a very simple thing. But it's for some people. It's a big discovery and that difference between being mindful and thinking about things. And the way that thinking can be kind of caught up in kind of a spiral loop self perpetuating loop that kind of sometimes spins us out further and further and further from reality from ourselves, pulls us up into our head and into a thoughts about things or concerns about things. What has to happen, what shouldn't happen with all kinds of things, but to be grounded is to kind of step out of the busy traffic jam of thoughts and, and get a different perspective of what's happening. And so this idea of getting grounded by being mindful. So when we do a mindfulness practice, whether it's on the cushion or whether it's daily life, there are different component parts of what makes up mindfulness practice when it could be This morning, I mentioned three of them. And I'd like to review those. And then this afternoon I'd like to add a fourth component part. And the idea is that we are relatively complex beings. lots going on for us, and the inner ecology of our mind or heart, how it works has many different component parts. So the course of the day, you have to have all kinds of physical parts that need to be taken care of, and sometimes you need to have breakfast need to eat. Sometimes you need to take a nap or go to sleep. Sometimes you need to take a shower, groom yourself or something it has all these things you do and these are all you know, and you've somehow managed to get through the day. All of you here have gotten through a lot of days. And you've figured out how to do this well enough to Today, these different component parts of the day. So meditation is like that is these component parts. And if you know the component parts, then you can start becoming wise about what is needed at any given time. And different pieces, pieces of the puzzle are needed. And this is important, especially in contrast to some of this more simple instructions of meditation, that are sometimes given that meditation, just one thing, just one way to do it, and nothing else really counts. But I like to think that everything counts, everything has a place and a time. And so just a matter of understanding when and where different ways of practicing are useful. So in a very broad terms, the three component parts I'm going to start with is could be fit into the category of doing, being and of knowing and there are times when we certainly have to do weird things we things we do and as I said this morning You have to you know, you, you can come to meditation center to meditate is it doing you have to get in your car and drive here or walk here, whatever way bike here. And then you have to kind of come in here and figure out where you're going to sit and get your cushion and sit down and get your posture going.

And there's so that's all involves doing to some degree, it might be second nature, you might not think about it much but it involves doing and then once you sit down to meditate, and you monitor yourself a little bit, just check in and see where you're at. You might realize that more doing as needed, you might realize that your mind is just out of control. And that the best thing you could do for yourself is to calm the mind down and get a little bit stabilized concentrated. And that one way it may be that you have to do that is to be very simple. Stay with the breath, come back to the breath, come back to the breath. And that that calming and centering and stabilizing. And that's a way of kind of that's doing, stay with the breath. Let's be with the breath over and over again. And so sometimes that takes a lot of effort. Depending how strong crazy the mind is. Sometimes in meditating, especially on retreats, I've been really sleepy and tired. And I keep collapsing, falling forward and nodding off. And this feels like manual labor to sit up straight. And just like keep sitting up straight, keep sitting up, start doing this and it doesn't look like any, you know. You know, I don't know what romantic textbook description of what you know, you know what meditation is supposed to be like, you know, stress you know, all this produces all your stress and your you know, all these wonderful things. You read all this research about how wonderful meditation is and you're just trying to stay awake and But it's like manual labor, you have to, you know, and you could just go take a nap. But you can also slow doing and make the effort, muster yourself up. And then at some point, you wake up enough and there's some kind of cheese, some kind of energy that comes up and it's relatively easy to kill yourself upright enough to do it anymore. It's being you're being done, it's being done to you rather than you doing it because something has come together. For so there are times when doing is necessary. And so to have wisdom to know when you're supposed to do something. Sometimes, practice takes the form of being. And as many of you know, especially here in the West, I don't think I've heard really this kind of language and in when I was in Asia practicing, but maybe because there's so much doing here in America, the teachers in Asia, they were kind of amazed by the western meditators who came to practice in in Asia because said, Wow, you guys You guys are really working hard. If only my Asian students would work half as hard as you, it would be great, you know, but a lot of the Westerners kind of, you know, were digging their own grave by how much they were trying and doing and, and so there's a strong tendency to do and accomplish and to fix and to negotiate and to get rid of and in all this doing that many Westerners bring in a very powerful message instruction for a lot of people is to stop the doing and just be and don't try to do anything. In fact, there's some people I give a very clear instructions, so clear about don't do anything. When you meditate, just don't do anything at all. Anytime you notice yourself wanting to do something, your job the only doing you should do is just stop doing it. And then at some point, it gets so bad I say, don't even do that. You know, just know nothing. You're not allowed to do anything. And that because of the hounds And then powerful the instinct is to do and to get something to fix and to accomplish and all that. But it's, but it's not just an antidote to overdoing the being practice is actually a quite a beautiful and very meaningful way of practicing, to get a sense that just to be alive is enough that just being here, and just to breathe and, and just to be just to be alive, is meaningful, is satisfying, is rewarding. Is is one of the one of the great things you can learn from things like meditation. And so being allowed means that we have to allow for something, some beingness to emerge and to be.

So it's not just kind of, it's not like tuning out, but it's allowing our inner vitality or inner sense of lightness or, you know, whatever that form that takes with it. For in terms of emotions or in terms of sensations in the body or even thoughts, it may be, you know, contents of consciousness of awareness, to just let it be and let it just kind of do what it wants to do. Maybe you don't have to do so much, maybe some things resolve themselves if you get out of the way. Some of you probably had the experience of being tense, maybe 10 shoulders or something. And you know, you try to get those shoulders relaxing.

So you tense up even more something, but you kind of just have to give it the time and let it kind of settle the settle out. Some things will just settle out. If you just give them time and make space for them.

certain emotions, the best thing you can do is just give them space and go for a walk and don't try to fix them or solve them or analyze them. But just let them be and so they can settle on their own. Anything any momentum that we've created in the mind, the heart the body, by Howard engaged in done that momentum has to some degree has to kind of play itself out. And sometimes we can speed it up, maybe, but sometimes it's trying to speed it up just perpetuates it. And so there's a lot of wisdom to sometimes just getting out of the way, and letting the inner life unfold the way it needs to unfold, trust it. And sometimes it resolves itself or unwinds. Or rather than resolve itself, I like to think that we don't fix our problems, we dissolve them in meditation by things dissolve as we slip big space. So it works sometimes and some, some people find it very meaningful to realize that some of the issues and problems and challenges they have are don't need to be fixed. You don't have to take charge. You don't have to be the one who's doing it. But it's more like you get out of the way. And there's something in the psychophysical system that can take some things to yeas are two resolution are to settle them out to calm them down. And then analogy I like to give is that if you know you cut your finger, you do the kitchen chopping vegetables and you cut your finger. And that's a pretty simple thing to do. cut your finger happens quickly and don't have to be very sophisticated to cut your finger. But the but the healing of that cut is an amazingly complex physiological event with a lot of proteins and hormones and at the end you know, the immune system comes into play and you know, the I don't think we have the computer yet that's complicated enough to design and track all the things that go into healing that cut. And certainly you're not smart enough to do it. The part of you identifies the part of you that you think you're smart. You know, you know, that doesn't know that you're not smart enough. I'm sorry to tell you And then I don't mean to insult any of you, but I don't think you're smart enough to, to do that, to track all that and get it all just right to heal the cut. But what you can do is you can make sure the cut is clean, you can make sure it doesn't get get irritated even more and get worse. You have a role, but the role is to allow the natural healing to unfold on its own. So the same thing with the heart and with the mind, there can be healing that happens if we create the conditions that allow something to happen on its own. We have to create the conditions for it. And some people you know, some of you who have grieved the loss was maybe no this experience that if you had kind of mostly have to allow the grief to be there and get out of its way. And I see you nodding your head. He lost your wife right recently. And so the idea of you get out of the way and just trust it and trust the process of it unfolding and It's a profound thing to do. And it's a, it's a, it's a powerful lesson in it's a very powerful lesson in trusting something that is deeper within us than the place where we think we're smart. We're worth we think we're in charge. And so to learn this kind of being practice, and part of this being practice sometimes has almost mystical kind of discussion in our scene. It's a kind of closer to the spiritual stuff. And that is resting in awareness. The awareness is just don't do anything but vital, the Beingness of awareness, that awareness, which is naturally there, that doesn't require any doing, trust that or allow for that are open to it.

And, you know, it's no, I don't know, probably awareness means different things for different people. But that way in which you know or register or receive data or experiences of the world that happens with again it not because you're doing it not because you're smart and figure it out or directing your attention to do anything, but because it just arises in awareness. Just like you know if you were looking at the sky, big blue sky and then you see you know a bird fly across the sky just it appears and is there and then it goes away and you know, you didn't you know, you didn't construct it, you didn't make it but it just kind of arises and passes through. So the mind in that kind of sense of awareness in mind is sometimes called sky like, sky like mind sky like awareness that's often said they have similarities to space in mind. Like space, where it has room and space for all things to arise within it. So whatever that sense of spacious awareness or space within which things occur and arise, to be to just allow yourself to be with that and allow things to come and go, sooner or later in Buddhist meditation practice, we want to come to a place where we're just allowing things to arise on their own and trusting it's okay just

let things be. You don't have to do anything alone. And what happens eventually is you see that things are very acutely you start seeing things arise and they pass the rise in the past. And you learn that it's okay it's it's trustable to allow things to arise and to pass whatever it might be allowed to arise and pass. Some things stay for a while, but just kind of get out of the way and let just trust this being practice law, things arise and pass the arising and passing.

So sometimes we emphasize being. And sometimes that's the most important lesson some people need to learn. And that's sometimes sometimes the only thing we can do. I first started learning the being practice, when I was doing zen, because Zen practice wasn't working, you know, as the my zazen, and it, just, you know, just I couldn't get it to work, whatever, whatever, wherever working are supposed to mean. And so I finally had to give up on a retreat, and it was when I gave up and just like, I can't do this, then I discovered a whole other way of being a whole other way of practicing within, within involve that self conscious effort and doing and accomplishing. And it was very transformative to learn that I was so glad that I failed as a Zen student, then zen started, you know. So, then, so then there's the knowing practice, and practice of knowing and that's becoming clear, but what's actually happening. And it's a little bit cognitive in the sense that you know, you know, you hear a sound, you know, you're hearing a sound, you have a thought, you know, you're having a thought. And what I found was that in myself, and I think for many people, that some of the sometimes knowing is really important to know what's going on. So anyway, become familiar and really recognizing what's happening, that we can really become free of something. Or if only by knowing something fully, can we make the proper space to be with it, to not interfere with it, allow it to be there, it's kind of like respecting something deeply. And seeing its integrity or seeing it what it is actually make space for it to kind of do what it needs to do or space for us to somehow respond in some deeper way because of it. So there's that clarity, but knowing that this is what it is. This is the experience I have. So some of you might have had the experience like with them. emotions that you know, you're feeling kind of off, you don't know what's going on, and maybe you're grumpy or irritating or something. And then and then you kind of stay with yourself and then suddenly, oh, I feel afraid or I feel hurt. And then oh, and is that a clear recognition and then something released is something opens up or some something whole different things are happening because like clarity, you know, what it is, it's not just kind of being and not knowing. And what I found in my own practice is that there being practice was good up to a point. But then for it to kind of open up further there had to be the knowing and, and the knowing had to be informed by the being. Because to start to having knowing being one more doing doesn't quite work. So it is like it is a kind of doing, but if the knowing kind of is closely akin or arises out of the being, then there's not much effort in the knowing or there's not much striving or not much self in the knowing. And so it's more like I can feel sometimes, like the natural functioning of the mind. In some schools of Buddhism, some teachers have talked about the cognitive functioning of emptiness. I love that term. So there's an emptiness here, Mung other things can mean that you know, it's you are not the one who's involved you're not a place where you're smart from, you know, that sense of agency, you think you're, you're in charge is not arising from there. It just somehow rising in the field, that you know what's going on. But there's it but there's clear knowing and so, at some point, I've my practice, I've switch from doing to being and then to knowing, and sometimes knowing is the most important thing that people need to do is to actually know And recognizing what's happening. And then to experiment with how to know and how to know clearly and deeply. Part of the importance of knowing for Vipassana practitioners is that Vipassana practice, the date that especially the deeper areas of Vipassana practice, open up in when we really know what our experiences, but not not in the abstract, we really know the particularities of the individual data of experience as it's occurring. And we actually know something. Can we know it in a deep way. And if something happens, we know it in deep way in a way that's often obscured by the concepts that we have. That there's some kind of freedom that's being searched, finding in the cracks between our experience that we can't really find without some kind of really deep knowing. So the

purposes of Vipassana practice knowing becomes increasingly Important, the more concentrated and still and quiet we become.

Some people do the knowing practicing Vipassana and emphasize too much at the beginning of their practice. So they're kind of like doing a lot of noting and knowing and recognizing it's really happening from a you know, a relatively I don't know what to call it. I guess my hand went high, so kind of, I guess that says something. And the, these metaphors of highs and lows, but you know, kind of kind of this more on the surface of the mind rather than deep inside. And so it keeps him there. Remember, many years ago meeting, I met him I met a man who did a lot of mental noting. In fact, he did it all the time. He was really proficient all day long. He has mental noting. And after a while, I got to know him a little bit and found out that he was holding at bay, all his feelings and all these things. It that he had, it was only was like it was like a life saver for him to keep the note and going. So then he wouldn't have to have any space in his mind for anything else else to arise. And it felt kind of sad, that that's what he was using it for. But even short of that means in different from that some people are too actively involved with knowing and if it's too much akin to more thinking that keeps him in that thinking that around. So I think it really helps to develop the being in the subtleness and the concentration and the stillness. So that it's on the, on the on the with that, that this cognitive function of emptiness can work this knowing could happen and really kind of insight insightful, incisive, penetrating knowing sort of happening of our experience as it arises. But there's not like a lot of effort. And now what I found is, when I do a lot of this knowing practice, I have to constantly regularly check myself and to see if I've started Due to knowing too much, and then I kind of relax because you want to be very careful not to have any stress or tension in that knowing so in doing being and knowing and three component parts, neither fourth one and a few minutes. And what's interesting to do is, you know, there's not like what sometimes, you know, one is seems deeper than the other but they're all needed at different times different ones are needed and useful. And what could be interesting for you to reflect a little bit on which of these three is your strength, and which one were likely to adopt and do or, and which of them is your weakest one. Do you are you more likely the more doer and you know, being a doer is great, I'm kind of some parts of my life I'm a doer. I enjoy doing is probably some of you realize that and the eye kind of delightful to being gay. just undo and kind of the, I think the representative experience in my life of me being a doer, that part of me was when I worked at the Santa Cruz farm and gardens as an apprentice was an apprentice farm apprentice there one summer. Now in the early 20s and so, you know, all summer long I was gardening, you know, and we're digging beds and planting and all that thing. And I just saw happy doing all this physical work, that if I think in a new tool, the garden shutter something, I run to the garden shed to get the tool and run back to keep working. So maybe I'm kind of crazy, but, but, but I, you know, that was like an like, I was I happy just to be doing. And so, you know, so maybe that's a strength of mine, and I had to learn how to be that you know, and so I think probably for me, that we Apart from me, and, you know, when, when I was younger, my practice was being and knowing was relatively strong, but I had to learn how to know, out of that being I to learn to know in a relaxed spacious way, rather than just like, you know. So what is it for you? Which one is, is strength? Which one is strong for you and which one is weak for you? And if one of them is the weak side of the three, when would it be useful to strengthen that? Or when would it be useful to call upon it more often? And is it doing way to support you and help you? It's possible to have all three of these work together. It's not like you can do one at a time, you're actually doing all three to some degree all the time. And the question is, what's the degree? And how much of each one are you doing and what balance Do you have them in in and having the right balance is kind of maybe one of the nice things to do.

So then there's the fourth component, element. And sometimes this is the alternative if nothing else works. And sometimes this is the ground for the other three, that kind of context for the other three. And the fourth element of this practice is loving, loving, bringing the heart into what you're doing, to have

some appreciation, some kindness and friendliness, some goodwill, dependent, whatever the word might be for you that's kind of bringing something that's heartfelt into it. Caring, compassion, that to hold yourself and to hold this world with care and compassion, love kindness. friendliness is such an important thing our world needs and you need and everyone needs that. And without some little bit of that sometimes it's very hard to make any you know, in On this whole enterprise of mindfulness in here in the West, some people put emphasis on forgiveness as part of compassionate care and an acceptance. Sometimes, rather than that people like the word generosity to be really generous to yourself or to the world, compassionate, kind. At some people, all those words don't work. But maybe the equivalent can come from respect, respecting yourself, respecting others, or maybe that doesn't work, maybe just getting out of your way. leaving yourself alone might be the most generous, compassionate thing you can do. Just thanks, you know, but they do have love caring for. So is there love is there some something like this in the field of your practice? Or you're practicing because you're trying to you know, Be the best meditator on the block. Are you being ambitious? Are you trying to prove something to someone? Are you to feel inadequate and this is going to make work make you make it for you? Or in all these ways that actually kind of can just put salt in the wound? Can you can there be a love as part of this? goodwill, the heart The heartfelness in what you're doing. This thing about being a human being being alive is you know, it's pretty challenging, I think to be human being in all these complexities of how, what happens to us as we live our lives and grow up and challenges of life, adult life and so many different things happen. It's it's a lot of sorrow, a lot of pain that goes on with love, care. The And at the same time, you know, this this life that we have this is your life. You know, it's an amazing thing to be alive. And you were given this life, this amazingly complex, phenomenal. Unexpected, you weren't expecting to be unexpected and you didn't even ask for it. Maybe, you know, the chances that it was you and not the neighboring sperm or something that somehow made its way to that particular egg and, you know, oh, you know, did you ever thought about who it was that it could have been? And, but here you are, and, and we are, you know, we're a community of people who have to we have to find our way together as a society as people and we're really dependent on each other in huge ways. In our society and, and I think we're all in it together. And to have love to have care, to have compassion in whatever way that's your way. It's many different ways of doing it. So these have four component parts, though these four, which is your strength, and which is your weakness. And in which one, which one of the four might be good to kind of, you know, encourage a little bit more, you know, bring forth more often and have in which, which one of those four Do you want most to inform the other three? I guess that was, that was a rhetorical question. I'm sorry. So, you know, I would, I hope you'd say love would inform the other, but maybe the others can be the other way as well. And certainly the others can inform love.

Knowing is really important part of love. In fact, sometimes I think that knowing Love is the same thing. Something so profound about knowing the kind of seeing clearly. And as some of you have heard me say that in the many years that I've been a Dharma teacher, some of the more important suffering, really difficult suffering I've seen and people are contending with as adults, is it people who weren't seen as children, they weren't loved as children. And not being seen as children is almost the same as not being loved, or is the same as not being loved. And to not have that is really a big deal. Because being seen as such a such a great important thing. And so as adults, we have a practice of seeing. That's what insight means. And it's, I think it can be quite profound, to really be to see ourselves and allow ourselves to be seen by ourselves. Some people do a lot of seeing but they don't really allow themselves to be seen. Then they keep parts of themselves kind of hidden away or something. But there's something about seeing and being present. Being and allowing the being there and not interfering, allowing What's there to be there. And being in the seeing, and they're doing, they're all they all can be forms of love. Sometimes one of these will not appear for many years. And then as the practice develops, they appear for me to commit a number of years before, I was surprised by the

arising of compassion, and then it took some more years for the arising of love or loving kindness that arose out of the practice. But you know, so sometimes these things arise, you know, in their own time. So, they're all great, you're great. All your capacities are great, all your abilities are great and you have the great ability to do. Enjoy it and do it wisely. You have the ability to be great. Allow yourself just to be to gift, you have the ability to know, it's a great thing. It's one of the special things of being a human, I think, to really know, to know that, you know, enjoy it, you know, celebrate it, appreciate it, be in awe of it. It's kind of like it's pretty awe inspiring are going to be able to, to know anything. How do you know why do you why in the world, you know anything at all, how does that happen? It just doesn't take much to know things. Right? I mean, how do you know you have to go pee? YouTube wasn't a big you'd have to go to college to figure that one out. You know, you know, wow, I know something. Just It's clear, I really know. This knowing is this phenomenon that we know. And I like to think of the are, are knowing me is the universe knowing itself. And then I think it's nice, amazing thing. And then of course love. I think love is amazing thing. And all these I think are innate to the human heart. Beautiful parts and so I hope that you find ways of enjoying all four of these things and find some way to that's right balance for who you are different balances for different people and the right medicine for Woody, what troubles you the right balance of these for troubleshooting the right medicine at different times. But these are the component parts that are partly part of what we kind of negotiating or finding a way with when we do this practice.

So I think that's what I'll say. And it was nice today I felt in here it was nice for you are nice enough at least I know it can be challenging to do a day like this There were a lot of you here today it was a kind of a big group and usual and that both has its challenges and its benefits and what's nice about this practice is when you see the challenges are the benefits that the but it also felt very nice when I sat in here instead of really good feeling for this whole day and I have a lot of admiration appreciation for people to come for these days and sit here and so I thank you all for this day, you know, hope it was nice for you all. And the custom here at IMC is that it's the people who practice here who take care of their practice place. It's a variety of reasons for why we have it set up that way. But one reason is so you have opportunity to love the place you're practicing. And so what we do is we it takes about 10 minutes for about seven or eight people to stay at the end to do the basic cleaning that we do like we need to do, because we're have a cleaning service, right, so the bathroom and the kitchen and vacuuming the floor and things like that. And we need about seven or eight people. We'd like to have seven or eight people who could stay behind to do that have anybody likes so 12345678 great. And Richard is the manager so you can check in with him so you don't all end up cleaning the same bathroom and, and then for whatever benefit that you've had. For this day of practice, you might want to give some thought about how you can take that benefit and turn it around and use it to benefit the world around you to do something nice for the others. This is called the dedication of merit that we do in Buddhism is so consider a little bit you benefit from this day. Are you a little more patient? Are you Budweiser? Are you more humble? Are you here you have a kinder, softer are you? I don't know. All kinds of things can happen here. And how might that serve you in improving this world we live in a neighborhood you go to place of work, wherever you are. May all beings be happy.