

2015-07-22 Dharmette Giving Yourself Over To One Thing At A ...

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SPEAKERS

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A characteristics that's probably accurate for most of you, maybe all of you here is that you are living what in Buddhism is called a lay life. You aren't living in a monastery, chances are, you're not living at a retreat center. You're not on retreat. But you're living in a world where you probably have to take care of all kinds of things. You might have to go shopping for your own food and maybe cook for your food, cook for your meals, you might have to go to work. You might have family to take care of home to take care of all kinds of things that you got to do social lives to take care of many different things. And some people find that this so called lay life is has its challenges keeps you busy and sometimes makes it hard to find time to Really devote yourself to mindfulness practice a Buddhist practice meditate enough. And sometimes occasionally people and long for the wish Can I could offer I could only go on retreat. That's where it's really at. Or if I, you know, if things were a little bit different, maybe I could be a monastic for a while and you know, it'd be nice to spend a year kind of immersed in, you know, in a monastery setting and just just be saturated with Buddhism and practice and all these wise other monastics who are kind of floating on clouds and dispensing great wisdom and kindness and compassion and, you know, it's be so great to be at these places and, and, and instead of a run these people have to live with and, you know, challenges and all this. And so there's a kind of yearning sometimes force occasionally for this kind of the Shangri La have a retreat center monastic sending center. A chance to devote yourself to practice a lot and it kind of for Lauren feeling well you know, lay life is second best third best or fourth best really, you know, I'll do the best I can and hope someday I'll. So I want to offer you one practice or one piece of instruction for living a late life that could make it comparable to being on retreat or being comparable to the values of being in a monastery. Because the difference between layer life and retreat live from monastic life is not that great actually. And so it doesn't take that much to kind of tip the tip the whole, you know, direction towards life being as productive as retreat life monastic For even more so, you know, there's lots of people who live in monasteries. You know, you could go to places like Thailand. Most Buddhist monks do not meditate. You know, they're wearing the robes and all that. And you can go to a Buddhist thought, I don't know. But now anymore when when I was there many years ago, it wasn't uncommon to go to a Buddhist temple and Buddhist monks and they're sitting around watching TV and smoking their cigarettes. And you know, they're there. They take care of some of the pastoral needs of their village, their community, but they don't really devote themselves much to meditations, actually a very small percentage of monks who actually meditate in Thailand. And so you think, Oh, if only I could be a monk, well, you might watch television, chances are in our society, you don't smoke. You know, so anyway, so the fact that someone's living a monastic life doesn't automatically mean that they're getting the full benefits of that life. So it doesn't Think that much to kind of have an Ole life to get some of those benefits that can come from it. So I want to offer you one thing that you can do that can really kind of tip it in that direction and really enrich your life. So they get some

of the benefits of so called monastic retreat life or whatever. And so it's very simple. And that is, when you do something, do only one thing at a time. That's all just do one thing at a time when you do it. And when you do that, one thing, do it. Just do that, do that one thing, like really give yourself to that one thing.

So an example for many years ago my life was I noticed that I for some reason, I was going to go from one side of my home to the other side of the home. I think I was going to go take the laundry from the washing machine into the dryer that was the task was to go across the home to the laundry area. And I noticed that on that way, in my home was really small. All these things got my attention. This needs to be put away. This needs to be looked at, oh, look, there's a magazine. I haven't opened it yet. And, you know, I should see what's in it and, and then you have to walk by the front door, you know, I wonder if the mail has come. Maybe I should go out to the street and check the mail and, and so the one task that I set myself to do was to walk across the house to the laundry area, that was the intention and all these things pulled me left and right. So it's, you know, that isn't enough. It wasn't like a necessarily an unethical thing to to, you know, get pulled left and right and do all the other things. But I didn't get the benefits of doing one thing. To set the intention, I'm going to walk across the house, come to the laundry, and just that's what I'm gonna do walking across the house, I'm not going to let all these other things pull my attention, unless the house is burning down then maybe, but I'm just going to go this is what I'm doing. And or if you're cooking a meal, just cook the meal. maybe don't have the TV on or the radio on or don't try to be efficient and do two to three different things at once and, you know, be on the phone, because it's, you know, why, why just do why just cook your food if you can be talking on the phone at the same time, right? I mean, it's just so efficient, it gets things you know, you know, you get more done that way and, and even better if you have the TV on, you can't have it on talking, you know, if you're talking on the phone and cooking but at least you can have it on silently. So you can be tracking the TV and what's going on in case important news things come up talking to your friend On the phone and cooking and then it probably have to go you know, get the bandage to for this you know to chop your vegetables and you chop more than you should have. Just do one thing at a time, if you're chopping vegetables, is just chop the vegetables. The mind wanders away, come back, the mind doesn't want to be there as desires for the things. fold that back into just being right here, just for this just for this. If you're going out to do the laundry, just walk to the laundry area. Don't get distracted by anything. That's the intention. Just do that. If something else gets your attention, make a mental note later. I'll go look at it I'll deal with it. If you are washing dishes, if you are talking with a friend, just talk to a friend. If you're walking out to your car in the parking lot, just walk out to your car. What would be like just to park your car a little bit further away than you have to the far into the parking lot and use that walking to only walk to do as walking meditation. So that you're in the walking you're in your body as you walk, you're not in your thoughts thinking about what's for dinner, something else you just just walking. Give yourself over to doing one thing at a time. Through as if you do that a lot through your day, you will get a lot of the benefits that come from being a devoted monastic renunciant someone who really gives themselves over, you know, to be a professional or you know, lifestyle of living a religious life. It's remarkable what you benefit you can get. Just do one thing at a time and really do it. Be there for that activity. Watch your mind so your mind doesn't go off into other thoughts. Just be there for that. Be there for what you do. One thing, do one thing at a time. Great. That's all it takes. Is it too demanding? Yes. Listening to music, it's beautiful to listen to it, sorry.

So if you're doing dishes and listening to music at the same time, does that count as doing two things at once?

Well, the answer is not from me, but from you experiment, try a different ways and see what the benefits are. Sometimes the music and the washing dishes becomes one big thing. That's the one thing

too so feels like you're in this one thing that includes that. Or it could be that you're washing dishes, but you're not really there because you're singing along with the lyrics. You know, that's where they were you're at. So what do you what do you know? So I would just experiment both ways and see what brings you the most sense of presence and engagement to hear now. I remember when I was at Zen center many years ago, was a brand new student there. And I had this idea and Zen You do one thing at a time, and I showed up with breakfast. And one of the most senior Zen priest there, I think was Philip Whalen was at breakfast, having his breakfast and reading the paper at the same time. And what this must be unethical. You know, so I went up to him and said, What are you doing? You know, you know, you're supposed to do one thing at a time here, you're and he said, I'm just having breakfast and reading the paper.

And he helped me so much to relax around this stuff. Not that take it too seriously. So you have fun
Yes,

like the structure is very clear, and I spend time practicing in that way. But currently, I'm having great difficulty in actually resting in the one thing at a time. So is there any additional guidance as to how to do it?

But many things I could say but what comes to mind is maybe you're trying to be one with the wrong thing. Maybe what you need to really become become one with really kind of do one thing and really get into is what is it makes it difficult? What's taking you away what's making it hard? What happens if you turn yourself over to that?

Any comments? seem relevant enough. Great. Thank you. Wow, we've never got questions here. I touched the please. I must touch something here. Yeah. You touched a nerve. I'm so in clarification for what you just suggested with her is, let's say you're feeling anxious or desire comes up about wanting to do something else. So just be present for that. Just like yourself, you have to be wise and know what's appropriate, right? I mean, if you're, you know, at someone's funeral, yeah, I'm not talking. I'm talking dishes or dishes, or something simple. Yeah, you know, so then you have to be wise, you know, but, you know, sometimes the dishes got to get done, you know, and it doesn't matter what you think and what you feel and just got to do anything to deal with it. But, but yes, sometimes if you're anxious or angry or something. Sometimes you want to keep yourself over that completely and different people have different ways of doing that, that are wise. And, like, if I'm angry with it, what I like to do is go for walks, and I just give myself over to the anger and just let it be there and course through me that kind of just just be angry, just like that. Or some people find being sad, just really wise just to be sad, and I find it to be the issue for me, but, but meditation is a great place to be sad, because you need to keep your spine straight. So you don't succumb to it. You don't give into the sadness Oh, for me, but but just let it be there and just let it one thing just said be a sad Buddha, they say. So when you're doing dishes, you know have to decide whether the dishes need to be done or your sadness needs your full attention. If so, this is these are full attention then maybe go sit down someplace. If the dish Just need to be done. Like your sadness, weight, or the wonderful skill, you know, it's possible to do both. And just just be a be a sad dishwasher.

It's even better if you can enjoy it. The thing about doing one thing, giving yourself over to one thing there's a kind of a choice the right word or kind of a satisfaction to just do that even it's like you're sad dishwasher just just beat that. And as opposed to all the kind of like I shouldn't be doing that should be fixing I should be doing something else. What am I going to do? Just be sad. It makes life a lot easier. And then it allows sometimes a deeper process to unfold. That can't unfold if we're not really there. One more and then

I was wondering what minute Six would do with their iPhones. What's the everything you're saying? Makes a lot of sense. But there's always this phone and I know there's an expectation for my job, especially to always know what's on that phone.

Yeah. Yeah. So yeah, this is an issue, I think, for many of us is the frequency in which people check it the frequency and there's a ping saying messages come and we have to know what's going on. And I think we have to get really wise about this. And they have a really clear boundaries and limits to how often we do it when we because you know, give yourself over to do one thing, and then we keep getting interrupted by that phone in some ways, and we're expected to be interrupted. So how are you going to do that negotiate that is a big issue for our society. Some people find that they turn their phone off for periods of time, and even even 10 minutes 10 minutes, I'm not no way I'm not gonna answer the pretenders next 10 minutes, no way. And that's committed or for an hour, I'm not going to check it for one hour. And the world's not going to come to an end. And that just that can make give you some of the benefits. And then when you check it after the hour, do one thing, just check it. orbs is there's a universe in your phone, right? Just check the email. don't check the news. Just the email. Next, give yourself over fully to this, just that. And my favorite smartphone, monastic story. I don't know if was still a smart Yeah, this smartphone but Ajahn Amaro who was a wonderful monk. Long time ago, he had one of the first things phones that could be called a smartphone. I think he could do email on it back then it was really unusual. And it was really expensive. It was like \$1,000 thing. And kind of kind of looked like what we have nowadays, a smartphone but you know, when he was an early version of this kind of idea, And I saw him with his fancy phone. I just had a flip flop flip up, you know? And then I said to him, I don't know what are you doing with this luxury item this phone? And you know, keep him accountable to it right? What's what are you what are you doing? And he said, Oh, a supporter, some friend of his, they gave it to me was a gift. I find it useful. And, but I decided that I can only accept this. If someone comes along and asks for it, I would give it to them. So I was tempted.

Mostly I was tempted to find out what he really but we've had that that freedom to hear. Anyway, so good luck.

Okay.