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SPEAKERS

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Earlier, I spoke about how I mentioned kind of a Buddhist slogan that says that don't add fuel to the fire, let the fire die out. And the fire that we're talking about here is a fires of Buddhism, kind of the core kind of roots of is lost in hatred and delusion. So don't add fuel to lost and hatred and delusion. And the word for fuel is the same word for clinging. It's clinging, craving, closing down, which is the fuel for a keeps these things burning. So hatred, it keeps burning, if we keep being somehow clinging and tightening and grasping and resisting. And it can seem like the you know that of course, we should cling, of course, we should grasp, that's how life is lived. That's how you take care of yourself. But what we learn is that actually, you can take care of yourself better, without clinging, grasping. For one thing, if the way the way we harm ourselves often is by getting caught up in craving, and caught up in hatred and delusion. So if we can help ourselves not to keep adding the fuel to it, so that keeps burning, but rather take the fuel away, so that it can dissipate cool down, then we're actually wiser, we actually can engage in a better way in the world. And it's in this regard that the that the word for liberation are one of the one of the descriptors of liberation in Buddhism is, is to cool down. So you're gonna have to be really cool. Which, you know, because what we're cooling down is the fires of greed, hate and delusion. So what are the what are the? What are the things that are the fuel for the fires? And what are the things that are that? What's the clinging that are the fuel. And so one of the ways that Buddhism likes to talk about this is they talk about five areas of clinging, or grasping, five, that become the fuel for the fires. And the first one is our body. And many people cling to their body. They cling to how they look, they cling to their health, they think they have a negative clinging, they resist or have a push away or contract around what they don't like happening in their body. So if there's pain, for example, there can be it's unfortunate to have pain, but there can be very strong reactions, that there are those various reactions or fuel for further suffering. I learned that early in my meditation life when I had a tremendous amount of knee pain, when I meditated and, and I noticed that if I hated my knee pain, the muscles around the pain would contract. And then it would hurt more. And if I could stop hating my pain, those little muscles would loosen a little bit, and the pain was better. And so if I was going to continue meditating, I had to watch my mind so carefully, that I wasn't somehow clinging, grasping, resisting, tightening up around the pain, and then I can manage, and then eventually the pain went away. Sometimes, I still have any pain. But I don't mind anymore. Now there's very little grasping or clinging around. So there's all these ways that we kind of cling to our body, or clinging arises out of the body. And the and the consequences of clinging to the body is that we're adding fuel to create more clinging. So there's a wonderful kind of kind of loop. There's clinging, clinging is fuel for making fire, the fire is more clinging. And since that we make more fire, you have more fuel, have more fuel, the fire burns more.

And so there has to be some way of ending the cycle that goes around and around. And that's part of the function of mindfulness minute Mindfulness Meditation is to see clearly what's going on. And to relax in the seeing and being in the present moment, and not giving into and not acting on this clinging,

but acting on non clinging on seeing. And so the clinging begins to relax and dissipate. So one thing we cling to is the body. The other thing we cling to, is a little bit deeper than the body is. The more subjective is the feelings that we have in our body. And the feelings that the tradition is focused on the most is the pleasure the pleasure, pleasant and unpleasant feelings that we have, or the pleasure the ways in which we feel pleasure and pain, comfort and discomfort in the body. And for some people, that's it, there's a real strong orientation around somehow wanting pleasure and not wanting pain. And so that's so strong, and they forget any kind of clinging around pleasure, or kind of a negative clinging around pain. They're very clinging, adds fuel to the fire. And it's very important place that people cling, very important place to learn non clinging, to learn to be with displeasure, be with what's unpleasant, in a relaxed way to be with a nice full way, not so that we suffer more. But so we actually suffer less. So we don't add fuel to the fire. So I've had that as well, where I've had something very unpleasant, being experiencing something very unpleasant, sometimes emotionally unpleasant. And I've been so critical, so aversive to it, that I've kind of felt like I have to get away from this, I have to push it away, I have to do something here. And so in the very trying to push it away, or ignore it or do something with it. I actually made it stronger and stronger. And sometimes when I made a brand new meditation student in this whole thing, sometimes it was quite ugly, the process, I didn't know how this looping worked. And so I would feel this emotional discomfort seemed natural enough to want to go make it go away. I was desperate to have it go away, I was clinging to make it go away. So I tried hard to make it go away. And sometimes I tried too hard in meditation and meditation is the when we make it go away. But But when I was meditating was filled with clinging, filled with desire and expectation and wanting and fear and I was caught. And I did that I feel more distress. The more distress I felt the only thing I knew what to do was to try harder, start cleaning more, I'd feel worse. So of course, what's the natural thing to do? Clean more. And you know, it was kind of ugly inside here, as Luke made more stronger and stronger. And then at some point, unfortunately for me, or fortunately, I reached rock bottom. And then I just gave up. I thought hopeless, I can't do anything here. And in the giving up. That's when I wasn't putting fuel on the fire anymore. But I just couldn't give up on my own, I had to just kind of like bottom out. So I hope you don't have to do that. But but then then I learned that potting mountain bottoming out and giving up I learned about oh, maybe I don't have to try so hard not to be clinging and grasping. Maybe I make more space for it. And that's the function of the mindfulness is to make space to be aware, rather than in contrast to adding fuel on the fire. The third area that people cling to that the Buddha emphasized is they cling to their perceptions of things, their labels, the ideas they have about what things are. And there's all kinds of labels that people have ideas, and right and wrong are good and bad. And this is the way it is and should be this way. And it's fine to have perceptions ideas, but we cling to them, we hold on to them.

And that's, you know, you get to put you in this loop. So part of the function of mindfulness is to kind of step away and see that thoughts, ideas, labels, perceptions that we have are just that They can arise in the mind through a thought. And we just let let it be, don't get pulled into it, don't live by it, don't react to it, don't pick it up. The fourth area is usually called in, in our circles is called mental formations, the mental activities of the mind. But more precisely, its disposition or side of the mind, it's the motivations we have in the mind, the mind is filled with impulses of what it wants. And that impulsive motivation of wanting something, can some people it's so integral to who they are they, they define themselves by what they want. And even if what they want is what they don't want. And that becomes, if you're clinging to that, your desires, your wants your motivation, what you're hoping for what you're expecting, then that big, you know, you enter this loop, the cycle of clinging, is fuel for further clinging. So we have to be very, very careful and attentive to what we want, what our expectations are, what our desires are, what our hopes are, what's motivating us. And so part of this function of mindfulness is to be very, is to really bring a lot of care and attention to what we want, and be very careful, they just just because we want it, that we don't justify it, or more profoundly, just because we want it, we feel justified in clinging, or

grasping or striving to have it. And so instead of that, we try to be mindful of it. And if we can step back and just see an impulsive desire arise, and not given to it, then by clinging to it, then we can be much wiser about how we engage and the desire is a desire that's appropriate to pursue good motivation, then we can try to approach it in a way that doesn't that does not involve clinging. And one way that doesn't involve clinging is the idea of setting the intention in that direction, this is what I want, I'm pointing in that direction. And then rather than being the one who makes it happen, have women more than idea that you're the one who allows it to happen. So even if, like, even if it's something like that, only you can do. Like, I think a great example, that, at least for me, has been falling asleep. I've been falling asleep now for 62 years, it's pretty much been a daily thing. So you can do the math to figure out that any add in their naps. So, you know, I've been doing this for a long time. So I've gotten to be 62 years old. So I'm, you know, I've been successful enough with the sleep thing. And then I think I think all of you here are old enough if you're successful enough. Anyway, so what I've learned is I don't know how to put myself to sleep. I just, I've tried so many times, and actually sometimes I've had insomnia at night. And like, I really want to go to sleep I tried for me. And I've learned that it's kind of productive, like this, the fuel fire loop that goes on, the best thing I can do is not try and, and then just kind of let my mind wander or meditate or I just lay there quietly, contentedly. And then so I allow myself to fall asleep. But I don't try so much. And there are things where you have to do with tremendous energy and effort. The like even something like you know, like running, if you like to run takes a lot of effort and energy. But at some point you get into it, it's better to allow your body to run when you click into it, than it is to keep being the one who's like to push more, more more. You kind of allow at some point, you allow the whole system to work and some people talk about running. There's this effortless effort that kicks in at some point.

So and then the fifth area of clinging. And then these five areas that are the primary areas that is consciousness or awareness itself. There's something about the nature of being conscious or being aware that for some people, it feels so special, and feel so profound or deep or intimate part of who we are like some people's the most intimate, special part of who we are. That's what it is everything else that we're aware of. That's just arising and passing that just phenomenon the world. But to be aware, that's the thing. And that's a particular area that people who practice meditation and mindfulness are prone to get attached to at some point, because we're actually developing our capacity to be aware. But they can be clinging to that. And so to really go become free to really cool down the fires of greed, hate and delusion, you won't have to be very careful, you don't claim to awareness itself to consciousness. And then liberation in Buddhism, and early Buddhism is called liberation. Based on non clinging, non clinging liberation, and the word for clinging, here is the word for fuel. So it's liberation that no longer has any fuel for the continuous cycle, that loop that goes on. So the shorthand for all of this, because that's all complicated to go through lists and all this. So the shorthand of it is practice nonreactive awareness. No matter what happens, settle back into an awareness which is not for or against the experience that's not reactive to it. The awareness that gives hold it openly. And that maybe allows your wisdom to operate, to know if practically you have to be four against something, but your heart your awareness is never against it. nonreactive awareness, and that cuts the cycles and allows for the cooling. That feels so good. So thank you. And I suppose that wasn't a particularly appropriate talk for the solstice