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SPEAKERS

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As we continue to explore patience, or people who practice mindfulness a key part of patience is self understanding. To understand how we react, how we respond, to know ourselves better and better. We know the impulses, the feelings, the emotions, we know the thoughts and the beliefs that underlie being impatient.

So we got our practice with patients after all, the sound out there. And would have been nice if they obliged us in the morning when, but we get to take it when we get it. So hopefully, that was the theme of the day supported you through this. One of the important areas of patience has to do with patience with other people. And occasionally, you come across people who are not behaving just exactly like you want them to behave. And so being patient with them is sometimes the right approach to meet them. And sometimes it's easier to be patient if we understand we understand them what's going on with them. So for example, someone may, you know, they might say something mean to you, and you react and sitting, they think this is unfair, it's wrong. They're evil, they need to ask for forgiveness, they need to make amends, they need to apologize, you know, and just kind of worked up. But then you find out that, you know, how stressed they are there. One of their parents just died the day before, but they still have to go to work and, and but at work is falling apart. And they had to lay off some people that they cared for a lot and top of that they have a toothache. something you've heard. Wow. Now I understand you don't have much patience, you don't have much resources, you're kind of like pretty stressed out. So I don't think I don't have to take your the way that you snapped at me. I'm not gonna take it so personally. So I've known people who have warned me, they said, You know, I am you should know, today I'm really in, you know, in a difficult state of mind. So just, you know, you know, so if I say something, you know, please don't take it personally because I just, I'm struggling here and trying to keep it together and Okay, and so sure enough, they say something which was kind of, you know, and they were annoyed or something and but I For a warn that they're having a hard time, they're kind of some kind of a different state than usual. Or more dramatically is a story of that happens regularly. And in hospice care, that someone who's been in loving family member for decades, in the last days of hospice care, and they're dying, some people, their biochemistry changes, perhaps neurology changes or something. And people, it's a very, very, it's a very it can be, it can be a common phenomena, that as people are getting close to dying, that they start being angry at the people around them, or they start criticizing them or, or, you know, accused them for all kinds of things that they never would have done other earlier in their life. And it's fairly common for hospice nurses to tell the family to expect this. And then when it happens, say there it is. And so it's families to learn about this find out not to take it personally, this is not the person that usually new, this is something, you know, brain chemistry is operating now. And so you don't have to, so then the people are not going to feel so hurt so deeply. Oh, no, you know, my uncle just told me that a piece of shit. And so you know, how could he you know, and you can be just you can be upset for the rest of your life, because that's the last words he said to you.

But because the hospice nurse said, this is what they do say, Oh, it's brain chemistry, it's not really the uncle I knew. And so we don't take it so personally. So there's a way of kind of, if we understand the situations and the other person, sometimes we can be much more patient, we're not caught up in it, not reactive to it. And I think a general kind of good guideline is that we usually don't understand people very well, that there's a lot under the surface that we don't know what's going on, and making them tick making them operate. And if we began to understand more of what's going on, we probably be impatient with a lot more people.

The other is to understand their suffering. And so part of what can have helped bring on patients, is we have compassion for them, we care for them. Are they really struggling? They're suffering, and, and, you know, they're doing, you know, I've known people who, you know, initially I was annoyed, because they were taking forever to figure something out to do something common, can you be so dense, you know, something like that, right. And then I found out that they were suffering about something in a big way. And it was very, and for whatever reason, the task they were doing was really difficult for them. And when I understood how difficult it was in the suffering, they're having, my heart just broke, you know, oh, you know, why was I holding them to some standards, you know, that wasn't appropriate for them and their circumstances, and my care and my compassion for them, feeling their suffering was enough, okay. But however long it takes you, it's fine. I'll just kind of go along and make space because I care about your suffering, I don't want to add to it. So there's a variety of ways in which compassion, it can make a difference. But there are some times where we feel hurt, we feel angry or resentful that that compassion is not the name of the game, understanding of their circumstances, and not the name of the game. And perhaps what's needed now is a higher order of generosity. kind of feeling that Yes, I'd like you know. And so they're the two movements in Buddhism that are kind of like the foundation of social relationships are loving kindness, and generosity. So what is a generous thing to do here? And what's the kind thing to do here? what's the what's the thing to go? How did it come from goodwill. And these two movements, to let go of ill will, and replace it with goodwill. So if we have ill will towards someone. The very strong ethic in Buddhism is to try to figure out how to how to avoid put aside restrain let go of our ill will, or hostilities, interestingly do we have for them? Because if we don't, it's poison for us, doesn't look good for us to have it. And it's certainly not good for them. And so to learn how to either put aside or not give into our anger or resentment, or how to put it down is important part of social harmony. The other Buddhist one is to come from loving kindness to come from goodwill. So let's put down ill will pick up goodwill and have a genuine feeling of genuine kindness, a generous spirit of goodwill for that person, may you be well and be friendly towards the person. Be kind to the person That's not always easy to do. And so you all know that in Buddhism, there's a whole training in developing loving kindness and developing goodwill. And part of that training is learning about all the resistance all the resistance we have, or the good arguments we have, why we shouldn't do it, why it's hard for us to kind of where they work through that. And so we really kind of maybe find out that maybe it's not true where we don't have to resist, we don't have to hold ourselves close, we don't have to hold on to our ill will. It's okay, it's safe to open our hearts to people and have goodwill. And as a training in Buddhism, it can take months and years to go through and really explore all the beliefs and all the resistance, all the hindrances we have to having an open heart to people and having goodwill. But part of Buddhist training is to spend the time doing that, looking at that, finding it out. So these two things, letting go of ill will. And picking up goodwill, I like to think of it as as generosity, and loving kindness, the goodwill is generosity and loving kindness. So these things are very important kind of Buddhist practices, and you go to Buddhist Asia, people are practicing all the time. They're restraining themselves from ill will. And they're looking to see how they can practice goodwill in the situation. metta. In. So there's two two things, these two things. Here in the West, there's a very strong tendency for those two practices, avoiding your will and engaging in goodwill, to be placed under the category of forgiveness.

And I love it, that forgiveness has the word given givenness in it, giving. I like it. To me, it makes me think it's meant to be an act of generosity, not an obligation. But it comes from this. So you know, generosity. The word forgiveness in the West, the way I built up in this way, has a very strong association, historically down through the centuries with Judeo Christian religions. And part of sorting can have a really heavy sense to it, very strong associations to it. And, you know, it's often it's very consequential in western theology, that, that God forgive us. Because if he doesn't, it's not a pretty picture. What happens next. And so it's, you know, the whole thing is it carries a lot of weight, carries a lot of religious authority, maybe sense of obligation, and you're supposed to forgive your enemies and all that. So it can be kind of a heavy baggage for Westerners when we talk about forgiveness. But still, the western Dharma teachers will use the word and will do forgiveness meditation. But in the Buddhist sense, what we're talking about is putting aside the ill will, and engaging in goodwill. And that saves us from a lot of the challenges around what forgiveness is, it doesn't mean that I'm, I'm approving of what they did and condoning what they've done doesn't mean that they get off scott free, and there's no consequences of what they've done. Does it mean that I know you know, that people have a lot you know, people have some people have trouble with the idea of forgiveness. But But if we kind of reframe what, how we use the word forgiveness, just two more core Buddhist values, then how I understand that it means putting away ill will, and picking up goodwill. So letting go of resentment that can go of anger and hostility. And then, but it's not enough just to let go of those. But the idea is to open our heart and have goodwill to that person. Forgiveness doesn't really happen unless we, you know, forgiveness is not just kind of like, okay, you know, okay, your pardon, I'm not going to talk to you anymore. We're not to deal with anymore. I don't you know, that maybe it's better than the alternative but, but there wouldn't be the full forgiveness because in Buddhism, the idea is to come to the place to find the place of goodwill, of metta loving kindness. There's no sense of obligation in Buddhism that you have to do this. Buddhism is not an obligatory religion doesn't put obligation on us. However, it's more like it's an opportunity. And if we understand the cost of ill will and staying closed and having resent being resentful and if we understand how wonderful it is to come from goodwill Then if it's something that we voluntarily want to do, rather than something we have to do under obligation. So I mean, I think I think it's fair to say that for all a Buddhist spirituality is voluntary. And so we use when Buddhists use the word forgiveness, it's a voluntary thing. So you know, because we feel like it's a wise thing to do an appropriate thing to do. So forgiveness or putting aside do well, and engaging in goodwill, is also a practice, you, we don't know, we don't expect people to be skilled at it, just because they hear about it. But it's something that we begin to practice and work up to, we've been stretching yourself into it. And one of the first things that it said that's appropriate to celebrate, to really appreciate this, even if we can't forgive, can't do this movement, is to appreciate that we want to, and makes a difference that we want to, I would suggest, it's a huge difference. exposed to no way I don't want to do that, versus, I want to do that. But I don't know how I don't feel bad that you don't know how to feel good that you know, if that's what you want to do, you don't want to stay holding on to a grudge, you want to stay holding on to this. And then it's a practice, it takes a while to work through it and find your find your way.

And the other thing about this whole forgiveness, goodwill, putting aside the ill will and all that. And that can make it a lot easier is to do for some people is no one has to know you're doing it. Because sometimes if we offer forgiveness, and like, you know that, you know, that's your doesn't deserve it, you know, I don't want him to know, because somehow that just a complicated situation, or I'll be seen as they'll take advantage of me or they'll do it again or something. You don't have to be so explicit about what we're doing, it can be in our hearts. And then how that plays out. And action can be something can be a whole other thing. There are some people who may be it's wise not to have much to do with again, ever again, just to be too difficult, the difficult people. But we can still drop our resentment and anger towards them. And our hearts can still wish them well. But you know, I really want you Well, I want to

Goodwill for you, I want you to be well, which is far away from me. You know, you know, I don't want to be the one who brings you goodwill. But at least my heart's not closed. And it might seem a little bit miserly or something but but just, you know, it's possible to open our hearts and have friendly feelings towards someone. And not you don't have doesn't mean you have to act on it. Or they they know it. And that can make it easier to take that step to make sense to can be just you know, in your privacy of your own heart. And then later with whatever wisdom you have, you can decide whether or not you want to do it publicly or do with the person if it seems appropriate at the time. So patients, patients from understanding patients from understanding ourselves well, patients understanding how we operate with resentment and anger and closing down shutting people off. And then patients from having the intention to not live in that reactivity method find a way to let go of it and move into something more positive. And one of the ways that people will do this is through forgiveness practice. And we could drop the word forgiveness in Buddhist English, but it's still a very powerful word. And so rather than not using it in Buddhism, and here in America, I think that try to explain how it's understood in a Buddhist context. And keep the word add some of the depth to it or the value to it or the richness to it or that you know, that this sort of social kind of emotion, social attitude that we have. So that's my introduction. And I think the whole topic of forgiveness is a very tender topic. And some people have done a lot of it and make a lot of thought of it. Some people haven't done much, but you know, it touches areas of where we've often been hurt and been very difficult for us interpersonally. So it's a tender, tender topic. So what I'd like you to do for a few minutes is, is have a tender conversation about it in this way, little bit like we did this morning. And that is what is what, in what intention? What wishes do you have in regard to forgiveness? Being forgiving? What is your aspiration? around the world of forgiveness? And how how, what what, what are the best ways, you know, to find that forgiveness, to find that forgiveness to be able to do that. So you don't have to talk about it all the ways you don't know how to do it and how you can't do it. But what's the best way you know how to do it? And what you know, what is your aspiration? Now? How strong is it? You know, how does it work for you as it does a value for you. And just share kind of personally what that's like for you, you don't have to talk about difficult relationships hurts you have, you don't have to talk about how difficult it is to forgive. This is a little bit more on a positive side in the sense of what is your aspiration? What's your connection to the idea of forgiveness and the value of it? Do you see value for it for yourself?

And maybe only by hearing what I said earlier to you sort of seeing something more valuable in it the way I presented? And then what are the ways you know how to do that? What are the best ways you know how to be forgiving of someone else? Does that make enough sense? So what I had in mind was you do you'd actually just form pairs of people. And have a conversation back and forth. I would like to do the same thing we did this morning where each person talks about five minutes. But this time, it doesn't have to be a monologue. One person talks about how they feel about it. And the other person is a witness and listens. But they can ask questions, they can participate a little bit. But the bulk of the talking should be the person who's that has the five minutes. I'll ring a bell at some point and then like we this morning will switch and you can switch roles but the witness doesn't have to be completely silent this time. But mostly makes sense. So if you could pair up with someone and we'll see if there's not an even number once you come towards the front if you don't find the group