

# 2017-03-27 Simple Compassion

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## SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

To talk about compassion. And do we need to have it a little bit louder? Yeah, so there's that little bit to like, that sounds good, right? That's good. Good. Okay. So this evening, I'd like to talk about compassion. And it's a big topic. And can be talked about many different ways. And I want to try to talk about it from the point of view of what's called the sublime abiding of compassion, or the Brahma viharas of compassion. And the Brahma viharas, sometimes also known as the divine, a bindings are four ways of dwelling, or being, that are usually associated with meditation. Because it's something when the mind gets centered or focused on these four states, so strongly, that they become the primary atmosphere of the heart and the mind of how we are. And what makes them Sublime is that they are or divine is that there are four forms of love. And the ability to love in some ways is, you know, a nice thing for human beings. And, you know, it can feel quite nice and it's way. But most people, even people who are madly in love, they say, you know, they're there. That's mostly what they're thinking about. get distracted regularly. by it, they think about it, and they're planning how to get to meet the person and, or they're thinking about it and thinking about dinner, you know, just kind of like mind jumps all over. But when the mind gets concentrated, when the mind gets focused, and still, it has the ability to have to be focused on one thing at a time, and undistracted way. And this, this idea of being undistracted is partly what makes meditation quite pleasurable for some people. And when what you're being undistracted from is love, then the experience of love, these four kinds of love, can be quite nourishing, quite healing can be quite inspiring to feel to be able to have these four forms of love, because Sachi, can you feeling saturated whenever they radiate out of your being? Fire is a very different conditioning, then how, you know, such a stressful life conditions, the heart and the mind. So the brahma vihara is when they were well established in our meditation states that people enter into, and the idea that you can enter into meditation state that's characterized by love is quite phenomenal. I had no idea that this was possible, and no interest in whatsoever until I was meditating quite a bit. And I wasn't looking for these states, but these states arose in me. And that was surprised, there were quite a quite exquisite, a quite, kind of precious to be sitting in a state of love, kindness, and if so these four kinds of love, that we can sit in, we can dwell in that Buddhism champions are one is usually in English is called loving kindness, which forms form of goodwill or friendliness, kind of love, for friendly love. And then there's compassion. And then there's appreciative or sympathetic joy. And we appreciate other people appreciate their success and their happiness. And that takes a very powerful form of kind of joy. That's kind of the Buddhism associated with love, and then a form of love called equanimity. Like, wanna miss love.

And so today, I want to talk about the second, which is this. forum thanks for compassion. And I want to read you a description from the ancient texts from the Buddha of how those ancient texts they talk about someone who's dwelling in this state undistracted state of compassion. Here, when abides pervading the east, Eastern direction. With mind accompanied with compassion, and likewise, the southern direction, the western direction and the northern direction. So you kind of like the mind is

radiating or imagining that they're feeling that this quality of compassion is spreading outwards, in all directions 360 degrees. Also, that this feeling of compassion has also been pervaded, above, below, horizontally, everywhere, and all over the whole world is do we pervade a mind, a company with compassion, extensive, expanded limitless, free from hatred, and ill will. These are meditation states, so the states of the mind feels quite expansive, spacious, spacious, it feels limitless, there's no barriers or boundaries to it just feels just open, completely open state. And then I think maybe what's most precious is, without any hatred, or ill will. And for some people, that's quite something to sit there for, you know, an hour at a time and have no aversion towards anything whatsoever, and just sit there with a feeling of radiating compassion. It's quite a wonderful thing. And as I said, mentioned before, it's also it's often considered quite healing. And the thing that he it's healing most from, and I've mentioned most in early text, it heals us from tendencies towards cruelty, towards ill will towards hatred. Because it says that when the mind is this way, that it's impossible to have any ill will, towards other people, no tendencies and wanting to harm or hurt anybody whatsoever. And that's a great thing. We need more of that in the world, people have no, you know, no, no inkling of wanting to commit harm to others. The and people who have these in meditation, it's a kind of an exquisite feeling of well being of happiness, to have this kind of compassion. And it's, some people find a little bit odd, that a state of compassion would be associated with happiness. Because generally, compassion arises, when we're in the presence of suffering, someone is having a challenging time is troubled in some vague way. And the heart is moved to feel tender, caring for them, or feel a kind of feeling of love, where we want their, their suffering to go away, we will be alleviated. And this movement of compassion is a beautiful thing. But it's something that arises in the, in the presence of suffering. Often, compassion is held up as a wonderful ideal in Buddhism. And people sometimes have great imaginations of becoming, you know, a great saint filled with beatific compassion and going around smiling and being happy. And it's can seem wonderful ideal. But generally, it's an ideal that arises when we're encountering what isn't so ideal that they're suffering in the world. And so what is it about? How is it that compassion and its encounter with suffering or caring about suffering, caring about the suffering of others, can help us feel happy inside for ourselves. And part of the task of this meditation practice and developing this compassion is to learn how to have compassion. So there's no cruelty, but more importantly, for some people, no distress, in relationship to the suffering of the world, but still, to care deeply about it, and to have this kind of, you know, compassionate state. That's kind of the task because often people feel anxious around suffering or feel distressed or feel alarmed, or feel angry about it, and they feel like they want to do something. And in the wanting to do something, it's hard to stay kind of centered in this state of compassion itself. So here's part of the, my understanding of how it works.

And that is that and that, in ancient Buddhist text, they have three to at least three or four different words that are the words for compassion. And the one that most people know about is karuna. And that's kind of like the use universal words and Buddhism for compassion. But there are other words as well. And one of the important words is anukampa. And what's interesting about how the Buddha used these two words, is that Karuna was mostly used to describe how you feel compassion in a state of meditation. And anukampa was used to describe the compassion you use, when you got actively involved in trying to do something about the suffering of the world. So in meditation, you're not doing anything except radiating compassion, feeling compassion. But when you're out and about in the world, you try to do something you're trying to help people and act on it. So one is one way of distinguishing these two, what is called Simple compassion, or basic compassion, baseline compassion. And the other is active compassion. And so to understand how to cultivate this simple compassion, it's helpful to realize that it's not the same thing as active compassion, where we're going to act on it, it's going to, you know, initiate, you know, we're going to get involved in what's going on. It's two different forms of compassion, I'd like to think that the simple compassion is the basic underlying one, that gives birth to the act of compassion. But if we're able to distinguish between these two, then it can be a lot easier for people to feel simple compassion. Because when their focus is on simple compassion, we don't have to

get confused with the ideas that I have to do something or, you know, that shouldn't be that way. And I'm angry at those people for causing the suffering to the other people. And as you know, you know, it's not okay to sit here and do nothing, because I feel this urge, you know, if I'm compassionate, to do something. So it is for the meditation, you don't do anything, this is a time where we don't have to act on it. And so we can allow ourselves to feel the simple, compassionate wish that they be free of suffering, but we don't have to act on it. At that point, maybe later, if there's wisdom and cause, we should maybe act on it for sure. But to be able to separate these two, two out, can make it easier than to relax back into the simple wish for, you know, the simple desire, this undesirable emotion of compassion as simple compassion. The so one of the things that modern physiological research has shown is that when there's some kind of clean, simple or pure compassion, operating, meaning that there's no distress, no anxiety around the compassion, no feeling of being alarmed, no hostility towards anything, but just very simple, relaxed compassion, that our physiological system creates oxytocin. And that's the wonderful hormone that nature has, you know, made for human beings. So that will want to be compassionate, because it makes us feel good. It does all kind of a reward system, I suppose. mothers would release oxytocin in their system when they're nursing, and that maybe they wouldn't want to nurse as much as they do if it wasn't for the oxytocin. And so it's kind of the feelings of very nice feelings that arise in the body when we're caring for someone.

And the first time that I didn't know about oxytocin when this happened to me, but the first time I discovered this simple compassion and how good it can feel, was I was on a group hike up in the, in the mountains, desert kind of place. And we were walking in these canyons with big boulders, and we had to kind of climb over these little walls and all these boulders and there was a it wasn't, you know, I was in my mid 30s, I was pretty fit. And it was relatively easy to climb up some of these things, but there was an older lady who had trouble. But it wasn't like a big trouble, but it was a little bit of a challenge for her. So I stayed behind and walked behind her, and we came to a place where she could use a little hand, I would help her up. Seemed like an obvious thing to do. And after a while, I kept doing it. Not for her sake. But I started feeling really good. Like I like vibrating with this warm happy pleasant feeling in my chest like, and like, oh, let's go do some more. And so this idea that you would care for someone, help someone do something for someone. And it would be, you know, beneficial for yourself was a surprise to me. And probably some of you know, the Dalai Lama goes around the world saying, if you want to be happy, have compassion for others, if you want to be miserable, think only about yourself. So this idea of thinking about others, and caring for others is kind of as if one of their secrets secrets or open secrets for a happy life, a good life. And this idea that, and then I also started discovering these feelings of compassion, or as I said earlier, would bubble up in meditation. And I would just sit there in a kind of glow, that had this feeling of caring or tender, caring or caring for the world. And with this caring feeling, came this feeling of pleasure of warmth, warmth, of happiness of the light, the color feels like was radiating outwards. I didn't feel like I had to do anything and did meditation and wasn't trying to accomplish anything, I wouldn't try to judge anything. He was just kind of resting in this state, wonderful thing.

They say that this, people who've done some kind of studies of how compassion works for human beings, how it's learned, I have pointed out that you know, there's a theory about the different kinds of ways in which people get attached when they're young, healthy kind of bonding that goes on with their parents. And when there's healthy, unhealthy attachment, kind of attachment disorder, a minute, proper attachment, that make sense experienced abuse, or challenges with their parents growing up, maybe their early early ages, those people tend not to have a lot of compassion when they grow up. But those who have healthy attachment, or more access to compassion, children who are disciplined, through punishment and anger, grew up having less compassion, that those when they do something they shouldn't do cause hurt another kid in the playground, if the adult comes over to them, and tells them

You can't do that, but then explain to them to why they can't do it. You know, you hurt someone, and then, you know, what, how would it be for you, if someone came in do that to you, and, you know, kind of had the conversation talking about the logic of it or something. Explain to them, the kids who had this inductive reasoning offered to them as a result of what they've done, also grew up to be more inclined to be compassionate than those who are, you know, punished for what they did. So this idea that the conditions that we grew up in, can affect our access to compassion. There's something about being closed, or being angry or being scared, feeling unsafe, that makes it very hard for the heart to sing, for the heart to kind of radiate. But if we can feel safe, connected, trusting, if we're not stressed out, stressed, then it's easier for the heart to relax and soften. And then to radiate. Compassion didn't come to me easily. It was not something that, you know, when I first started doing Buddhist practice that I thought about or cared about, or had easy access to, but I thought, you know, kind of meditation is kind of like a tenderizer. The, the, for me, I thought that, you know, the, the hard crusty heart that I had, at an early age, started to soften and soften, or the crust started to break off, you know, the barriers and the armor that I carried with me. And so as I slowly slowly started to thaw, or some of the fear, I had the sense of lack of safety, I had anxieties I had began to soften and the heart became more open. Then it was like this natural thing and it's in there that began to radiate and flow outwards. So simple compassion. The idea that there's two kinds of compassionate these two kinds can for some people can give them more permission to relax and meditation and discover some degree of caring for some people. It is discovered And most towards themselves. Because the person who's suffering that you're most familiar with is yourself. And so sometimes there's people recoil from suffering, and get angry. And sometimes because of that, they're very critical of themselves because they feel like they're suffering they're inside. But to turn that around, and be able to meet oneself with self care, self compassion, with kindness, with friendliness, with caring, we care about our suffering, and importance of caring for ourselves. One of the reasons that's very important, is we're trying to change the conditioning that's affecting our hearts or minds.

And we are constantly being shaped by the conditions, the conditioning that we're offering. So if we go around being angry towards ourselves, that's a powerful conditioning, where we feel you know, less safe, or you hurt more. But if we're kind to ourselves, that becomes a different conditioning. And it's not something I can operate quickly. But slowly, something begins to thaw and to relax, it kind of sets, it sets the stage for something else, allow something else to happen. And part of the function of meditation is, in fact, to do a reconditioning, of our inner life. Some people, they talk about re parenting, when people grow up with out being parented properly and don't feel loved or cared for by other people, it's possible to have that caring and that love, well love from the inside and create a kind of penetrate down into the marrow of our bones or into the cells. And so we kind of relearn something that we didn't learn as a child. Again, it's not easy to do, because of sometimes very strong negative self talk that we have, and challenges we have with our inner life. But to begin to kind of meet ourselves, meet our challenges and begin to discover a caring to be present for it, in a careful caring way, can be very, very helpful. But it's helpful, even if you don't care for yourself, it's possible to develop compassion. And that was my case. I, when I was a young Buddhist student, I was studying Zen. And they didn't teach us anything about being compassionate or kind to yourself. It just like that was considered to be to saccharin, you know, it's what you do in Hallmark meditation centers. And, and, you know, which Zen was just like, you know, use, you know, face the truth, you know, directly just sit there. Like a samurai. It's kind of, you know, tough, strong, serious, send us serious. It's a good religion is a wonderful practice, I benefited a lot from it. But what I'm trying to say is that, so the practice of Zen was to sit and be present fully present for the experience you had. And that's all we were told to do. Just be there and to be fully present. And so I got to be fully present for a lot of suffering, because I suffered a lot. And I was kind of naive. So it didn't occur to me, there was supposed to be a different than we should be any different. I just was, that's what I'm supposed to do is sit there and be present. So I just accepted what I



was given, which is my suffering. And I just sat there and sat there still quiet upright, for hours and days, months for years with what happened here. And what happened for me was that by being present, in a nonreactive way, without making a story about it without being critical of it or being for it without being against it, just being present, trying at least to be fully present, that was the art of it. That was the effort to do it, is that all the extra stuff that baggage I had about my reactivity to it, my self pity around it started to fall away. And the simple act of being present was falling was part of this tenderizing was part of kind of something began to give away, relax, partly because to resist to be closed, to be resistant, takes a lot of work. It's tiring, and the heart really doesn't want to work so hard. It's exhausted sometimes. So if you see it and just be present for it, we're not. We start slowly picking up space and time for what's inside of us that's been working in contracted to begin to soften and relax, soften and relax.

And so slowly, slowly, I began to discover more and more compassion inside of me. At first, because I was maybe because I was so shut off for myself, the way that I started its first kind of, to kind of was operating on me, I didn't recognize it was operating on me, this was happening. But I started recognizing compassionate things environment around me. And that person seems so compassionate and I'd be drawn to that person. There were certain objects in the world, like some statue that I saw there was that that statue is the embodies obstructs that you, that's the embodiment of compassion, that statue and he said, Love every day, I'd go by and look at that statue, because it was compassion. And after many years later, someone told me no, it's an abstract. It's an abstract sculpture of a flame. But somehow, I saw this as Oh, yeah, it is. But, but I thought it was, you know, compassion, and nice to have the sometimes that the breeze, or the wind blew against my cheek. I thought, Oh, that's compassion. And then I started drawing, and I started drawing images of statues and art people. Were there. Somehow, I felt those expressing compassion that would copy them from books and photographs, and things so I could, and I wasn't, I wasn't so conscious of what I was doing. I just, in retrospect, noticed that I was doing all this. And then in retrospect, it's after some years, I'd gone to Zen to get enlightened. But that didn't work out. But the but what happened instead, was I got compassion. And what would you rather do get enlightened or compassion? Well, I hope you never have to choose between the two. But it's pretty good to get compassion. And that changed my life. And so at some point, compassion became the organizing principle of how I live my life or in our, you know, direct my life became such an important principle for me, or kind of reference point for me. So, in Buddhism, there is a meditation practice meditation practice on compassion. And it's a practice of sitting down. And it works best if you already have a meditation practice. You don't have to it can be for some people, their first practice, but it's best to be have some meditation practice already. So you have some capacity to get focused, get centered, to relax, and have some ability to kind of be here and in some modicum of understandability. And then, to evoke the image, or the idea of memory, of some person for who is has some kind of suffering, we're thinking about them as uncomplicated. So it is, you know, the most uncomplicated person, you know, who's suffering, most uncomplicated kind of suffering. Because if you think about some really horrendous suffering, it might be challenging for you to be paying attention to it. Or if you think of someone who have, so you have some kind of complicated relationship with, you might be sitting there trying to have compassion for them. And you and you start thinking that in return the \$10, I lend them, you know, how could they and, you know, maybe I won't give him any more money, may they be free of suffering, but you know, you know, those \$10. So, there's some simple things uncomplicated, so you, you think about them, think about their challenge they have. And then you see if you can have this simple compassion, where you're not going to do anything about it at that moment, you're simply going to open your heart and let it be tender, a tender caring for them, as if, you know, as if you're being present to witness for them. And all that during all that medicine for them is they know that someone cares. Sometimes just knowing that someone cares is huge for people. And so you're just gonna sit there with caring for that kind of caring, uncomplicated by the need to do anything. And then it's repeating a phrase. So it's kind of like focusing on this repeated phrase as part of the

focus on this working thing concentrated. And the simple phrase is, may you be free of your suffering, may you be free of your troubles.

And in saying the phrase in a very soft, quiet way, the idea is kind of like water, you're watering the heart watering this carrying this tender, caring and staying in touch with it. The mind wanders off and you come back You touch into it. And you touch into this idea that the wish you have the intention you have the aspiration you have, you'll be really nice to this person didn't have it, I really wish the person wasn't suffering. And seeing if you can find a way to touch into it, simple compassion, simple, tender caring. As this tender, simple compassion can arise in meditation, as we've been familiar with it, then it becomes a stronger and stronger foundation for this act of compassion in the anukampa. And when the Buddha talked about going out to Buddha talked a fair amount about going out and living for the welfare and happiness of other people, living a life that supports and helps others. And he said, do it from a new compound, rather than from karuna. Do it out of this act of compassion, this act of caring. But it's easier to do that if you're centered in a simple compassion, where you know how to be compassionate without the complications of all the other emotions we can have about what's happening in the world. And then perhaps when we have active compassion, we can it can be very passionate, can be very forceful, very engaged. But maybe there's a fair chance that we don't get pulled along by anger, by being alarmed or being distressed by being afraid. But, but we can stay grounded, and a compassion in the face of tremendous challenges go on. And I think this big make, this is a gift for our society. There's no shortage of tremendous suffering in our society, in our world, in our neighborhoods, you know, there's all kinds of challenges that people have. There's some social challenges is great faultlines in American society, a tremendous violence and hostility and prejudice that goes between people here, there is people who have run into life, tragedies of sickness, old age and death, in ways that are quite sorrowful. There's all kinds of ways in which people are suffering. And we can become the medicine. We can become the medicine if we care, and we become the medicine, if not only do we care, but we have the inner freedom and ability to be responsive, to rise to the occasion, and be able to offer something to the world that comes out of our compassion. Perhaps they were sent, sometimes simple acts, sometimes maybe they're great acts, but to prepare ourselves, so they were ready, who knows when you're going to be asked to respond to the world, for your neighbor, for a stranger, for family members and friends, for our society as a whole. Who knows when you're going to be asked, when that comes your way, and it's obvious that you assigned for you to respond. And if you're prepared with compassion, compared prepared with an open heart, prepared in a way that you know how to respond with clean compassion with centered on compassion. It's a great thing we can do for each for each other. So Buddhism has these four forms of love. Each of them can be cultivated and developed. We don't have to leave love to chance and just hope that that comes along with the right time. We can reflect on it, think about it, cultivate it, develop it, and make it something that becomes a strength. The Buddha called it can become a wealth. And it's an inner well, and what's nice about the wealth of Love, love, wealth of compassion, it's portable. And it's, if it's really strong, and you it's kind of hard for someone to steal it. But they don't have to steal it. Because you're ready to offer it. Here. You can have it all my compassion, I'm ready to support you and help you. So we have about 10 minutes. Do you have any questions about this topic that you'd like to ask or any comments about it or any testimonials about compassion? And how it works has worked for you in your life.

Hi, I'm trying to understand the difference between compassion and empathy. And I was just thinking about empathy recently and a definition by Bernie Brown. Where empathy is like, you're going down in there with the person, you're feeling their feelings, and compassion, it sounds like it's a tenderness. But if you were also feeling their feelings, then you'd be feeling all their distress and all the stuff that would contribute to burnout. So am I on the right track there?

I don't know. I actually had a conversation with someone today about this topic and about empathy. And I think she got a teeny bit upset with me, because I said, it's a semantic issue here we're talking about and then but then I tried to explain myself, then she thinks she relaxed. So there are it void the word empathy for a moment. And what it actually means it might be useful to distinguish two different responses to other people's state that they're in. We can really be in the presence of someone else's talking about compassion today. So someone else's suffering, and kind of feel how painful it is, for them. And in doing so, we feel almost like we feel that pain ourselves. And people often have this with physical pain. If, you know, if we watch someone, you know, suddenly get injured in a physical painful way. You know, I can sometimes kind of shoot my whole body kind of recoil is almost like I feel like a tight and contracted because it's, there's almost like in these mirror neurons. It's like the chalk on the chalkboard. It's involuntary. It's Oh, you know, and it was very unfortunate. I went to a restaurant with my family some weeks ago. And they had a sports channel up on a TV on this on the wall. And they were showing some kind of like, from some foreign country, some awful kind of all out wrestling, boxing, kickboxing. And, you know, it was, it was blood everywhere and what they were doing to each other, I was like, it was just awful to watch it, I stopped after a while, but, you know, you know, so that there's that kind of way you can really feel and you kind of edit. And then there's a kind of then there's another thing where you really feel with someone else, you kind of recognize that there's some part of you recognizes or feels what's happening with someone else. But we don't identified with it that strongly. We don't become it that strongly. There's a feeling of Yes, I can have a physical felt sense that tells me something where I kind of know what their head what's happening to them. I really know it. But it's not happening to me. I'm free of it. I don't want identified with that. I'm not caught in it. It's almost like there's a strong observer that can watch it being experienced in their own body. But we're relaxed. We're not contracted, nothing goes on. So that distinction makes some sense. Which of those is empathy? The first one? Yeah. Like that opinion carries today. Robert is not allowed to say yet. He is that's his profession is to happen to have an answer to this question. So who else thinks which of those two? So right now? Yes. The first one, number one. Number two. The first one might be sympathy. So there's a mic right behind you want to tell us in the sir.

Is this fine? Yeah. Okay.

So the way that I understand it is that social science would say that what you just described is understanding what another person might be feeling would be called cognitive empathy. So we understand, but we don't necessarily feel. The second kind is effective empathy. Which is the ability to imagine we can feel what someone else is feeling, and then have the willingness to actually feel it. And that's when mirror neurons are activated. Compassion is the wish to alleviate the suffering. So an easy way to know the difference between empathy and compassion is that empathy is a response matches to suffering. So I can be, I can empathize with you, and you're happy, right? But compassion is always always seen only a response to suffering. So,

which, which, which of those two kinds of empathy is a source for compassion or compassion, a whole different so.

So again, it's social, I'm giving you a social science definition. The first two are cognitive and affective. And those compassion always includes empathy. So there's four, four aspects to compassion. And the first two are empathy. So without empathy, we cannot be compassionate. But when we block empathy, we block the flowering of compassion, because we don't allow our, our heart to open. So this happens when people shut down. Lots of first responders and medical people will shut down to as a way of protecting themselves. And so they sort of blocked their empathetic response. Right, is that, is that make sense?

Yeah, I still don't understand. Your what you're saying. It's very nice. Very clear. But But All right, so the issue on empathy is that they're in their laypersons vocabulary. Empathy means to feel what someone else is feeling. Correct. So if I'm suffering, and you feel my suffering, now we have two people who are suffering. Great. You know, that doesn't seem very good. So so when you when we say that we have empathy, and we're feeling somebody else's suffering, it's it's I think, it's usually nuance It doesn't mean that you're fully feeling what they're feeling. There's some you're feeling good in some way. But you're feeling that person's suffering without you suffering, even though you're feeling the suffering for for empathy, because there's empathy for someone suffering, and has an effect affected, affected empathy you talked about? So how can we have an effective empathy of someone suffering and not suffer ourselves?

The way that the mirror neurons work, if I've understood it correctly, is that they activate a response in our brain that makes us think we're having that experience that we're witnessing. So it makes us think that we can feel all the blood and gore that was happening on the screen.

So now we have two people suffering you and me well, so that's where empathy has to be brought into balance. Because when it gets out of balance, what happens is that people will shut down as a way to protect themselves, which is just what you said, You've stopped looking at it. So if you continued looking at it, and spilled over into actually tremendous distress, then it would be referred to as empathetic distress. I see. And people confuse this with compassion, collapse or compassion, fatigue, because what's actually happening is that empathy gets out of balance. And because it gets out of balance, we can't really develop compassion, according to social science. And in my personal experience, as a practitioner, I think that it bears out when I, when I go over the cliff, there's no there's no more compassion, because it's all about me and my suffering.

Yeah. So yeah, so this, I guess, I guess I have the experience of feeling someone else's suffering, in a sense, but, but the sense of being mindful and being stable within myself is so strong, that I had one to identify with it. I don't get it. You know, it's almost like it's just a piece of a much bigger room. It's like a little thing, something. So it's spelled clearly and fully and intimately. But the mindfulness, the awareness is so strong and so free in a sense, there's no identification, right? So for me that would, I kind of like to call that empathy. And but this is all semantic, right? Because the idea of feeling someone's suffering so strongly, now you're suffering to think that doesn't seem to be useful. I wouldn't want that kind of, you know, I almost want I think empathy is such a beautiful word that I want a different word.

Well, I'll say, I'll just finish, this would be my last comment. But without mindfulness without this stability that comes from mindfulness to be able to see what's actually happening, we will tip into empathic distress and we will not be able to develop compassion, because compassion requires that we be able to recognize and stay with suffering. Great. The way I understand it.

Yeah. Nice. So thank you, Robert. Robert, is that teaches compassion teaches people trains people in the incoming compassionate. So it's, uh, you know, we have a lot of respect for what Robert has studied and learned. And

what he did is you don't actually teach people how to be compassionate, but how to cultivate to cultivate it.



Yeah, so. So we're over time, but I'm happy to stay up here. If you want to talk to me, those of you some of you have raised your hands and we haven't haven't had a chance. So I'll stay here. And I hope this evening has given you something to think about, that helps you feel about how you feel and think about compassion for the next week. Thank you.