

2017-06-28 Dharmette The Force Behind Preoccupation

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SPEAKERS

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So there's a relatively well known Indian story about how you catch a monkey in India with a coconut. And apparently, what the hunters will do is they'll make a slot in the coconut, and carve out the inside. And then they tie the coconut to a tree with a rope, and they put candy inside. But the slot that gets to the candy is big enough for the monkey to put its hand in flat bone, it grabs the candy, it makes kind of a fist, and then the maker, then it can't get out of the slot. But because the monkey is supposed to be very greedy, it's not going to give up the sweet for anything. And so the hunter can just walk right up and pick it up. And they're caught. So this story is told this analogy of what our minds do, usually, it's an example of desire, or if people get caught up in desire, and they hold on. But the, the, I'm thinking about it today in relationship to our thinking that we often hold on to our thoughts, we have some, we have a little piece of candy in there, in the brain, the mind, something that or maybe it's not candy, maybe it's a piece of poop or something. But somehow we go in, and, you know, we go in there, and we we get involved, we pick it up. And we don't want to let go doesn't even occur to us that we should let go. And we're just like holding on. And to our detriment, the desire to have to be involved, I think about it to fix it. And part of the reason for this, I think is for some people, they think that thinking is where the solution is going to be. They believe that if they can think themselves enough, they can they can know everything can be made, okay? And so there's this authority that's invested in our thoughts, that, that this is where the solution is going to come. And sometimes, you know, we don't our thinking is fine. Sometimes thinking can be helpful. But, but it's, you know, kind of overrated, especially if you're like, you know, have your hand your hand in the coconut, it's a pretty limited life, you know, if you're always, you know, tied to the tree, you know, stuck in the coconut. So, you know, if we're kind of like doing that with our thoughts, we, you know, we are in, you know, we're kind of stuck on it, there's not a lot of movement, and not a lot of freedom that goes on. So part of the task of a free life, is to learn how to be free of thinking, or free from thinking or free from being caught in the thinking. And so, to do that, one of the things we do in mindfulness practice, is become familiar with what it's like when we're caught in our thoughts. So each person probably will have a different way of being caught different way of understanding for themselves. But take a look for that. Don't create the opportunity, but look for an opportunity, where you're really wrapped up in some kind of concern, something you're, you're really can't put down you're thinking about it, and it's swirling around and repeating your thoughts over and over again. And then kind of feel your way to feel what's going on what is that like to be so wrapped up around those, this concern? So sometimes for me, I felt like I'm glued to it. And now or sometimes it's a very strong elastic band, where if I pull away a little bit, the last thing is pulls me right back to it. Sometimes it's felt like I'm in a carousel, and they're just kind of like spinning around and around and around and I can't get off the carousel, just kind of going and going going.

Or I can feel there's a contraction and a tightness around the thinking around the concern. And one of the one of the one of the things that also that finds fascinating is the way in which the world can get very small when we're preoccupied with some thought concern. And so it becomes like the thought we have becomes the world becomes the most important thing or becomes the only thing and there's a kind of a Loss of perspective, that there's that we live in a huge, varied wide world. And we as human beings are huge and varied and vast in our hearts and our minds in all the different aspects of who we are. But for some reason for this day, we're kind of zero and we're like, caught up on this one little thing. You know, it's, it looms as being the most important. You might know that it's not the most important if anybody asks you, you might say, No, it's not that important. But functionally, it's like this is you know, the way you're functioning, this is what's most important. So to kind of study this, get familiar with how this works. So don't be in a hurry to fix the problem, fix this, but be able to become a connoisseur an expert at what it's like to be preoccupied caught up in swirling active thoughts. And the reason for that kind of familiarity, is so that you can start this, you can learn not to be enchanted with that or not to believe in the authority. To begin seeing that there's actually kind of you see how that trick is being done. It's been said that you could, people will enjoy watching a magic trick over and over and over again, until they see how the trick is done. And once they see how the trick is done, they're done with the student is no longer so interesting to watch it. So if we can see how the trick is done in the mind, then at some point, we can feel okay, I'm enough. But if it's still magic, if it's still kind of like, you know, we're still pulled into the enchantment or the concern or the power or the authority of what we're thinking about, you know, we're keep kind of be interested, being interested, be interested. But if we see how it all works, there's an I think, a kind of a natural tendency to step back to open up to kind of be more expensive and not be so caught on a particular concern. So the principle of this is, in mindfulness practice, we study the very thing that keeps us from the ideal that we want to live. If the ideal is to live a relaxed, free life with our thought thinking, study what gets in a way that more we study, the more we familiarize ourselves with the shenanigans of the mind to familiarize ourselves with kind of how we get caught, the less we'll get caught. But if we don't understand how we do this, then we'll it'll keep sneaking up on us, it will keep finding ourselves in the same predicament over and over again. So what is it that pulls you into it? And one of the clues to all this that is very helpful is what is the emotion that somehow creates the hook? What's the emotional relationship we have with the concerned that powers the preoccupation and quite a bit in human life has to do with anxiety. Sometimes it has to do with desire, sometimes it has to do with delightful anticipation. Sometimes it has to do with you know, resentments and anger. So we have, sometimes it has to do with hurt. And so, you know, there's this kind of underlying feeling underlying emotionality. That somehow is the, the, it's like the push, like you're, you're standing in the edge of a cliff. And you don't understand why you keep falling over the edge. You know, and you're like, you know, cartoon character. So you go back up on the cliff, and you're standing there again, and then you find yourself going off the cliff, how did this happen? You know, I can't understand it. And then one day, you realize there's someone standing behind you that's pushing you, and you feel that push. And sometimes it's the emotions that are operating behind or as part of the thinking, which is kind of the push or the momentum or the force. Brian what keeps us caught up or gets us to fall over the edge with our coconut. So those are my thoughts today. And we have a little bit of time before 12 o'clock if maybe this time if for some one of you wants to ask a question about your coconut. Yes, if you can use the mic, everybody nice.

Thank you. So once, once you identify the emotion, then what?

How do you keep it from pushing you over the cliff?

Well, one thing is you can turn your attention from the thoughts you're having. So rather than having your attention, go into the thoughts, have your attention flow back into the emotion. And to feel it in your

body, just to kind of be present for it. More often than not, our emotional life is where is what really needs our attention. More often than not, our thoughts, our thinking doesn't need as much attention as it gets. Occasionally it does. But it tends to be most people give our give thinking more, more attention than it deserves. There are some people who give emotions more attention than it deserves. And so sometimes people who are a little bit too much in that camp, maybe they should focus a little more in their thinking. But I think I my impression is that for most people, it's, you know, that it would be really good to kind of be present and really sense their emotions. With respect. Maybe one more, I think it'd be that quick, we can do one more.

I just have a general question. Because last, I think last week unit, sorry, maybe closer. So near me. I think last week, you mentioned the thought about the river and how all of a sudden, we would begin to ground ourselves from going down the stream. I'm just curious, is it just a repetition of staying with the repetition of continuously getting so skilled, that eventually you just stop going into the coconut, more.

A lot of this practice is repetition, tremendous amount of repetition. And so if you can find yourself on solid ground, if you can wake, wake up, if you can kind of be more mindful of what's happening, then lost in a situation. And even if it's a few moments, it counts. And we do it again. So much. So I think that it's not so important to how often you wander off in thought. In practice, what's important is how often you come back, and how soon you can come back. And there's something about coming back or getting grounded or waking up to what's happening. That is that if it keep doing it begins to strengthen the capacity begins to recondition us, and begins to weaken the forces of preoccupation. And then slowly over time, there's a, like, certain muscles get stronger, certain tendencies get weaker. And we find it's a lot easier just to stay present. But the repetition and now one of the things that this means in terms of this practice that we do is, if you really are one of the really helpful approaches, or helpful attitudes about doing mindfulness practice, is expect a lot of failure. And be okay with it. That's part of the deal. And what I mean by failure is that, you know, if the idea is to be mindfulness to stay present, you should be able to finally connect to your breathing for a moment. And the idea is to stay with your breathing, maybe, then you find out you have your to stay with the two breaths. So in a conventional way you failed. Or you're trying to stay present. And you know, it's just two seconds, so you failed at being present. So there's a lot of failure. So, it's better not to think of it as failure. You know, but if there's lots of people, some people are really good at interpreting out here, that their meditation failures. It's built into the system, that this is how it works. And our job is not to worry about the so called failure. Our job is just to do it again. Come back again, learn from it, study it, get to know it. That makes sense. Okay, great. So thank you.