

2018-05-05 Desire Nothing Is Enough

Wed, 9/2 1:12PM • 26:18

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

desire, clinging, arise, hunger, poem, feel, lose, hand, bit, opened, frank, wanting, point, incessant, nature, happy, hear, stop, deserve, leaves

SPEAKERS

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So, today in the mail I received the kind of little program, maybe that you get sometimes handed out at a memorial service. And it was for a man who used to come to IMC, who died about a year ago, and less than a year ago and last July, there was memorial service for him or something like that. They apparently it consisted of taking a boat out into the, from the Santa Cruz harbor to cast this ashes. So they had a little program, including instructions to meet afterwards for pizza at some pizza place. Though if some of you I don't know if some of you knew Frank Ryerson came here on and off for many years. Lovely men and I didn't go to this memorial service. I don't know if I even knew about it. But I finally got the program today. And there's in it. There's a poem that he wrote and is a poem by the Japanese poet Bashō. So I think if you read Bashō poem first, maybe his poem will stand out a little bit more and highlight. So this Japanese poet writes even in Kyoto hearing the goals cry, I long for Kyoto. So he's right there. He has what he wants, but he still wants it. So this one thing, thing. That's one of the things that we're contending with when we do this practice is it to come to terms understand the nature of our wanting and sometimes it's absurd maybe not you're wanting maybe you're wanting is always serious and of great important consequence. But it does happen from time to time that it's even possible to kind of be amused by once one thing. I the incessant nature of it. It's possible sometimes to cry, grief at the sentient nature of it. But it's also possible to wake up to become free. So this is a poem by Frank and it's a title that nothing is enough. Nothing is enough or Everything is not enough. I have a hunger beyond any object, it chooses a hunger never still nor satisfied, only occupied for moments. The Hunger is and is not me. I can't outrun it and if I feed it, it wants more. Mostly it wants something else. A wise person said, Stop, hold still for a bit and you and you will be used. Eventually you will become the instrument of what needs to be said you might be lucky this way. become nothing, then nothing is enough. Wouldn't it be nice if you came to the point where nothing is enough means you're always thirsting and you can never get enough to nothing is enough, because you don't need anything. I don't want anything, just having nothing enough. My father in law didn't want anything. And so one of his daughters in law, gave him per birthday wants a big box.

And I think he was a little disturbed that he was going to get this present they didn't want and so he opened Inside was another box, he opened inside was another box, within and in and the innermost box had a card. And I think it was a Buddhist monk a cover who was opening a box that had nothing inside. And it said and he's very happy this Buddhist monk said, just what I wanted nothing, you know.

So, that car in my father in law kept it was for years he kept it in the kitchen wall. So he finally got something he he kind of wanted, I guess. So, nothing is enough. And that would that be good news, if you could say that and so, this you There is a kind of nature of one thing that sometimes where you can never get enough and I certainly have had that experience of having my desire fulfilled. And seeing in the next moment I'm looking and searching for the next thing. I've also had the experience of in the

middle of getting some particular desire fulfilled because I mean, not just a momentary taste of something, but it's going on. And while I'm finally in the situation with and dreaming about for a long time I finally orchestrated in the middle of doing it, I'm thinking about wanting something different next thing or something else. And then it's possible to finally get what you want and then miss it. Because you're free, because you're preoccupied with the next one thing. And then there's a way in which too much one thing is as Self alienating one thing kind of looks usually looks beyond itself or look beyond us. We want something and there's a way sometimes where you can feel that we lose a connection with ourselves. Maybe we're very connection connected to part of ourselves that desire part. And it can feel compulsive it can feel driven, it can feel insistent that has a lot of authority. And if our sense of self is tied to that desire, it can feel that this is essential that this is who I am and I deserve it. I once went to many, many years ago, maybe about 25 20 years ago or so. I went to buy a car at a car dealership, they go try them out and driving around with a salesperson sitting in the passenger seat and And he proceeded to tell me that I deserved to have an air conditioner, which should have it should I then I wasn't interested in having it, but I deserved it so. So if I deserve my desires, boy that is becomes really important to have them in. And that's nice that Frank in his poem says the hunger is and is and is not me. It's an interesting kind of, you know, to see both perspectives, both perspectives and how do we see both perspectives? I don't know what he means, but what. So the hunger, the desire, the craving, it is me, in the sense that my desire is not yours. My desire is not your problem. I take responsibility, it's happening here and this being here. It's not anywhere else. So in a certain way it is mine to be responsible for, be caring for it, be careful with. And then the hunger is also not mine, not me. I don't have to be defined by it. It doesn't represent who I essentially am. And some of these desires, you know, kind of, you know, that's one of the advantages of mindfulness. If you can be still quiet mindful. And you're sitting there maybe following your breath, minding your own business. And, and suddenly, some nice desired thought just bubbles up. Where'd that come from? I didn't Well, it I didn't want it. I didn't want to want I didn't. I wasn't planning yet. I didn't engineer it. I didn't go through the list of all the desires. Since that time, we're going to have that one.

It's there it is, it's possible to watch certain thoughts, certain ideas and desires simply arise and not feel any hook, any identification with it. It's just phenomena coming and going. It's just a thought that arises, just a desire is an impulse that arises. And nothing more, nothing less. And there's no tendency to, to, as I said, define oneself by it, think it's me feel that somehow it has inherent value or compulsion or truthfulness or, or because it's me, because, you know, if I identify with my desires, and then I've grown up in a world where you know, the self deserve certain things, self needs certain things. We don't need to be happy if the self has certain things. And so they're all kind of kind of doing something With this self concept that we've inherited or learned or acquired, and if it's not a tie to any of the self concepts and the values around self so that, you know that learned ideas around what it means to have a self and all this. Then desire arises. And you can kind of like watch it go, doesn't doesn't stick do not get hooked into it. That becomes just a phenomena of nature. It's like, the wind picks up and leaves get blown across the street and the windows down the leaves settle down. Oh, look at that. The leaves are not me. I don't identify with it. They're just phenomenal. So it's a bit remarkable to be able to watch some of the activities of the mind arise as just phenomenon that has no in a certain kind of way. Nobody bearing on me No, no relationship to me No. No, just kind of, like just stuff that I'm not defined by it to both both have their value both both perspectives, this is me, this is not me. And, and one of the ways to, you know, take responsibility for the ways we could hook to the way we get pushed around the way that desires grab us by their nose and, you know, and, or the way we believe them the way that we invest in them and, and then take responsibility for that. So you know, I don't have to do that. I don't have to keep chasing these desires. I could, there's another way. And the way of this poem, a wise person said stop, hold still for a bit. I love the idea to hold still for a bit. That seems realistic. To stop and be done with it, stop and hold still for a long time. that's problematic too, that the people who hold themselves

tight are still and Don't try to act or try to just sometimes that represents a very strong desire that's gotten in the way but just for a bit. So I don't know what that means for you with pause for a bit, enough to see what's going on and enough to make a pause and some of the incessant desires that are operating in order to be able to listen and hear something different. What else wants to happen? What can't happen if we're spinning around in our desires? And I remember many years ago, to story I've told me often enough, but I used to love going into bookstores. And, and I would, but I noticed after a while that whenever I left the bookstore, I was exhausted. That's strange. So at some point, I started paying attention to what I did in the bookstores. And mostly what I did was, I want that book, I want that book, I want that book. I want that book. And it was just like, all this desire. And it was like, you know, lots of titles that I wanted. I didn't have any money. That didn't stop me from wanting and it was the one thing that was tiring. But what's been my progress? I tell you the story is that for a different reason is over is this point is that while I was doing it, I didn't feel the cost of that one thing. I didn't see how it was wearing me out. And, and, and so there's sometimes if we get too caught up in a what we want too much. As I said earlier, with alienating we don't we lose a connection with ourselves.

We don't really see what's happening and what's driving us. So to stop long enough to see, but also to stop long enough to be able to hear what else wants to arise, what else is going on. And when we do this practice, at some point in the practice, we come to a junction, we come to a turning point, or I like to think of it the crest of the mountain, like we're walking up the mountain, it's a lot of work. And it's something like maybe if you're biking, you're biking up the mountain, it's a lot of work to bike up the mountain. When you get to the top and the road goes down the other side, then you can just coast it's just like easy. So there comes a turning point in this practice where the practice becomes easier and more natural. And, and where you can at some point, from doing the practice, you can feel the momentum is towards freedom. The momentum is towards not clinging, not desiring It feels really good. So the example is that you know, if I hold my hand in a fist really tight and I haven't really done it so long that it's kind of like, you know, cotton with frozen my hand or, or I'm holding on to something in that fist to grip onto something that seems so important. So important to have that there's a few lessons from learning to look at are clinging. But one is, we might I might some point you know, think oh, maybe I should do this practice maybe I should let go. So initially, it takes a lot of work to begin loosening up the fingers and it's working sometimes actually hurts and have to push against the way it's been frozen in there and so a lot of work to kind of get them but have you tried to believe in it the value at some point if the hand is opened up thick enough, relaxed enough that the next moments of opening and relaxing the hand feels so good, it feels like this is the right way to go. This, this, this is actually the better thing to do. Not only that, but the kind of feels like almost if your anthem anthropocentric about it, which I guess you're allowed to do for your hand. You it's like the hand wants to be released, that's the desire of the hand is to not be so clinging. Or that's where there's less work. It's, it's free, or it's easy to do that. But it takes a while to get to that junction or that point where it becomes easier to let go easier to be free than it is to cling and to want. So at some point, this idea of stop, be still for a bit is to start making space and time to listen to something deeper than wants to happen. And one of the things that might happen is that you feel that the movement towards the freedom from desire from clinging is innate within us. That's the direction the heart wants to Go. And the other thing that we might discover is that how much we don't want to let go. Because we feel we're gonna you know, he'll let go of things to let go of the holding and clinging to things is, is to to lose something we think. But what I'd like to propose that if you're clinging to something, you've already lost a lot. There is loss in doing that. Because if you're clinging, for example, do something really tight. Like I'm clinging to the striker holding on the striker might be you know, maybe it's the best striker in the world and it's worthwhile clinging to and I'm gonna, you know, have it and, you know, my status as a Dharma teacher depends a lot on the quality of striker that I have up here and it's like, you're not gonna lose it to all these wonderful things. But what I've lost in the clinic To this is I have lost an open hand that's full of potential full of

possibilities. This open hand can, is soft, it's sensitive, it can feel things, it can touch things. The fingers are available to do all kinds of work. I've lost a lot in order to cling. So yes, sometimes in clinging, we lose certain things. But I think that to pay tear careful attention, we discover we actually gain more than we lose. At least when it's done well. We gain a sensitivity we gain potential to respond and to interact with the world in a different way.

And we get the potential to let some kind of motivation some kind of movement have to arise within us. That's deep comes from a deeper place maybe or free or place. Then what comes from When we're caught in desire, we're caught in identification we're trying to be something, we want to be something or want to not be something I was wanting. And Frank's poem kind of points to this. A wise person said stop, hold still for a bit and you will be used eventually. That's kind of interesting. That be used you'll be used you'll have a place you'll have a purpose you'll have some The world will need you for something. You know, it's there's very few mature, maybe no mature Buddhist practitioners that I know who become couch potatoes. So you have to worry about that. enlightened couch potatoes. You will be used eventually you will become The instrument of what needs to be said you will become the instrument of what needs to be said. So what does that mean that you become the instrument rather than the instigator the instrument rather than the person who's in charge. And the person who will take credit infinite credit, look at me, you know, I said otherwise wonderful things come the instrument for what needs to be said. And this is you know, one of the things that can happen, it's a little bit hard to for the psyche to trust and believe that if we let go of clinging if we let go of the incessant pool and drive for desire and wanting and oddly enough, sometimes it's even appropriate, at least temporarily or in a wise way to let go of appropriate things, healthy things. I've known people who the reason they cling is because They, what they're clinging to, is actually a fine thing. I mean, it's in and of itself is a fine thing to cling to. And like eating, eating is a fine thing to do, I want you to eat. It's a good eat. But I had an eating disorder for a while, where I couldn't stop eating. And I was clinging to the very thing that was healthy to do. just wanting more and more and more. And so the so sometimes you want to even even even this thing, but stop for a bit is a really healthy, we can listen to hear something deeper. So like for example, retreats are a good place where all kinds of things which might be appropriate in everyday life, we have a chance to stop there. So for example, You know, socializing and having friends and doing things with things, people, that could be a nice thing to do. And you might have a healthy desire for that. But to stop that, like for a seven day retreat and not be involved in the social life in the usual way, might allow you to stop and pause to hear some deeper movement inside, a deeper desire deeper thing that wants to be expressed or to be lived. So that this idea of meditation or, or some kind of way in our life to stop for a bit, so we can hear something differently. So something else besides the ego or the usual kind of place, we're smer kind of caught up in self definition and proving ourselves or apologizing for ourselves, has a chance. So this is and he ends he might be lucky this way. become nothing, then nothing is enough. And I remember having Frank came to visit me here after he was sick, and we sat on the porch. And he told me, he'd never been happier in his life. Though he knew he was gonna be dying, and he was, he was really happy. So maybe he knew something about nothing. And maybe you can learn something about nothing. Wouldn't that be something but don't make it into something. Very keep it as nothing.

So you don't so you don't claim it for yourself. So you don't build a cell from it. Just nothing. And maybe you can be happy and maybe your desire Squat take a very different quality. There's no human life without desires. But the quality of the characteristic of those desires will be very different. Once you have a new relationship to them and your relationship to hell flows out of you.

Nothing is enough or everything is not enough. I have a hunger beyond any object it chooses. A hunger never still nor satisfied, only occupied for a moment. The Hunger is and is not me. I can't outrun it. And

if I feed it, it wants more. Mostly it wants something else. A wise person said, Stop. Hold still for a bit and you'll be used eventually. You will Become the instrument of what needs to be said. You might be lucky this way, become nothing, then nothing is enough. So, thank you all and