

2018-07-23 Trust Awareness And Love Everyone

Tue, 9/1 10:37AM • 32:35

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

awareness, contracted, trust, world, people, mind, light, cling, felt, thought, thoughts, contraction, present, zen meditation, atlantic, darkness, dissolved, turn, waves, freedom

SPEAKERS

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So, first I hit check and see if you can hear me okay. It's all working Ok, volume. A little bit louder, a little bit louder. So then we'll wait to not say anything just because we want to hear if it's louder. That doesn't work. I have to keep talking. So how's that now? That okay?

Recently, I was reminded that I'm aging and I reflected on how long I've been doing this meditation practice. And it's been well over 40 years that I've been doing it 45 years. And it's been a great journey. And I reflected on I was going to summarize for myself. And it's just a few words, the guiding light that comes from those years of practice something about the insights or something about perspective I have on life that I would like how I'd like to live. I would summarize it in five words. If and is that one of the five so the five words are trust. awareness and love everyone. Trust awareness and love everyone. And a big part of kind of the direction of mindfulness and Buddhist meditation for me has been coming to really trust the minds capacity to be aware, and in a sense to rest in that door or stay close to that. And I was fairly lucky that a reference point for me when I started meditating, was that I had when I was summer when I was 19 20. I sailed across the Atlantic, on a 40 foot sailboat. And as it will, as it turned out, kind of a coincidence that at the beginning of that summer, I decided that it was okay. To have fantasies my mind you know, never ever thought about it. I was young I hadn't thought about that. Oh, it's okay no problem. And that's it let give free freedom to my mind to have fantasies. And so there was going across the Atlantic and six hours a day I was on watch. And we didn't have any automatic pilot back then we use a sextant to find our way across the Atlantic primitive times compared to now and, and so we had to be at the rudder. That was his brother, six hours a day, two hour shifts. And now one of those shifts was in the middle of the night. It's quite something to be out no both the middle of the night in the middle of an ocean, just you and I remember once standing there, you know it's not that far above the water ends Just be myself the tremendous stars and vast expanse. And then out of the blue, suddenly, I guess that night sort of blew out of the dark. There was I got slugged in my, in my side of my arm like who's up who's out here and it was a flying fish. The what happened to those going across it was a very harmonious kind of most of the trip except for the storms. It was a pretty harmonious, you know, everything going cross Atlantic, everything's going west. The wind is going west, the currents are going west. The waves are going west, and the jellyfish are going west. low clouds are going west. It was kind of like they're really going we're going west. It's kind of in here that at the helm. I was standing there for these hours, giving my mind the freedom to have fantasies to think whatever it did. So no restrictions in my mind. However, in order to be able to sail the sailboat, because these waves that also came going west, like we were, they were kind of big.

And so if you didn't really hold on to the steering wheel well the boat would not would kind of fall off the waves. And so you want to stay going west, you have to really stay and hold on. And you have to, you know, look at the compass and because we didn't have any automatic pilots, you have to do it yourself and constantly every every moment. You have to adjust like driving a car down the freeway have to make adjustments all the time, but just kind of second nature, but sailing yet to make adjustments against the compass to some degree. So here was given freedom to my mind to do whatever it wanted to do. And every moment, every second on how often I had to be present for reality, I had to ground myself in something here. And that turned out to be a wonderful combination for me, because it wasn't like I was trying to let go of my thoughts. I wasn't trying to control them. I wasn't trying to censor them, I wasn't trying to do anything. So that was, the idea was to let them just allow them to be. But at the same time, I had to, you know, be present in reality, you know, otherwise there was consequences. And that combination of freedom and the mind and being grounded continuing reality without feeling bad about my mind or criticizing it when I fix it, that proved to be a wonderful combination. And the course of crossing Atlantic weeks of crossing Over, the mine got very still and very open and very present. I felt a degree of well being continuous kind of well being kind of joy that I had never felt so continuously in my life. So then soon after that I started doing Zen meditation. And they told us to sit up straight and follow the breathing. And I thought, well, maybe that breathing is kind of like that compass. Or they, you know, help them get there kind of. So I saw I the same thing I kind of let my mind have its freedom. I didn't have any idea that I should not be thinking. But I kept coming back at moment by moment whenever I could to my breathing. And that worked relatively well for me and doing Zen meditation. And again, it was just combination of freedom to the mind, unrestricted qualities of the mind. But if I just thought all I did was unrestricted mental thinking, just my fantasies, you know, I probably would have ended up in a hospitalized or something. Because if you know if you if you have your thoughts with no connection to reality, it's I don't know how long we can sustain that with that. It'd be a little bit too strange. But, but this constant moment claim being grounded in the present, just connecting to what was here was kind of this wonderful combination of I must have doing. And then I came to Vipassana practice, the mindfulness practice we do here. And the marvelous thing that I learned there was that I could still give freedom to my mind, my heart, whatever was going on, just let it be. I knew that I could, you know, you know, there's certain kind of freedom but freedom does not mean participating. It doesn't mean getting involved in those thoughts and reacting to those thoughts or fueling them some more thinking that even more better you know, are identifying with the thoughts. It just a mind just has these thoughts just going like, you know, like, bubble machine that you know spewing out bubbles. And they come and they go in and, and so what I what I learned in in Vipassana was I didn't have to turn away from anything, in order to ground myself in the present moment in reality. I could ground myself in the reality of my thinking, their their reality like everything else. And so whatever is happening, whether it's an emotion, whether it was physical pain, body sensations or whether it was thoughts, whether there were sounds outside, whatever direct wherever my mind got, was picking up whatever my mind was involved in. Starting to do. I didn't have to go back to my breathing to kind of be centered or be present, I just had to turn awareness on more fully, like shining a light on opening or turning the light on, towards with the emotions, the thoughts, the sensations, the sounds, whatever it was. And this idea that you don't have to turn it away from anything was very powerful for me. You don't have to kind of turn your back on something or say that or say that's wrong or that shouldn't be there.

The only thing I had to do was to turn on the light of awareness. To really be aware of it though that's happening now. But that kind of turning on the light of awareness of really be see it there is not participating in it. It's not reacting to it. It's not getting involved in whatever it is. It's not condemning anything but it's also not approving anything. And so it's it is it is like very different than business as usual. Because I think for many people business as usual is you have a thought and you get involved in it and you think it better or you think it out or you, you know, react to it or emotions, you know, it's

complicated world we live in, of being involved and identified and reactive and all this stuff. So it's a radical different way of being. But what I learned in the past that was you don't have to turn away from anything. And so the idea is you can just kind of, they say, wake up. So, in this, thinking about this, I'd like to read Mary Oliver's poem. And she has a delightful little poem called the Buddha's last instructions. And, and, if you listen to it, both things you might want to just kind of register, don't think about too much but just register as it comes along is that she uses the imagery of light a lot in this poem. And, and they particularly imagery that kind of moves through the poem is the sun rising in the morning in the sunlight, the early morning sunlight until the sun kind of is in the middle of the sky guess at noon. So there's kind of the growth of this of light, the sunlight and, and the second thing, you know, that's my interpretation, perhaps I don't know what her intention is, is I think of it as a metaphor for the light of awareness that she was writing about the sun of awareness. So she said, palm goes, make of yourself a light, said the Buddha before he died I think of this every morning, as the East begins to tear off its many clouds of darkness to send up the first signal, a white fan streaked with pink and violet, even green. An old man. He lay down between two solid trees and he might've said anything. Knowing it was his final hour, the light burns upward. it thickens and settles over the fields. around him, the villagers gathered and stretched forward to listen. Even before the sun itself hangs unattached in the blue air. I am touched everywhere. By its ocean of yellow waves. I am touched to everywhere by its ocean of yellow waves. No doubt, he thought of everything that had happened in his difficult life. And then I feel the sun itself, as it blazes over the hills, like a million flowers of fire. Clearly, I am not needed. Yet I feel myself turning into something of inexplicable value. Slowly beneath the branches, he raised his head. He looked into the faces of that frightened crowd. Make of yourself alight.

There's a saying about stop cursing the darkness, light the candle. So the candle light of our mind from awareness and so to trust awareness, to trust the light of our capacity to know and be present and be attentive is a powerful thing. Because the awareness that we can trust has a clarity to it or has a cleanse cleanse that cleanness to it. And what is it this is clean, clear awareness that it's possible to have a little bit hard to define. But I prefer to define it. By what it's not. It's there when we don't claim anything. We don't cling to our opinions. We don't cling to our complaints. We don't cling to needing to be right. We don't cling to our fear. We don't cling to our suffering. We don't cling to our happiness. We don't cling to our joys. We don't cling to needing to have the world be as we want it to be. We don't cling to all kinds of things do they cling the way we get entangled and caught and obsessed about things and I associated with being, you know, this movement Being contracted. And there are people who want to justify being contracted because being contracted can get things done in their world. So the imagery that I like for it for it is that of the fist. So the contracted fist. And so we get angry. We get attached to anger and sometimes it's righteous anger and we want to change the world, right the wrongs or just a contraction of fear, or the contraction of hostility and hate are the countries all these contractions that did not. And the movement of trusting awareness is the movement of trusting having the hand open. And it's nice to have a hand open that open hand can do so much more than a fist. Fist is rather limited in this repertoire. But an open hand can you know it has it then that sensitive part of the hand It's available for the world, soft sensitive palm of the hand. And but to trust the open hand, to trust the mind which is not contracted around anger or fear or alarm or distress or something. And this this is some emotions of fear and anger and distress that arise, come with come along with sometimes a lot of authority. And they come along with sometimes a lot of social message that we're supposed to that we should we have to that can be an insistence in them. And sometimes assistance is quite reasonable because there's social injustice, there's, people treat each other terribly in this world of ours. And so it can vary, it seemed like the right thing to do is to contract in order to defend ourselves or hide or run away. I'm not saying that's necessarily wrong, but it is paint To do that, and it's not trusting awareness, it's actually crushes awareness. Like we lose the soft part of the hand we make a fist. We lose this the open clarity and cleanliness of awareness when we get contracted around these states. And so, I think

that we can do a lot of things we need to do in the world much better and still do them. With the open hand. We can do it, but it is not a call to be passive, to trust awareness. But what the open awareness does, and this is one of the great gifts for me in this practice, and one of the lessons that I've received for myself and through doing them is it as my awareness as this awareness it opened up and ground itself in reality met reality the way it is that I met other people.

There was a remarkable sensitivity or contact that I made with people around me sensing a feeling of carrying an awareness of the people around me. And it wasn't awareness, it felt like it wasn't intentional. But rather it seemed felt like it was like the as the contracted states. softened. It was kind of like the crusts kind of the crust around me kind of dissolved in the armor that I had dissolved. And so naturally, there was an awareness and openness of it in availability to take in the world around me that people around me and that made a huge debt. When that started happening and doing this practice. It was a life changing event for me. Because then, and what happened as it happened. It wasn't just it kind Like that became a clear and clear to me or clear and clear that what we have here is a we rather than B and you all the time is that basic paradigm to operate under has its value, me and you. But there was something I hadn't really understood before and that was the we. And that sense of we arose because as the awareness opened up more, as I said, rested awareness, trusted awareness more the strong contractions around self, me myself in mine was an operating this much. And then motivation, the interest in seeing the world through this kind of narrow viewpoint of me, myself and mine. dissolved is settled away. And actually when I started seeing it operate, I could feel the limitation of that I felt the contraction of the pain of that To do that, and so at certain parts certain way, I started to dissolve certain way. And as I dissolved then that didn't make any sense to have you know, there wasn't someone here to make a boundary or a line between I'm here and you're there and but I didn't have to worry about I found I found I don't have to worry about those boundaries being date you know, dissolving and being dangerous because this non contracted state that places where I got in trouble interpersonally was not in contracted states. But when I started contracting again when I started reacting and responding and that was where the dangerous interpersonal dangerous for me started to arise. And so learning to trust awareness and then in that sense of then being increasing sensitive aware the world around me There started to be a growing quality of love, of compassion of caring. So trust awareness and love everyone. Now there's a command. And I, you know, I'm not interested in commands like that, but rather as a description of what's possible description of what happens. And so now it's those are reference point, I'm not always there with that. But this is a very strong reference point for me in my life. And, you know, this is, you know, I use that reference point to help me see and notice when I'm not there when I'm caught. When there's too strong a separation between self and other, when I'm not trusting awareness when I get a contract and then what I learned is becomes important that You don't turn away from what's unpleasant or what's not right or the difficulties. You don't have to, you know, even let go of it. You have to just shine the light of awareness on it more clearly. I'll look at that I'm contracted. Wow, look at that. I'm judging those four people. Wow, the mind has an amazing capacity. Wow. Wow. Look at that. And that wow factor that seeing that awareness that stepping away from being involved in that is a movement from being no longer being invested in these contracted states without having to judge them or be angry with them or critical of them. So it's amazingly friendly way to be with oneself and loving everyone includes yourself.

Not because you have to kind of go around and be too You don't want me to active loving yourself I think that's not so good. You know, maybe it's good but but I shouldn't have said that but but you know it's work you know it shouldn't be work that's what I'm trying to say shouldn't be work I got to get, you know, get this love self love going you know crank it up it's it's there waiting for you it's there it's it's there it's there when a where and when we trust awareness when we trust this uncontracted state when we're not busy always wanting and rushing and getting and proving and defending ourselves and busy

being bored or busy wanting to entertain ourselves or busy going for the next great thing or whatever it is. It's the opposite of an amazing thing to be to so awareness to rest in the present, or to trust it, and let it unfold. So to trust so to trust awareness, and love everyone, and then I wanted to read the words of someone who I think I don't know, trust, he would say trust. Everyone trust awareness, but he did say love and the importance of it. I am convinced that love is the most durable power in the world. It is not an expression of impractical idealism, but of practical, real I'm far from being the pious in junction of a utopian dreamer. Love is an absolute necessity for the survival of our civilization. To return hate for hate, does nothing but intensify the existence of evil in the universe. Someone must have sense enough, and religion enough to cut off the chain of hate and evil. And this can only be done through love. I believe firmly that love is a transforming power that can lift the whole community to new horizons of fairplay goodwill and justice as Martin Luther King and then this Mary Oliver's, you know, idea of metaphor. light and dark. So Martin Luther King also wrote or spoke, darkness cannot drive out darkness. Only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate. Only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate. Violence multiplies violence and toughness, motivate multiplies toughness and the descending spiral of destruction. The chain reaction of evil, hate begets evil. Wars producing more wars must be broken, or we should be plunged into the darkness of annihilation. So when I say you know for me that the guiding principle has been trust awareness and Everyone, I hope it's not a sentimental sentiment or you know something. But I think of people like Martin Luther King, and you know that this is a way of responding to the world and being in the world and changing the world, because we certainly want to change the world. But can we change it with our open hands, instead of with our fists? I think that's what interests me the most. Because that open hand of the mind, the window, the open hand of the heart. That's where the best qualities of who we are exist. I think those are powerful qualities that can change. And I'm not so sure I want to live so actively or support so actively a world where what's being supported or what's being enacted or what's being exemplified are contracted hands contracted minds can attracted hearts.

So to love everyone and care for everyone to respond to the world, from this good place in our hearts, that we discover when we trust awareness, trust that place of not clinging to anything. And it's beautiful because this I found it quite beautiful. I just see I don't know if that's the best word. I think beauty is beauty. It's beautiful. But maybe other people have different words for it. But I think it's just spectacular. That kind of all inspiring that it doesn't have to be about me. I don't have to be the one who does that. I don't have to be the one who loves I don't have to be the one who responds and acts. It's such a relief. Turns out that the eye thing is a little bit the part of the contracted mode. And so I don't have to take credit and I'm not to take the blame. I just have to trust awareness and love everyone. But I can take away I can take out the I just trust awareness and love everyone. It's It's a wonderful description of a settled present open mind open heart to beautiful thing. It's a beautiful way to live. So, that's what's great. It's kind of what it's come to after 40 years. We'll see if the next 40 years where it goes from here, but it's been a good you know, it's been a wonderful time and so I was reminded recently that I'm aging and guess who else is aging? May you trust your good awareness, your good heart? May you trust your love me we may all of us live in a world where we care for each other. Thank you