

2018-08-15 Dharmette The Middle In Mindfulness

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SPEAKERS

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One of the, I think, very evocative, and of the classic Buddhist teachings is the idea of the middle way. And it's applied in the ancient teachings in two primary ways that I know of the middle way or the middle path is the path between asceticism and indulging in sensual pleasures. And, and so the middle way between those two and so what's the middle way that neither denies nor indulges? And the other way that it's used in ancient texts is the middle A is between asserting that something exists on one end, and the other end asserting something doesn't exist. And you know, what's left? You know, if something indeed exists or doesn't exist, then, you know, that's a little confusing. And, and the middle way is explained as being that things don't exist independently. And they don't know they don't not exist either. But how things occur, if you don't use the word exists, is they occur depending on conditions. And so, the coming together of conditions is how things occur as opposed to something existing just this is how it is. And so the assertion that we know exactly, this is how it is, is one extreme assertion the assertion that you know, this is not how it is, is another extreme. But the middle way is to kind of look at the situation and sees understanding how it comes into what are the conditions that bring about what are the historical conditions? What are the present moment conditions? What are the concepts and interpretations that need to be in place in order to understand this thing being there? How do things exist conditionally are part of their suiting nutritional language is dependent arising, how does it they come into, so they don't think they don't exist. And part of this, neither existing or not existing is an appreciation that things are constantly fluid constantly changing and moving and, and nothing, nothing is static. And so to watch the shifting and changing nature of things, is the middle way. The middle way can also be the middle way, between being for or against things. For some people, there's such a strong instinct to be for and against things. So that's the only options and so we're either fighting or we're somehow fighting against something or fighting for something. And we're either right or wrong. And, and so you know that when we have this concept of the middle way, in Buddhism and keep referring back to it, it becomes it becomes an investigation, it becomes something, okay, where's the middle way here? Is there an alternative between being for or against an alternative being right and being wrong? And what does that look like? So you know, and physically can look like, when we're for something, we lean towards it. Or sometimes we're against it, we lean forward towards it too aggressively or we pull away The metaphoric thing in this practice is to learn how to sit upright and stable without leaning forward or backwards just here. And that's the middle wage to be here, without being for or against. And then being here, then we can start looking at it more fully at the nuances or the variety of different aspects of what's happening here. That might be invisible to us. If we're too quick to get beat for or against to be opinionated, this is right and this is wrong. And so the middle way.

Now we're back. The middle way is to investigate the middle way is to be present for the situation. Middle Way is not to get lost in the future lost in the past, but to be here in the place where we can kind of look more fully all the way around. So what's the middle way, in different lives, and the middle way is not a compromise way. Sometimes it's the third way, it's an alternative way, that is neither one way or the other. But it's another possibility. And I find that particularly useful in conflict, when people are in conflict. You know, if we it's either or that you know, then there can be tension. And what's harder to see is that it might be a third way. And the middle way might be to have a conversation exploration, what's really going on here to understand the conditions that are happening and different points of view and, and the different possibilities and then to stay in the conversation until we can start or maybe there's a third option. And to use maybe a silly example of silly but you know, a petty example that I don't want to diminish how this works in real important situations in real life is that one person wants to go to the beach, the other person wants to go walking in the woods. And so they're in conflict. It turns out that there's a park nearby that has a lake. And you know, and so it satisfies both of them. And so they hang in there and they talk and they find there's a third alternative. So sometimes there are brilliant alternatives that only are discovered if we hang in there in the middle way. So what's the middle way? How do we find is there another Another alternative is to kind of open up to a new possibility. And then in meditation, what's the middle way in meditation? You know, one way in Middle Way is to also not to be for or against, not to come to conclusions. It's this way. And it's that way. It should be this, it shouldn't be that these kinds of clear, kind of the definitive statements, ideas that this is how it is, this is what exists, this is what doesn't exist this what should be this shouldn't be, are often the kind of world of reactivity that we have. And so there's the evoking what's the middle way, here in my meditation? Maybe the middle way, you know, what's the third way? What's the alternative way? Maybe, you know, turns out that the middle way is not to put the self in the middle of it all. Turns out a lot of the shoulds insurance and it should be it shouldn't be what's right and what's wrong for many people occur around a constellation of self ideas self identity, vacation and conceit and what's in it for me And who am I and all this? And maybe the middle way is, doesn't pause it. It doesn't self Me, me myself in mind, but doesn't say the opposite, that I don't count that I don't exist, that I'm not important. So what's the middle way between selfing and self denial. And so the middle way is to pay attention to the details of what's happening here. The details of thoughts and emotions and feelings and sensations in the body and begin understanding how they operate and how they influence each other and what goes on. And, and all the information we need are found in this careful attention here, in this third way, and this middle way, without the self referencing or without the self denial. So neither self assertion your self denial, but rather at the middle way that happens. So I find that this concept of the middle way that goes back all the way to the Buddha is a very evocative idea. And in different circumstances, it does different things are found to be the middle way. But but I find it because you ask yourself, what's the middle way here? Not the compromise way. But what's the third way what's the alternative way where there's freedom or where there's compassion or where there's some way that's more harmonious with situation I'm in than some of the either or options that people fall into so easily.

And the task is not to, you know, apply what I've said to your life necessarily, but the task is to understand a little bit this idea of the middle way and how it kind of presents a A encouragement to look more deeply investigate don't settle so quickly on the usual ways of doing things. So what's the middle way here? And it's all maybe it's not. Maybe there's maybe you don't have to be business as usual or maybe there is a new way of looking understanding this that is not for or against or right and wrong, or it is or it isn't. How does it work here? And that's that opens up, I think, a path to freedom to do that. So may you find the middle way.