

2018-11-07 Dharmette To Live as if Everything is Important

Mon, 8/31 8:17AM • 12:07

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

incidental, important, teacup, bow, zen, live, world, retreat, tea, japanese, happening, true, cup, life, importance, attention, equivalent, afternoon, unimportant, tray

SPEAKERS

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So I want to tell you two brief stories from my life that were impactful for me. I guess I'll do it chronologically. The first was I was sitting a Zen retreat. And, and in that customer their practice of that Zen center, first day of the retreat, every afternoon, they would have middle of the afternoon in the meditation hall. Everyone would turn around and face it towards the middle of the room, and we'd be served tea and a cookie, I guess afforded by us to go through the afternoon. And, and they're being Zen they would come in in a very formal way, bow and a tray and they would give you a cup, and then they give you a cookie and then they come with a tea kettle and they pour the tea and And then after you've been given a ticket the first day you kept it by your seat for the seven days of the retreat. Each afternoon you get tea, but the seventh day after serving tea and eating it, you would be there come around and collect the teacup. So just simple thing. And everything is choreographed in Zen. So you're supposed to sit certain ways a certain time you're supposed to bow and you know, it's, it's very clear what you're supposed to do and not to. I was sitting next to and the whole week, visiting Japanese Zen monk had been a monk for many years. And it was kind of inspiring to sit next to him, sat very dignified upright, he was very present. They just it was kind of inspiring to be next to him. And so that came that time to color enter the retreat to collect the teacups. And so they came with a tray. And so it's like they have This glass in front of me, I was going to the normal way you would bow to the server, you'd pick up the teacup and you put it on the tray. But he did something different. He did one extra thing. And that is he clearly before we get got rid of the teacup, he clearly bowed to the teacup. And as what you bow to a teacup, a teacup and now you know, being young and whatever my excuse is, it didn't occur to me that you could have some certain kind of appreciation or gratitude or reverence or something for a tea cup. And it was really touched me. And it touched me that somehow some small incidental detail of life like a cup could get that kind of attention, that kind of focus and I wondered about what a relationship he had to that cup and how he must have really taken in the cup in his cup. And what it did for him, whereas I just drank the tea. So that's one story. The second story is when I was a graduate student, I took a class on Japanese history I think it was Japanese Buddhist history. And somewhere halfway through the quarter this the term, I had a conversation with the professor who had some Buddhist training. And we were talking about you know, there's so many details we were learning and so I said something like, Oh, so this particular historical detail is not that important. Is it so I don't have to remember remember that do I? Something like that, that he said to me, kill. Everything is important. Everything is important. The teacup is important. The chair you're sitting on if you're sitting in a chair is important how you open the door is important. The people that you encounter the strangers who walk by you on the sidewalk are important. There's a way of living where nothing is seen as a coincidence or incidental or unimportant. But there's a way of walking through the world and meeting the world you're in, where you kind of take in everything as significant, that it has value. Nothing is dismissed, nothing is

considered the incidental. No person is incidental. No person is insignificant. But you go through the day, with enough presence of mind that you're really there to register and be with the experience that you're having.

Many people don't do that. Many people are so busy doing what they want to do. They're ahead of themselves. They're thinking ahead, they're leaning into the future. They're concerned with what's going to happen tomorrow or the next meeting with someone they're thinking about it. And sometimes, you know, not really here for this live the world experience that's here now. But this world that we live in becomes kind of magical, or become sparkling or becomes more rich. When we all everything we encounter becomes part of the deeper conversations we're having with reality, or that reality is happening with us. And I find it remarkable how when we're paying attention, things fold in things seems to things begin to seem to relate or have importance or are teaching us or mirrors for ourselves or there's, you know, there's a much richer, deeper world that comes alive. If we're there for the teacup. If we're there for the person who's walking down the street, or if we're there For everything is important. Is everything important? This is ridiculous what I'm saying you have a much more important things to do than then treat everything as important. You probably right. It's a self fulfilling prophecy. It becomes true, how it comes true, but it's one of those things that become true because you see it that way. If you see that some things are unimportant don't deserve your attention and not worthy of your attention because this other concerns and worries are more important. And that's kind of true for you. And that's how your life will be and that's how you'll be informed by our life that'll that's the conditioning, the viewpoint that will come back at you and shape you and develop your habits and your understanding of the world. If you see everything is important everything insignificant every person, every encounter somehow is part of the, the depth of life, the fullness of life, and you see it as important, then that becomes true. Because the importance is, it really lives in our mind in our view and understanding. So you could argue easily No, it's not the case. And you're right. And I think you can argue the case that it is true. And you're right. So we're not talking about ordinary right and wrong, ordinary truth and false in terms of, you know, abstract idea that's true, you know, that's right. It becomes true by how you live it. And it's your it's your choice, what kind of world you want to live in. What kind of feedback you want from the world, what kind of interaction what how you want to be developed and how you want to be shaped by your experience of being in this world and you'll be shaped to radically different if you Have the presence of mind to bow to your cup, you know, maybe not exactly that but to treat it, even something as simple as a glass is important. And then No, nothing is incidental. Everything has importance, everything has value, everything is there, informing you and mirroring you and opening the world for you and you know, maybe you won't understand it or see it. But if you have that attitude, the world becomes magical. It's wonderful. And it's your choice. And if you have better things, better things to consider, they're important than what's happening in the moment, by all means. But, you know, you'll live in a much less you're poor, the world become poor, the world become one dimensional, rather than three dimensional. And if you You want to really three dimensional world, you would really kind of really have the presence of mind that you actually see and touch and experience what's here. So something as simple as, because this occurred to me the other day would happen to me. You drive someplace and you're driving in a car and you're going to be going someplace. So you park your car and you have to get out of your car, you open your car door and you're still going someplace. So you open your car door, you get out, you're close your car door and you're going off to where you're going. That's one way.

The other way is to park the car, open your car door. Step out and look around I'm here. This is this life. This is this world. This is this universe here now. I know supposed to go there, but I can spend 30 seconds just marveling. I missed the new environment I wasn't here. minutes ago. What is this here? If this is the most important place for me right now, this is important where I am. Look around and then close your car door and then go to where you're going to go. And you see the difference between those

two? The first way you do what you have to do, you get to what's important. But coming out of your car and closing door and leaving is one dimensional, like you're missing a lot of the information, a lot of the cues, a lot of what's happening in that moment. Who knows? You might have been on the brink of getting the equivalent winning the equivalent of the California Lottery Spiritual equivalent, it was right there for you. But you know, you were busy to get someplace. And so the fact that you were there and what was going on was, you know, had no importance for you. So to live as if everything's important to live as if it's important or valuable enough that you could, could bow to it. And appreciation. I think it's a wonderful way to live. So about to you all, thank you for being here. I don't take it as an incidental thing or random thing that this group of people should be here for this day and, and who you are and how you are and what you bring here I think is very significant. And I appreciate that you're here and, and for these few moments that were together. This is the most important thing. Thank you.