

# 2020-07-28-Wise Speech (2 of 5) Is it Timely?

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

feel, conversations, happening, speak, interpretations, frazzled, give, choreographed, kitchen, quickly, lots, interpreting, meditation, yesterday, chant, pressure, timely, situation, stay, tension

## SPEAKERS

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So again greetings. And today I'll talk about the second of the five criteria. I'd like to call them questions for how we speak, what we say. And the first one yesterday that the Buddha gave, can be presented as part with the question is what I'm about to say true? Is what I'm saying true? And this idea of truth and true courses can be very quickly, complicated, philosophically complicated, and if you really get into the philosophy of it, you can tie yourself in knots pretty quickly. But for people who practice mindfulness, what is most true is what we experience directly for ourselves.

And to state truly what we're actually experiencing, to the best of our understanding is very different than interpreting what's happening out in the world. So for example, yesterday, the event happened where I felt confused and frazzled. And I noticed that I started thinking about or interpreting what was going on for the other people, for their their situation, and trying to make sense of it. I realized very quickly that I didn't have enough information to really know what was going on there. And all my ideas were interpretations. Though sometimes, they felt very compelling the interpretations I had as if I was right. But what I could recognize is what I really knew and what was most true, what was most actual for me, is that I was frazzled and confused. And when I recognize that then things became a lot simpler. This is true, this is what I know. And I've learned that in conversations where there's conflict, that to stay close to what's actually happening here with me and state that rather than state interpretations or, or assigning blame or criticism or to what was going on that then there's opening and possibilities for the conversation generally, to open and unfold.

Many years ago, I was a graduate student I remember and having a very tense time with the chairman of the department. And I was really angry with him. And he came to see me and so I very carefully said, told him when you did x when you said x, what happened to me is I became filled with anger. And I was actually filled with it at that moment there and it was obvious I wasn't hiding from it. But because I was just seeing actually what's happening to me here, it was not a criticism of him. And he actually didn't take it as a criticism of him. And so we could have the conversation. I think he felt,

you know, remorseful, he felt like he Okay, maybe he made did something wrong to a space for him to relax around it. That wouldn't have been if I had told him my interpretation of what he had done. So this idea of staying true, is very close in mindfulness practice is very much close to staying close to what's actually happening for ourselves. And then if it's more than that, then we want to be true, as I said yesterday, to be truthful, stay, preserve the truth, safeguard the truth. We want to state that basis of the source from which from which we've gotten what we were saying, This is my interpretation. This is what I've heard, this is what I've read. This is what I believe this is what I have faith in. This is what I've reasoned out. Maybe my reasoning is not quite right. But let me tell you, this is my reasoning so far, then, but that's closer to the actual what's happening here for us. And then a person can participate very differently than if we make declarative statements. So that's a little bit repeating yesterday, the idea that the first criteria, is it true? Is it actual? The second is, is it timely? Is it the right time to say something?

So something might be true, but it's not really the time to say it. I've known people who have specifically asked for feedback for something they've done. But they've said very clearly, I would like feedback. But I don't want it right after I'd done it. I would like to wait a day. I'm just too open, too vulnerable right after I've done what I did. I want feedback for, can you please, but it really wanted so after a day, I'll be in a different state or settled, and I'll be able to receive it in a useful way. So we can see with our friends or colleagues or neighbors and people, that there might be things we need to talk about. But is it really the time to talk about it? If we have a neighbor we're in conflict with because of, you know, some fence that's troublesome between our property and the neighbors and just had a death in the family. That's probably not the time to go talk to them about the fence. So to wait until things are settled. If someone just comes home from work, and is frazzled or is somehow, you know, is confused or tired, that might not, might not be the time to say, you know, some difficult piece of information to that person. So we wait to when it is time.

And so this ability to choose the time, the wise time to say something, is a really important skill. And some of you and I've discovered this in myself, that there are times where I don't give myself time, lots of time in which to speak, like, you know, maybe a future time because there's an impulse of strong strength. I have to say it now. I have to say my opinion, I have to get across what's going on. Because we have these bottled up emotions sometimes related to what's going on situation and we're often looking for a release of that bottled up at energy released. So that tension and say speaking sometimes quickly or speaking immediately is sometimes more about releasing that personal tension. And or trying to fix things for ourselves than it is really being wise about how to speak when to speak a situation. So that means that for mindfulness practitioners, we have mindfulness as a tool to help work with the inner pressures, the inner tensions we have, so they don't get bottled up. They don't get we don't get stuck with them, that we can recognize what's happening and make space for it. Feel what's happening. So things move through us, or perhaps tell ourselves the truth, saying, Wow, I'm really there's a lot of pressure here to speak. There's a lot of need to kind of get my two cents in as we say in English. And do you know to look and feel that pressure that push Let me make space for it. Let me question whether this is the time to really speak right now. So two, is a timely, it's true, but is it the right

time? Is it an have I, my living in time, or my being pushed by time in my living by time, and that plays out in conversations? If we're interrupting a lot, if we want to get our word in too quickly, and don't give the other person a chance to speak, then we're not we're living by time, as we went on to say has to be now as opposed to living in time. Where What do I have to say? There's time for it. I can say it at some point. And there's a certain kind of empowerment that comes when we realize we live in time, and there will be a time to say what we need to say. And a time that's effective a time that I can be heard at time when the conditions have come into place.

So we can really make a difference in the conversation make a difference in the situation so that it's a healthy thing to do. So, is a time and what is what what is that? What is it the time for right now. And this sometimes what time is for is to give time to make space to make temporal space, so that there's silence so that there is room for people to feel to speak to things to unfold to settle. And so this idea of is a timely, also is part and part of this idea of can we use time as part of the process Can we use time to open up the field? Can we pause? Can we slow down? There were conversations yesterday where I was also confused with what was going on. And, and I asked specifically, can we slow down? I need to kind of track this and build what's happening step by step can we slow down, so not to rush not to be caught in time, but to make more time. And this idea of making time giving time to things, again, can seem like it, we don't have time for it. And you don't have to get on to the next thing. It's possible that by giving more time, we things actually are done more effectively. If we give more time to things, there's sometimes less follow up, less processing that has to happen afterwards. And so this whole idea of time, living in time, as opposed to living by time or to be in charge of your time, as opposed to having time in charge of you to make room temporal room lots of time. We live in vast time, abundant time. The only reason we don't live in the vastness and abundance of time is because of our attachments are clinging, our hurry our needs. We define time to create the set a degree we kind of make time. So I'd like to end with something real important learning that I had or Time and being in a hurry for one for, I guess nine months. So for one year, I worked in the kitchen at the Zen monastery. And for nine of those months, I was the kind of the manager of the kitchen and was responsible for getting the food out and food made on time. And Zen monastery is a very choreographed life. It's very scheduled life. And so meals have to be ready, not just at a generally at noon. But you know, at a very exact time, like by the minute that has to be ready because there's all this choreographed behavior that has to happen to get the food into the meditation hall, people sitting there, meditation, posture, waiting for it, and so forth. So in a sense, there was some pressure and time pressure to have it at the right time. And so lunch was the big meal of the day and every day, about 15 minutes before lunch was supposed to be served up. The whole kitchen crew was required to stop, go to the little kitchen altar and chant scriptures. chant the Heart Sutra. And as a kitchen manager, I would often feel we can't do that we don't have time for that, or they can do it. I'm going to keep working so we can be on time with the food. But it was required, so I would go and do it. And every time where I felt we didn't have time, after we finished chanting, it felt like we had a lot more time. And, and meals were generally always on time. So I learned from that that, even to this day, if I feel like I don't have enough time for something, I have a lot of things going on and start feeling certain kind of tension, inner tension around that. I've learned that the best thing I can do is to do less And I'd like to go and meditate even for five

or 10 minutes. And even such a short meditation time, I come out of the meditation. And now I feel low and behold, I feel like I have lots of time. And this kind of weird kind of meta. Minimum metamorphosing have time and the fluidity of time is really obvious when you feel harried, have much very little time. And then somehow, you can open up and fill out the rest time. There's lots of time. So maybe you can give lots of time to your conversations and learn to ask the question, is this the right time to speak? Is this the right time to say what I'm about to say? Or might they might there be a better time?

So thank you. And may you have lots of time today for all the things you're going to do or not do, and I look forward to continuing this theme tomorrow