

Unattached Love

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Come to IMC and see, is it loud enough for everyone out there? A little bit louder out there? So how's that now? Is that okay?

So I started on the first Sunday of the month talking about a kind of core piece of Buddhist wisdom, which I do every year, which is the *Four Noble Truths*. Last week I talked about a core part of Buddhist ethics, which is the first precept not to kill. And today I want to talk about a core aspect of our social world, our social relationships, our attitude of how we live in the world with others, and that is goodwill. The translation I'm using for *mettā*, and *mettā* is kind of one of the foundational kind of cornerstones of our insight practice. Some people will say that the practice of mindfulness is, at some point, grows together and becomes inseparable from goodwill, sometimes called loving kindness or kindness. And we see since the time of the Buddha a tremendous emphasis on this particular practice, social emotion that we're capable of, goodwill.

And you see it in a number of ways, the Buddha talks about a practitioner. The ancient world, they talked about monastics, but the tradition says the word monk or nun applies also to lay people who are practicing the *Dharma*. But monastics are ones who have renounced wealth, physical wealth. But the Buddha goes on to say that the wealth for a monastic is their goodwill. So the way to become wealthy is to cultivate and develop this inner goodwill. And maybe that's a more reliable wealth or a better wealth than physical wealth.

And it's certainly a big contrast to see between someone who's renounced physical wealth and that what they replace it with is this wonderful generosity of spirit, where they have friendliness and kindness and care for others. And the Buddha said that a monastic who's a practitioner, a monastic who is also someone who is very committed to the teachings of the Buddha, he says that a monastic, even, I don't know if he said even, but if they do just one

moment of goodwill, one moment of kindness, they're doing the Buddha's teaching. That's pretty. Puts it in a good place. So if you're interested in what the Buddha has to teach, it's that far away. It's just right there in your goodwill, offering goodwill to others.

And in the *Dhammapada*, translating the word *bhikkhu* as practitioner, a practitioner abiding in goodwill and pleased with the Buddha's teachings, attains happiness, the quieting of reactivity, the state of peace. And we see that he often pairs the cultivation of goodwill with discovering peace. And there's a wonderful kind of reciprocity here that cultivating peace brings forth goodwill, cultivating goodwill brings forth peace in his ancient teachings. And a fascinating story around goodwill and compassion and appreciative joy and equanimity is that there was a man who encountered the Buddha and he was so impressed by the Buddha's goodwill. It somehow radiated. It sometimes was clear. It stood out.

And he said, I'm a direct witness that the Buddha abides in goodwill, that he rests in. He's filled with goodwill. And the Buddha does this very strange statement. He says, well, I don't really accept or allow you to say that about me. What you can say about me is that I abide without greed, hatred, and delusion. That's allowable. You can describe me that way. And then the guy says, well, I'm a witness that I see the direct evidence that you abide in compassion. No. You can say that I abide free of greed, hatred, and delusion. Okay. It's my direct evidence seeing you that you abide in appreciative joy. So what is he seeing in the Buddha? He's seeing something good. No. You can say that I abide in the freedom from greed, hatred, and delusion.

Okay. I'm a witness that you're the direct evidence that you abide in equanimity. So you know what the Buddha's going to say again. No. You can say that I abide free of greed, hatred, and delusion. So the Buddha on one hand emphasizes the value of loving kindness and compassion and so forth, puts a tremendous emphasis in it. On the other hand, he doesn't want to be defined by it. Why is that? And maybe, as much as important as goodwill is, maybe it's a problem to get focused on it, fixate on it in such a way that we get defined by it or we get recognized by it. We make it into a thing. Maybe love is not a thing.

And if we can overemphasize it, it's important. I have to develop my kindness, I have to have goodwill. And it becomes this kind of narrowing of attention and focus. Whereas maybe what we're looking at here is a broadening of the focus or a releasing of the attention of the mind from what obscures our capacity for kindness, for goodwill. So there is goodwill that we can develop and have, but maybe the relationship we have to it is different than most things, in that we don't quite take it as an object that we manipulate and that we work with. What we're doing mostly is getting out of the way of it, learning to recognize it, maybe learning to evoke

it without it being necessarily a thing.

And I don't know if this is the best analogy for it, but it occurs to me that there's something that we depend on for our dear life, right, that we can't really see, we can't really grab with our hands very well. And that's the air we breathe. And we do have some evidence that we're breathing in air, because you can feel it in your nostrils, maybe in your lungs filling. And so you have some sense, and you have a really clear sense of the importance of air if it's not around. You'll get the evidence immediately. And so, but we have an abundance of air, usually, right?

Sometimes we have a wonderful feeling when the air is fresh and clean and clear. It feels kind of wonderfully refreshing sometimes versus the air that's full of smog. And so we have some sense of it, but you can't quite point to it or you can point to it because it's everywhere. And so you can't help but to point to it. But it's kind of there. It's pervasive. It's full. It's there. And we can't exactly relate to it as an object that we manipulate exactly with the mind or make something in the mind. It's more like we have to allow a natural functioning of the air to support us and benefit us.

So part of the reason for this analogy is that Buddha describes loving kindness as something that can exist boundlessly, abundantly, all around, above, below, everywhere. Our goodwill pervades the universe. It's pervasive. It doesn't lend itself to be an object of a particular thing. It has this kind of, I don't know if it's invisible, but it has this kind of quality of suffusion, of diffusion, of openness, that it's definitely something valuable. But it exists in a different kind of way, that it's one of those things that you can't cling to. If you have greed for love, maybe love is impossible. If you have hatred for love, that's okay, because love won't be there.

You know, you can't have certain things together, that there's something about the nature of goodwill, this *mettā*, this well-wishing, this generosity of spirit, this friendliness, that goes hand in hand with non-clinging, non-attachment. And so this amazing focus on love in Buddhism, and sometimes I think of Buddhism as a religion of love, as much as it's a religion of freedom and awakening, but it involves a love which has no attachment to it. And how often do you have unattached love, that you can be really confident, there's no clinging here, there's no holding on, there's no attachment, there's no agendas. And even if you say, yes, you have that, I kind of suspect that it's not quite that.

Love belongs to some of the most complicated forms of communication, complicated forms of connections to other peoples that we can have. There's so much going on with love and what we call love. And two people could have very different ideas of what it is. And some

people, what they love in a relationship, they love being loved. The fact that someone loves them is what sets them alive, and they feel so special and wonderful. And there's this kind of, that's what, and so there's a confusion between what loving someone else in some deep, open, attached free way, and being attached to how we feel, the security we get, or the status we get, or the adoration we get, or something we get in return from it.

And some people confuse sexual desire with love. And they get a lot of pleasure and they get a lot of... It's also very complicated what's going on with sexual desire and sexual fulfillment. It's not just pleasure. There's so many things. And we see sometimes it's quite dysfunctional when what's happening is a power play. It's a form of aggression. And... And so, but love that needs nothing in return is a definition of goodwill, of *mettā*. Love, kindness, friendliness, that doesn't depend on the other person. It's just there as a state.

One of the big surprises for me in doing this practice of insight, mindfulness, was to become settled enough, undistracted enough, relaxed enough, open enough, not preoccupied, not attached, to experience that that state seemed to be inseparable from a warm-heartedness, from a tenderness, a kind of a resonance of goodness, of generosity, of kindness, of goodwill, that didn't depend on anybody being in front of me. It didn't require having an object for it, a kind of love that exists without an object. So when an object arises, a person comes in front of it. It's like a heater, which makes a cold person who comes into the room, warms them up. But the heater does it without, will still warm everything without there being a person there.

So yes, our goodwill can be radiating out into others, right, but it doesn't necessarily need to get reciprocated, does not depend on who the person is. And this is one of the radical things about this Buddhist idea of kindness, is that whatever it is, goodwill, well-wishing, loving-kindness might be a too high a bar for a translation, because it's also meant to be done towards people who are really difficult. The tradition says that it's something we cultivate even towards our enemies, even towards people who are consciously harming us. The bar is that high in Buddhism. Is even there we want to abide in this goodwill.

And some people would say it's foolish to do it for someone who's harming us. Maybe. But that doesn't mean we can't defend ourselves. We can't take care of ourselves. But the idea in Buddhism, we take care of ourselves, we defend ourselves with goodwill. And kind of the origin story of Western *Vipassanā*, part of that origin story, maybe something like that, that one of the, I think it was one of the first early practitioners who went and practiced in India and learned *Vipassanā* in India in the 1960s, I think was... ran into someone on the street or a rickshaw driver or something who tried to accost her or something. And apparently she got

away pretty easily.

But she went to her teacher, Munindraji, *Vipassanā* teacher, and said, what am I supposed to do when someone accosts me like this? And he said, with all the loving kindness you can muster, hit them over the head with your umbrella. Yeah. So I don't know if that's effective, how effective that is. But just the juxtaposition of those things is kind of fascinating. So anyway, this is this high standard that we're measuring this against, that there is a way of having goodwill even for people who are difficult.

But they don't deserve it. That's not the point. The point is that a unrestricted heart, a heart that's not caught up in preoccupations, with resentments, with envy, with fear. It will radiate. It will resonate. It will have this innate, almost maybe innate, sense of goodwill, well-wishing for others. Thinking about giving this talk, I think I was half awake this morning, so that's my justification for what I'm about to say, or pretend, is I was thinking about all this loving kindness. And many years ago, almost 20 years ago, I created a draft for a book about loving kindness and went through my mind this morning, oh, maybe I should revive that book.

And well, that book will need a cover. And whenever you have a cover for a book, the big challenge to figure out, what do we put on that cover? And I said, what do I put as a cover image for this book on goodwill? And I thought, then I remember that when my first son was born, a friend who's a photographer took it, or someone, I don't remember who it was, I think it was my friend. We have a picture of my hand and my son's little teeny little hand inside my hand, kind of resting there, my hand resting and his hand resting. And I thought, oh, that'll be the picture for goodwill, for love.

Somehow I associate parental care of a newborn, right, that's kind of innate, kind of biologically, hormonally, kind of oriented towards nurturing a little baby, a newborn baby. Or, I didn't get a picture of this, but kind of the opposite end of the spectrum, that holding my mother's hand as she was dying... That was quite a touching time for me, to holding her hand. I remember her holding my hand when I was a little kid. I remember being a little afraid once, and she was holding my hand, and then she was dying, and I was holding her hand. So this kind of a capacity to bring this kind of care to people is very deep.

Maybe it's kind of built into our biology, and what's built into our biology are social emotions that are the opposite. What's built into our biology also is to hate, is to be greedy, is to carry resentments for decades. Which part of our biology do we emphasize? The beautiful thing about this practice, you don't have to answer that question. What you have to do is practice and realize that the greed and the hatred comes together with our biological capacity to cling, to grasp, which is stressful, which is limiting, which causes danger for us. It's danger-

ous to spend a life of greed. It's dangerous to spend a life filled with hate, greed, hate, and delusion.

And this practice begin to relax and to open, to settle, and have that layer of our life kind of settle away and fall away, because we're not fueling it. We're not feeding it, we're not continuing with it, so that something that I consider even deeper has a chance to show itself. And below that is this depth of being able to nurture and care and have goodwill and to love. And it's kind of maybe, you know, be unfortunate if the only time that we awaken that capacity is in these extreme moments of having a newborn or a dying person, dying parent. Or if it's someone who is a partner that we really love and share a lot of life and all that, then to that person there's a lot of goodwill. There's no requirement to do it for anybody else in Buddhism.

But we're shortchanging ourselves. We're limiting ourselves. And so to be able to discover this depth, to let go enough, let go of clinging, and have this wonderful task of discovering what non-attached love is. It makes love with a lover or partner much more healthy if there's no attachment there. So this relationship between attachment and the absence of love, or the relationship between the absence of attachment and love, comes across in this particular teaching that Buddha gave, where he refers to 17, at least 16. There are 17 mental states that he refers to. And the first 16 are clearly emotional states, social states, emotions or attitudes or motivations that have to do with our interpersonal lives, things we do in relationship to each other.

And the description in this ancient text is these are things that soil the mind or soil the heart. So I don't know if you care about that kind of language. But I want to just first read you the whole wonderful list. Covetousness, greed, ill will, anger, revenge, contempt, dominance, envy, avarice, deceit, fraud, obstinacy, obstinance, conceit, prejudice, arrogance, vanity. Sorry to bring up the bad news here. It was a talk about love and I just evoked all these things for you. But these are kind of social things we can get caught in. And probably once or twice, accidentally some of these came up for you. And you had to deal with it and live with it.

And then the 16th one is not so obviously interpersonal. Maybe this is deeply personal, but it's the very one that allows these others to thrive. And it's negligence. If we live a negligent life, a life that's not really paying attention, not really caring for our life, for what's going on, that enables all these others. Don't live negligently. Live attentively. Live caringly. So the Buddha lists all these states. So it's clearly interpersonal, karyosocial, implying that the *Dharma* has a very centrally important interpersonal social purpose to make those relation-

ships healthy.

And the way he continues, he says, that a practitioner who really pays attention to their mind, really pays attention to what's going on within them, if they have any of these, we can see over time that it's not, these states are not inherent to the mind. They're not permanent, you know, etched in to the mind. These come and they go. They're there and they disappear. And there's a way of really seeing that, especially if you're really troubled by some of these states. And then you sit and meditate or quiet or go on vacation or have a good nap or whatever it takes, and you wake up and it's absent.

Some people carry these with them, literally for a year, some of these states, resentment. And it might come and go a little bit, but whenever they remember, they remember to do it. And so it seems like it's always there. But to have a qualitatively clear way, wow, you look around, it's not there. At least for this moment, I can't drum it up. Wow, this is possible. To see that it's contingent, to see that it doesn't have the nature of being permanent, to see that it's constructed, to see that it comes and goes, to see there is an alternative, to see there's an other way of letting the heart go, beat and shine and show its best.

There's a way of seeing this, the Buddha says in this teaching, that is so clear, so obvious, that even if it's for a short time, it inspires inspiration. It brings forth a huge inspiration. Wow, this is possible. This is freedom. And it might not seem so interesting. It seems like to you. It might be that, you know, becoming awakened, becoming liberated, is some great pie in the sky, a wonderful state, cosmic consciousness, you know, high, rarefied states of something or other. The Buddha says in the teaching, if you have this real clarity, we'll just pick greed for now, real clarity about greed comes, it goes, it's not permanent, it's possible to put it down like Ovid in a qualitatively clear way, an experience of mind and heart that's blissfully free of greed, blissfully free of resentment and envy, blissfully free of conceit.

Then you know what the Buddha's awakening is about. Then you have a taste of what the Buddha's awakening is. It's very practical, it's immediate, it's psychological. It's not like a big philosophical metaphysical experience. It doesn't require exalted states of concentration. Right there, you see what the Buddha is about. And the Buddha has done this thoroughly. It's his thoroughness that made him a Buddha. But if you do it partially, you get the taste of it.

And so then inspiration becomes stronger. And then also he says, then you're inspired. That also can give inspiration because now you know what the *Dharma* is about. You know the *Dharma*, this teaching and practice we're doing, is really about something that can be experienced right now in the immediate present, something we can see for ourselves, something that invites us to come. Look at this. And then we know, start recognizing that there are

people who have done this work. There are people who have done more and more of this letting go of their attachments. So these problematic social emotions that we see rampantly, painfully, in the news these days, being expressed in how people treat each other. But we know that there are people who live differently, and that's inspiring.

And so to have this inspiration, the Buddha then goes on, this kind of inspiration, this gladness, this joy, this delight, that comes together with a heart that's free of greed, hate, and delusion, or free of some of these things, then the heart, then the mind, will radiate its goodwill. And then he describes as radiance of goodwill in exalted ways. So you get the exalted part. You have to put it off a little bit. And he says that when abides in goodwill, above, below, around everywhere, all pervading, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will. Wow.

But the ticket, the doorway to this kind of wonderful heater we have in our heart, the heater that radiates goodwill, is doing this important inner work of understanding the social attitudes, the social motivations, the social emotions that we have that interfere, get in the way. And one of the ones that's not listed here, because it's not obviously causing harm for others. All these cause harm for others is fear. I think fear is often an obstacle for this deeper connection to ourselves, this, this, this.

And so this practice of mindfulness, the practice sitting down and meditating, is one of the orientations, one of the purposes of it that I like to be explicit about, because it's often implicit. But if you're explicit with it, maybe we can look for it or foster it or encourage it or take it in in a deeper way than we have. That in sitting down to meditate, the orientation is to create an atmosphere of safety. Even if your life is unsafe, even if outside the walls of your home there are riots and wars. Right here, in yourself. Can you take in and allow for a feeling of safety so that the fear we carry with us begins to settle, begins to quiet, maybe temporarily?

Because without fear quieting, without fear being met, without meeting the fear with goodwill, so the fear feels like it's not being not afraid of you. Some of you make your fear afraid, how you relate to it. And that makes the fear even more afraid. But to meet the fear with goodwill, to relax around the fear, to let the fear begin to dissolve, and to begin recognizing when there's a feeling of safety in your meditation. Safety that's only here and now, but here and now is good enough to begin to allow something deeper to show itself, something, a deeper capacity to feel, to know goodwill, to know compassion, to radiate appreciative joy, compassion.

But goodwill is the fundamental social emotion that the Buddha wanted to emphasize. It's so centrally important in this tradition. And it goes hand in hand with the second kind of

social movement, social relationship, social attitude that this tradition emphasizes, which is generosity. That generosity and goodwill, goodwill and generosity, that's the expression of a peaceful heart. That's the expression of the absence of greed, hate, and delusion. And that's our wealth. That's how we live the Buddha's teachings. That's where we find a deep abiding peace.

So what is your relationship to love without attachment? Have you ever kind of clarified, cleaned, scrub cleaned your love from even the smallest attachments and clings? Or are you content to have attached love? Do you justify it? But that's the wonderful kind of challenge or invitation in Buddhism is to discover what an unattached love might be. Love without clinging. Love that doesn't have to be an exchange.

Goodwill that maybe doesn't have to qualify to be called love. Because sometimes that love word is kind of a high bar. But goodwill, well-wishing, the Pali word for them translating as goodwill, as *mettās*, you know. And it's a cognate to the Pali word for friend, *mitta*. So some people translate it as kind of a friendliness, unattached friendliness, universal friendliness, an attitude of being friends with all people. So that's the talk on *Mettā*. I have nothing more to say.

So we have a few minutes, and if you have any comments or questions about this. Thank you for the talk, Gil. Greatly appreciate it. I was reading Ajahn Samado's book, a small little pamphlet, and he talks about *mettā* as loving patience. Loving patience. So it's a way, like you just said, if we call it goodwill, it sets the bar a little lower for loving kindness. Yeah.

And I was in Southeast Asia recently, and I was trying to generate loving kindness in the way we think of love as sort of more sacron for someone I didn't particularly have fond feelings for. And then I thought about this passage of Ajahn Samadhas of loving patience in that I'm not going to grasp on to patience as something I'm going to want to hand out to somebody or give somebody, but it allowed me to just be with whatever feelings I had and literally have goodwill, your definition for him. So it was very instructive for me. Thank you.

Yeah, yeah. Sometimes there's a, we can't make the situation any better and we have to kind of live with it. And so we can be patient. But there can be patience with stress, kind of holding ourselves together, not reacting, but loving patience. I was also thinking, as you were talking initially, that the *Brahmavihāras* are abstract nouns, loving patience and... *Karunā*, compassion. They're not action verbs. So it's easier to be unattached to something that's an abstract noun from my perspective. Okay. Wonderful. Thank you for your comments. Thank you.

Yes. So I find that I'm having trouble letting go of contempt and anger toward some public figures. Do you have any suggestions? Yeah, yeah. Well, first, if you can, don't be so interested in those public figures. Be interested in your contempt of them. Turn the attention 180 degrees around and really start understanding and feeling and looking what the experience of contempt is and how it is a drag for you, how you're diminished, how it limits you. Get to the root of your contempt. See what underneath it, what is it that gives birth to contempt. And there's a whole world for you to discover inside.

So can you do that? Can you turn around and sit with the contempt. And so after a while it doesn't matter who the contempt is for, because you're really getting connected, understanding it, feeling it in your body, understanding the beliefs, the different emotions that come together with contempt, and in the cracks of the contempt, what's the root of it? Thank you. And this is noble and invaluable work to do. I mean, this is what, you know, to be really inspired in the *Dharma* mind and be glad that you have *Dharma* practice is, wow, I'm so lucky. I have a practice to meet my contempt. So rather than being a drag, you're eager to do it.

Hi, Gil. I have a little bit unusual question. Question one. Have you considered spending any significant portion of your life in a... hostile environments, I don't know, political rights would be probably appropriate, you know, context for you, just so that you can practice actually being, you know, you know, having this love in an adverse environment rather than, you know, we're providing you with a lot of respect, love here, right? So it's easy for you to kind of do it back. But a lot of us, you know, especially coming out of corporate world, sometimes it can feel, a lot of times, in fact, as a war zone, right? Lots of politics and stuff like that. So you I don't know if you can relate to us in that respect. So have you ever considered, you know, doing something, going to like this adverse environment and actually seeing how you would, you know, be in that type of environment?

Well, certainly, you know, Buddhist communities are not angelic. Obviously looking at my question, right? And certainly in these communities, I've been the focus of people's hatred and ill-will. And so I've had by practice. And I lived in communities. I lived in monasteries. And sometimes the challenge is there. Very personal. When they're personal, they're also very intense. So I've had experiences, but specifically what you said, to have chosen to go put myself right in the middle of a riot and experience that, in order to practice with it, I haven't done that.

Is there reason? Have you ever had like consideration of doing it? I don't think I've ever thought of doing that as, for my own sake, to practice for myself. I have considered, I mean, in some ways, my whole Buddhist practice from, has been in preparation to do that. Okay,

thank you. I'd like some advice on what I'm going to tell my wife when I go home today and tell her that I'm going to be practicing unattached love. Okay. Why tell her? Why don't you discover the healthy way of doing that until she notices, hey, something's different here. It's really nice. What's happened to you? And then said, yeah, I've managed to clarify my love for you.

Oh, that's nice. Wait, don't say right away. But you're now unattached. Because a lot of people in the West are confused by that. And you want to kind of ease into using that big A word. There's no need to. But you can maybe say greed. Yeah, I've clarified. I used to have a lot of greed in my relationship to you. And it's no longer there. But maybe more seriously, I mean, what is then... Maybe you can clarify, like, what does it mean to have unattached love, and yet love is such an attachment, right? Like, how do you do both of those things?

I think it's true that for many, many people, love involves attachment. A little bit we have to look semantically at the definition of words. Right. Coming from the early 1960s, there was a kind of a foundational psychologist who used the word attachment for the parent-child bond. And so there's healthy attachment. So when it's a healthy bonding between parent and child or maybe even between couples and all that, and it's called attachment, we don't have to, we shouldn't assume right away it's the same attachment that Buddhist English uses. So there's a different English. English English and Buddhist English.

And so for Buddhist English, we're talking about grasping or clinging. That's synonymous with. For the parent-child relationship, attachment there doesn't need to have a clinging or attachment. But the bonding has its own dynamics that's quite strong, that can give birth to very intense and strong reactions and responses without clinging. Remember when my son was sick, he could walk now. He was, you know, maybe just beyond being a toddler. He could walk a little bit. But I remember being in downtown some city and we were walking along together, him right next to me, you know, it's kind of proud father he could walk, you know.

And then I ran into someone I knew when I started talking to the person. And in a moment I knew that I had lost track of my son. You know, I was, you know, and the speed in which I spun around towards a traffic to make sure that he wasn't going into the traffic was phenomenal. And because, you know, it turned out he was fine. But I was struck by, wow, that was an intensely fast reaction. And I thought, this is the bonding. Was I attached? You know, was there clinging? I don't, I would, I don't think particularly. Right. So we have to be careful what we're talking about.

But the attachment we're talking about in Buddhism is harming you. So why don't you go

home and tell your wife or your partner, I've decided to figure out a way to love you without harming myself. What would you say to that? You harming yourself? I had no idea. We better talk about this. Can we maybe pass it down? No. Hi, Gil. Good morning. As a legal practitioner, I was struck by your use of negligence this morning. It was actually really... No, no, no. Very illustrative. Be afraid to go home now?

I really liked how you said that negligence was the source of all of these other social problems, issues, concerns. And the reason that I was struck by that is because in the law, negligence is the source of so many torts, which are defined as legal harms. And the four elements of negligence are a duty or an obligation to do right, a breach of that duty, the causation of harm and the harm that results from that duty. So it was just very illustrative, and I wanted to thank you for that analogy as your resident nerd in the audience. Wonderful, wonderful. So maybe the last one behind you there, you have. Yeah.

Thank you so much for the talk, girl. I was thinking, I was personally thinking, you know, the unattached love. I feel I can practice it when with strangers or with friends. And I can see that when the intimacy increases, those 17 things happen. And I'm very aware of it, but I'm not, like I was just thinking about myself. I was thinking, how can I make sure those 17 things do not affect? They have to make sure what? The 17, like the greed, that do not affect the unattached love.

Yeah, it's a very good question, but I'm going to answer it differently than you asked. If you're a practitioner of attention, of yourself, practicing mindfulness, working on understanding how you work and what your attachments are and where freedom is, what love is, what unattached love is, you're really engaged in this process. As we develop intimate relationships with people, and there's much more love, much more sharing of a life. There's so many more issues that arise, complicated issues in the shared life and the shared, all that, that it becomes a really wonderful place to practice.

And so rather than avoiding those relationships so they don't come up, and just have wonderful goodwill towards strangers, just always just be around strangers. Just always just be around strangers. Make sure you're with strangers all the time. Okay. And make sure the strangers are far away. Then you can have universal good love, universal love for everyone. But as soon as you're, you know, it gets complicated. And so rather than avoiding those complications and avoiding these 17 or whatever other attachments there are, as if you're not supposed to have them, of course you will have something like this.

But sometimes a primary relationship for some people, that's the place where they're going to try to get to the root of it. They're going to practice with it. They can't go to the monastery,

so they make their life the monastery in terms of this is where I'm going to work on this and clarify and see myself more deeply. And I think it's an invaluable way of practicing the *Dharma* is to really bring it into the relationships you're in, even to the close relationships. And sometimes you'll learn a lot more doing that than if you go off to the monastery and sit quietly all the time and avoid all those relationships. So good luck. It's well worth it.

Okay. So I hope that this talk evokes your curiosity and questioning and exploration of this whole domain for yourself. And maybe even talking to friends, strangers, and enemies about this could be very interesting. Kind of hear it out and explore. So thank you very much.