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Public Talk – Love and Cherishing Others (Unedited)
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Introduction and Refuge

I think you want me to talk about love, isn't it? This idea of love, is that the plan? Okay...okay. Well, I've got – I want to sing a little prayer first; there's a little baby prayer, in Tibetan, and the general thought expressed in this prayer is this sort of altruistic aspiration to listen to these ideas, whether we've heard them once or a thousand times, or never before, so that we can take some tools from it – because it's got to be practical, you know? It's like cooking class – if you walked away with no techniques, it's kind of a waste, isn't it? And we want techniques to do what? To help us become a little bit less neurotic, a little bit less fearful, a bit more brave, a bit more kind, and a bit more, you know, these things. This is the point; so that we can – for our sake, and the sake of others. So, thinking like this; this is our reason, to sing a little prayer that expresses that.

Sang gye chho dang tshog kyi chhog nam la
Jang chub bar du dag ni kyab su chhi
Dag gi jin sog gyi pa so nam gyi
Dro la phan chhir sang gya drub par shog (3x)

'Attachment' and 'Love' – The Buddha's View

1:45

Well, you know, one of – you know, normally, if I say to Bob, 'I love you,' and then Bob says, 'Oh, yes, and I love you,' I mean, we usually mean that like idea for your sister or your mother or your close friend or your boyfriend or something. I mean, maybe to a friend you might say it, like a girlfriend, if, you know, not your boyfriend type boyfriend -- you understand.

So, what do we mean by it, normally? Well, if we look at taking the Buddha's take on it, if we take the Buddha's view, the Buddha's model of the mind and take – and look at it, there are certain characteristics in our mind that the Buddha would simply call negative states, and one of those is called 'attachment'. And basically, he would say that really runs the show right now. And we don't even really have a proper name for this in the way that he defines it. And basically what attachment is, under the heading 'negative' – not under the heading 'positive', because there some positive states of mind – the negative ones are kind of fearful and needy and neurotic and kind of I-based, in a neurotic sense; and the real energy of attachment is this sort of dissatisfaction that causes us to yearn to have this or that or – and we dump that onto events and people and things; truly believing that when we get it, we'll get happy. That's really what attachment is, and it's kind of sneaky; because what happens is, when I say, 'I love you', in the beginning especially, when Bob looks so divine and so handsome and so perfect, and you can be *in* love with somebody, you know, really it's ninety percent attachment. The mind is so excited, and everything is so perfect – 'Finally I've found happiness!' – and you've written this entire novel

that's going to get you 'til you're ninety-seven, you know. 'Now I've found happiness!'

I mean, I remember reading an article in Vanity Fair with Nicole Kidman, when she was still married to Tom Cruise – I know she got divorced and she's now remarried to some Australian country western singer -- what's his name? Keith Urban; that's the one – she's married to Keith now, with two nice children – I read all the papers.

So anyway, when she was with Tom, and she had this interview with him in Vanity Fair, she said at the end of the article, 'We will be together until we're eighty.' Then of course, you know, she had to say – and we are like this -- 'If we won't be, I will be devastated.' So what you can say there is, she had an immense – and the fact is, join the club, we're all like this; this is just the Buddha's way of describing it, you know– we have these masses of attachment; when we meet a person who fulfills that, it makes us blissful and loving and we get married and have babies or whatever you do, you know, the part that when it's all excited and wonderful is – this is attachment getting what it wants.

Now, of course, along with that does come love. And so love – what's love, for the Buddha? Attachment is this needy, unhappy, neurotic state of mind, which is very hard to recognize; because you don't have it raw, on its own. You have it usually mixed with love, and so we say the word 'love'. But when it's needy; and then, of course, when Bob stops doing what my attachment wants, that's when it turns into anger, and that's when he gets jealous, and all the misery happens, you know. And certainly for Nicole, when he left her, the attachment bubble completely burst and she was shattered and fell down. And that's the proof of attachment.

So, we can't imagine love without that. Whether it's for our baby, or whoever, you know, there's always the component of this. So then, what is love, if that's the case? I mean, it's a bit depressing, 'cause we can't imagine love without it.

Well, so, in the Buddhist view, in the model of the mind, you've got the heading called 'positive' and that's where you put love, in the altruistic sense. So, all the altruistic states of mind, for the Buddha, they've got this characteristic that when you have them, the extent to which you have any love, in this altruistic sense, is the extent to which you want others to be happy, for their sake. You delight in their happiness. So, really you can just define it as the wish that someone be happy. 'May you be happy.' 'Whatever makes you happy.' That thought with lots of affection built into it when we've grown it strongly, that's what's the meaning of love in the altruistic sense.

Now, we know we have that for the person we're attached to. But the trouble is, normally, you only love the person you're attached to, and you're only attached to the person you love. So, the only love we *do* know is for attachment people – sisters, brothers, unless we've split in the family, you know, the husband -- until he gives you up for a younger version, you know -- your beautiful baby – you

usually don't give your baby up, I mean, usually that lasts a whole life; we tend to think of it as attachment and love mixed together.

So, the whole Buddhist idea – and this is fundamental from Buddhist psychology, you know – as maybe we know; what Buddha's saying is extremely kind of hopeful but hard work, is that the so-called negative states of mind – attachment, anger, which gives rise to jealousy and arrogance and fears and depression and low self-esteem and all this stuff that we know so well – this is the stuff that pollutes us, this is the stuff that drags us down. And this is the stuff that limits our love; and that turns our love into hate, you know, when Bob's given me up for a younger version, what am I going to do? My attachment will be turned off like a tap; he no longer does what my attachment wants. He now no longer looks gorgeous to me; he looks as ugly as anything. And I can't bear him and I've going to really struggle not to hate him, aren't I? This is how we are, you know; and we assume – why we use the words 'love' and 'hate' together, you know?

Attachment is Suffering; and We Can Remove It from the Mind

6:55

But really, attachment and anger or attachment and hate go together, not love and hate. Love is the wish that someone be happy. The opposite of attachment is anger – the opposite of love, I mean. Sure; you can call it 'hate'. So, love actually is an aspiration that others be happy, a delight that others be happy. And the Buddha's point of view is very simple: the extent to which our own minds are caught up in attachment, in that bottomless pit of neediness, and therefore in anger and frustration and hurt and depression and jealousy – all of this stuff which we all know as so normal; we all understand then, we've all got them – which we then think, of course, in our materialistic model, we all just take them as a given; in fact we give equal status to all of these along with all the good ones, you know, and we say we're all born this way, they're natural...

So, Buddha's really quite radical in saying that actually this stuff which causes us so much pain; we shouldn't feel guilty about it. It's what breaks our hearts. It's what causes us suffering. And, of course, it's on the basis of this that we harm others. It's very clear; look at the world, you know? If you truly love a person, you wouldn't harm them. It's because you're attached to them and then they don't do what you want, then you harm them, 'cause your attachment has gone out, you've gone berserk, you know, turns into anger.

So for us in our world, like I said, we tend to give equal status to these states of mind. And so as long as we're fairly rounded, and we have a reasonable amount of love, a reasonable amount of attachment, a reasonable amount of anger, you're an okay person. Well, Buddha's more radical. Quite simply, the simplest way to put it, he is saying – which is quite shocking if you think about it; none of our materialist models of the mind would assert this – that we can rid our minds completely of attachment, anger, fears, jealousy. It seems incredible to us; it seems almost unnatural. In fact, it *does* seem unnatural; because we assume that anger is – as we say – it's natural, it's human. Jealousy is natural, it's human, you know?

And so – it's true, it's natural insofar as we have it, but the Buddha's point is more fundamental. He says if we look into it, we're going to see it causes us pain and suffering, and all his methods -- and all really Buddhism is, is this, actually - - are the methods for knowing our mind -- which is what meditation is -- so that we can identify these unhappy parts of our mind so that we can slowly remove them, step by baby step. This is what Buddha's saying. So, it's quite shocking, actually. You go to your therapist and you say, 'Please can you give me methods to get rid of all attachment, all anger, all fears, all depression, all jealousy; and have infinite love and compassion for all beings?' They will definitely think you're mentally ill. Do you understand my point? This sounds so cute, this sounds insane. It's not natural, as we'd say. Buddha's got a very different view. So, it's quite a surprise to hear this.

So then how do you develop this genuine love, you know? It's a tough one...okay, it's going to be a while. Don't hold your breath, okay? That's the point, it's not going to come overnight. Look, at least you've got to aim for something first, don't you? You've got to know how to label it, know how to identify the love, as opposed to the attachment – and that's the tough job, that's the tricky part, because they're completely mixed together. They come like water and milk, completely mixed; it's really hard. Which is why – if you're going to be, you know, using, anything from Buddhism – you've got to learn the words first, you've got to learn what does he mean by 'love', what does he mean by 'attachment'; otherwise it's just empty words, you know. And it's a proper job.

So, you know, as Lama Zopa Rinpoche puts it, of course we have love now. We do have love. We have an immense amount of love, wishing others be happy. And we help others be happy; we sacrifice our lives, sometimes, for our children, our husbands, people – our close ones – we do. We do have enormous love. And we see how hard it is, how tough it is not to have attachment, or to go against the attachment, to go against the anger, or to go against the jealousy and all the dramas and the fights, you know, quite – it's a tough job.

For Us Now, Attachment is the Default Mode

10:42

But as Rinpoche says, we do have love. But at the moment, it is unstable, because at the moment it is actually, not even just mixed with attachment but unfortunately, for most of us, it's *based* on attachment. In other words, attachment is the default mode -- quite scary. And it's so ingrained in us, the Buddha's saying, I mean he just says we come fully programmed with this stuff from the first moment of conception. We don't learn it from our mummies, you know? It's deeply inside us, this deep – the main disease, if you like, mental illness – a good term, the Buddha would have liked that term – the main way that attachment is suffering is quite deep inside us, and we don't actually even give it a name, and it's like this really deep sense of dissatisfaction; that's somehow at the level of assumption, we really kind of just assumed. When you wake up in the morning and you feel things just don't seem right, and you're slightly agitated, and there's always something wrong. You're checking what you haven't done, you're thinking what you should be doing...and the anxiety,

and *strong* anxiety we have, up to the level of intense fears...it's this constant sense of dissatisfaction which means 'I am never enough'. I don't ever *have* enough. Whatever I do *isn't* enough. Therefore *they* are not enough and *it* is not enough and *life* is not enough.

So it's quite a painful state of mind, and because it's quite ingrained in us, we don't question it, because it's deep inside; because it's spontaneous. And it's only spontaneous, Buddha says, because we've practiced it. So we don't question it; we assume it's true. So we *believe* I'm not enough. We *believe* I haven't achieved enough. So therefore we're always dissatisfied. It kind of sounds so cute, you know, but really it's quite profound. And it's heartbreaking; because, of course, one has to keep achieving more, and getting more – we need more money to do this and to have food, and blah-blah-blah; but what he mean by happiness -- and this sounds almost too corny sometimes – what he means by happiness is really contentment. And contentment can sometimes mean that you've got a stuffed stomach, and you're sleeping in front of the television. You feel content, you know? Well, that's not really content; that just means you're tired and feeling lazy.

'Content' is a state of mind that causes you – when it's really deep; and one has to practice to accomplish it—you actually even feel kind of joyful. A person who's truly content – even if you're not perfect, even if things are a problem – it means you're really feeling kind of joyful. You're kind of upbeat, positive. And we know some people like this. No matter how bad their lives get, they always see the bright side. Maybe they're denying some of the bad, but somehow they have that characteristic, of being content. It's pretty special, it's pretty amazing. And then, of course we just think, 'Well, they're just born that way. What to do? I'm one of the un-content ones. What can I do?' You know?

But, the Buddha's saying you can change it. And it needs going quite deep into our minds, and daily practice. And the key to success is learning to listen to what's happening in our own heads, you know.

So, the way I like to say it is, sort of, we've got, you know, we've got a head full of about fifty roommates. All the different voices, all the little stories, you know? And we've definitely got the good roommates like kindness, forgiveness, love, generosity, patience, compassion; they're all there, for sure. But the ones that often run the show and easily, you know, have a tantrum when things go wrong – attachment, dissatisfaction, frustration, annoyance, irritation, anger, jealousy, depression, low self-esteem; they're the loud roommates. And as soon as something slightly goes wrong, they're the ones that make a big fuss, you know, shouting and yelling and kicking.

So it's really just a simple way to put it, but we know that we never stop thinking, right? All the time are thoughts; chat-chat-chat-chat-chat. And because we're not used to being introspective in our culture – we don't learn that, you know, people think it's normal to have a busy mind, rabbitting on about nothing, never ...well, not rabbitting on about nothing, rabbitting on about lots of things; but because we're so caught up in the outside world, so busy with dealing with

this and that and work and the car and the driving and the life and everything, we don't notice it until they're very loud roommates having a tantrum. 'Oh, I must be angry,' we'll say, when the words are vomiting out your mouth -- a bit late to notice.

The First Step – Hearing Our Own Mind

14:58

So the idea is to be able to listen before, you know, you can't get out of bed one morning.

'I'm depressed...' That kind of person, who goes more toward depression than anger is because like – the person who gets angry – each of us, the depressed person and the angry person – both, the same state of mind, actually. They're both aversion, and they're both the response when attachment doesn't get what it wants. This is quite subtle. So, one goes *in* and becomes despairing and hopeless, one goes *out* and punches and kicks, you know. We've all got these different personalities. But in both cases, we don't notice what we're thinking until it's too late. Then, of course, we'll go to a therapist and take pills and all the rest.

So, the key, really, the key first step to try to, you know, develop love, which, of course, we all want so badly, is to know our own mind; to hear our mind. And that's a puzzle to us, because it's then you see – okay, it is a puzzle, because you don't quite know what to do with it when you hear it. Mostly we identify with what we call '*feelings*'. Feelings -- and now what we are run by are feelings. If something *feels* good, we figure it must *be* good. If it doesn't feel good, we think of it as a disaster.

So, the Buddha's take on it is kind of interesting: that the feeling level is a result of having the thoughts, deep down, so often that now it's come to the level of being visceral and physical. So, the only reason a person has angry *feelings* is because you have angry *thoughts*, and this is a big surprise. In other words, Buddha's saying – he's like a cognitive therapist, not joking – that beneath the feeling is actually the mind racing away, telling all its elaborate stories. The anger's got its own elaborate story about things based on attachment not getting what it wants, based upon this; and then jealousy's got its story, and depression's got its story...but we don't notice the stories all chatting away, deep down, so fast; until they get to the level of feelings, which is when they're very habitual. And it's only when they get to feelings we realize that we've got a problem. Then we just think, 'Well, how can I change feelings? Buddha says I can get less angry. What am I supposed to do, suppress my feelings?' That's the best thing we can come up with.

In our culture, you either vomit everything out or you suppress it and live in denial. Well, this third approach, using these skills of being your own therapist as Lama Yeshe puts it; listening to your own thoughts, listening – and that's based on having a simple focusing practice every day, a simple kind of psychological technique where we focus the mind and step out of the equation; step back from the chaos so at least you stay on one thing, like focus on your breath or whatever, you know. And all the chaos can be there and maybe even

not settle down – sometimes you think you're getting worse – it's because you're listening to it, you're hearing the thoughts. And this we have to learn to work with, you know. And then, slowly, slowly, we've got to begin to notice the difference between the attachment thoughts and the love thoughts, the compassion thoughts and the angry thoughts, you know. They're all mixed up like a big soup right now.

I mean, it's certainly do-able, and this is the approach that Buddha takes; and it's really practical. But it takes time. There's no quick fix, you know, because, again, the key point in Buddha's psychology is you've got this marvelous potential for these good qualities which we can develop to bucket-loads, you know – love, compassion, contentment; which includes, which have a characteristic – the good qualities have a characteristic such that to the extent to which you have them in yourself -- of being peaceful. Love and compassion aren't neurotic, you know. They're kind of peaceful states of mind... it's not like you're *sad* to see suffering, but it's a very stable, spacious state of mind; whereas the negative states of mind are kind of panic-stricken, freaking-out drama queens, you know; little kids stomping their feet, the angry roommates, the crazy roommates. They're a mess.

Accountable, not Guilty

19:00

But like I'm saying, we've got them all mixed together right now. We can't tell one from the other, and that's the key job we have to do. And then we have to have the courage to identify ourselves more in terms of the good ones, even though they're not so practiced now. We might be full of anger now, but Buddha's saying it's cool; it doesn't define you, it causes you suffering; when you see it causes you pain you just don't have guilt, you have real, painful regret because you realize it's hurting you, and of course it's causing you to harm others. So you get very kind of grown-up about it rather than guilty. We love to be guilty. That's one of the biggest, lousiest, crummy roommates – guilt. We think it's almost virtuous. It is not.

So, the whole attitude in Buddhism is to be accountable; to hear the crazy roommates – they're all your roommates, I'm sorry; they're in your head, not mine, you know, they're yours. We've all our own, but they don't have to run the show. The Buddha's saying we can grow the good ones to the point that they are the loudest, they are the default mode and we can grow them 'cause they are who we really are. But the other ones, the less you give them power, eventually they'll all leave. This is how he's saying it – I like this analogy, you know.

So, love and compassion; who wouldn't – love and attachment. You see, the trouble with giving up attachment, we get very depressed, because we can hear – especially if you're in love with somebody, you know – attachment to Bob when he's so handsome and gorgeous; you think he's the ant's pants when you're in love with somebody; it's just like the person looks perfect to you -- and so when you think of giving up attachment, you think we're kind of – as Lama Zopa says

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'Oh, you mean I've got to give up my happiness? I've got to give up my heart?' because we can't distinguish between attachment and love. We think this means love, you know? It's such a blissful feeling.

The Delusions Exaggerate

20:40

And of course you want him to be happy; that's the love part, and it seems so easy because you're in love with him. But we all know that bliss doesn't last, you know; you start living with him, and he's kind of, you know...suddenly he looks less perfect. He might burp during dinner, or fart between the sheets instead of in the toilet. Suddenly, the person who you thought was so perfect – I mean, we set ourselves up for trouble; and that's what attachment does, you see. What all the delusions do – Buddha calls them 'delusions'; they're liars, these roommates. They're crazy; they exaggerate everything. They make a big song and dance about everything. So, what attachment exaggerates is Bob's gorgeousness. It's nice to see someone who's gorgeous; you can't say it's not. But along with exaggerating his gorgeousness we also exaggerate his role in making me happy, and that means I have this massive expectation – 'He better make me happy.' So that's why I get so distressed when he does things that my attachment doesn't like. So I'm going to blame him and get angry. Before I know it, two months later I can't stand the sight of him. Do you understand?

So, it seems good that attachment exaggerates the goodness of somebody. That sounds wonderful, but it comes with this massive expectation and manipulation to get him to do what I want, and this panic if he doesn't, and anger – which is the response if attachment doesn't get what it wants. So it comes with all this baggage, you know? The same with the chocolate cake: liking chocolate cake is totally appropriate, like loving Bob is totally appropriate. 'Attached' to the chocolate cake is the problem.

You know, wanting something is totally reasonable. I have to *want* to walk out that door before my legs pick me up. Isn't it true? The thought – they say in Buddhism 'everything exists on the tip of the wish' or the thought – not kidding. So I have – to want something is perfectly reasonable; don't mix that with attachment, don't confuse it. 'Love' doesn't mean attachment; 'liking' doesn't mean attachment. Wanting something doesn't mean attachment.

So, I have to say I'm going to walk out the door. Believe me, if I'm thinking I'm going to sit here chatting with you and I find my legs walking me out the door, I'd get a big surprise. The only reason my legs do the job is because my wish is there. So, 'wanting' to walk out the door is not the same as being 'attached' to walking out the door. If I 'want' to walk out the door, and you stop me to have a chat, and then I get annoyed with you – 'Excuse me! I want to want out the door!' – that means I'm attached to it, because attachment does not like getting what it doesn't want.

So wanting one thing doesn't mean attachment. Liking cake – that's perfectly fine, it's just habit, you know; Tibetans like their yak cheese, Australians like their Vegemite...surprisingly. We love our Vegemite. So, 'liking' Vegemite is,

'Oh, I'd love some Vegemite, yeah!' You get all excited 'cause you like Vegemite. But then when it doesn't come, like when Dinae today bought me Marmite instead, if I was 'attached' to Vegemite, I would have said, 'No, thank you, I don't want Marmite.' But I didn't, did I, Dinae? I said, 'Thank you very much!' I didn't blink. I saw it; I registered it wasn't Vegemite, I did a quick thing in my mind, and I said, 'That's fine. I can take Marmite.' You get my point here. Attachment looks like it's nice; it makes you excited, it makes you anticipate, you're full of excitement, everything's delicious; you're in the 'up' mode, you're in the high mode; the 'up' mode. Everything's wonderful, which looks good, but it's got a lot of garbage on the way with it, you know. It comes with a lot of other junky stuff, like I said: expectation, manipulation to get it, and then when you get it, it's '*mine*' so I will possess Bob as '*mine*' which means I get jealous if you want him. I will get angry if he doesn't do what my attachment wants; it comes with all this other baggage and that's the part we have to see is the suffering part.

Having a good feeling and looking at Bob and feeling blissful – that feels wonderful. It doesn't – it seems cruel that we have to give up attachment, if it means feeling good. But the Buddha's point is really more subtle. You don't have to chuck the baby out with the bath water. You're not chucking out your happiness; you're actually chucking out all the junky stuff. You're chucking out the possessiveness, you're chucking out the expectations, you're chucking out the manipulation. You're chucking out all of that part. Do you understand? And what you end up with – it mightn't always *look* so exciting; you don't go up and down so much – but your mind is blissfully content. That's the bonus. That's the result of giving up attachment, because attachment's like a junkie's mind: very extreme, very neurotic, very manipulative, very grasping and profoundly self-centered. That's tricky; that's like a honey-covered razor blade: hard to see initially, but it's actually suffering, and it's hard to see we have it.

I remember a friend of mine, a Buddhist, and had a Buddhist wife; they're really good friends and call each other 'darling', they both do the cooking and they look like they're really good Buddhists, you know, been together for years like a happy couple. You know, you think, 'There's a good couple, looks like they're working as a good couple.' And they are, they are. But she suddenly fell in love with a younger guy one time. And you can tell, it was devastating to him. So, he wouldn't have thought he had so much attachment until he lost the object. Do you understand what I'm saying? You don't realize you're attached until you don't get the object, until the object is not there. That's the pity; and so the real job then is to work on the mind and to observe it so we can distinguish it before it doesn't get what it wants; that's a great practice.

The second attachment – the millisecond attachment is thwarted – and this works at a very subtle level, throughout the day, you know? You're just driving down the street thinking you're feeling happy, and then suddenly the red light comes, and you get irritated. Well, 'irritation' is a polite word for anger. 'Frustration' is a polite word for anger. 'Annoyed' is a polite word for anger, a variation of it; not a very extreme one, it's true...you know, it's not road rage yet, but it's a variation of aversion. So attachment – you're all eager-beaver when you're getting what you want; you rush to something and then the second it goes

wrong or the red light comes or your person says the wrong word or he does something in the sheets or whatever it is – irritation arises. Annoyance; and that's anger. We're going between these two a thousand times a day, and it's tricky to see it.

Like I said, because we're not looking inside we only notice it when it's full-blown and the roommates are having a mental breakdown, you know, screaming and yelling. And that's why we have to have this ability to look into our minds before it gets to the mouth. And that's where practice comes in, and it's not anything esoteric: a simple little practice, a little bit every day, really we can cultivate the skill to step out of the mess and just – not to get involved in it, not try to work it out every minute – just let it be. Let the thoughts come, let the thoughts go. Give yourself some space, you know. And that skill of introspection, of intelligent introspection, you bring to bear in your daily life. So when the drama on the road happens, you're noticing what you're thinking, so you can handle it before the drama happens. You're noticing what you're thinking at work, not just the other person, and suddenly you avoid the fight because you're noticing your thoughts and you adjust them so the words come out nicely. This is what practice is: just ordinary, day-to-day activity. But in order to do it, you know – if you like the Buddhist approach, of course, you have to be specific and take the Buddha's understanding of the mind – but every word I'm saying here sounds cute and sounds nice; especially we all know the word 'anger' and we all know the word 'depression', we all know the word 'possessive'; but it's really a quite precise interpretation of the mind, you know, and it goes quite deep.

So far so good; are we communicating? Do you have any questions for me? Where are you, darling? Okay, talk to me.

Don't We Need Some Ego to Operate on a Day-to-Day Basis?

28:53

Q: So, now...there is the idea of 'no self, no problem' 'no self, no self', but isn't it true that we need some ego to operate on a day-to-day basis? And if that is true, then how can we completely say that there's 'no self'?

Ven.: It's a question of understanding these words. It's not as gross and as clichéd as 'there is no self'. I mean, clearly, there you are: you're a 'self'. It's much more subtle, the understanding. So, even without going into the details there, the simplest way to put it would be: what Buddha's really saying is, we're not trying to get rid of 'self', we're trying to get rid of the neurotic voices of ego. It's just the way I say it; and that's all this 'neurotic self'. And because we have this over-exaggerated, instinctive grasping at what Buddha would say is a wrong sense of self, a wrong *sense* of self, that we have attachment and anger and pride and jealousy and neurosis. These are the things he's saying we get rid of; you don't get rid of your self. You could actually say, that when you got rid of that junky stuff which is causing you pain and causing you to harm others, you've developed love, wisdom, joy, contentment, fulfillment, and it's almost like you can say now you've found your *real* self, which is a self that's linked to others, a

sense of an interdependent self; not a paranoid, separate, lonely, bereft, miserable, poor, self-pity-me self. You get my point now?

So, it's like kind of you become a really *nice* self, which is spacious, interconnected; you can be very strong, you can be brave, you can be appropriate; look, you won't be sort of lovey-dovey and stupid, you can be very powerful, very confident, very courageous, there'd be no fear, be no anxiety, no panic, no drama...I mean, can you imagine being like that? My goodness. Do you understand my point? That's the way it is; the words can be easily misunderstood until we go into them quite deeply, you know, and often, superficial, ah, practice of Buddhism ends us up -- becoming -- can cause us to become kind of nihilistic.

'Oh, I've got no attachment.'

'Would you like sugar in your tea, Robina?'

'Oh, I don't care...'

'Would you like coffee, Robina?'

'I don't care...'

Indifference is hideous. Indifference is not the option. The word 'attachment' seems to imply 'detachment'; and we can really misunderstand that. That's why I know when I first met the Tibetans, met the Dalai Lama, it's very clear he's not some boring detached person; do you understand what I'm saying? Full of life, full of energy, full of fun, full of -- very charismatic, very powerful, but clearly no ego, no neurosis; so, I mean, you've got to think twice about what it means for yourself, when you see the proof of the pudding in people like him. You get my point?

Q: When you meditate, sometimes you can actually *feel* the difference, and so I was wondering...

Ven.: Between what and what?

Q: Between...some days I can feel the difference between attachment and non-attachment...

Ven.: Okay...I would suggest you keep going and eventually more than feel it, but know precisely the difference. It's a precise thing. That's why I find Lama Yeshe's phrase 'being your own psychologist' kind of interesting. It sounds like a little marketing ploy -- it's a good marketing ploy, I agree -- but it's marvelous; the very interesting point is this: you know, if I'm going to my therapist, in the West; and we've got marvelous therapists now -- so marvelous, since Freud, it's so fantastic what we're doing in the West in the last hundred and fifty years, isn't it? It's incredible; looking inside now. But I think, still -- this is interesting; this is where Buddhism does diverge -- the materialist view is based upon the assumption that I'm made by my parents, alright, therefore my anger, my jealousy, my fears have not only come from their genes, but then their conditioning has produced my anger and my fears and my jealousy; the way the teachers treated me at school, and all the different events of my life. And that's -- it's marvelous to look into the events, 'cause it can tell us a lot about our self -- you understand? But that, of course, is based on the view that that's what

produced you; that's our view in the world. So, when you're with your therapist, you go back into the past and the *events* to discover why you are. The Buddha's view is much more fundamental and really much more tasty, and you can do both; but the Buddha's one is by learning his model of the mind and exactly what a negative state is, and what is attachment – the definition of it, how it's this-and-that – and then, through these skillful techniques of meditation, you imbue that looking, that mindfulness with this intelligence of knowing how to call what you see deeper and deeper down.

'Being Your Own Therapist'

33:28

So being your own therapist means going deeper into your own thoughts, into the actual construction of these elaborate stories deep down inside us and deconstructing these stories and then reconstructing them, is really a way to say it...it's a much more, I think, tasty, more profound way to really know your mind and how to change it. The events kind of are interesting, but they're nowhere near as fundamental as knowing your actual own mind itself, and that comes with not only knowing the meditation skills but knowing the Buddha's way of describing what is attachment, *precisely*– how is it different from love, *precisely*. And that's quite a – you know, the precision and clarity that we know we need to learn cooking and mathematics is what Buddha would say we need to learn in this in this scene we're describing here. So it's quite a different approach. Do you understand? And it's *this* way we can change. Okay? Someone else? I'm happy to keep chatting...just press a button and tell me what to talk about and I'll do it.

That was 'love' and 'attachment' – was that clear? The difference? Okay. What else? Somebody?

Compassion

34:51

I think one interesting point – under the 'virtuous' or 'positive states of mind' heading, as opposed to the 'negative' or 'non-virtuous', the way Buddhist psychology describes it – you know, we can put another state of mind which really goes hand-in-hand with love; and this is called compassion. I think with this, we can have a lot of misconceptions, too. It can be mixed with other things. So, like I said before, the way we are now, we do have love; but as Rinpoche says, it's unstable; it actually not just comes along with attachment but usually it's based on the assumption of attachment, meaning as long as Bob keeps doing what my attachment wants, I'm prepared to keep wanting him to be happy (which is called love). Do you understand my point? And of course, we know how painful it is when he does leave me for a younger version – you *don't* want to want him to be happy, you wish and pray she will leave him! Isn't it? You can't help it. It's very strong. So, we can see: it's tough to have love for those who don't do what we want.

Now, compassion is also limited in the way we have it now. We do have compassion; it's defined in Buddhist terms as –if love is 'may you be happy' – the thought – you either want the person to be happy or you delight in their

happiness, their happiness makes you happy; that's love. Compassion is like the flip side. The reference point for compassion is someone's suffering. 'May you not suffer' – that's compassion. And then, of course, when you see them suffering, you have empathy; you feel their pain. That's compassion. But, we do have compassion, now. But actually, we can say, from the Buddhist point of view it's really limited. We only have compassion for 'our' people and victims. And that usually means animals and children, I'm sorry to say. We love to have compassion for animals and children. Well, that's fine; better than nothing, I promise. But the Buddha's saying it *ain't* enough, I'm sorry. It's also got strings attached. It's also, you know, unstable.

So, the level of compassion – in the same way that the level of love that the Buddha's saying we can accomplish step by step with all the practices is outrageous – it seems exhausting initially. The Buddha would say we have the capacity to love and have compassion for every living being. So, there's a lot of thinking that has to get done. We've got to look at a lot of our assumptions and change these assumptions; and again, the way the Buddha's, sort of, path is presented is a very incremental, step-by-step progression. One can't just leap into it, you know? We've got to look at a lot of fundamental assumptions in the mind and really change those.

So, compassion, then – we think about it – why should I have compassion? You know, if you think of a 'victim', the victim is a person who is harmed by someone. So usually, of course, you'd never think that you're going to have compassion for the *harmer*. Why would you have compassion for an oppressor? That sounds very weird. Why would you have compassion for a child abuser? Why would you have compassion for a person who harms animals; because that's the other option. So let's look at that. What's the logical reason from Buddha's point of view; and it's got to be a logical reason, not just some gooey feeling, you know; some gooey reason.

Why We Have Compassion for the Oppressor: Factoring In the View of Karma 38:04

So, now, if we were Christians discussing here, Christian teachings, there's a logical reason there. The logical reason is that God made everybody and that is the basis for having compassion and love for everyone and therefore forgiveness; that's perfectly reasonable from the Christian point of view. But the Buddhist point of view is different because you remember, Buddha's not a creator, and he didn't say that we're created by somebody; that's not the issue in Buddhism. The logical reason for the Buddhist approach to have empathy for the suffering of another actually comes from the first stages of practice where we work on our own mind. And that is to say, the fundamental point in Buddhism – and this is one of the meanings of karma – the fundamental point to the Buddha is that whatever we say and do and think has consequences for me. And once we can get this – and I'm not even talking about looking at past and future lives yet – if we can see in our own inner awareness of our own minds, simply that my attachment, my anger, my depression, my jealousy break *my* heart. Harm *me*. If we could get this point on our earth, can you imagine what a blissful world it would be?

I mean, we know this when it comes to certain things. We know that if you smoke enough cigarettes, you'll get really sick and you might even get cancer, not to mention emphysema. If you eat really lousy food, you're going to get sick. We know this. We can see that there are consequences to ourselves of certain actions that we do. But we have a very different set of rules, it seems, when we come to what we call emotional stuff or moral stuff. Do you understand? We have a very strong streak in this lot where we think it's always someone else's fault. It's not *my* fault. 'Why are you depressed?' You know, because something went wrong. 'Why are you fearful?' Because this person did *that*. 'Why are you angry?' Because she said *that*. Why this? Because we always have this externalizing of them, which sort of implies – it means *it's not my fault*, therefore it's okay.

But it's a bit like saying, you know, 'Well, I didn't make Marlboro, I didn't make this tobacco, I didn't do it, it's not my fault...' But I mean, who cares who made it? Who cares who sold it to you? If you can recognize the simple bare-bones fact that smoking will harm your body, then whoever might be these wicked people who made it -- doing whatever they do -- you see there are consequences to you, which means you are accountable, which means you can change and make a decision. The same with anger, the same with depression, the same with jealousy; the same with these states of mind, you know. This is all.

I remember even a Catholic – this old guy who used to visit my friends on death row in Kentucky – for thirty years, he was out of his mind with rage because his daughter had been murdered. Of course! Can you imagine the grief? But of course he had anger and rage because of this; we would say it's normal. He said it took him thirty years to realize the real reason for his suffering. It wasn't his daughter's death. It was his rage; and this is the point I'm making, this is the simple point that Buddha's making. So forget whether he had the view of karma and past lives, they don't care; just this experience of seeing your own mind -- seeing the pain it causes *you* – this should be enough for us to think, 'Oh my God! What can I do to get rid of it?' This is kind of very mature. We can be really grown-up when we think this. So, if you can see that your anger and your pain and your hurt, which then causes your body and speech to do harm to others is why *you* suffer, then all you've got to do is look at others.

So, of course it's wrong to harm others. Of course it's terrible for someone to abuse a child – or indeed abuse an old person, I don't care. For anybody to harm anybody is wrong. No argument there. But when we can understand our own mind, our own anger, our own fears, our own depression, our own hurt, our own wish to lash out, our own unkind words, our own bad actions and where it comes from and how it causes you pain, it's not too difficult to see that people who harm others, their suffering is causing them *incredible* suffering. Of course, the Buddha would suggest even more suffering in the future. But I think this doesn't take too much to see; except that we just don't want to see it, that's all, because we like to feel sorry for a victim, which instantly means, 'who can we blame?' And we love to be angry with somebody.

So, you know, if we can really have the courage to see our *own* suffering and what causes it – our own rubbish, our own delusion, our own anger, our own hurt, our own stuff; actions of body and speech that harms *me* – then we can see it for others. Forget about karma for the future. Does this make sense, people? So then you can really extend your compassion, and that's where true compassion isn't just some sentimental thing – 'Ah, the poor thing can't help it...' When it's victims, we love to kind of coddle, you know. It's like a tough mother, you know, tough love. You told me four times to do something, and I won't do it. You're my mother; you have to be strong with me – 'Go to your room!' And if you're a good mother, it's coming from kindness. I won't think you're kind, but it worked; I needed some tough love. So, that's a valid kind of – that's compassion that isn't just sentimental and soft, you know? And when you realize – it's like another example for me is, you know, let's say some junkie: everybody else hates him. They're a pain to be around. They steal, they lie; they're not friendly company. But the mother of that junkie, her heart breaks. Why? It's so clear. She can see he's harming himself; and that's the key to our having compassion for others, *that we all harm ourselves*.

This is really important. Otherwise, there's this dualistic mode of always having compassion and then wanting to blame, and our compassion just becomes anger then. We forget about compassion; all we want to do is hate that person who did the harm, you know? Hate that person, thinking it's valid to hate them. And then you destroy your own mind as well. This takes looking at, though. It's not necessarily easy for us, to not have anger. So, protect the child, of course. Put the guy in prison, of course. Stop the person from harming the animal, of course. But have genuine compassion for that person, because it's better for them to be locked up. That's a tough one, but it's not impossible. One has to really think it through, you know?

And the Buddhist approach very much is, you know, a bird needs two wings: wisdom and compassion. And all the work of the wisdom wing is the work you do on your own mind, knowing your own self really deeply, really well, and really being accountable for the junky stuff inside you without guilt, without blaming anybody -- it's yours, you know – and knowing it doesn't define you and that it causes *you* pain and suffering and causes you to harm others *and* you can change it. And when you've got *this* for yourself, it's easy to translate it to others. Then you can have a very big heart. You'll be very brave, very courageous and have this strong -- wisdom kind of gives strength to your compassion. Otherwise it's sentimental and it's just for these small victims, and you have anger, which doesn't help at all. Anger – it just doesn't go anywhere. You've got to be bigger than this, you know? So, this is the Buddhist approach to love and compassion; a tough one – not easy. And the key to them is removing the rubbish from our own minds, so we then have more courage, more strength, more wisdom and more joy. No question -- more courage, especially. No fears, you know? So, what do you think about that? Any questions about that? I talk very fast and the time hasn't run out yet, you see? Another question, darling? Go for it!

You're Not Necessarily Getting Worse; You're Just Noticing What's Already There 45:53

Q: Well, I find too, that anger begets anger, and so I have tried to become really aware of how frequently I get angry. And it's like... sometimes you're reaching out to get something and something else falls down... I can't believe how many times a day I get angry! It's incredible...

Ven.: That's exactly right. And why – it's because the default mode is this bottomless pit of neediness every second to get what I want. It's so deep inside us we don't even notice it as a voice – we just think it's normal. Buddha would say it's *so* deep inside us; it's the most primordial habit. It's so habitual, it's instinctive. So, 'habit' is exactly the word.

Q: So, I guess what I was going to say is that lately I've been noticing that when I have these little frustrations, I'm saying, 'Oh, another test to see how I'll react to it.'

Ven.: That's the point; that's practice, isn't it? Exactly right. We're really being aware; that's how we practice, you know? So, like playing the piano, you've got to be alert every second, to make sure we're doing it the right way. If it's wrong you've got to change it, don't you? If we don't notice it, how can we change it? That's the point, yeah. And this is why, too, when we start to look really deeply into our minds and start practicing this way, often the first thing is we think we're getting worse. But we're not getting worse, we're just noticing, you know - - we've just been on default mode until then. The fact that when you start to notice it, you know, and then we start to see the junky stuff – how marvelous! If we don't notice it – I mean, if you don't realize that you've got cancer... that ignorance is terrible. You've got to know you've got a problem.

Q: So when I feel like my mind is getting worse and busier and like – augh! – that's my question. Is it like my ego's trying to protect itself or are you just noticing that it's stronger...

Ven.: Well, that depends; if you are practicing being introspective and observing your mind and wanting to change, then one of the signs is that you think you're getting worse because you're seeing it more, frequently. Most of the time we're just on default mode, we don't notice it. So, in that way it's a good sign.

I mean, it's like if you go to the gym to get fit, you actually come home with more pain than you could have imagined, but it's good pain, isn't it, because you know you're working on it. And that's another point, too. When we are working on our minds, you need to be courageous to put up with all the roommates; 'cause you're going to hear these lousy roommates louder and louder. We've got to be brave, because they won't go overnight, you know; we can't change habits overnight. You don't turn into a perfect body overnight at the gym; you've got to keep putting up with the floppy muscles and the overweight, but you know you're working at it so you can get optimistic: you've got your end result coming. You understand what I'm saying? So you be brave in dealing with the

stuff while we've got it; but knowing we're working on it. That's important. So, what else, people? Something else? Any other questions?

Attachment Falls Away Gradually as You Progress

49:22

Q: Two of them...one is pertaining to what you were just saying in regards to you can see the end result coming... at the same time, though, you don't want to attach to that energy...

Ven.: No, you don't want to attach to it, but we need courage; we're human, you know? Otherwise – if – of course, we are attached to it. But don't expect to give up attachment immediately; it may be the first step is to become attached to becoming a *good* person, than attached to a lousy one. I mean, one step at a time, you know? Eventually as we're working on ourselves, attachment will go away. So, I figure, if you've got to have a relationship with somebody, at least have attachment to a good person. Do you understand? A virtuous, good person who can help you with your practice, because you're not going to get rid of attachment; it's not possible to have it until we realize emptiness – a long way to go. If you're doing the right thing you'll go incrementally, step by step. Wanting to become a better person is a good thing, it's marvelous, it's what makes us want to do the job. So, of course there's going to be attachment in the beginning; it's impossible not to be, but that's okay. You keep working on it and then slowly the attachment falls away as we progress, as we progress, as we progress. And we're human, we do have a sense of space and time and goals and now it's four o'clock and tomorrow it'll be next morning, gotta make plans...it's the way our mind works, you know. When we're only on that attachment neurotic like a motor, then we go crazy; of course.

So we still have to continue to make plans and want this and do our practice and know what it's like to be a better person; imagine what it will be like to be less depressed, less angry. Oh, my goodness, we need that inspiration, we need that encouragement. Do you understand? There's no question. If attachment to it is more than the other one, then you won't last; because attachment never lasts, it gives up. Do you understand? We've got to give ourselves courage. It's important, very important; because we're so overwhelmed by our hopelessness now. We're so overwhelmed by our misery and our self-pity and, 'I'm hopeless, I'm no good.' We define ourselves by our fears and our depressions and our uselessness; and that's what drags us down. So, we've got to start identifying with our potential. You know, I mean, especially, look at the typical example: let's say you're grossly overweight and you're so exhausted by it and you want to change and you just don't believe you can because we're so used to defining ourselves, 'This is who I am, I'm hopeless, I'm no good, I can't stop my eating;' you drag yourself down. Like if you're an alcoholic; you drag yourself down; you believe, 'that's me'. Start to taste your own potential to know you've got the courage to change – we need as much as we can to give courage to us and that means to identify with what we will be like when we're no longer like that. We need that; it's important, I tell you. Do you understand? So important...we've got to be kind of upbeat about it. Remember that is what is possible; it *is* possible. When we're overwhelmed by our own misery, we can't see any light at the end

of the tunnel; that's no good. We've got to see that it's possible, isn't it? Very important.

Helping Our Children

52:10

Q: I have a question about children... you know, you speak of -- it's primordial, the attachment...

Ven.: That's right. Deeply instinctive.

Q: ...and in regard to our babies and our children; can you speak about that a little bit...

Ven.: You mean, how to help them?

Q: Yeah, you know, how to... I have the tools, through practices and through reading, to learn about attachment, to learn about focusing on my mind, to take the time to sit; how would I maybe pass those tools on...?

Ven.: I understand. I really think the key to it, and it's almost -- it's so simple, it's embarrassing -- and there's no shortcut -- is, if we were here describing music instead of working on the mind, and you were asking me, 'How will I give these tools to my children,' well, the answer has to be that the more you know them the easier it will be. If you don't know them, you can't hand them on, can you? So, you've got to do the job yourself; because the fact is, because we're dealing with the mind here -- and I see a child angry, I see a child depressed, I see a child do all their trips -- if I don't know my own mind at all, then I'm not going to interpret correctly what I'm seeing., you know? I just won't. Then it's going to cause be to panic and worry... and if I've got anger, but I don't think I have, then my kid's anger will appear twenty times worse to me because I don't realize that my anger's factoring in as well.

Do you understand what I'm saying? It'll be so distressing to me that I don't -- and so I'll think it's all the kid's. And that's not true; it's me as much as anything. So, until I can work on my mind and see what I am doing and interpret mine well, I cannot really help my child. It's like -- that's what's so marvelous about therapy these days -- it used to be when you studied psychiatry, it was a medical discipline, you looked at rabbits' brains to find out why they did what they did, and there was this very arrogant person who would never deign to think that they were mentally ill, and they were there to dispense advice and tablets to poor mentally ill people. But now, at least, when people become therapists, you've got to do it yourself first; and that's extremely important. I mean, how bizarre to think you wouldn't study music before you taught somebody else music? It's completely weird; it's not possible. You've got to be a musician before you teach others. So you've got to do this work before you help others; and doing it yourself, then, gives you so much more clarity, so much more awareness of where that kid's coming from; and therefore more courage and more patience and more skill, and their problems won't freak you out. If you're not dealing with yourself, their problems freak you out, so everything's worse, everything's

a mess. There's no shortcuts, we've got to deal with ourselves. Then, everything's clear. Do you understand? Yes?

Attachment and Compassion in Our Close Relationships

55:14

Q: ...a question about a family member, who is maybe not an alcoholic but drinking a lot...

Ven.: You know, I think this is where it's very interesting to talk about now how compassion plays out in our close relationships. So in the same way that attachment makes a mess of our love, attachment can make a mess of our compassion, too. So, compassion – so you're describing here, straightaway what you're expressing is that you have a person whom you're close to and you can see they're suffering, right? That's the reason. You can see they're suffering.

Q: Two people...

Ven.: Two people, okay, and that means you have empathy for their pain, right? Okay. So, I'm not saying you, personally, now – the more we are caught up in our own needs, our own fears, our own dramas about that, the less we can help them, and therefore the more we make a mess, ourselves. We try to help them, but because often it's our own anxiety that can't bear it – do you understand? So, what we have to see with compassion is this: as His Holiness the Dalai Lama says, 'Compassion is not enough; you need wisdom.'

So what wisdom *is*, is what you get, the more you know your mind, the more you see your own neediness and your own fears, all of this thing, for example. You understand what I'm trying to say? And then, if you try to separate your own stuff from this person's, then you know very well that it's only if this person is open to being helped, or open to a piece of advice, that you can even help at all. And very often you know yourself, if your parents -- telling you what to do all the time, 'Oh, I'm worried about you...' it makes you crazy, you know, because you know that they worry, but because we know it's our parents, and they say it's their compassion, but we know it's their anxiety also, but it's hard to criticize it. So, the same with ourselves; we've got to be so cautious and to know how to distinguish our own fears and rubbish from the person's suffering. Are you seeing my point? Then you can be skillful; and the other point is this: sometimes – we all know – there is nothing we can do except just watch and wait. This is the painful part. This is the part that we find unbearable, isn't it?

Less Fearful, More Courageous, Less Needy: More Able to Help

57:28

Q: Yeah, and seeing the other person who's being harmed by the drinker...

Ven.: Exactly. And all of this too: very very difficult. This is where, and the point I'm saying is this: look at the family; but look at the world and see the suffering. The environmental suffering, the racism, the violence, the wars, the dramas – you understand what I'm trying to say? The world is full of suffering. So this is the point: if I'm – in ordinary default mode and being an ordinary samsaric

sentient being, the way Buddhism talks, I'm full of needs, attachment, fears when I see things that I don't like; so then I will be full of horror and despair when I see the world, all the people, all the alcoholics, and it will make *me* crazy, and I will want to kill myself 'cause I can't cope with it. Are you seeing my point? But if I work on *myself*, and I get less fearful, and more courageous and less needy, I'll have more courage in the face of the suffering of the world and then will have more skill to know *how* to help, if I *can* help. Otherwise, it just drags us down and makes us all drown together. So we've got to work – again, the same thing as with the children -- the more you work on your own mind and be clear your stuff and your space, and where you're coming from, then, if you can help, absolutely help. But we all know, sometimes we can't make the world be healthy tomorrow, we can't make it all go away; and there's no point in feeling freaked-out about it. And that's where we can get courageous ourselves. Are you seeing what I'm saying? It's not easy. It isn't easy, sweetheart.

So, again, the more needy and neurotic I am, the less I can help anyone else. I'll just drag them down as well and make a mess. And the person has to want to be helped; we know that, we know that so clearly. You can take a horse to water; you can't make it drink. That's a really important point, because you're probably totally right; you're seeing nakedly what's going on. You can see it clear as a bell; but sometimes, there's just nothing to do but be there and never give up on them; because often what happens, if I've got a lot of attachment for a person and I'm giving them advice, and I'm trying to help them, I get very upset when they don't change; so I give up on them, or I get upset or I get depressed. But you can't do this, you know?

I mean, I worked with people in prison for years – fifteen, fourteen years – I don't do it anymore, I don't run the Prison Project anymore, I used to. That's where I could see, any practice that I did in my own mind helped give me courage and strength to help people in these awful, suffering situations; I couldn't open those doors, I couldn't get these young men who were in the wrong place at the wrong time with thirty year sentences to convene for not even being anything, or not much, you know, the sentences were quite severe. There's nothing much I could do, but – there was no point in being patronizing, because often you can be patronizing about people's suffering. I had to be respectful, and this is *their* suffering, and I gave them the tools and it was up to them to use them. Are you seeing what I'm saying? Many would give them up, many would get worse; that's okay, I'd never give up on them, I would never feel depressed or fed up because they didn't change... 'cause that's coming from *my* attachment, you see? Do you see what I'm saying? It's really important. And if they are close, to want them to be happy, to love them and to give advice; and then it's up to them. It's up to them.

And the other point that's interesting, actually, I find: we can't help but see other people's problems, especially if it's alcoholism, or drinking too much, or a strong problem; you understand what I'm saying. We can't help but notice it. And so inevitably what we do is we talk about them behind their back, we gossip about it, and we end up only seeing that part of the person. And that's very, sometimes, patronizing. So somehow, even though a person's alcoholic, out of

respect for that person, you don't always talk to that part of them. Talk to the better part of them. They know their minds; they're not stupid, you know? But to always be patronized is too much, sometimes. And we get obsessed with it, and only ever see that. Of course, it's true, and you can see them destroying themselves; but treat them with respect. And don't often mention it; speak to the better part of them. Do you understand what I'm saying here; that's really important -- 'cause our own anxiety ends up doing this other one, and it ends up just a big mess. And all the talking behind -- especially in families -- builds it all up, you know, it's not helpful. That's not helpful. We've got to give each other respect. Even though we're destroying each other -- ourselves, I'm saying -- doesn't mean you don't care; you totally care...but then when you're not being so attached to making them change, you're watching, and then you'll see opportunity when it arises and you'll take that opportunity to help them. Do you understand? Not easy, is it? You've got to be very courageous. What else, folks? Anything else? Yes?

Q: Would it be the same thing, with the person's own anger? You just can't -- because no matter what you do, the person's bad attitude... I just...there's a situation where I have to be there...

Ven.: You work with this person or you know this person, you mean?

Angry Daughter

1:02:43

Q: It's, ah, my middle daughter. She's just at a stage now where she's just really angry...and it's...

Ven.: Okay, so this is where wisdom comes in, isn't it? Because all the time pointing it out is totally hopeless, or -- and it mightn't be appropriate, depending on how old she is; what is she? Four? Fourteen? I mean...

Q: Fourteen.

Ven.: Thank you. Okay -- it's still bad enough -- so, and this is where you've got to have wisdom. Sometimes, you know, you've just got to be the father. Discipline. Sometimes, it's almost like you ignore it; and this is what's difficult, because the other person's anger completely plugs into our anger. So, sometimes -- I can see this -- I mean, anger's been my big thing in my life, right, and so as a child, because I was very angry and very volatile, it was always the loud thing; the way that people defined me, so therefore I defined myself this way; but I remember later on in my life, with a friend who didn't have, herself, much anger. And she liked me; she was close to me. But she didn't have much anger; so she didn't, kind of, respond to it. She wasn't being passive-aggressive; but she was -- but she responded in always, in a respectful way to me. So, instantly... where could I go with that; because anger wants a fight. She's just dying -- she doesn't know it, but her anger is dying for you to fight with her. She will do -- that anger in her will hook everything in you just to fight back. Anger loves a fight.

But you don't be passive-aggressive with it. Sometimes, like I said, you be the disciplined father: 'Enough, now!' That's really good; you need that. And other times, you talk – like with an alcoholic – you talk to the better part of her. You treat her with respect: 'Is that true, darling. Oh, really?' It's infuriating; you don't do it as a game, but you just don't respond to that part of her. You respond with respect, or don't answer, or – or just whatever, you know. But don't get hooked; 'cause the thing is, when you get angry, nothing you do will work, okay? So at least for your sake and your sanity, and not to buy into her thing, and then she can blame you; because as soon as you get angry, she can blame you; that's all I'm saying. You can't do this unless you're very skillful. I mean, it's so difficult; 'cause it's her problem. And that's what wisdom has to be: sometimes you've got to be tough; sometimes – like water off a duck's back.

Q: The discipline part's hard for me...

Ven.: Because?

Q: ...the point of discipline... and that comes back as...more anger towards me...

Ven.: That's where the wisdom in you has to know what's right at which time. You've got to have the power; you got to know -- if you're going to do it, you've got to be powerful. Because I know as a kid – I remember, I knew it intuitively; I only knew it intellectually later – that I wanted – what do you call it – I wanted boundaries. Our family had no boundaries. Seven kids, utter chaos, an incestuous violent father, my mother completely overwhelmed by it, who overcompensated to all her kids, it was a complete mess, there was no – and I was angry. And there were just no boundaries, and I knew – I yearned – I wanted it; I wanted some strength. I wanted someone to come back to me with strength; and I'd respect that person. It's hard; that's why you've got to work on your own mind.

In fact – it's kind of interesting – my father abused me in those other ways, but my mother – It was my father, I always respected him in some ways; kind of odd...I always loved him, I forgave him and I respected – there was something about – he had some wisdom, my father. He wasn't caught up in my dramas in some ways. I always knew – my mother I had around my little finger. I just knew this as a kid. She'd overcompensate, and she would do my homework for me -- I was just being lazy. My father said, 'No, she has to learn from her own experience.' I didn't know what he meant, I'd go, '... learn from my own experience...' I'd try to work it out, but I knew he had some wisdom in there, so I couldn't fool him. Even though he was abusive in some ways, my mother was the typical, overcompensating, attached mother. Do you understand what I'm saying here? And I respected that. I heard it. He made me learn from my own mistakes, you know? Kind of interesting. It's wisdom. It's not for nothing they say 'wisdom', it's the wisdom wing; and you can only have wisdom when you know your own mind well, when there's some skill there and clarity.

But the thing is, you can't win sometimes. You can't win; you can't make her do what you want...you can't stop the anger; it's hers. Just be there like a rock, not buying into it; loving her regardless. Do you understand? That is really important. Let her shout and yell and have a tantrum; she knows you're there like a rock. Absolutely she will; there's no question -- if you're like a rock, stable; don't you think? And again, like with the alcoholic: not let it overwhelm you or make you freak out; then you just drown with her, then it's no good. In other words, what I'm saying, I think, here, is our attachment in normal life can't bear problems; we hate problems and so we have a lot of fears. So, I look into our family: this chaotic family of seven kids, right; seven kids -- and when we talk about it, me and my sisters, and three of my sisters had complete mental breakdowns, total mental breakdowns; and they were the three who had the most fears, who couldn't cope with *any* violence, who spent all their time trying to make it all nice and make the harm go away -- the thought of the dramas -- where I was more volatile; and all the dramas and shouting and yelling; I'd jump in the middle and make it worse sometimes, you know? I didn't have a mental breakdown; I probably gave other people a mental breakdown...but they had so many fears because they couldn't stand it to be *bad*; they had to make it all *nice*. That sounds good -- you can't criticize that -- but it's fear. We have to be brave in the face of chaos, truly. I'm really serious about this.

So, right now -- I mean, so often I go into the medical units in the prisons; there're all these young men; crazy, strong minds zonked out of their brains on these bloody medical drugs, you know. 'Cause we -- I mean, who are therapists? Typical human beings, they've got fears like everybody else; 'make it all go away'. We can't make it go away. We're so scared of what's inside. Do you understand... that's okay, she's growing up...I mean, this is where you've got to know people's minds. Has she got good qualities? Does she have a good heart?

Q: Oh, yeah...

Ven.: And she's intelligent? And she means well? And she's got potential? Honey, don't worry about her. I'm really serious here. If you've got good qualities, that -- that's the saving grace. But if she was psychotic, lying, sneaking, manipulative; you understand what I'm saying -- then there's not much hope, that means she's mostly negative and they're the ones who go crazy...and then it's very painful for you. But if she's got good qualities, then one's got potential; she'll be fine. So don't be scared of it, just, you know...you understand what I'm saying? And that's where you've got to know people's minds. I mean, I see some of these guys in prison, out of their mind with rage; these raging maniacs. Gangsters kill people, rapists; but good -- especially the Mexicans in California -- good, good minds, intelligent, big hearts; they become incredible practitioners in prison, 'cause they've got potential -- that's ninety percent of it. If there's no potential; if the delusions are overwhelming, and completely -- they can't access their potential -- that's when there's a problem, you know. Do you understand what I'm saying? That's why you've got to know your own mind; if you don't know your mind how can you know hers? When you know your mind, then there's less fear of somebody else's dramas; you're more courageous in the face of it.

And then again, I can see, for myself as a kid, 'cause I was very volatile and violent and I wasn't scared of violence, in all this drama, my father had this kind of – even though he'd harmed us in other ways – he had some kind of clarity and wisdom. I *loved* that part of him. I remember it as a child. Are you hearing me? I liked that. My mother's stuff was all emotional and so much attachment and it's kind of yucky, you know? It sounds peculiar, what I'm saying. Do you understand what I'm saying? You get what I'm saying? And when there's somebody – this friend I'm mentioning – later in my life – she's a therapist, actually; but she's a friend, a dear friend. She's the first person in my life – she's a therapist, she has skills, but she's my dear friend – and she was the first person in my life who responded cleanly to me; because she had skills. It was like nectar to me, absolutely nectar. You understand? Because when you've got strong emotions, and everybody's got their own junk and you're *blegh*, you know; but to have a person who doesn't buy into you're crap; that isn't manipulated and isn't angry with you...I'll never forget it; it was like heaven on earth -- because she was a person who'd worked on her own mind. Do you understand what I'm saying? It seems to me that that's what a good therapist or a good friend is; but you can't get this until you work on your own mind, unless you're just born this way; you're a Buddhist practitioner from a past life and maybe you brought it with you! Are we communicating? Okay...

The Antidote For Anger Is Patience

1:12:06

Q: Is the antidote for anger, patience?

Ven.: Yes! And let's look at patience; it's a hideous word, we hate this word – but let me tell you what patience really is. The more – using the Buddhist way of talking about it – the more we understand – first of all, all the negative states of mind in Buddhist -- the way the Buddha's psychology talks – kind of fascinating -- they're all based in fear: that's their voice. Their energy is panic and fear and anxiety. Anger, attachment, jealousy; there's this frantic sense of 'I', desperately wanting what I want, panic-stricken when I don't get it, or freaking out if somebody else takes it. Do you understand? They're all like – we're all having mental breakdowns.

So, when we see that attachment's the default mode – this yearning to always get what I want -- and the split second it doesn't get it -- like you just said, like even if you drop something, you know, you freak out; then what patience is, is this kind of brave attitude that welcomes the problem. You greet it. You literally go against the impulse – which takes time – you go against the panic. And it's like because what we're really saying is, 'Oh, my God!' -- What is it that John McEnroe used to say? Remember? 'This can't be happening!' What'd he used to say? That's what anger sounds like. The second something goes wrong, it's like, 'Oh my God! No!' What we're really saying is that this is impossible; like this can't be happening. But it is happening; and you kind of learn to greet it. It won't make you crazy. It won't give you a mental breakdown. It's cool, you know? Patience is a very brave, courageous, stable state of mind that doesn't have a mental breakdown when attachment doesn't get what it wants. It takes practice,

oh my God, but it's an amazing state of mind. It's not repression. It's not just like gritting your teeth – that's more like passive aggression. That is not patience.

Of course, it won't happen immediately; you've still got to practice it, in the mind, you know. And then you get brave in the face of the dramas; it doesn't freak you out. Do you understand? We have a mental breakdown now, the second we don't get what we want, we just panic, or we get depressed; because we can't cope. That's aversion, you know. But patience is an amazing state of mind if we do it right. They have a saying in Tibetan, you know; Lama Zopa says, 'You learn to like problems like you like ice cream.' You change the whole approach, and you learn to see bad as good. I mean, it's a really hard practice, it takes time, but it's having the concept of it this way.

Because, the thing is, anger – because it's a freak-out, a mental breakdown – you can't make clear decisions. When you're freaking out, you can't be clear. But if you're being clear, you're observing this lousy thing that's happening; you're not being stupid, you're not pretending it's not happening. But if you're clear, you can make wise choices. You can deal with it well. You understand?

Q: So I need to lead by example...

Ven.: Absolutely. Oh my gosh, yes. That's right.

Q: ...not teaching...(unclear)

Ven.: Exactly. Not giving lectures, you know...Just be it. Just like that friend of mine. I'll never forget it. Because she was skillful, she was just like a rock for me; she wasn't freaked out by my anger; 'cause I was so used to people in my life freaking out about it, and my ego would buy into that, but she was stable, she didn't buy into it, didn't give me lectures, didn't point it out; so I was there with egg on my face; I was like, 'Oh...isn't that interesting...' I loved it because it was strong and stable, you know? You lead by example. Exactly...exactly. It's miraculous.

Well, enough now? Eight-thirty; enough now? Any more?

Q: We got our three hours' worth...

Q: What's patience – what's patience, for short, again?

Ven.: Courage in the face of things going wrong. Seeing it for what it is and not having a mental breakdown; welcoming it.

Q: Okay.

Ven.: So, you know, whether it's seeing the terrible wars, whether it's getting a pain in your knee, whether it's your girlfriend leaving you...understand, it's easy to say. But, look, patience is -- delusions – anger's all about, 'this shouldn't be happening, why is it happening, if only it didn't happen, oh my god, this is so

terrible', it's all about the ifs and buts and whys and hows; whereas patience is, 'this is happening, now let's see what I can do about it'.

Q: Okay...

Ven.: That's what it is...I mean, Martin Luther King said one time, 'It's okay to be angry.' Meaning, it's okay to see there's something wrong. You've got to be intelligent to see there's something wrong...but then you go, 'What can I do about it.' Anger just goes, 'It shouldn't be! Why is it? How dare!' punch, kick; or, despair and panic. It is happening. What can I do about it? Then you get courageous and stable. How's that? It doesn't come overnight, but start; start. Fake it 'til we make it.

Q: Ah, I've heard that before...

Ven.: That's practice. Yes, darling?

'Control' is Attachment; 'Firm' is Kind and Wise

1:16:54

Q: Then, with the child, or another person, there's being assertive, or being firm; and then there's control...where's the line?

Ven.: 'Control' is attachment, darling. Control is attachment. Control is attachment and ego and manipulative; and 'firm' and strong and discipline is kind and wise and compassionate.

Q: So, like in the instance of wanting something for your child or wanting them to do something and they say, 'no' and you insist, where have you crossed the line?

Ven.: You haven't crossed the line, darling. Just because they didn't do what you want doesn't mean you did anything wrong. Just because they're more stubborn than you doesn't mean you did anything wrong! Then you've got to have the skill to know what to do, you know? Sometimes -- depends on the person; sometimes, with some children -- it's like, the good quality is called 'perseverance'; but when it's bad, it's called 'stubborn'. And if you've got a person who's got a lot of perseverance, you'll want to kill them... in the end, most people, you *can* control them, you *can* tell them what to do, but some *won't* do it.

Q: I wish for them to do this thing because I think that they'll love it...

Ven.: What do you mean, 'love it'? What are you talking about?

Q: Well, like I -- just as an example -- wanting a child to take a music class...or something like that...

Ven.: Oh, honey, this is something different. Of course you've got to be wise and say ... well, the trouble is now, people ask their two-year-olds what they want to

do; I can't believe it. I mean, 'What do you want to eat?' they say to a two-year-old. What a thing to do to a poor two-year-old! How old is this person?

Q: Thirteen.

Ven.: Are thirteen-year-olds allowed to make their own decisions, now? God help me...

Q: Many times...allowed...to make...

Ven.: Well, okay, darling; what can you do?

Q: Sometimes I say you have to do this and they do it...

Ven.: And they do it? So, you have that power over them still? I'm asking -- do you have that power? Then, honey, use it -- until they stop doing. Use it as much as you can until they say 'no'. Come on! I mean, I've got a friend whose four-year-old is like such a genius; he's like four -- he reads, he goes onto YouTube and he learns Chinese, he's a genius, you know, and he's got a very powerful mind. He eats, like, potato crisps and nuts or something. He never touches fruits, vegetables -- he's four, and...he's fit as a fiddle. She cannot -- I mean, he is so powerful...so excuse me, she's lost him already, you know? Thirteen is fine; if they're going to do what you say, great. So she's got to find this skill, a way to get him to be nourished, you know. He looks fine so far...but when you're four, and you know what you want and your mother's got no power over you... My god -- I always say if I had a child, they'd be dead... I can't imagine what they go through as parents. Unbelievable! My mother had seven! I can't believe it; how'd they manage?

Q: They didn't.

Ven.: That's right. Exactly. My God...Yes?

Q: Mother's little helper...

Ven.: Okey-doke; food for thought. So, it's gone like a dream! Look: seven o'clock we began, and like one second later it's finished... What, sweetheart?

Competition

1:20:26

Q: Can you talk about competition?

Ven.: Oh, you want to keep going, okay? What do you mean by competition?

Q: Ah, well, I like to test myself, I like to compete... I try to better myself...(unclear)... and I can't get attached to the competition, you know, and I don't want to necessarily get attached to the relationship either...

Ven.: Meaning the other people...

Q: Yeah...

Ven.: Again I would say, I think when we start to hear the Buddhist approach, and we start to get all this, kind of, spiritual, we get a bit wimpy. We can get a bit weak and pathetic, you know? There's nothing wrong with competition if it's coming from a genuine place; I mean, you know, the old-fashioned idea of, like, English cricket. They were, like, sportsmanlike. You'd never dream of being rude to the other team. You'd clap politely in delight for them; but you'd be competing fiercely... I mean that's marvelous. The Tibetan monastics, in their big Tibetan monastic universities, they had this really sophisticated type of philosophical debate. And it's like verbal karate; it's intense. They are fierce; they go for twelve hours at a time sometimes. They're screaming; they're physical; they're super competitive. But the whole practice is to be that competitive, but with delighting if you lose –rejoicing in the other person and smashing your ego. So there's a way to be fiercely competing, but delighting in the other person because you want to get the best out of you, and you want to get the best for both of you. That can be totally virtuous. It can be fantastic; because it a way of getting the best out of people. I know, when I learned martial arts, you know – when I had a kung fu teacher years ago – in martial arts, because it's based on Buddhism – there you are, you're sparring with each other; you're kicking and punching, right, you know. But we'd be taught – 'cause it's based on Buddhism – we'd be taught if we were sparring, and you punched me, I'd have to apologize to you: because I got in the way. You take responsibility. We were fiercely competitive, but it wasn't trying to *harm* you. We were coming from a very different place; it was to get the best out of you, and that's marvelous. Go for it, baby.

So, competing, if it's based on arrogance, is like you're a pathetic little boy in there who wants to be the best and be seen as the best. How dare anybody be better than you? But if you're confident, you can be very competitive, but you'll also be humble. You'll delight if somebody else is better, and you'll get more courage from it rather than being offended by it.

Q: Rise up to the challenge.

Ven.: Exactly. So, a virtuous quality in Buddhism is one that isn't neurotic and isn't based on just 'I'; so you can be fierce, you can be competitive, you can be strong, but it can be based on compassion and wisdom. If it's I-based, it's neurotic and pathetic and self-pity and miserable, and therefore harmful. If it's expansive and spacious, then honey, go for it. Do you understand? What else? That's enough...yes? Any more questions?

Q: I kind of had one but it's...

Ven.: What is it, darling?

'The time To Help Another is When They're Showing the wish To Be Helped'
1:23:41

Q: Well, it seems like there's a kind of strategy for when you're seeing the... like, defilements in another person, you know it seems we kind of want to talk about what do I do when...not so much for me, but... I was thinking about my friends, the issues I have with them and when they're not – when I see that they're disturbed, or in a disturbed state and kind of why I stay wise and not get sucked into that...

Ven.: That's right, exactly...well, that's the wisdom and compassion business, you know? There's no question that the way to make your own mind happy and content is to work on your own mind and that's the 'wisdom wing'; and then, that qualifies you to help others. That qualifies you to help others, because then you're not coming into it with all your attachment. So then, as for when they're harming you – you mean there's something stuck on you; how to have the wisdom not to...

Q: The one that I'm most thinking of is usually when I notice them in some kind of attached frame of mind...

Ven.: In relation to you or others?

Q: In relation to something and then I bring my attachment to the situation; thinking that, like, 'Oh how dare you be so attached...'

Ven.: No, no, no, that's the same thing as giving advice to alcoholics or fourteen-year-olds...

Q: ...become a strategy; it doesn't matter what the defilement necessarily is, or what the, you know...

Ven.: The time to help another person is when they are showing the wish to be helped, or you can see the window of opportunity, or it is your responsibility, like a parent. Otherwise, back off and mind your own business and be respectful to them, and show by example. Really. Be respectful. Because the fact is, we're always going to be pointing out somebody's mistakes...we always see somebody else's mistakes; and you know yourself, there's nothing worse than your friends giving you lectures. If they ask, and you can construct it in a reasonably intelligent way, that's marvelous. The world's full of deluded people, and the more you see your own delusions, the more you're going to see everyone else's delusions; there's no question. But, you know, having the ability to put up with it and be compassionate and respectful of other people is really important. Otherwise, we're going to have fights with everybody. Don't be so arrogant; that's like fundamentalism – trying to make everybody else believe what you believe. Awful...

Q: Yeah, but I just feel like ... understand a little bit more than I did how much of my own attachment I'm bringing to the situation...

Ven.: That's right; that's exactly right. That's the point and that's where I can see, like in my family, one of my sisters I can think of, who's totally gorgeous, I adore

her, but – unbelievable fears of violence in the family. But because she had all these fears, she thought she was *right* to have fears. I didn't have the same fears, so she – when you have fears, you believe you are right.

What I'm meaning is she dumped her own neuroses, she dumped it on the situation...do you understand what I'm saying? If you – your fear, you bring it to the situation and then you see it through your filter; so you say, 'That's bad.' Well, I didn't see it as bad; back off and leave me alone, you know; because we can't help but see everybody through the filter of our own neuroses. And the more neurotic you are -- and let's say -- the more neurotic you are, the more you're going to find everybody else's mistakes, and then be worried about them and, 'How dare!' 'You should be changing!' All this. Back off, you know? The world's full of crazy people; let them be crazy. Love them, as much as you can. Do you understand? That's why that friend – I mentioned that friend – was like nectar in my life; because I was – I *am* volatile and in my relationships as a kid I was a bully, and I was always intense, and dramas -- all I did was hook everybody else's rubbish and so everything was difficult; but this friend whom I met was skillful, so for me it was like nectar to have a person who just treated me normal. It was a miracle; she didn't bring too much *junk* to it. Do you understand what I'm trying to say?

This is exactly how we have dramas in our relationships, you know. All our expectations and neediness; we're just in each other's faces. Unbelievable; and we think we have a right to do it; 'cause we all psychoanalyze everybody all the time; it's so *rude*. I mean, that's something I've found among Tibetans; they're so – they might have Asians' thing of politics behind; they're classic Asians. You never point out mistakes; you talk behind instead. But there's this incredible respect they have for each other.

I remember one time, in the monastery in Katmandu, and there's all these students and monks live together you know; it's quite intense – and at some point when everyone is changing classes in the courtyard, was full of people going here and there, and three young monks suddenly flared up, and had a bit of an argument. The other monks – it was like – if we would have rushed in and given them lectures, and pulled them apart and – there'd been a big drama, you know? But the monks almost, like, respectfully, walked away and left them to it. It's *their* business. Be polite. Of course, if they were going to kill each other, you'd separate them. But we'd be in there in ten minutes, sticking our noses in, and giving lectures; it's too intense, we think we have a right to point out people's mistakes all the time; it is so *rude*. It's just so rude. It's *really rude*. Just back off and mind your own business. Speak to the better part of the person. Behavior is kind of powerful, actually. The first level of practice in Buddhism is like, Buddha's saying zip your lip and keep your hands to yourself, please. Honestly, we'd behave better. If you decided in your life you would never speak badly to your partner, you would never speak about people behind their backs; just these two – I swear to you, your life would transform. I'm not even talking about changing your mind here; just shut your mouth. Be polite, be respectful –really. Unbelievable! The wrong we do most is talk about people behind their backs; all the quarrels in families, the divisions and dramas in families – incredible. The splits because people all talk behind backs and sides and everything -- we think

we have the right to talk about people, and that's our own anxiety, you know. Just stop that one, I swear, you'll be peaceful. Life will be a dream. Do you understand? It's behavior, it's just your speech. Do you understand? Alright.

Okay, time to go. So, we're going to have a few more days of all this – variations on a theme, isn't it, Bob? Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday for the next two weeks; and all kinds of things; we'll talk about karma, we'll talk about compassion, seeing enemies as friends; we'll talk about all this stuff; techniques -- hopefully techniques and how to bring it into our lives to help us become marvelous human beings for our sake and the sake of others.

Jang chub sem chhog rin po che
Ma kye pa nam kye gyur chig
Kye wan yam pa me pa yang
Gong na gong du phel war shog

Transcribed by Fran McDermott