Sometimes our intentions are called seeds. And those seeds are nourished and sprout and grow into things when they're acted on spoken of somehow expressed in body speech or mind. And seeds that are not expressed, aren't watered. And what we water, the seeds we water affect who we become, you know, much of our experience and if we water our unhealthy intentions, then it tends to produce disease, not necessarily physical illness, but it tends to create unhealthy states of mind become stronger and stronger and become our dispositions. how we're supposed to act, respond, live in the world. And if we act and act or speak or in some way live, those intentions which are healthy, that tends to produce mental health tends to create a healthy disposition, to be disposed to act in healthy ways in the world, speak in healthy ways to relate to others in healthy ways. And so, starting last week, I started a series of talks this month, on one of the most healthy intention seeds a person can have and that is a loving kindness and metta or loving kindness, goodwill is a an intention that is very popular in Buddhism to among Buddhist practitioners to act on, to feed to nourish, and it's been said that in some Buddhist countries like in Sri Lanka, loving kindness meditation is the most popular form of meditation among Buddhists, much more than following the breath or any other kind of meditation. It's loving kindness practice. And certainly find many, many people in Asia who know memorize the loving kindness chant, or no, they're very basic loving kindness, or even if they don't meditate with loving kindness, they're thinking about it or express it somehow, in the course of their daily life.

loving kindness, in particular Buddhist tradition is considered to be one of the real root or foundational attitudes towards life to others to ourselves, that is to be cultivated and developed. It's also one of the one of the primary reference points for when we hit when we come to a juncture. We have to make a decision about something about what we're going to say to someone difficult conversation perhaps, or act in certain ways. And we're not sure. When I'm sure where the wise thing is, what the wise way of acting is. loving kindness is offered is one of the reference point to help you decide, is it kind? Is it expressed does it Express goodwill? What you're about to do? And if it doesn't watch out, in some way or other, it doesn't express your goodwill, watch out. And I guess the opposite of goodwill is ill will. And, and it's so easy, I think to have ill will. When I was coming here this evening, I thought about that, you know, how easy is to have ill will. And I was I surprised myself because it was a little thought in my mind that wasn't mine. That when something like When the credit card wasn't quite a thought, but it was something of the nature of, of how easy it is because they deserve it
those people and in fact, loving kindness. Practice is meant to be the medicine that cures ill will. And so, sometimes it's taught in Buddhism if you have a lot of anger or animosity to cultivate, actively cultivate the seed nourish the seed of goodwill of loving kindness towards others. And in fact, if you read some of the classic manuals or texts, the ancient Buddhist texts about loving kindness, practice. There's one, there's one book that has a ancient book, 1500 year old 1500 year old book of meditation instruction. It's a big book. And a lot of instruction has a big fat chapter on loving kindness. And most of the chapter is taken up with how to overcome ill will, or ill will, when it's operates, is considered to be the to oppose or destroy our, our, our tendency or motivation to have goodwill, loving kindness. And so it's very important to overcome it. And so, classically, Buddhists are often working on this looking at their ill will, looking at their anger, their hostility and learn to practice with it. And in some ways, I think it's very realistic, that this big instructions on loving kindness focuses so much on anger. Ill will It means I mind places I interpret that to mean that we're not meant to be kind idealistically, you know, you know, if we're pretend kind of sugarcoat things and pretend are just gonna be kind and ignore the fact that I'm, you know, really pissed. We're meant to really be very realistic and very honest about how we're feeling we're going on. And then the honesty if we're, if we're angry, then to delve into it, look into it more deeply, and maybe more important, most important to question it. Is it really to your best interest in the best interest of others? For you to kind of dwell in that anger and ill will state and one of the classic reflections around this is the reflection of who's really being harmed when you have hostility when you have anger, and, and the answer of course, the trician wants to give is it's you're harming yourself. So the tradition says, The Buddha says something like something like very vaguely something like when you are angry at someone, you're doing your enemy, a favor your cause or you're causing harm to yourself that your enemy could never do on her own his own because because the enemies is outside of you, you know and they can wave and do all kinds of things, you know, insult you, but get into your mind your heart and turn it in and poison it with no ill will and anger and hostility. And that's really gotten deep into and so you're doing your you know, that's what your enemy wants to harm you and now you've done it for yourself.

And

there was one of the Kenan Brian Keenan whose name that one of the hostages in back in the 1980s. There was an English journalist, I think, who was kidnapped in Lebanon. very routine was held hostage for many years. And when he was came when he finally released that through on how five, seven years, he was asked, Did you have any resentment towards your captors? And he said something like something like that he said something like, No, I never had an resentment towards them, because then they really would have harmed me.

That's pretty neat statement.

So, you know, cultivation loving kindness is it's easy to be excessively in agree, sweet about it. Long before I knew about Buddhism, Buddhist practice at least. When I was a freshman in college, somehow I decided I was going to be really nice one day.

Really nice. I don't know what got what kind of what got into my head and

Whether it be really nice, and I remember running into this woman on the freshman steps of the library, and he was really nice to her, if she left. It's kind of like she's left holding her nose or something.

You know, so
I stopped trying to be so nice.

That way at least.

So.

So to look honestly, it's our anger and not to overlook it not to not to pretend it's not there, but to be realistic about it. And then in being realistic, realistic about it, one of the functions of loving kindness practices that help purifiers heal us of that. And the question is, how can we do that in a healthy way, as opposed to just kind of papered over

It's interesting that some people who speak about the teach about loving kindness, talking about it as being selfless love. And certainly here in the West, there's a huge idea around selfless love. That somehow that's love that you're not in the equation, not anything that you know, I suppose it means that there's nothing in it for you. These selfless advantages, offer yourself as love. And in some ways that's nice because oftentimes when we call love in the West, is a Buddhist perspective is entangled with a with a lot of other things besides love. So there might be loving kindness, but then, which might be genuine, but then it's mixed up with maybe lust. One of the problems in Buddhist monastery Tassajara was that is for three years as a Buddhist monastery of men and women, and people sit there for long periods of time and suck in deep meditation and retreat. And in that kind of context, you know, there are deep and lost partners national wilderness far from, you know, television and news and, you know, life is normally lived very still a very peaceful place. And so much kind of emptiness, the heart just kind of become so open. And then openness where everyone feels so open, guess what? It's so easy to fall in love. It's so easy to have this warm, tender feelings for other people. And one of the problems in the monastery is that they have warmth and tenderness and appreciation in a very pure way, is rather unfamiliar for a lot of people maybe outside of their family or it's, you know, outside their family. And in so it's often then confused with sexual desire or sexual desire kind of entangled with it. And sometimes it becomes a disaster to think of those two those two mixed together and that kind of context. Sometimes it works out. And but you know, it's so easy to have love entangled with a lot of things that can be entangled with desire, certainly more than your sexual desire, that can be all kinds of desires that we're trying to fulfill, to fulfill ourselves trying to get something, comfort, safety, many things through the relationship. Sometimes love is confused or mixed up with hope there is or there's a hope there's something wonderful is going to happen here. And that excitement or that desperation or that, you know, somehow feel so good. And it's mixed up with a feeling of love or tenderness or care. So, part of the task of loving kindness practice is to help us tease apart all the other things that might be there together with the love or the goodwill. So certainly, so we don't make it make big mistakes. But with a tease that apart so it can be there in a kind of pure way. And now some people recognize that certain kinds of love are filled with attachment and clinging. And then they throw it all out, forget that I'm not gonna have any of that. And that's sometimes a pity, because I'm just throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Sometimes, the fact that there might be some lust doesn't mean that, you know, kind of like a composite different different emotions are offering together. In fact, there's less that doesn't mean that there's all isn't all also some really beautiful tenderness and tender kindness and goodwill, and it's there as well. So how do we tease those apart? How can we drop the attachment that clinging the lust and let the purity be there by itself? So I guess a little bit sidetrack to do this. Pure self this idea of love. So people talk about metta Buddha's loving kindness as being selfless. But it's I think it might give the wrong impression. It's selfless in that it's loving someone else is having goodwill for someone else, where the love is expressed in wanting that other person to be happy. The Love is felt or expressed in wanting that other having a desire for the other person is a very brave thing and desire, that desire, how
do I say it carefully here? that desire for the person might desire that the other person for the other person's sake right, that the other person, you know, be happy, not that you be happy?

By getting into good relationship with a person, but that you're hoping you're wishing for happiness for that person that's in Buddhism is the is a pure expression of this goodwill. That's called metta. And so in that sense, it's selfless in that you're concerned about, you don't you're not looking for love and return. It's not an exchange from that person. You know, sometimes it's nice to feel that that friendship back or love back. But that's not the point. That's what loving kindness is. In fact, if there's an expectation or desire for an exchange for receiving something back from the person, that's a different motivation, different attitude or feeling than loving kindness, this metta and, and so one of the beautiful things I've seen if you go back and read about people in history of Buddhism, who were recorded as exemplars of loving kindness and there are such people you can find those people and around who specialized in developing, cultivating loving kindness. And that can be or our field of this loving kindness around them, it's really something to be in their presence, to feel that somebody has been, you know, the 10 2030 years cultivating this particular state. And, and they talked in there is described or they talked about having this boundless love for people. But they're never described as wanting to be loved. And I think that for many people, the idea of loving of love is, is mixed up with wanting to be loved. And from a Buddhist perspective, and this isn't me offer you a challenge. Go home and talk to your friends about this challenge. From Buddhist perspective the human heart has a need To love but it does not have a need to be loved. Unless you're a child. The children need it. And children who didn't get it as children, then it gets a little confusing when they get to be an adult. But I think every person who grows up in a healthy normal way that the more spiritually mature person doesn't need to be loved. But in a sense needs to love or that's the expert natural expression there. Isn't that interesting? that principle should be there. And then there might be protests Well, that's poor life. That's when there wasn't love me.

Wait a minute, that's a lonely, you know, kind of dry

it's not going to be dry because The idea is to cultivate this very, very strong disposition that fills you so much, that it just, you know, there's no space to want to be alone, you don't feel empty, you don't feel like a lack. Because you feel so full of this kind of feeling this attitude, this disposition and it's really an amazing thing. To feel almost like welding up in welding is a good expression like a deep current that wells up from deep ocean kind of comes up, Steve welding up inside that kind of fills your, your chest or your torso into your arms everywhere, and just feels like there's this flow of method of loving kindness. Sometimes, without even having to have a person as an object. Sometimes it's called object plus, love. Just love a state of love is flowing. They're so beautiful and I like that It's a little bit too if you're cold you might go look for a heater. But if you're the heater

you don't need any heaters.

So if you develop this very powerful glows, warmth is very strong warmth. You don't need to go and find someone else this warmth to warn you up. You're warm so in that sense loving kindness is selfless, where you're really concerned about the other person's welfare or someone's welfare and wanting them to be happy. It's a beautiful thing to wants me to be happy when I can feel it in a pure beautiful way. It's it's almost like the closest like maybe Can you describe it here it's almost like had this inner sense inner feeling that has Have a twinkle in my eye.

Isn't that nice?
You know, and I kind of feel it for someone else. Because if they can be happy like that, that'd be really
great or anything. I wish that for that person. And,

but in classic Buddhism, I don't think it's, it's, it gives it does give the wrong impression to call it selfless
because you don't want anything from the other person. But Buddhism also emphasizes the benefits
you get from having that kind of love. And it's okay to want those benefits for yourself. Buddhism does
not make a very strong doesn't make that kind of strong, hard and fast. duality between self and others.
That leads sometimes to motivation that you are this idea you're supposed to be alternative Stick, you
know you don't count. The only thing that counts is to help other people. You do count. One of the
expressions, one of the expressive expressions of loving kindness of metta is to have goodwill towards
yourself. You're important to, to want yourself to be happy. And it turns out that having all this desire for
other people's happiness is beautiful love for others, is one of the ways of feeling happy yourself. Not
because they're saying, oh, you're such a good person, you're so great because you're so loving, not
because you don't care what other people think about you in that way. But because just the nature of
that kind of purity of heart is happy producing from within. It is not considered selfish to, to pursue the
benefits of loving kindness for yourself, not self not selfish, to want to want the benefits of loving
kindness for yourself. Seems a little bit odd juxtaposition, wanting this kind of pure love well being for
other people, and the same time to want to have some of the benefits of loving kindness for yourself.
But I don't think the classic Buddhism there's that's not a paradox. It's not those two things can coexist.
So, I want to read to you the seven benefits, or the 11 benefits, the 11 benefits of loving kindness. And
people who do loving kindness, meditation, like a regular practice, are encouraged to memorize these
Levin, just kind of have it there. And they kind of helps you feel kind of happy or delighted about the
possibility what you're doing. So these are the 11 benefits that can be expected. Now you have to do it,
you have to practice it well. don't really get into it. Just kind of like do a little bit and then expect all
these like that but you have to be the loving kindness has to become once foundation just be steadied
consolidated. That's so that's just kind of casual. So first one, one sleeps happily. When wakes happily
is that nice? waking up happy. One has no bad dreams. One is loved by others, even though you don't
want

one is loved by non humans. So animals and birds One is guarded by devis by the gods. It's nice like a
garden the guardian angels. And here it gets even more exciting or more fire poison or sword won't
touch one run people with swords likely. So fire poisoner sword won't touch one and

might be the friend who

he was going to a meeting at Zen center. And a lot of people go into that meeting there were priests to
senior priestess and center senior with pieces and center. And it was dark was the evening and on the
way there and it just nearby. Someone held him up I think at knifepoint. He wanted his wallet and he
said To him, he said to the mugger, well, you know, you can have all of them my money, but it's a little
bit of a hardship for me if I don't have enough bus money to get home or something, you know, or my
driver's license, you know, and so he kind of talked for a while and negotiated and,

and, and then

while this discussion was going on, you know, the priest walked by and walked into the building. And so
the guy who was being mugged afterwards came into the building and he sat down next to his friends,
which is past him of being mugged. He said, Do you see me talking to that guy out there? Oh, yeah, I
see. Like you guys when I'm having a nice conversation. I was being logged in. So I don't know exactly.
If you have, you know, you know, this, you know, friendliness or love towards the mugger. But I like to
think that, you know, that somehow that he didn't he certainly wasn't expressing his anger. his fears are still at but he Certain presence of mind that offered a certain kind of way of being that was beneficial. So there's that, you know, the knife didn't get him. So I don't believe I'm not too superstitious about this. But I do think that the Kinder you are, the less likely you are
to be poisoned
by your by your enemies.

Next one you like those because you're many of your meditators, right all of you. one's mind becomes concentrated quickly. Isn't that good? And in fact, one of the ways that loving kindness practice is practiced, is people will do it. As a preliminary meditation before doing mindfulness meditation, can you set the field to the term so just kind of a general disposition of friendliness towards one's experienced what's happening to oneself before starting to do the mindfulness practice. And many people will do five or 10 minutes of loving kindness may often for themselves, may I be happy, may I be safe, may I be healthy, may I be peaceful. And then that's kind of sets the tone. And then they kind of switch to do the mind mindfulness. But once mind becomes concentrated quickly, and I think I believe part of the reason for that is that when there's genuine, sincere kind of love or kindness in the field in oneself, when is not conflicted with one sale, and if one is conflicted with oneself, it's hard to be concentrated, become concentrated. So here's another one that's really good for those of you who have spent a lot of money on cosmetics. It could have it could have been a lot cheaper because The ninth benefit of loving kindness is once complexion becomes clear

10 one dies with a mind free from confusion. So some of you have, you know, a little bit concerned about your dying, it's a healthy thing to be held as a healthy way of thinking about your death and preparing for death. And it's one of the great things to do was to go also to prepare for death. And in our tradition, the two primary ways through meditation to prepare for death is to is to develop strong mindfulness and strong loving kindness. And then loving, if no higher attainment is reached, when is reborn in the Brahma realms up there with Brahma gods, certainly realm in the heavenly realms, where the that doesn't that the experience of people Born in this particular mythological realms, is the entire kind of subjective experience is that of loving kindness, this kind of warmth, love, tenderness, goodwill, of loving kindness.

The other benefits of loving kindness is loving kindness practices often take understood to be a protective practice. And down through the centuries, many Buddhists will use loving kindness practice to protect themselves in situations where there's danger. And I've used it sometimes that way when there's been interpersonal danger of something either, you know, worried me about my safety, then i've i've cultivated loving kindness towards the person. And I don't know I don't have any way of knowing this for sure. But my impression is that when I've been able to shift sometimes when I've been able to shift my interstates from fear to Goodwill, that hostility that I'm feeling somehow changes the person drops. It's less than yours in some way. And so that's one way in which this kind of protects us when people feel kindness from us as opposed to fear or hostility from us, then they're more likely to treat us in better ways. It's also said that animals will do the same thing. And I've known a lot of people who've tried that I know one person who tried for the dog got bitten anyway. So be careful. read the fine print.

But down through the centuries, it's been a very common Buddhist practice, to cultivate loving kindness for these protective benefits. But and also to chant. And there's a number of chances, the loving kindness sutta discourse in loving kindness, which we'll read next time next Monday. And, and one of its functions is to memorize it and chanted is supposed to create safety in this scene and the unseen world
for oneself. So is it selfish, to be wanting those benefits for yourself and doing loving kindness? It can be done selfishly. It can be, but it doesn't have to be. And in fact, if you do the loving kindness practice or the loving kindness attitude in its healthy form, you can't do it selfishly. Go selfishness entails clinging and loving kindness. You can't claim if there is pure loving kindness so the two can code Resist, if you're able to free yourself with clinging, the desire for benefits for yourself and the desire for the welfare of others. The last benefit of loving kindness practice is that loving kindness practice is also understood to be a liberating practice that leads a person to liberation and it leads to liberation of two kinds. It leads to a particular form of liberation called the liberation of heart, based on loving kindness for the liberation of heart through loving kindness. And this is where the loving kindness practice is not just the intention, but the intention grows to such a strong feeling or field, a dispositional field that becomes so strong such a glow such a warmth, such a furnace, that it radiates out from us, without any limitations hesitated. Resistance. And without any divisions between the people who is you know, any, any people at all, it goes down to everybody equally. It isn't like you say, well, I'll do it through all my neighbors, but not that one down the street. You know, then there's a limitation to it, there's a there's a barrier to it. So when it goes out and becomes, it's called boundless or without limits. When when you it's an easy thing to do to do that, so it's really complete. But when that's really done, that's that that's held such high esteem in Buddhism, that it's called a form of liberation, liberation of heart. And, you know, that's kind of like the in the direction that Buddhism is all going is to liberation to a beautiful state. And then and then to go further, one step further from that, and to use that limitless state to turn around and look at the nature The heart or the mind is a very deep way. Because the mind is so purified. So it is something so simplified, so clarified and that state, there's no conflict, confusion, agitation. It's a very, very simple and clear clarified kind of state. And when the mind is the heart is very, very clarified, it's possible to see it very clearly. And we can see into the depth of it like you see into a pond, you see right down to the bottom of the pond, then you know what's there. And when the mind is clarified, the hardest clarify and you can see deep into it. You see deeply what's there, and then it's possible to uproot the mind and attain not what's called was called the unshakable liberation of mind or heart and the unshakable liberation of mind the heart is the is liberation that comes when we uprooted the late the tendency, not just the tendency to cling Have any kind of at all. So you might not even claim you know, I'm not claiming today, but the tendency is there. So that tendency is even given up.

The Buddha wrote parsimony right, Said. Imagine that there is an easily accessed pond of clear, delightful a refreshingly cool water. If a tired, parched and thirsty person, scorched and exhausted by hot weather came across this pond, the water would be used to quench both the person's thirst and hot weather fever. It is the same for a person who becomes a monk. After learning the Buddhist teachings and discipline, cultivates loving kindness. From this, the person gains inner peace Because of this inner peace cultivates what is appropriate for a monastic? So, most of us are not going to become monks, monastics. But it's equally true for us like a deep pond that refreshes us from our thirst. So loving kindness will give us a deep sense of inner peace. The peace that the Buddha was pointing to that it's possible for all of us. So there's a whole series of benefits from doing loving kindness practice. But it starts with having the intention to wish welfare, well being on someone, it can be yourself Or it can be someone else. And primarily when the practice gets developed, it's primarily for other people. Initially, it can be for oneself, and that some point gets shed, like a snake that sheds of snake skin. And then it can be primarily for other people, for others, not just people but other beings. And when we start doing it for other beings, it always begins with beings, the people for whom it's easiest to do. And some people when they looked around for the easiest being, to have loving kindness for I've known people who've chosen their dog. Because, you know, that was just, you know, people are complicated. Or I've known people who have chosen individuals who they never met. There's a fair number of Buddhists who chose to choose the Dalai Lama. Because you're so easy with this beautiful smiley face but But the idea is to find someone find out who it is in your life and who you have the purest form of this kind of
goodwill desire for their welfare delight in their welfare, kind of friend the shortland strong feeling of friend friendship, friendliness towards this kind of loving kindness for that for the person where it's pure, it's not mixed up with sexuality sexual desire, not mixed up with other desires not mixed up with wanting something back from that person. You know, sometimes a baby, you know, baby You know, baby's not gonna do anything for you. You know, hardly sees you guide and maybe you're sleeping right but you have it you can feel homesick, a natural kind of loving kindness you want to want the best for the baby. So some people choose babies for that reason. And, but what I'm trying to say is most recommend is spend some time going through the people that you know, and find the people who you feel the most pure, loving kindness for. It doesn't have to be 100% pure. Don't beat yourself up because you can't get to that hundred percent mark. You know 70% is good. 3070 70% is great. All you can get to is 20%. It's, you know, it's even 20% is good, a lot better than nothing. So whatever it is, don't worry about how pure it is, but it's fine the persons people a person for whom its purest, strongest, easiest for you to have this delightful wish for their well being and well be for their well being and welfare. And then once you find that person,

exercise that wish that can be exercised Through simply kind of thinking about it some more wishing it saying the phrases of loving kindness to that person. It could be exercise through imagination, imagining that person being happy. It can be exercised through action. Maybe students mean nice for that person, sending them a card, sending them flowers anonymously or not making dinner inviting them over, I don't know. So find some way, whatever way is appropriate for you to water, that seed of intention that wants that person's welfare and gives you delight. Will you feel the light that you want the person's welfare? Yes. I'll repeat it so much. Yeah.

I find that

it raises fears about ways that it can be physically unsafe. Yes.

Okay. So two things occurred to me one is that it might be might be valuable then to look more deeply at what those what's going on with you have those fears. There might be some deep attachments and deep thing going on there. I'm not saying this is you at all. But I know for some people that when it's very strong, their anxiety over such things, it can be a symptom of sometimes unresolved issues for themselves, sometimes unresolved pain or wounds they have from the past. And so maybe there's some way of working through and looking for Usually What's going on? Or it's a symptom that you've been watching too much local news.

local news thing. Yeah, so maybe you don't while the local news, local news has other stories about the babies that are kidnapped, right. So nationally, they usually go they do sometimes. And then it's gone. Now, this epidemic is epidemic. And so anyway to look at some of what's going on, and turn it turn, understand and see if it's something that we can work through. That's one part. The other thing is that if you have anxiety that comes up and you do it towards someone, that's not the person that should be your first person, even though it's easy in some way, the anxiety, find someone else for him. Anxiety is not going to happen and just do that person and classically, a one on one classic construction is that the first person you choose after yourself is your benefactor. Someone who fits the category benefactor, someone who's actually been concerned with your welfare and supported you or your teacher, someone mentor in your life rather than a friend. And because that's kind of supposed to be kind of easier to have this kind of, you know, easy, pure concern for their welfare. Whereas even with, you know, even really good friends, it's often the little little complication. You know, I love I love that person so much, but so anyway, so that's my suggestion is find what's easiest, for this week. And then and
then find some ways to water that seed and find many ways to water if you’d like, if it doesn't make you happy to do that, don't do it. Thank you.