2020-09-25 Mindful Letting Go (5 of 5)
Liberating Absence and Relinquishment

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So with this talk, we come to the end of the week on mindful letting go. Wise is letting go. Letting Go is really central to the Buddhist path of awakening, together with clarity, together with clear mindfulness and awareness of what's happening, and to go hand in hand, because the more we let go of our preoccupations, hindrances, the clearer we can see. The clearer we can see, we can see the ways in which we are continue to be attached or continue to obscure fuller and fuller clarity. And these two together, represent kind of the deepening, higher deepening aspects of the Buddhist path to freedom. And this seesaw going back and forth between letting go allowing something to let go, release, seeing more clearly. And then further release. And the deepest release happens when there's an equanimous and relaxed clarity, that there's been so much letting go already, that the threads of attachment, the threads of clinging and holding on are so thin, that it's relatively easy for them to on their own, to let go. And we can let go into this wonderful absence and the liberation, the ultimate kind of awakening is usually defined by what is absent.

The absence of attachments, clinging, preoccupation, greed, hatred, delusion. That's the common definition of liberation is what's absent. But it's an absence, which is phenomenally significant for people. And you can know that we know that absences are very important for human beings. A common one is when someone dies, their absences really felt acutely, maybe for the rest of one's life. But also, if something rather unfortunate has been happening to one, say they've been really sick, physically limited in some way, for a long, long, long time. And then somehow, there's a cure, and they become free of that. That because of how long they were limited by their illness, that freedom from the illness, the absence of illness, is so significant, it's kind of a sense of joy and delight and excitement,
and just gratitude and appreciation. And maybe the person never forgets that, oh, that's no longer there. There's an absence.

So with awakening, there is an absence. On the way to awakening, there's all these little movements of letting go of releasing, of putting down of opening up that goes on. And part of what we can be mindful of, is mindful of that absence, that follows letting go follows releasing. And because that absence can be a teacher, it can show us where we're still attached. And they say that as people get more and more free, they became more and more, it's more and more sensitive to even the slightest attachment and clinging that goes on.

So we let go into that absence and the absent becomes a teacher. The absence also begins to work on us. If that absence is powerful enough to leave the absence present. To really have something like hatred disappear, cynicism, disappear, jealousy disappear, envy disappear, all kinds of things can disappear, that have been a burden and a sore soreness in ache for a long time.

If it's really thorough, that sense, that kind of feeling is left of absence of freedom from, it's almost like a little bit of space as coming created space in the heart space in the mind space in the body space. That space, then becomes a teacher, or as a guide, or as even feels like a force inside, to expand that space to expand that openness, to expand that non clinging. And so when that letting go and practice is strong enough, something happens inside, there's a shift inside, that letting go no longer becomes something we do and choose and, but rather becomes a movement of momentum that has its own life within us. It's like we've entered into the current of a river, and the current will carry us downstream, we enter into a kind of the current of freedom, the current of absence, this current to this space is openness. And it begins if we tune into it, and recognize it. Or even if we don't tune into it, but it tunes into us. There's a kind of movement to keep expanding and keep opening, keep letting go. And it's almost, it is kind of a momentum, a movement towards greater and greater freedom. Where we are the recipient of it, were we right along. We're no longer the active doer, except to keep opening to it. And it's possible to have some significant letting go, freedom, and then get preoccupied in the world and have very little space for that inner momentum, it still operates, but much more slowly. And it's also possible to come aware of it. And to make space for it, to allow it to give time for it. So that I can have more time to live more breathing room in a sense, to do its work to keep freeing us keep opening up, keep going.

So absence becomes very important in Buddhism. And it's really part of the movement towards freedom. Absence is also important because of how it frees up, vitality, energy, attention, presence, compassion, wisdom, all kinds of things can flow. And when that when they flow, through that emptiness or out of that emptiness, in a sense, through that freedom, they have a feeling, are they clear sense that, again, they not exactly personal, we can it's difficult to say this is mine or me. Because we're not the agent, we're not exactly responsible for it. It's happening almost in spite of whatever self identity we have and self conceit we have, our self ideas of being the subject the agent,
they for our lives. The Dharma is moving through us, freedom is moving through us. And the freedom is not something we can appropriate for the self. On the way as we get some sense of freedom, a sense of letting go that's significant.

There is one further movement that's related to letting go that's a really important and it's, I like to use I like to use the word relinquishment, as representing this form of letting go. This aspect of it because relinquishment does mean kind of letting go. But in my vocabulary, I think of relinquishment, as a clear choice of mature, wise choice. to relinquish something is more than just letting it go and letting it drop. Relinquishment is a is a conscious act of giving something up. The Pali word for relinquishment, also means generosity to give. So it's giving over if we say give up, it can seem like we're surrendering and some just giving, you know, just dropping something. But if we give over then there's a kind of clear choice to give something over. So the relinquishment is, involves a choice. And sometimes as a practice goes along as letting go deepens. We can let go of things a little bit.

Or maybe they can let go temporarily, but they come back and they come back. Our attachments keep returning. But we've had a taste of freedom from particular attachments, enough of a taste. And so then there can be a choice, I'm going to relinquish this, I no longer stand behind this, I'm no longer interested in this. So on one hand, there's the movement or freedom that we're not the agent of, and we allow it to happen. We don't rely on that only, but we certainly allow for it. That grows over time. But we also, if we want in a mature, wise way, reflect and consider our lives and what our attachments are worth clinging to, holding on to. And we can make a choice. We can have a commitment to devotion and dedication, a clear statement, I now relinquish this, meaning I don't stand behind it. I don't believe in that anymore. I'm not going to invest in it. Might not mean that we stopped doing it because of the habit, power of habit. But for the heart to choose, like to make a vow, kind of a commitment and not because which a duty to do so. Because we know better, we know where we want to live, we know what we don't want to be doing anymore. So there's also that choice.

So this wonderful kind of combination of that which we open up to and we like go that's a freedom from self freedom can do where, and the mature wise choice that we make, to choose to do something differently.

So letting go. And I hope that this week on this topic has inspired you. And, and I've been able to do it in such a way that you don't feel that letting go is a drag, that it's a diminishment. It's a loss. But rather that letting go is again, it's an enhancement. It's a some ways may be known, you become stronger, something inside of you become stronger and fuller, and, you know, maybe more powerful. They say that when someone is fully liberated, there is a kind of power in that freedom that comes through that freedom.

So letting go, may you let go wisely. And may you discover all the benefits that can come from such letting go Thank you.