In the ancient teachings of the Buddha, there's a record of a conversation of someone coming to the Buddha, and with great enthusiasm for mindfulness, and said that when people practice mindfulness, then everything goes better for them. Everything works out well for people who are mindful. And the Buddha said, Actually, it's a little different. It's when people have mindfulness and loving-kindness that everything goes well, that everything is good in a certain way.

And so it's remarkable that the Buddha, who emphasized so much mindfulness, really brought in loving-kindness as a companion, as a partner to mindfulness. And it's a experience of many. Certainly, I've heard this from fellow teachers, in my own experience, that as mindfulness gets stronger, or as loving-kindness gets stronger, they kind of merge. With the well-developed mindfulness, loving-kindness seems to come along with it. And with very strong, developed loving-kindness, mindfulness comes along with it. And maybe with strong mindfulness, it kind of opens up and releases all the places we're held back, closed. And so the natural tenderness can be there that from which care and goodwill and love can radiate.

And as loving-kindness gets stronger and stronger, we're more and more in the present moment. We're not thinking about other things. It's so compelling to be here and now when mettā is strong that mindfulness comes along with that.

So the two can be seen as partners. And some people find they don't need to practice loving-kindness in order to have it grow with loving-kindness. But there's also the practice of loving-kindness. And some people will intentionally do practice, do meditations in loving-kindness, or even go on mettā retreats, or do whole retreats where the primary thing they're cultivating is this loving-kindness or mettā, this warmth.

And it is quite something to have the primary activity, focus of the mind, be love, be kindness. And that just like you would maybe, if you're focusing on the breathing, and you get really concentrated until you're right there with every breath, and it feels so delightful to kind of be finally in the present moment,
and the mind is not scattered and distracted and really present. So in the same way that one can do that with the practice of loving-kindness.

And rather than the primary characteristics of the mind is preoccupation or neurosis or anger or resentment or hurry or fear or wanting to get things and get things done and all that kind of things that often preoccupy a person as they go through their daily life, rather than the mind being preoccupied that way, the mind is occupied with loving-kindness, with mettā as the primary focus, the primary characteristic of what we think, what we feel, what we experience in the body and what we're motivated by, a kind of a gathering together, just this unification, this oneness with just loving-kindness.

And it's a phenomenal thing to have it become strong and the predominant kind of way of being is one then that's saturated, filled with his kind of goodwill and love. And, you know, it's just a great thing. It's a way of experiencing a deep peace. For some people the practice of loving-kindness is phenomenally healing. That as it gets strong and begins to kind of be medicine almost for the places inside that are wounded or hurt or frayed or closed. And its warmth tends to kind of settle things and relax things, and open things for us.

The Buddha gave this kind of a visualization. He said imagine that there is an easily accessed pond with clear, delightful, refreshing, cool water. If a tired, parched and thirsty, hot person, scorched and exhausted by the hot weather, came across the pond, the water would be used to quench both the person's thirst and the hot weather fever. It is the same for a person who becomes a practitioner. And after learning the Buddha's teachings, cultivates loving-kindness. For this person gains inner peace, and because of this inner peace, cultivates what is appropriate for the path of liberation.

So here, the loving-kindness can provide this cool, refreshing kind of sense of peace to a person. You know, it's maybe a little bit point out that, you know, in the guided meditation, I just did, I emphasized warmth. And here in this example the Buddha gave, he talks about coolness. And this might represent a difference between two different cultures. That English was kind of evolved in cold, cool England, where warmth was really the nice thing. And India being a very hot country at times that coolness is really valued there. So either way.

And so this practice of loving-kindness, meditation and loving-kindness can be developed. And the idea that one would have a designated time to really develop or grow or expand, or I'd like to use the word release the care, the goodwill that's within us, you know, and that person would spend time doing that is a great gift to the world. To really let this precious resource, something the Buddha called a wealth, inner wealth, loving-kindness or love or goodwill, and let that actually become strong. Not to leave it to an accident. Not to leave it to just Oh, it'll just appear when it does. And, you know, it's here some days and certain other days it's not here. But to actually take time to cultivate, develop it, make it strong, make it easily accessible, easily called upon in a way that's sincere and it's authentic.

Here's one description of a state of meditation, that very strong state of meditation, so it's what maybe what's possible. And hopefully it's inspiring to know this is a human possibility. To have the feeling of this mettā be this strong as this description describes. So the first half of it is described someone
getting kind of prepped, this situation preparing oneself to have very strong loving-kindness and meditation.

Delight is born when one sees oneself purified and freed of greed, ill will, anger, revenge, contempt, bossiness, envy, deceit, and wrong view. So isn't that kind of great. Delight is born when one sees that one is purified and freed from greed, ill will, anger, revenge, contempt and so forth.

When delighted, joy is born. When joyful, the body becomes tranquil. Someone whose body is tranquil feels happy. For someone whose body is tranquil, the mind becomes concentrated.

Now with this concentrated mind, this is the description of very strong state of loving-kindness. One abides pervading the east with a mind accompanied with loving-kindness, and likewise the south, the west and the north. Above, below, and all around, everywhere, and all over, one pervades the whole world with a mind accompanied with loving-kindness, extensive, expanded, limitless, free from hatred and ill will.

Even if it was just a mind that was free of hatred and ill will, it would be pretty good and wonderful, since those are so painful for this world of ours. But to actually cultivate the sense, the radiance, the fullness of loving-kindness that it feels like it radiates and spreads from us out in all directions, east, south, west, north, and all around, everywhere, kind of filling us, filling the field of our awareness, filling what seems like the whole world with it. It's that strong. It's that pervasive. It's like a wonder, you know, we say sometimes that someone whose anger has a cloud hanging over them, you kind of feel this radiance of maybe anger or hostility from them, it's possible to feel a radiance of love and kindness in oneself, kind of radiates and spreads outward. It's phenomenal that we have this capacity to get so centered and so focused and so absorbed into these beautiful, beautiful states.

And some people say, No, it can't be true, or it's too artificial, or it's too sweet, or you can't be safe in those states. We're talking about a meditation state. And so what we do when we come out of meditation is may be different. But it's said that loving-kindness is one of the ways to create tremendous safety for ourselves, to be kind and friendly in this world.

And some people will feel that practicing this way is kind of selfish or self-absorbed, or just doing something for one's own pleasure. But I would say that it's the opposite, that we benefit certainly from it. But it really allows us to go into the world to benefit the world, to be better citizens, helpful people, to not cause harm in the world, to actually care about other people in a profound way. And this is what I hope we can have is a world where we care about each other and live together and with goodwill and kindness and support.

So the practice of loving kindness, and what I offer you today is sometimes called a practice of radiating loving-kindness. That's very different from the more classic way of practicing loving-kindness, which is to use phrases and to progressively kind of do it for different categories with oneself, a benefactor, a neutral person, an enemy, and to spread it out from there. And both are great practices. But some people find it simpler and less complicated to just do the radiance. And this seems to be how the
Buddha taught it because the Buddha gave no instructions for this, you know, the different categories and using words to cultivate loving-kindness.

Someone asked for a citation. I read a few different things, but one of them is from the Middle Length Discourses, discourse number 40.

So I hope that you will give some reflection today about loving-kindness and care, goodwill. And maybe you can even have conversations with people about what their experiences with goodwill and how they evoke it and how they practice it, how they spread it, what the value they see in it. And experiment a little bit and see if you can go about the day with experimenting, with practicing a bit more goodwill than you would have been if you hadn't heard this suggestion.

So thank you very much and wonderful to be here with you and we'll finish this series on mettā tomorrow with the topic of mettā and liberation. Thank you.