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**Speaker 1** [00:00:01] Wasn't sure what to say, she actually some foreign movies in here. Yeah, it's seems to me that it's my first weekend where things are Shangpa from Theravadan tires. Mr Lhatong of the Shangpa. Well, they are almost there under some pressure. I started last year.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:44] Around this time we weren't getting used

**Speaker 1** [00:00:48] to this place. I haven't done three of them and I thought, Oh, you know what I'm saying? So what would you like to hear? The other thing is that you can also be okay with and lots of women and you're back to New York City.

**Speaker 3** [00:02:13] I feel so I wanted to.

**Speaker 4** [00:02:20] Can you hear

**Speaker 3** [00:02:21] me? I wanted to seed conversation this morning a little bit, though of course,

**Speaker 4** [00:02:31] in our

**Speaker 3** [00:02:31] grand tradition, you can't and

**Speaker 4** [00:02:33] will

**Speaker 3** [00:02:36] derail economy.

**Speaker 1** [00:02:38] This is very, very real. I don't think it's going to.

**Speaker 3** [00:03:00] And in all of our practices, there

**Speaker 4** [00:03:07] are

**Speaker 3** [00:03:07] levels of kind of, you know, it's not exactly Buddhist to say this, but goals, goals to be reached within a practice, even though the very nebulous goal of enlightenment is better not to pay too much attention to or work too hard on, but let it just let things unfold. But along the way, we have a number of practices which might inspire us, and sometimes we get lost by virtue of not knowing what we're doing or why we're doing it, or exactly how to do it in the most effective way. It's important, it's important to address those things lest we just get chronically bored with the entire path, which can be a real problem. And so we can say things are not a real problem. It's all ephemeral and all this. But the ephemeral sometimes wakes up in the middle of the night and causes us to have all sorts of angst and pain. So one of our one of our goals in the practice is this business of the aspiration bodhicitta the wish to accomplish the Dharma, accomplish the promise of the Dharma in order to have the skill to benefit all sentient beings

**Speaker 4** [00:04:52] and the

**Speaker 3** [00:04:56] kind of exhilarating practices. Primarily, I'm thinking of the four Immeasurables, which are Immeasurables loving kindness and compassion

**Speaker 4** [00:05:06] and

**Speaker 3** [00:05:08] joy of a certain type and equanimity. These things are easy for us to feel drawn to and and feel like we would like to accomplish them. But then we go off the cliff. So a number of questions arise, like, how do you accomplish those things? And we. And we do talk about them and in classes and retreats, we we talk about them and we give methods. So a couple of thoughts on that this morning. Primarily, I'm focusing on

**Speaker 4** [00:06:04] the

**Speaker 3** [00:06:05] immeasurable equanimity because it's important for us to see

**Speaker 4** [00:06:12] that

**Speaker 3** [00:06:13] without equanimity,

**Speaker 4** [00:06:15] nothing

**Speaker 3** [00:06:17] the other three Immeasurables will never

**Speaker 4** [00:06:20] flourish.

**Speaker 3** [00:06:22] I mean, Immeasurables, if you think about it, a moment relies upon equanimity. Otherwise, it's not immeasurable. If I have immeasurable love for all sentient beings except for this brand or this ethnic group or this these people or these insects, even then it's not equanimity.

**Speaker 4** [00:06:47] It's short

**Speaker 3** [00:06:49] and full equanimity is what actually powers

**Speaker 4** [00:06:53] the

**Speaker 3** [00:06:54] realization of relative bodhicitta.

**Speaker 4** [00:07:01] And so

**Speaker 3** [00:07:02] coming to the two things again, I'll probably get them done by

**Speaker 4** [00:07:05] noon.

**Speaker 3** [00:07:09] First of all, one thing that all of you have probably experienced. Even if you have trouble looking at it on a regular basis, is that when you sit down and meditate, you are distracted

**Speaker 4** [00:07:31] on

**Speaker 3** [00:07:32] a regular basis.

**Speaker 4** [00:07:41] If you look closely,

**Speaker 3** [00:07:42] you will see and we've brought this up a number of times, you'll see that actually you did not decide the content of that distraction or any other distraction.

**Speaker 4** [00:08:00] And that should be

**Speaker 3** [00:08:03] if it hasn't been, then you need to look closer. It should be a concern, maybe even a troubling concern. How is it that I can be distracted while trying to do something that I feel is very precious, like the practice of meditation? I'm distracted from the practice of the meditation. And how is it that I could be distracted by things that I actually have no interest in?

**Speaker 4** [00:08:40] And more importantly, by

**Speaker 3** [00:08:42] things that I didn't see coming. I don't know where they came from and when they're gone. I don't know where they went. And the meditation is left sometimes like, you know, it's just the skid mark that's left over. And so there's a benefit to seeing this beyond the disappointment that we feel in not being able to remain

**Speaker 4** [00:09:14] steady

**Speaker 3** [00:09:15] with the meditation. There is a huge benefit

**Speaker 4** [00:09:19] in seeing

**Speaker 3** [00:09:21] that we are not only not stable, at least for part of the time, but for most of us most of the time. We're not only not stable, we are not stable, not stable in ways that we seem to have no say in. So we could ask the kind of juicy question of who decides what I think, what I feel, what I do, because sometimes it's looking like I have no idea what that is. But there is another thing to look at, which we generally don't look at. That is that

**Speaker 4** [00:10:04] it

**Speaker 3** [00:10:04] is not just me who is distracted, nor is it just the people in this room who are distracted. Because of course, you would assume that people who were attempting to meditate would be less distracted than most other people. And maybe that's

**Speaker 4** [00:10:22] true.

**Speaker 3** [00:10:24] So let's assume for a moment that those who don't meditate are even more distracted in ways that they assume they are deciding.

**Speaker 4** [00:10:35] Right?

**Speaker 3** [00:10:36] Like, you could decide to meditate and then decide to go to lunch. But since you decided to go to lunch, we don't normally call that a distraction. We call the distraction something that you do. You didn't think to do it, but you just found yourself doing it somehow. So if you look at all sentient beings and think that

**Speaker 4** [00:11:00] in

**Speaker 3** [00:11:00] this particular way, if I talk to my Dharma brothers and sisters about this, I discover that we are all kind of in this place and we're distracted and we don't know where it came

**Speaker 4** [00:11:11] from,

**Speaker 3** [00:11:13] and we decide not to be distracted that it quickly morphs into a distraction. So we're just plagued by it. So let us take it a step in the direction of not plagued by it, but about to have an important insight that it's not just us, it's everybody. And the things that we think and do and say become the kind of the machinery of interdependence. So what I say today will affect how I feel this afternoon. What I eat for lunch today will affect how I feel tonight. Just the classic sense of interdependence is there.

**Speaker 4** [00:12:01] But when

**Speaker 3** [00:12:01] we're not deciding what our distractions are and what we're thinking and feeling,

**Speaker 4** [00:12:07] then

**Speaker 3** [00:12:08] we are still in the loop of interconnectedness. And we're just not aware of it.

**Speaker 4** [00:12:17] And we're probably as a group of

**Speaker 3** [00:12:20] serious practitioners, lay practitioners, but nonetheless serious practitioners. We're probably less distracted and less unaware and more aware of these things

**Speaker 4** [00:12:32] than

**Speaker 3** [00:12:35] almost any other group. So what does that say about the other groups and what does it say about our opinions, about the other groups, our ideas about them? Most of the ideas that we have about others, we could easily put in the list of judgments. There's one, there's one check, check, check. So think that's what we do?

**Speaker 4** [00:13:09] But why

**Speaker 3** [00:13:10] are we judging

**Speaker 4** [00:13:10] them?

**Speaker 3** [00:13:11] Why are we judging somebody else who isn't even engaged in seeing what we see all the time and don't seem to be able to overcome it? So if you look at this just in a certain way, you can see this could be the seed for loving kindness compassion. And of course, the question what is the joy? What is its role

**Speaker 4** [00:13:37] and

**Speaker 3** [00:13:38] certainly equanimity? Is there anyone, no matter how bad they are or how good they are, that we might say on the good side, from the standpoint of the facts of the drama, we'd have to exclude some, but mostly we would say everyone's in this place. So there's no really solid argument to be made for caring more for some as opposed to others. This was my first time thinking about this. Then we find it easier to imagine caring about all sentient beings. Everyone's kind of evolved in different directions and all

**Speaker 4** [00:14:26] but

**Speaker 3** [00:14:28] even those who are completely asleep and

**Speaker 4** [00:14:30] that work.

**Speaker 3** [00:14:35] Ana, now not actually much more sleep than I am, so so no cause for judgment, only cause for a general, all embracing, loving kindness, compassion, joy and equanimity. So one more thing which is an enhancement to this and that other thing is we often talk about the unbounded view, right? And bound to view is

**Speaker 4** [00:15:11] we

**Speaker 3** [00:15:12] call it a view here to distinguish it from a belief. So we call it a view because we can hold any view we want, even without evidence. You know, if it's useful, then it could be a good view to hold if it's useful. Since we're not actually concerned about some absolute truth about it, just its usefulness is important. I mean, we use things to pick food up and eat them, and we wear warm clothes on cold days. We don't believe in sweaters and jackets. We use them because they're useful. So the unbounded view is also very useful in this regard.

**Speaker 4** [00:15:55] When we

**Speaker 3** [00:15:55] think of caring about all sentient beings and holding the view of aspiration bodhicitta, we normally think of all the people who are on this planet

**Speaker 4** [00:16:10] at most.

**Speaker 3** [00:16:13] So the larger view is to think that my, my connection with others extends beyond the boundaries of this life. And I have no idea what that looks like, except that I can stop for a moment and say this is what it looks like, just like where we are, wherever we're sitting, whatever we're feeling, whatever we're thinking, whatever liking somebody, not liking something, that's where it lands. But it's almost always within the context of

**Speaker 4** [00:16:46] the

**Speaker 3** [00:16:46] realm of people that we know, starting with our family, our brothers and sisters and our offspring, and extending out to people who have harmed us and so on. The idea

**Speaker 4** [00:17:05] that

**Speaker 3** [00:17:06] our relationships are not bounded by our birth and our death, but are actually it's like the dam is broke and the water is going everywhere. So our bodhicitta needs to have that sense of it's the water is going everywhere all the time to those two things that I think are very helpful adjuncts to bodhicitta. First, you can hold the unbounded view, make as many beings as I can see and imagine, no matter how big it is, it's still

**Speaker 4** [00:17:43] not

**Speaker 3** [00:17:43] anywhere even close to the actual bigness. It's more like we've picked up one grain of sand on the beach

**Speaker 4** [00:17:52] and

**Speaker 3** [00:17:52] put it under a microscope and decided that that's what a beach looks like. Actually, we don't know what a beach looks like by doing that.

**Speaker 4** [00:18:02] Oh, OK. No, no, that's.

**Speaker 3** [00:18:23] You're welcome to Re Rail and.

**Speaker 1** [00:18:31] It seems seems like you're kind of walking carefully around this idea of joy. A couple who said joy of a certain kind and he's sounded like he had no hesitation about that idea. What what is joy?

**Speaker 3** [00:18:47] Well, that's a good, re- real refresher.

**Speaker 1** [00:18:58] Yeah.

**Speaker 3** [00:19:02] Mostly what we're talking about when we talk about joy. We're talking about joy

**Speaker 4** [00:19:10] in the

**Speaker 3** [00:19:14] positive things that other beings, other people, other beings do. It's a little bit it's a nice antidote again, to judgment. Joy is a great antidote to judgment. And so we see someone who do something kind in our general experience of that person is that they're not actually very kind. And so we judge their positive thing that they did as kind of an accident

**Speaker 1** [00:19:47] like, you

**Speaker 3** [00:19:48] know, even really bad people do good things from time to time, but like they forget. So, so this is an antidote more, it's more about our stream of consciousness than someone else's. When somebody does something positive, even better, if it's somebody we've thought just wasn't capable of doing that, that it opens our heart to this place sort of like, well, could be, you know, could be genuine. So just as a matter of practice, we hold the assumption that it is maybe we just don't see all the times that they do something else, but also combine that with the idea that they're kind of on the bumpy road of, you know, spiritual evolution, like the rest of us are most of the time driving at night with no lights. So they don't actually see what they're doing. They don't know where

**Speaker 4** [00:20:52] they're driving,

**Speaker 3** [00:20:55] but maybe they have the aspiration which is appropriate, but just not all the kind of practice, accouterments and experience to guide themselves along the path in a in a functional way. So our first step in helping them is to not judge them, or even better yet, to judge them as inherently kind. And by virtue of the confusion which naturally accompanies us in this life, their natural kindness sometimes doesn't come out so easily. So it is joy is a little bit. I don't think it should be, it doesn't need to be an odd thing. But in

**Speaker 4** [00:21:41] the

**Speaker 3** [00:21:42] in the context of all the all of the confusion, the wrong understandings, the suffering of some and so on. Sometimes the idea of oh and joy, don't forget that it sounds like what? Where did that come from? So that's by way of saying, I think it fits into the form Immeasurables just like the other three.

**Speaker 4** [00:22:16] OK. Yeah.

**Speaker 3** [00:22:19] You look slightly like.

**Speaker 4** [00:22:20] Well, I mean,

**Speaker 3** [00:22:22] not colloquially

**Speaker 1** [00:22:24] joy has been like bliss, right? Kind of a subjective fullness or the fullness of the heart. Yeah, but sounds like a term of art here. Joy is more about equanimity and. About embracing our connection.

**Speaker 3** [00:22:45] Yeah, I think without equanimity, the joy itself often becomes a judgment. I know I know someone

**Speaker 4** [00:23:00] one

**Speaker 3** [00:23:02] Western teacher

**Speaker 4** [00:23:04] in the Dharma

**Speaker 3** [00:23:06] who manifest this really well and there their practice actually have a practice around the joy. I think so. If they have somebody who's having a lot of trouble, they immediately find the place. I mean, they have a habit

**Speaker 4** [00:23:24] of finding the

**Speaker 3** [00:23:26] the place where one could understand why they're having that trouble. So that a conversation can be started where where the person feels like somebody is being kind to them, at least not judging them, just saying like, Well, it's easy to see why you'd be doing this or having that, but you might try this little thing over here.

**Speaker 5** [00:24:04] More joy is definitely one of the one of the four Immeasurables where there's quite a variety of approaches, a variety of dimensions. One of the one frame of reference that sometimes been helpful for me is sometimes it's just referred to as rejoicing, rejoicing. So from the perspective of beginning with a sense of connecting with others from a point of view of warmth, general warmth and concern and kindness, then what arises when you meet people? Sometimes things appear to be going well. Sometimes things appear to be going not well. And in the way the sense of compassion you could say when we see something that we feel that, oh, I understand that it's not going well, then what? How do I relate to that? When you see something, oh, here's this is going well for somebody. How do I relate to them? There's a kind of a rejoicing. Things are going well. May you take advantage of that. Things are not going well. May this work out. So there is some sense of that. Should the rejoicing, some element of rejoicing that there is also the just the element that what we bring to a situation when we have a sense of well-being that's not dependent upon circumstances. There's just a sense of you can say that there is a sense of joy in that. There's a sense of freedom and and well-being. And we just bring that to whatever situation there is. That's so there's that again, depends upon the kind of equanimity there is. So there are various dimensions to joy as well.

**Speaker 1** [00:26:09] When sitting this morning, the noise upstairs kind of embraced that. Yes, noise. Yes, that's right. Yeah. And that's the kind of joy, you know, as opposed to, you know, yes, life. Life. Yeah, yeah.

**Speaker 2** [00:26:33] And there's also the sort of the emphasis on when we use the term sympathetic joy. So someone obviously having, you know, happiness about something, if we can appreciate that we can share in that joy, it doesn't have to be our joy as opposed to your joy. It's actually there is joy it it's it's there to be experienced and we can have that experience through others having their happiness, which is pretty, pretty exciting and tagging on to that in our culture because most of us have been steeped in some competitiveness. So when someone gets something good, our mind kind of goes to jealousy or envy. And this is this kind of sympathetic joy. Rejoicing is a great antidote to that. They got it instead of, they got it. You know, they got a good group on them, you know? And then the heart opens instead of closes. And you actually, I've been working with this one for a long time. You can actually start feeling joy in your heart when someone gets something that you really want to get. It's impossible, I would have never believed. But I think it's just I'm going to rejoicing with something to turn from jealousy and then seeing their joy and seeing if you can connect with it. And it just opens. It's really cool. It works. Yeah.

**Speaker 1** [00:28:32] Just give some specific examples of what you think, I can't hear you.

**Speaker 5** [00:28:38] I'm Susan. Susan asked if we could give some specific examples. You could give some specific example,

**Speaker 2** [00:28:46] but I can give you what I just said, Susan. Yeah, the first time it happened for me, I had been on your retreat when the teacher was in Rochester and was really working. And shortly after I went into a restaurant by myself just to get lunch and a couple came in simultaneously with me and the waiter waited on them and gave them the last table. And I was not feeling joy. And actually, I was like, Well, here it goes again. Discrimination against single women. I don't remember, you know, that other person that we have to live with in our heads. And it came to mind to try it, you know, just I have to wait here anyway or leave. So I waited and I just kept sorting through and trying. And then I watched them and they sat down at the table and they were really happy, you know, and I kept watching them like, look at them, look at it. And then I said, I don't know if something happened. It was like, they're happy. Why wouldn't I be happy that they're happy? Do I not like them? I don't even know them. OK, that's cool. I'm happy. I'm not in a big hurry. I'm OK. And I could start to feel it. Does that help? I mean, it's that it gets that specific any time I feel I appreciate that specific thing is what happens for me. For instance, OK, I wonder about being joyful about other people's joy, because it's also my interpretation to joy. So for instance, if I'm reading about people's personal battles, I'd like to feel joyful for those. And often, I mean, and often they're really quite amazing things these people are. But then when I can also fall into, it's the whole thing that wait a minute, our practice is about business in common. And so it's right. I because I understand from a really personal level in terms of you just see something doing something that you feel. You can see the joy and you can go, OK. I can appreciate that. And you can see also, as you say, you saw your own initial reaction to that. I guess I'm just wondering more in the broader sense. Well, we always need to hold relative an open mind and maybe not mix them up so much, even though they're like this. So in the ultimate, sure, it's impermanent, and maybe some moment they'll feel undue because they got hooked on their joy. But I'm not in charge now. I'm not in charge of that. On a relative level, we get to enjoy the thing. That's how it came about that just allow allowed.

**Speaker 6** [00:32:02] I wanted to survive. Well, I wanted to confess like that joy is definitely the most. That's the one where I feel like I don't really know what it is and I feel like it's like my my weak point. Like, I'm I am much better. I can. I can sort of I can do compassion in the good days I can do love and equanimity just seems a little mysterious, so. So I'm willing to to give that one a break for joy. I know. Well, you know, I spent seven years as a depressed person, and the way that I characterized that time was joyless and and I and so I really wasn't sure what to do with the practice of Immeasurables joy when it seemed like what I had was was like zero. And just like it was visualized in the other. And so one of the things that I learned, though, and sort of working my way out of that is that I did have joy, but I did not. I didn't actually realize that's what that was. And so when I could speak it, I don't intentionally try to make people laugh. But when they do, I actually experience that back as joyful. And when I look out there and people smile back at me, I did actually experience, so I had to acknowledge, OK, yeah, there is some joy there. And I think, you know, recently I went to my teacher because I asked my wife, like, what is my greatest flaw? She said she said you're too critical, and I said, you know, you're right. I will be less critical. I will pray. And so like, I went to my teacher and I said I, my goal is to appreciate my wife more and my life more. And he said, Really? And and I was like, Yeah, I was like, I'm going to notice things and I'm going to appreciate them. And and and and and things will be better and she'll be happier and we'll be happier as a couple. And he just smiled and then said, you know, essentially the same thing that he says to me every single time I come to him with one of these harebrained schemes. Actually, this one was counterintuitive. What he said was, you know, I think in order to appreciate things, you actually maybe need to start with, you know, do you actually enjoy your life? And I said, Well, sometimes it's OK, some good things and some irritating things. And he said, you know, perhaps instead of trying to fix your life, your greatest flaw, maybe a better way to come out, it would be why don't you just try to simply appreciate the things, you know, try to enjoy yourself? And he said, maybe if you're if you're in this sort of joyful state, maybe you'll more naturally appreciate things and send that out into the world instead of what my normal status is to change a lot of stuff in this and out into the world. So certainly it was not the advice I was I was expecting. And it's hard and and so I ask him, So how are you? OK, so what is that? You know, because how do you do that? And he said, Well, you could just start with appreciating right now

**Speaker 1** [00:35:55] and you're like, Oh, not this again.

**Speaker 6** [00:36:04] And he sort of walked through he's like, you know, you have two eyes that work you, you you. It's relatively comfortable right now. You're at peace, you know, can you appreciate that so. And so this is like confessions of a joyless. But but I think I think the other side of it is joy is is not complicated. It's it's when you experience it, you experience it. And the people who seem to be really good at it seem to be really joyful. And it's infectious and they send that out into the world. And, you know, people who are like, really good, you know, like, you can't wait to tell them that something happened because, you know, they're like, blow it up into a big deal, you know, and it's magnified. And so I think that I think that the trick is that you can get, you know, you can kind of get it. There's there's some traps with joy, but I also think it's simple if you share your joy with others, then it increases. And if you can share other people's joy, then then that increases. And and so that's all I have to say about that.

**Speaker 2** [00:37:21] I enjoyed that.

**Speaker 1** [00:37:25] I do think

**Speaker 5** [00:37:38] it's interesting that we seem to need permission to to enjoy things in this in this way. It's easy for us to take on compassion as

**Speaker 1** [00:37:55] the

**Speaker 5** [00:37:56] put my teeth in deal with these bad situations. OK, I can, right? But to actually have this now? OK, fine. Fine. This fine swell being tapped into it. Share this. Really, that's important. If that's permitted, feeling good is permitted in this,

**Speaker 1** [00:38:21] yeah, such.

**Speaker 5** [00:38:25] I've generally I've only had a few episodes in my life that were the experience of Immeasurables joy to zero point, but I have more had the opposite and I felt and it has it, it has its downsides, just kind of feeling happy, go lucky a lot of the time. So I didn't get the paper done on time. But and and I don't think there is. It's this is not like some kind of

**Speaker 4** [00:39:05] moral

**Speaker 5** [00:39:07] victory. I mean, we were all born with different kinds of situations and things unfold in different ways. My mother actually said, you were different when you were a kid and I would come in in the morning instead of fussing. You'd be standing up quietly, standing, holding on to the the kid and just smiling. And so there is a yeah, and I've I've felt blessed by that and I've found something, something in that that the experience that was that was kind of hard for you to come by is something that is more natural for me. But it's it's no, it's still a very powerful thing and finding finding the kind of sense of well-being that's actually not fundamentally dependent on getting something, being entertained by something, avoiding something. This is this is something that's a very powerful. It's very powerful, actually, and very, very positive. So being able being able to go there, being able to cultivate this and cultivate this with this sense of whatever arises, and I bring this sense of well-being into the situation that's been there to equanimity such as joy. We don't talk about much. We're better at it all broke. Let's try to fix it or learn to what it means to try to fix it and deal with it and all the other kinds of things. But the potential, the basic potential for well-being that's not dependent upon circumstances, entertainment or the rest is very deep. Very.

**Speaker 1** [00:41:22] Can you speak up? I'd like to ask the question if the the experience you have when you're in this place of meditation, when you come and you wouldn't, there's no thoughts, but is a boundless mind boundless? That's the boundless mind that you're talking about. Then surely that's a quality that is an experience. That can arise in all places. So it seems like having the Immeasurables in place now, almost placing a concert in know in the way of that boundless

**Unidentified** [00:42:14] calm awaken my.

**Speaker 1** [00:42:19] So then they become a distraction. Immeasurables become a distraction in a way. That's my question.

**Speaker 3** [00:42:29] That was a statement. But we can take it as a question.

**Speaker 4** [00:42:38] I think you're right. Of course, you

**Speaker 3** [00:42:42] could say that, however, about every instruction, for every meditation practice that you hear it, it's explained. It's conceptual. So on the extreme side, you could say that's another conceptual instruction. I won't I won't do that thing because it's not going to be useful. Basically, from using your words, I think you would say I can't seem to get out of the way, so I won't do anything. And we are we have to understand that there's a value to the conceptual and the value is increased by virtue of understanding the obstacles and the problems relating with understanding things conceptually. And then and this is the big problem, really. And then we move into this place of having the experience that we have really deeply experientially understood what actually, we've very clearly understood the conceptual explanation. We all fall into that, and at some point we get tired with that. So then best case, we move on to actually engaging in the practice from an experiential side, which is where all of it has to go. I think you're right.

**Speaker 4** [00:44:15] You know, you're right.

**Speaker 3** [00:44:18] The question then, is what are you going to do now? Well, the basic meditation of combining or shamatha is really meant to be a completely non conceptual experience. You sit down, you relax, you let your mind settle, and then whatever happens, you remain aware of it. You don't need to apply an antidote or anything. But those instructions sound, sound very nice. But then occasionally we have that experience, and most of the time we have the experience of being distracted. Using the distraction doesn't have to be a

**Speaker 4** [00:45:03] problem, a

**Speaker 3** [00:45:05] distraction. Normally, when you say there's a problem, you need to keep your awareness on

**Speaker 4** [00:45:11] on

**Speaker 3** [00:45:12] the object of your meditation. But the distraction itself as a kind of higher level can actually be the object of your meditation. At that point, then you don't need to apply an antidote. You're because you'll be applying an antidote to the actual, authentic meditation. So these things work what we hear on any given day or from any given person at any time may be very useful, but it's also helpful to understand that whatever is useful today may not be useful in a week or a year. A decade or something that seemed totally useless may actually become useful at a future time. Path is not one thing. What do you think?

**Speaker 1** [00:46:11] I think this the value of things changing all the time and that makes a lot of sense.

**Speaker 4** [00:46:21] That is your

**Speaker 3** [00:46:23] view and your attitude over are important, of course, because we already know things are going to change and whether you pay attention to the.

**Speaker 5** [00:46:39] Thanks. Sometimes when we use the word distraction, where you use the word distraction just now in a certain way, I I, I tend to think of there is distracted in this.

**Speaker 4** [00:46:54] Yeah.

**Speaker 5** [00:46:55] And so what we label as a distraction like in in one frame of reference, well, my mind goes on on the breath and then my mind was on lunch and the attention the thought of lunch was distract the distraction. But actually losing track of the losing the thread of awareness was where destructiveness arose. And when you later said then that distraction could be actually the subject, and that means actually distracted ness did not arise. There was never any destructiveness. But what arose, whether there was movement in the mind, whether there was stability, that that was not, that it doesn't matter if you don't, you don't have the distracted ness arise. I think that for me, that helps clarify this.

**Speaker 3** [00:47:56] Yeah, yeah.

**Speaker 5** [00:47:58] And so the the very the very first thing that you said about the mind free of thoughts, the boundless mind being free of thoughts, sometimes it could be free of thoughts. Sometimes there can be movement in the mind. But in that case, whether there is destructiveness or not, is the question. But at the end, for a very long time when there is movement in the mind, we're seduced by the movement and we're lost in it and we're lost in our confusion about that. So for a long time, just the notion, Oh, there's there is this. It's a distraction. That's fine. But in the longer run, this notion of cultivating sense of deeper sense of not destructiveness

**Speaker 1** [00:48:51] is a different thing. And.

**Speaker 3** [00:49:15] So for those of you who are. Let me just I'll just finish this quick. For those of you who are interested, we meet again this evening. Same program pretty much as today. So Marci, before you're in the last

**Speaker 2** [00:49:33] one, the last question

**Speaker 3** [00:49:37] will be the last word to

**Speaker 2** [00:49:40] hear your. You're referring to the distractions that would come up in our shamatha as being very much had this sound of randomness and out of control ness to it. And I'm wondering if. I mean, I guess when you said that I was thinking about how if everything that arises in my mind is, is karma, is that true and is what I do today? I mean, there is some element of not control, but as far as what I do today and my the way that I make my mind, the things that I do with my body, speech and mind are going to influence what those distractions are. Correct? Right. There is some it's not totally random or out of control in that

**Speaker 3** [00:50:42] sense, right? You said it was random?

**Speaker 2** [00:50:45] Well, I don't know. I that was not random, but it was just the way you were describing the way we can't control our mind. And I and I get that. But I guess I'm wondering if there's. That was just my thought anyway, and I was wondering if if that's correct.

**Speaker 3** [00:51:09] And what's the that exactly?

**Speaker 2** [00:51:12] Well, it's I mean, it's not that hopeless in the sense that you know what? Yeah. Up in your mind over time, by what you do with your body speech and mind today.

**Speaker 3** [00:51:26] I mean, that's really the that's really the basis of the Buddhist ethical system. Is that what you do will influence things later? Maybe you almost instantly, but also later. So. And it includes what you think, what you say, what you do with your body and all of those things add up. And and I think sometimes we put way too much effort in trying to understand it as karma. But when we haven't, when we actually had a stepladder in front of us that we could have just stepped up and, you know, understood what was in the cupboard instead of having to go through these machinations around the karmic side, karma is a complicated thing. But the foundation of it looks pretty simple for most of us will understand that my actions bear results, but we may not understand and may not even believe is that they bear results

**Speaker 4** [00:52:29] far more

**Speaker 3** [00:52:32] predictably and are kind of in the sense that it's predictable that there will be a result. You can't know exactly what it is or when it will occur. And so it's difficult to sometimes embrace the idea that most of the karma the ripens in this life was seeded or planted in previous lives. But it's another one of those things as a very useful view to hold, rather than wonder whether it's the truth or exactly how that works. If you just hold the view that it works like that, it changes a lot of what we just do naturally without having to memorize the lists of what you should do and shouldn't do. You can kind of get close to the sense of what is a good thing, what is not a good thing. What is helpful for myself and others? What is not helpful for myself and others. And that understanding comes right out of the meditation as part of our life. So I think there's a there is the there can be a feeling that these things are random in the same way that we might say. We might say that weather patterns are so big that at any given time, whether or not you will feel a blast of cool or warm air on your face feels totally random. But we also understand that that's just because we're not we're not sophisticated enough to know all the causes of these, all the things that come to bear there and

**Speaker 4** [00:54:12] and are

**Speaker 3** [00:54:13] the things that happen to us in this life, including our distractions or the things that arise that we didn't think to think about can feel that way, that it feels random because we cannot connect all the dots to all of the things that have happened. Not just that we have time, but what we have done in our continuously changing interconnectedness with all of it means. I think that's why I think it's helpful to embrace something like the form Immeasurables or whatever it is that works for someone and to just focus on that and understand that the outcome cannot be predicted in time or exactly what it will be. But if I continuously hold the attitude that my life is for the benefit of others, that will bear a certain result in this life and beyond that? I think it's a it's an easier and more I'm going to say it, a more joyful approach. You're also not looking for a good thing that comes from a good thing we did. OK, I did that now. I should get something. We already know we're all old enough to know that is a losing proposition. So disappointment. OK, dedication is by virtue.

**Speaker 1** [00:55:58] It's very true that I quickly realize is not based on being such.

**Speaker 2** [00:57:10] Please stay and help clean.

**Speaker 1** [00:57:16] Thank you. You know, the group is in the U.S. that's the work of teaching each new start with each one. Yeah, next.

**Speaker 5** [00:57:35] Actually, this one's own unique because based on this one?

**Speaker 1** [00:57:42] Oh yeah. Yeah. Maybe they're like being thrown in after a few years ago. You know, we have equanimity besides just Typekit you right there. And the basic Oh okay, it's easy to.