

Dharma Talk at Buddha Center on Second Life
28 April 2010
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(A participant, Meme, comments that he'd like to discuss death, and preparation for death. He mentions that his brother is dying.)

Why does death and suffering exist? How do we comfort someone who is dying? It's very difficult to comfort someone who is dying, especially one who has not adopted a spiritual viewpoint to life. And by that I mean one who does not have a world view or perspective or philosophy that there is more to this human existence or this existence period than just going through time encased in this bag of skin and bones. So if you have someone who is in that point of view there is very little that you could do other than be with them, in body or just in spirit, and give them comfort in whatever suffering they are experiencing at this point. Because if you try and tell them that there really is no death, that consciousness is eternal, if you talk about reincarnation or anything that points to the transcendence of human consciousness beyond death they are not going to listen to you and in fact they are going to take that as an insult or something childish, something for fools. So all you can do really is just be present with them and offer them your loving kindness whether with words or with your actions, or just from your heart, just beaming energy from your heart, Metta.

(A participant, Katie asks if he is suffering.)

Yes, he is. As far as comforting someone on an emotional, spiritual level it would be doing metta and doing service for that person, if you are there physically with them, helping them to get through their day. Bringing them food and drink or whatever it is that they need, talking with them, reading to them. And also if they do have a spiritual sensibility and they do understand, at least on an intellectual level, then discussing how consciousness is eternal and that any identification that they have with the bag of skin and bones that their consciousness is inhabiting at this point is really illusory and I would do the "ABC" meditation with them, if they are able to do that. Because that is the best way to dissolve that identification we have with your physical body as being who and what you are. And then really experiencing who and what you truly are, which is universal divine energy.

And the other thing that I would do, and this comes from my clinical practice, and my advocacy of an integrative transformational practice, is E.F.T - the emotional freedom technique, which is extremely effective at relieving suffering and distress of all kinds, emotional and physical. It's not a visualization at all; it is a technique that utilizes acupuncture meridian points. So it's like acupuncture, but it does not use needles to stimulate those points. It uses tapping on those points with your fingers for about eight to ten times. I've been using it now for over three years and I've been involved in

psychology, philosophy, spiritual practice for over 35 years now, Probably close to 40 years and I've found that E.F.T. Is probably the most effective emotional releasing technique I have found. And I've tried practically everything. So E.F.T. is my choice for working with people both psychotherapeutically and spiritually on helping them to release those blocks that we have so much trouble to releasing. It's excellent on emotional problems and it's also excellent on physical problems that have at least a partial base in emotional repression and negative emotions, past traumas etc. And that is the basis for probably 90% of diseases. Most diseases, that we experiencing today are psychosomatic. Which does not mean it's all in people's heads. What it means is that there are real physical distresses that at least in part, if not totally, have their origins in some kind of psychological, emotional issue. I use it therapeutically with my clients and I teach it to my clients and all my friends. The technique works for your own problems. It works for my problems and it works for everybody's problems. It is my primary therapeutic tool at this point. After 30+ years of doing verbal therapy, I find that there is a lot of issues, that people need to work out a lot verbally, that E.F.T. Can go in, and because it's dealing directly with your energy body, it just allows you to release the emotion, release the issues so it just does not bother you anymore. I would say that doing Metta, doing service, doing the ABC meditation and using E.F.T. - those are four dynamite things that you can do for anybody that is experiencing suffering or preparing to go through that transition. When you talk with that person, just find out what is bothering him, what are his anxieties, what are his fears. You take each one of those and do one or more rounds of E.F.T. on them. Then see how that dissolves and leaves in its place a wonderful peace of mind. The thing that I found in working with E.F.T. that truly amazes me, is that when you have a problem that's been with you for a long time, let's say a traumatic memory, that every time you remember this event you tighten up or you go through negative emotional reactions, sometimes mild but sometimes pretty serious, any time, you engage these thoughts, that negative emotion finds you and you can't get rid of it, but when you do E.F.T. on a particular issue and you dissolve and release that negative emotion, it reverses the whole situation. So that you can think about that situation and you won't get upset at all, the way you used to. It's like the emotion now can't find you. And that's the test that I use when I work with people on specific issues. We tap on them and reduce the emotional distress down to a point where it's rated as a zero. Like there is no problem anymore. Then I'll ask that person to imagine that situation again and really get into it, imagine the people, the place, the other things in the environment and trying to imagine it as vividly as you possibly can and see if any negative emotional reaction comes up. The amazing thing is that they can't do it. Once you dissolve a negative emotional attachment with E.F.T., you just can't feel bad anymore, at least about that specific problem. And so in a course of therapeutic treatment you just target one problematic situation after another until you get to the point where that releasing reaction generalizes and that all of the memories that feed into particular problem dissolve so that you don't have to do treatment on every single traumatic or troublesome incident that you had in your life. You can do it on maybe half a dozen to a dozen of them. And then everything else falls away. And that issue is just not a concern anymore. To me it is one of the most powerful spiritual techniques that I know. And an integral part of my integrative transformational practice program where I teach people that if they want to

really accelerate their spiritual progress and their spiritual practice they should create a integral program for themselves and address body, mind, emotions and spirit. Not just one of those, but they'll make the best progress by addressing all of them. Because as much as we are not this body we do inhabit it while we're here on earth. And it's something that we need to take care of in a proper way. So that it becomes a vehicle for us to achieve our transformation. The beauty of E.F.T. is that it can resolve issues that have been standing for years in minutes. I don't mean to say that it will magically dissolve everything if somebody is seriously disturbed, and I work with those people, that it's going to cure them in one or two sessions. That's not the case. But it will shorten the time of treatment dramatically from years to month. On serious issues, that have been long standing, that are very complex, and have a lot of different causes, you would like to consult the professional. It's a wonderful tool, but there are some issues that you really need professional guidance with. I want to help you guys to feel comfortable with your practice, with yourselves, and to accelerate your own transformation. By accelerating your transformation you help to hasten the transformation our entire planet. It's the Hundredth Monkey Phenomenon -The more of us that transform ourselves, the more we raise the collective level of consciousness of the entire planet and the entire universe. So that we get to the point where we just pull all those Luddites along. Our enthusiasm is too much for them to resist.

(A participant, Anahata, questions, what are your thoughts on Euthanasia. She has a degenerative illness and it is something that she considers.)

I feel both that I am powerless and that it's inappropriate of me to dictate or even render an opinion of someone who has freewill and is going thru their own journey. I don't know what to say on that, other then the Buddha said that life is suffering but that suffering can be transcended, and perhaps that old Roman saying "Dum spiro spero" – "while I breath I hope", they may be applicable here, to point out that there is something in your illness that is going to be instructive to you and help you to arrive at your own transformation. And then maybe you will decide that you want to continue living or maybe you don't, but the choice is coming from an enlightened perspective rather then from the ego perspective of separation and suffering.

(A participant questions, do I think that people should have a choice?)

If universal consciousness gave all humans freewill who am I to say that somebody should or should not do something? Remember, you are one expression of universal consciousness in an individualized package. Just as we all are. So we're all connected. But you and we have condensed ourselves to the point where we appear to be separated. And in that separateness we are the captains in our ships and the masters of our fate or vice versa. So we do what we feel is best for us and what will serve our highest good in purpose. I'm sure that there are some people who have been euthanized, who, and this is all speculation, after the fact came to the realization that they should not have done it. And then there are some that, after the fact, said that was the right thing for me to do at that time, in that lifetime. But again, it's all speculation. It is totally up to the person in question. I really don't want to say anything

because that would be presuming to know something that I don't really know. That's a tough question. Because the first precept of the Buddha is, don't kill. And that, we assume, includes killing yourself. And yet there are limits to human suffering.

(A participant, Meme, questions, what is happiness?)

Well, just pay attention to your breathing, pay attention to the phenomena around you without judgment and pay attention to your inner body. And you'll know what happiness is. You experienced it at the beginning of our dharma talk, at every dharma talk. If tell you what happiness is, I just give you an idea, I'm just feeding your ego. Remember, the Buddha said enlightenment is the end of suffering. Maybe happiness is also the end of suffering.

It reminds me of the old joke about the young man who wanted to find the secret of life. Someone told him that there is a guru in a cave on a top of a high Himalayan mountain, and it would be very difficult to get there. But he decided that he needed to know despite all that. So he took a long ocean voyage and he trekked through miles of desert and miles of mountains over snow and ice and climbs that high peak in Himalayas and went through all sorts of hardship and suffering to get there. He finally finds the cave, he goes inside, and he finds the Guru sitting there on a rock with a smile on his face in meditation. And he bows and says to the Guru: Oh great Guru, I've traveled miles and endured many hardships and much suffering to see you. May I ask you, what is the secret of life? And the Guru says: well, you certainly may. The secret of life is a babbling brook. And that's all he said. And the young man is at first stunned by the simplicity of the answer. And then he gets angry. And he starts yelling at the guru, I can't believe this! I've traveled all these miles, I've crossed the ocean, I've crossed the desert, and climbed mountains, endured all sorts of suffering and hardship, come all over all that up here to ask you the secret of life! And all you tell me that the secret of life is a bubbling brook?!?! - And the guru looks a little puzzled, and asks him: You mean it's not?

That's it.

(A participant, Delani, comments that happiness is to stop craving desires.)

Happiness has nothing to do with concepts. Take a deep breath, feel your inner body.

(A participant, Meme, says peace is happiness.)

But what is peace? What is happiness? What is craving desires?

(Delani comments, if you walk through the snow, freeze your ass off, when you get to the warm cave, you are happy, and at Peace within yourself.)

Yes, but why are you happy? Because you stop resisting the present moment. You just take a deep breath. There's no concepts, it's just, "AAAAAHHHHHHHH". That's it.

Stop trying to conceptualize it. Peace, inner peace, happiness, craving desires, ending desires...that's all conceptualization. It's all words. Happiness is what you experience when you stop resisting what is whether that comes from the inside or the outside, (and "inside" and "outside" are illusions anyway). But it seems like it's coming from the inside or the outside. When you start resisting the things that are happening on the outside and when you stop resisting the feelings that are coming up as reactions to things that are happening on the outside that's happiness. So just be.

Remember Lao-Tzu's advice in the Tao Teh Ching, # 47.

"There is no need to go outside for better seeing,
nor to peer from a window.
Rather, abide at the center of your being,
for the more you leave it, the less you learn.
Search your heart and see if he is wise who takes each turn.
The way to do is to be."

There is the secret of life, summed up in that little verse.