

>> MG: So, we're about to start the third movement, and it is 5:38, which is exactly the time, in all worlds, it was destined for the third movement of the symphony to start. Heather, how you doing over there? Just checking in.

>> Great.

>> MG: We're good? Okay. There she is. Good. Awesome. Laurie, how you doing over there? Good? And where's the other Laurie? There she is. Hi, Laurie. Awesome. Sequoia, how you doing back there? You having fun?

>> Yes.

>> MG: Awesome. So good. Edie, you good?

>> I'm very good.

>> MG: So, Chris is behaving himself, over there?

>> Yeah, unfortunately.

[laughter].

>> MG: Give him time. He's working with his pleasure cap. Chris, life's not easy. It's just not. Challenges all the time.

So, what we're about to start -- "The Twenty Principles of Pleasure."

[laughter].

>> And what we're going to do is, we're actually going to do, today, the first five, and we're going to actually do an exercise on one of the key ones, and stop there. Because I think, both, in terms of time and, also, energetically, I think we can kind of dip into it, start the core five. Energetically, it's not a time to go through twenty, now. But let's find the core five. The last 15, you'll see, will take us about a half hour tomorrow morning. It will take us about a half hour tomorrow morning, because they actually won't come alive until we deploy them, in levels of pleasure. But the first five, you can kind of touch directly. So, what I want to actually do is do the last 15, kind of just go through them tomorrow morning, in the next part of the program, and, then, right immediately afterwards, be able to start doing the levels, to actually see how they deploy immediately, as opposed to just kind of going through them now, and them being kind of mysterious, inexplicable and causing enormous frustration, anxiety, various forms of breakdown, relational issues, all through the night. There we go. I'm just trying to be helpful. Drum roll! Are we ready? Drum roll!

The first principle -- so, we now are in the third section. We're now in the third movement in the program, in the symphony. And whether you are here, at Shalom Mountain Wisdom School, in 2013 or whether you are listening at home to this program, we are now in the third movement of the symphony. And this third movement is "The Twenty Principles of Pleasure." And the first principle is "Pleasure is a skill."

Pleasure is a skill. And that simple, first principle of pleasure changes the game. Pleasure is a skill. And that emerges, if you remember, at the end of the second movement in the symphony. We talked about the ninth voice of pleasure being the voice of evolutionary pleasure. But, actually, the evolution of

consciousness, the highest apex of evolution, is the ability to get more pleasure from the most areas of life, in the deepest possible way. Greatest depth; greatest span. That's evolution. So, the enlightened person is the person who's able to get most pleasure from most activities, in the greatest depth. And the addict, then, becomes the person who's narrowed their pleasure realm, to a very, very narrow arena of pleasure. So, the invitation beyond addiction, which is an invitation to pleasure rewoven is to actually reweave the pleasure map, which is exactly what we're going to do all day tomorrow. And I don't actually believe that we can deal with addiction, whether in its sometimes minor forms, as they appear in us -- when I say "minor," I don't mean minor emotionally or psychologically, but minor in the sense that we at least get to maintain the veneer of functionality. Sometimes, the gift of addiction is that the veneer of functionality breaks down, and you actually have to deal with your life, in a kind of profound and powerful way.

So, the first principle of pleasure that emerges directly, from the ninth voice, the voice of evolutionary pleasure, which we did at the end of the second symphony. Now we're at the beginning of the third symphony, brought to you by Nance McGee, in 2013, and you can look her up on the internet and find her, if you're listening, wherever you are in the world; and say "Hi" and come to her program at Shalom. There you go. We're even now.

[laughter].

So, the first principle is, pleasure is a skill. Okay? And what "Pleasure is a skill" means is exactly what we talked about, up to now. The skill is to derive maximal pleasure from the most ordinary activity. So, learning that skill is a huge realization in life. But even before we get there, we're going to learn one dimension of that skill, right now. But before we get to it, just getting that sentence -- pleasure is a skill -- changes your life. Just, when you talk about skill sets, you don't usually have pleasure. But, actually, we know that pleasure is a skill. And once you understand that, that acts as a genuine paradigm shift. The word "paradigm shift" is thrown around irresponsibly in lots of ways. This is a genuine paradigm shift, in how you understand the world, when you actually get that pleasure is a skill. Excuse me. I get a little choked up about this.

And there's no opposition between the skill and the implication of skill and pleasure. We think that pleasure is this kind of soft, fuzzy thing, that you just kind of, sort of do, and it just kind of comes, and it just kind of morphs in, and it's all kind of cuddly, all the time. Cuddling is a skill. Actually, cuddling is a skill. It's a skill. Cuddling is actually not so easy. Someone is kind of in your way. Half of their body parts are kind of in your body parts. You're trying to sleep, yet, you want to express affection. Kind of, why are they on your side of the bed, anyways? Your arm is stuck under them. Can you imagine? Your arm is like stuck under them. You're ready to die. You want to fucking saw your arm off. But it's just kind of inappropriate. And there's a whole group of people who are one-armed in the world, because they just finally saw it off, to get the fuck out of there. It's like the one-armed tribe. It's like "Oh my fucking God." This shit's not easy, man. So, cuddling, I mean, it's a skill. How do you navigate that? How to kind of move things around, so they kind of fit? Let's spoon the other way, now, honey. You know? So, it's like, it's a skill. It's a pleasure. Pleasure is a skill. And you know, by the way, when you hit it, it's awesome. Like, when you hit a good cuddling position, like you're kind of there, you just don't want to move. I mean, like, "Don't move, honey." And you just stay there, like a year. You're happy.

And that's true about all of pleasure. Our kind of sense that pleasure just happens is untrue. Just like love, there's kind of stations of pleasure. Those of you are familiar, Nance pointed out to us earlier, to the early teachings of the great Church. So, those of you who are familiar with the Stations of the Cross, you might want to familiarize yourself with the Stations of Love, which is a core teaching, which we may get to tomorrow. But there are stations of pleasure.

And the first station of pleasure, is [00:08:42*], in Aramaic, and it's "Pleasure which is arousal from above." A free gift from the universe. There it is. I mean, the first time you see a beautiful mountain vista that you've never seen before -- you see the Grand Canyon for the first time. It's like, "Oh my God." I mean, I live near Big Sur. I think I do. We may be moving; we may not be moving. I'm not sure where I live, actually. But one of our houses has some relationship to Big Sur. And Laurie's going to tell me where we live and what to wear, and it's just all good. You know, it's fine. I have a lot of masculinity. I can decide some things. Do I decide anything? [laughter].

Anyways, so, if you've ever seen Big Sur -- how many people have ever been to Big Sur? You've been to Big Sur? Do you remember the first time you saw Big Sur? It just fucking blows you away. It's like, "Oh my God." Now, here's the problem. The fifth time you see it, it's not always as good. Sometimes, it blows you away, but, then, you begin to live there, and it becomes ordinary. So, even if Big Sur doesn't, something does, for you. So, find what it is. So, I want to find what it is. Whatever it is, you get a first -- it's a principle of the universe. And everything works differently for different people, but the basic principle is that pleasure gives you a free gift from the universe, and it's Station One, Arousal from Above. You don't have to work for it; there it is. That's often true in a new food. That's often true in a new body. It's true in a new experience. It's arousal from above. Then, Level Two -- Second Level or Second Station, whichever one you want to use. You lose the arousal, and it's just not as exciting anymore; whether it's the food or the view or the body or the experience.

And the Second Station or the Second Level, however you want to call it -- I move between them, for lots of reasons, but let's not get into that conversation now. The Second Station/Second Level, you're in separation. It's there. It's exciting, but it's just not in anymore. You're just not there anymore. It's not that first moment. It's not that first time you saw it.

And, then, Level Three, you actually reclaim, at a higher level, the initial wonder and mystery. But not with the kind of gorgeous, naive awe of the person who's listening to that classical music piece, "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," for the first time and is blown away. But by someone who has a deep sense of music appreciate, and they can hear every cello, and they can hear every movement of every piece of the symphony. And they kind of step into it again, and at Level Three, they're blown away, in a way that they're first blown away, at Level One, wasn't even close. That's Level Three.

So, that's just a sense of what we mean, pleasure is a skill. It's a sense of the skill. So, the first skill to pleasure would be to know these three levels. And, so, when you look at your beloved's face -- and your beloved could be a friend; it could be someone you see once a year; it could be someone you work with; it could be someone that you're partnering with, someway in the world. There's many more beloveds than one. And I always say that, because there's always in the room, people at different points in life, in the relationship to the Holy hide and seek, in search for the beloved. And I may be deep in a relationship and feel kind of alienated from the beloved. And I may not be deep in what's classically called a relationship, but be seeing the beloved all over the place. There's many ways to find the

beloved. When you actually get a sense of your first glimpse of the beloved, you're blown away. And, then, Level Two, you kind of lose it. There's a kind of alienation. There's a kind of regularity that sets it. This becomes the person you're with, and you respect them, and you deeply love them. But you're not blown away. And, then, you reclaim, at Level Three, the early arousal, at a higher level. And you look in the face of your beloved, that you've been with for forty years, and you're blown away, again.

So, that three-tiered process is essential. The way the Zen Buddhists liked to say it was, "The mountains are the mountains, and the streams are the streams." Level One, it's just beautiful. It's gorgeous reality. And, then, Level Two, you meditate. When you meditate, you realize, "It's all not real. It's all emptiness. It's all complete, unqualified emptiness." It's all emptiness. Level Three, the mountains are the mountains, and the streams are the streams. You're blown away again.

And Level Three is not Level One. When Buddha died, in one tradition, in the Pāli Cannon, he had three groups of students. And the first group of students were not quite as advanced. So, they were beginners, the novices. So, the Buddha died, so, they cried. Because your master died, you cried, obviously. Right, you cry? The second group of students were much more advanced. They were into the Buddha Dharma, and they understood that the world's a wheel; the world is suffering; life is suffering. They knew the Four Noble Truths. They knew the Eightfold Path, and they realized, the Buddha died -- he's getting off the wheel, emerging with nirvana, so, they didn't cry. The third group of students, the most advanced, the Buddha died, and they cried, of course. It's like, "Wow." That's the space between the words. It's learning the skill. Life, itself, is the evolution of tears. Life itself is the evolution of tears. A baby cries. Who does the baby cry for? Him/herself. It's a beautiful, pre-personal, egocentric, self-involved crying, which is infinitely cute. And there's nothing good about it, because babies aren't good; they're cute. They're beautiful. But when the Master cries, the great woman/Bodhisattva/Master/Man cries, who is crying for all sentient beings; for all the suffering and all the joy that ever was, is or will be, those tears are so much bigger. So, it's not just about tears. It's about the evolution of tears. Life is the evolution of tears. So, it's always, baby is untrained in tears. The baby is untrained in the pleasure of tears. It's always about the evolutionary movement. So, that's just a sense of this first principle, which is "Pleasure is a skill."

And one of the primary skills in pleasure is knowing how to receive pleasure. So, receiving is a huge skill. Just hold that with you, kind of knowing how to receive a pleasure is a huge skill. And, so, the first principle is, pleasure is a skill. In this principle, there's a 1A -- an example of the skill is knowing how to move through the Three Stations of Pleasure and knowing that there are Three Stations of Pleasure, being able to track yourself in them. Number two, the second skill, just to give you an example of what a skill means, it's the ability to receive pleasure. And to get this with me for a second, me and Mary Ann are going to try and make this Dharma clear together, here, for a second, okay?

To receive pleasure is not the same as taking pleasure. When you take something, it's not yours, because you've taken it. To receive is an entirely different art. So, we'll talk tomorrow about this art of receiving, what it means. The word "Kabbalah," itself, the Great Tradition of Kabbalah -- the word "Kabbalah" means to receive. Like, "Wow." The entire Tradition is teaching how to receive. That's what the whole thing is about, from beginning to end, is what does it mean to receive. The entire story. So, we'll come back to that tomorrow. That's Principle One.

Principle Two, drum roll, in the house. Drum roll in the house, and I'm going to go through Principle One, Two, Three, Four and Five very quickly. It's going to take us, really just not more than another -- about 10 minutes, 15 minutes. Then, Jeff and Shelly are going to take Principle Two into deep practice. Because it really needs, kind of practice, these Principles.

Now, let's just kind of -- before we get to Principle Two, let's just say one more thing. So, what is addiction? And I want to stay with this addiction theme. An addict -- and the addict that lives in us -- because I never want to talk about the addict "out there." It's out there, and it's in us. An addict doesn't know the skill of pleasure -- may be unfamiliar with the Three Stations of Pleasure or may not know how to receive pleasure. And only when pleasure kind of becomes a flash flood of dopamine, where it's kind of compulsory. It's a compulsory download of pleasure. You don't need the art of receiving -- can the addict receive pleasure? But the actual art of receiving pleasure is just not available. It's a very powerful teaching. So, addiction is the opposite of the skill of receiving pleasure.

Now, if you think this is a casual issue, this first Principle, actually, it is the trajectory of history itself. If you look at just one mythic -- the text of the Garden of Eden. It's kind of shocking, when you realize what the text is all about. And it was, of course, missed by, virtually, all interpretation, in all the great Traditions. What's the story of the Garden of Eden? Just think about the word, in culture. The Garden of Eden is the place of pleasure, obviously. It's filled with trees which are [00:18:53*]. The description in Hebrew is gorgeous, of these kind of beautiful, sensual trees that are pleasing to the eye, luscious; and you have available, every tree, for your pleasure. So, what's this story about? It's a story, a mythic story about a human being, needing to learn how to get pleasure. It's kind of shocking that you can go through an entire Church/mosque/synagogue education and actually miss the core of this story. It's a great mythic story about pleasure and, particularly, about the capacity to develop the skill of pleasure. And what's one of the ways that you block pleasure? Which you do is, you've got everything available to you, in the world, so your eye wonders over everything that's available to you, and it's just lions and tigers and bears, oh my. It's like, "Wow."

And, then, your eye freeze-frames, right over there, on the missing tile. There are a thousand tiles on the ceiling. Everyone is perfectly made, in perfect place, 999 gorgeous tiles, and you are fixated -- you cannot remove your eye from the missing tile, which is called "The Missing Tile Syndrome," as of now, okay? [laughter]. And the Missing Tile Syndrome is there's one tree in the whole garden -- there's one tree. It's not your tree. You're not doing that tree. You've got every tree. You can fuck open every tree. You can eat every piece of fruit. You can rest in the shade, engage sensuously, esthetically, emotionally, psychologically. All the beasts of the field -- every sensual engagement that's possible. And what are you focused on? There's one tree that you're not supposed to engage, and the only thing you want is that tree. That's called a pleasure block. That's what it is. You can't get pleasure from what's available to you. The only place you can imagine getting pleasure is in the forbidden. [00:21:03*], stolen waters are sweet.

Now, that lives in all of us. No exceptions. That voice, that attraction to that boundary-breaking pleasure lives in all of us. Why? Because we're not actually breaking boundaries appropriately in our own lives. And boundary breaking is an essential human activity. And which boundary do I need to break? The boundary of contraction. The boundary of small self. When I don't break the boundary of small self and experience the utter ecstasy of breaking the boundary of my contraction and kind of

expanding beyond all boundaries, in a genuine way, then, I haven't actually erotically met my need for boundary breaking. And, so, what all do is I'll look for small versions of boundary breaking, to meet that utterly essential human need. It's powerful. It's powerful.

So, just kind of feel into that for a second. That's the Garden of Eden story. And you're exiled from the Garden, because you're unable to get the pleasure. You get that? That's the story. So, then, you return to the Garden when you're able to get pleasure. In the great mythology of Christ consciousness, the idea is to come back to the Garden. But how do you come back? That's the mystic's path. The mystic's path is to return to the Garden of Eden. How do I return to the Garden of Eden? I learn how to get pleasure. I actually developed the skill of pleasure. I developed the capacity to actually get the pleasure that's mine to have and to discern the nature of pleasure and the voices of pleasure and more importantly, the principles of pleasure and, ultimately, key -- the levels of pleasure in the relationship between them. That's what brings you back to the Garden. When I try to get back to the Garden without that deep reality consideration, there are two cherubs with flaming swords, guarding, in the text, the entrance to the Garden, and I get burned. I get completely seared and singed, because I haven't actually learned the art of pleasure.

So, learning the art of pleasure is this big deal, that brings us directly to Principle Two. I think what we'll actually do, I'm going to stop. I'm going to do Principle Two and after Principle Two, we're going to do the exercise. So, here's Principle Two.

So, Principle Two is a big one. And some of us who have studied together have engaged this principle in some different places, so now is a place we can re-engage deeper. You never make love once. Let's do it again. So, Principle Two is about the nature of pleasure. And Principle Two -- now, gently. And if you feel a contraction, just let it go. Put it aside. If you can't let it go, put aside the fact that you can't put it aside. It's okay. It's just perfect. The *Beautiful Mind*. They're always going to be there. It's fine. And the six people I'm talking to know exactly who I am and who you are and why I'm saying it to you. Let it go. It's fine. Okay? So, here we go. You with me?

So, here's Principle Two. Ready? Principle Two. So, Principle Two is -- and you say it with me, those of you who studied it together with us -- the opposite of pain, we think, is pleasure. The definition of decadence is the belief that the opposite of pain is pleasure. Ask anyone in the world, "What's the opposite of pain?" "Pleasure." So, let's say it again. The definition of decadence is the belief that the opposite of pain is pleasure. It's not true. The opposite of pain is comfort, not pleasure. And that distinction changes the entire game. The opposite of pain is comfort, meaning I could avoid pain my entire life and be worried, "Why haven't I gotten to pleasure?" We're actually trained, in contemporary society, to avoid pain and to seek comfort. And we wonder, when we're 86, "Why is it that I never got to pleasure? I avoided all the pain." The answer is, the opposite of pain is not pleasure. Actually, every true degree of pleasure evolves some degree of dissonance, of tension, of pain. There is no pleasure that doesn't have a dimension of pain in it, a dimension of tension in it. And when I seek to avoid all pain, I wind up comfortable; but, tragically, as in Pink Floyd's old phrase, comfortably numb. I wind up comfortably numb. And so, here I am, I've avoided all the pain in the world, and I wound up comfortable.

So, I just want to show you something, kind of really wild and beautiful. And I know it's kind of late in the evening, but for those of you who are rhetoricians and linguists, this is really beautiful. Because you

can't notice this in the translation, but in the original, it's kind of gorgeous. So, in the original text of the Sacred Biblical/Mystical text that's gotten hijacked; that's gotten distorted. So, put that aside. Don't let the hijackers steal it. Let's go back to the original Sacred text. The way the Garden of Eden story is read, is that the human being eats from the tree, when he/she eats from the tree, something happens. They become mortal. Childbirth becomes painful. And the word used is "etzev." And etzev means -- it's a word used four or five times in the original text. And etzev means tension -- the pain of childbirth; the tension of making a living -- all this stuff that's hard in the world. All of a sudden, that stuff is there. But, actually, when you think about it, what's really happened is we've become human. It's not a curse, actually. It's actually the natural process of waking up and becoming human and having to find pleasure by actually discerning our way through the tension. It's no longer an idyllic baby -- pre-personal. We're actually entered the realm of the personal, and now, we've got all the challenges of pleasure. We can actually kind of develop our capacity for pleasure. So, the Garden of Eden story is the story of waking up to our humanity, and part of getting pleasure is being mortal. I know I'm going to die. Part of getting pleasure is the pain of childbirth, meaning the pain that it takes to birth any new idea into the world, anything new into the world. The pain of making a living. The financial structures, numbers, making it work. We all know it. It's part of our lives.

And pleasure is wrested out of; is discerned out of; is lived out of that world. So, the Garden of Eden story is the story of waking up and, then, developing the capacity for pleasure. Then what happens? And, then, a new character is introduced into the story. And that character's name -- you may remember from a Bill Cosby routine, 25 years ago -- that character's name is Noah. And Noah is his name, and Noah means "comfort." The name means comfort. So, Noah is "Mr. Comfort." That's his name. That's literally what it means. We call him "Noah," but, actually, it means "Mr. Comfort." And when Mr. Comfort is born, there's a birth verse that's actually associated with him, that all of commentary missed. You know, in Genesis, you've got all this genealogies? So, they kind of threw in a verse, among the genealogies. So, everybody missed it. And the verse reads as follows: Noah is born; **[00:28:07*]** -- this is the birth of Noah. Then, the verse reads **[00:28:12*]** -- it's Noah will comfort us, from the etzev, from the tension and pain that we engaged when we engaged the earth, that was cursed after the Garden of Eden.

So, what is Noah about? Noah is about comfort. Noah is about what Marc Vonnegut, Kurt's son, called, taking the Eden express back home and trying to bypass the cherubs with their flaming swords. Noah is about addiction. That's what the Noah is about. Noah is looking for comfort. His name is comfort. The world is being destroyed around him -- well, that's the way it goes. I'll build an ark and forget the world. I'll take what I can, and God told me to build the ark. So, three times, it says, "Noah does what God commanded him." And he builds an ark, brings everything into the ark, and, then, goes and sails away, as the whole world is being destroyed.

But when God commands Abraham, "I'm about to destroy the world; go save yourself," everyone says to God, "Fuck you." One of the great "fuck-you's" in the Bible. That's a 12 verse story, where Abraham says, "What do you mean, you're going to destroy everybody? Really? You're going to destroy everybody? You can't do that." And God says, "Of course, I can. I'm God." "I don't care if you're God. You're not allowed to destroy the righteous or the wicked." And this wild text emerges. So, that text parallels, from a literary perspective. It's an exact literary parallel to the Noah text. Because when God

says to Noah, "I'm going to destroy the world," and Noah says, "Okay, what should I do?" "Build an ark," and Noah says, "Okay." And if you notice the text, it's filled with all the details of how you build an ark. So, it's kind of like the instructions to a model airplane. When you're living in a traumatized house, what do you do? You build your model airplane. You get down -- you build this; you build this; you build this. And you create a world, where you have some control over.

So, Noah is the guy building the ark, who lets the world be destroyed around him, and he creates an environment of comfort, which he can just survive, in a world that's being ravaged. Sound familiar? That's Noah. Noah is the Comfort Complex. So, addiction -- and there's many forms -- is comfort. It's comfort. It's not eros. It's not pleasure. So, the opposite of pain is not pleasure. The opposite of pain is comfort, and I can spend my life being "Mr. Comfort," avoiding all pain and never getting to pleasure. And we've created this contemporary Western society, where the job is to live as long as you can, as comfortably as you can, and we wonder why we never get to pleasure. The answer is, you can only get to pleasure if you're willing to engage the pain of your life and to walk through the void. And a void dance never works.

So, comfort is actually a form of pseudo-eros. Now, does that mean comfort has no role? Of course, comfort has a role. Of course, comfort is lovely to have around, in all the appropriate ways, to take the edges off the hardness of reality. So, comfort is great. Comfort food is legitimate, and comfort sex is legitimate, and comfort clothes are legitimate. They're all legitimate, as long as they're not actually allowing you to bypass your core engagement. As long as comfort gives you some energy, some connection, to actually engage, comfort's fantastic. So, we're not dismissing comfort. Comfort is beautiful -- as long as comfort doesn't masquerade and claim to be pleasure. See the difference? As long as comfort is comfort, comfort is great. Comfort is fantastic. But if comfort masquerades and claims to be pleasure, then, comfort is a lie. And that distinction is an essential distinction. So, I can spend my entire life avoiding pain. I'll get to comfort. Now, if that's all you want out of life, that's fine.

But if you're actually an authentic, awake, alive, aware human being, that's not all you want. You want pleasure. You want the deep, radical pleasure of being alive. So, for that, there's always a dimension of comfort you have to be willing to give up. If you want the full transmission of a Dharmic relationship, you've got to be willing to give up some comfort. There's no way to get it without giving up some comfort. It doesn't work. And you've got to decide in life -- the big decision in life is "What comfort am I willing to give up to get pleasure?"

That's Principle Two. So, Principle Two is the opposite of pain is not pleasure. The opposite of pain is comfort. And the decision you have to make is, "What comfort do I need, to enable me to get to pleasure?" That's a big one. So, I might decide I need a beautiful home. Completely fair -- gorgeous. I need the aesthetic comfort of a beautiful home, and I can even sing to that beautiful home and find pleasure in that home. It's gorgeous. There's lots of things you can legitimately say that comfort is going to create a context for my pleasure. Beautiful. In some ways, you get so deep into the comfort, it becomes pleasure. Even better. But you also have to decide what comfort you need to give up and only you can make that discernment. You are your self-authorizing source of authority guru. No one can tell you. A teacher oversteps, if they tell you which one it is. But you've got to have the principle. The principle is, "What comfort am I willing to give up?" And if you can't genuinely find a comfort that

you're willing to give up, you will not get to pleasure. You've got to engage, what I call your "optimum point of discomfort."

Let's all finish the Principle, take a couple of questions, and go to the exercise. I just want to get the last point. There's an optimum point of discomfort, which is your magic place. It's the G-Spot. It's the G-Spot for, really, emergence. It's an optimum point of discomfort. Too little -- you won't get to pleasure; too much -- you won't get to pleasure. Too much discomfort -- you just can't hold it. You can't do it. It's too much. Too little -- you won't get in. You're not going to open up. So, actually, a key movement in your pleasure symphony is to find -- it's a particular skill -- your optimum point of discomfort -- which is precisely right -- which allows you, then, to move from there and into the pleasure.

Those are our first two Principles. And, really, these are the big principles. The next, really, 18 principles -- we'll literally do in a half-hour to forty minutes tomorrow, because each one, something is really going to come into play in the actual levels. But these two, I wanted to really just put into the space. I wanted to do three more, but this is enough, because these two emerge directly from the ones that we've already done. From the voices and through the eros work we've already done, these directly emerge from.

Let's take a breath for a second. Ahhh. Yeah. Just take a breath. Relax. Time will stretch itself out, exactly how it needs to. And if we wind up eating -- we ate three hours ago. We checked in with the kitchen before. If we wind up eating at 7:00 -- because the exercise, we really want to do fully -- that's perfectly fine. We're totally good. We're perfect. We're relaxed and good. Just feel into the space. Yes, what a delightful space. You know? And just feel if there's anything that comes up for you. Before we move into the exercise, that's important for you to clarify, to ask. It's not so much a sharing time. It's more clarification time. So, any questions, any issue, any insight that you have that might benefit us. Kind of let's just be quiet. We'll just sit in quiet for a minute or two and just see what emerges in the room, for anyone. And try and find something that's, again, a voice in the room. Kind of, we're in the Dharma; we're in the Sangha. We're also honoring our Buddha. So, anything that comes up for you, let's just let it come up. We'll start with Nance, as soon as we start.

Nance?

>> I'm trying to get to the steps. I'm going to use the image of [00:37:10*]. So, part of my interpretation of the Garden is useless. So, I'm wondering if what you're saying is there's a necessary breach of innocence, in service of pleasure or something in that neighborhood?

>> MG: Beautiful. That's a beautiful way to say it. And the answer is an absolute yes. That is, Station One, Arousal from Above, is innocence. It's innocent. It's the baby. That's why we love babies. There's an innocence about the pleasure. And, then, we engage the world, and pleasure is so not easy and so not innocent, and we feel so guilty, in so many ways. Not guilty in the old sense but in the deeper sense. But, then, what we need to do is reclaim our second innocence. And the second innocence is when we return to the Garden. Yeah, exactly. That's beautiful, and just adding innocence to it just enriches it so beautifully. Thank you. Thank you. Shira?

>> So, you tell stories about how we go into the marketplace and trace desire back into the root. [00:38:29*]. I guess my question is about that. Is it something you leave alone or do we have to actually trace the pleasure?

>> It's a great question. There's about four subtle questions there. It's a great enquiry.

>> [00:38:59*].

>> Yeah, I'm going to. Thank you. So, let me try for a minute, Heather, and you'll help me formulate it, okay? So, what is the nature of the tree in the Garden, Heather asks. Is the tree in the Garden the kind of forbidden pleasure that you need to actually find your way into -- and not forbidden pleasure, in the way of something which is an ethical violation -- but a forbidden pleasure, that's somehow out of balance. You need to find your way into the pleasure and kind of trace it to its roots and find its source. Is the tree something that you need to engage? Do you need to engage pleasure that, to you, is forbidden? Do you need to kind of, as it were, force yourself, or kind of demand that you engage that loss of innocence, in the forbidden pleasure, in order to find your way to a higher level of pleasure? And, again, it's a subtle question. So, the question makes no sense to you, this is a good time to just take a break and just shut your eyes and dream about any kind of pleasure you want. If it makes sense to you, then, stay with us for a minute.

So the answer completely depends on who you are and what stage of your life you're in. There actually is no one answer. There was one person in our circle a couple of years ago, who I met with, and I said, "There's a path you could walk down, which would take you into, really, engaging a depth -- loss of innocence -- which I think you don't need to do. But if you did it, it would give you this and that, and you decide whether you want to walk it. And that's a decision. Some people absolutely don't need to walk it, and some people do. And it's very, very much based on a person's Unique Self. And I would say, generally, a person that's asking the question probably does. [laughter]. Fair? Like that? Yeah.

Lynn -- and just, everyone, just repeat your names, even though we know them, to just kind of form Sangha.

>> So, what came up for me was, is it about stepping into the forbidden? Is it finding permission?

>> MG: I think it's closer -- there are really two different things. Let me just be clear. What I don't mean by "stepping into the forbidden" is some terrible ethical violation. It's about that which is forbidden to you. It's finding your forbidden fruit, and it's finding a way to give yourself permission, in that realm of the forbidden. Yes, it's about that. And I think everyone gets -- that's where Heather's coming from. She's not a mad rapist, so you don't have to lock your doors tonight. Although, maybe? [laughter]. Anyone who would like to find Heather tonight, just leave your name some place. All right, Steve?

>> Addiction is a big word. In my own life, I'm looking at the little, tiny comforts. [00:42:23*], that, maybe, instead, I check my facebook page. It's all those little things, those little tiny things, that take you off. That's where I'm at, right now. It's like it's happening.

>> Thank you. That's really, really helpful. That checking of the facebook page -- and we talked about it a little bit earlier today. But just kind of bring that image into the room. Literally, social media have literally prevented people from actually finding their way through the emptiness, because you never actually stop. You're always posting on a page, sending a text, receiving a text, engaging, sending an email. So, there's this constant sense of being connected, but it's not -- it's kind of gorgeous when you realize it -- it's not true connectivity. It's not actual connection, which is eros. It's actually pseudo-

connection. And if you want to check it, just see how many of your facebook friends show up when you're in trouble. Do facebook friends get you out of trouble? Unlikely. It's just not how it works. So, we've kind of redefined "friend." What is a facebook friend, exactly, that you never see face-to-face? So, social media are important, and they have many wonderful, liberating values. They also have great shadow.

And one of the things we need to learn how to do is how to actually make contact through social media. So, I don't think the move is regressive. I don't think a regressive move is going to work. In other words, "Let's not have automobiles." Well, it might not happen. We have social media, so, now, the next Ninja move is how do you actually make contact intimately, in social media? But it's possible. It's possible. There's a couple people, actually, in our circle, who are actually looking at this carefully and are going to kind of begin that conversation. I think, Heather, you've got a sense of this, of this kind of art, a little bit. You know, we talked about it before. Kirsten's got a sense of this, and they're going to, hopefully, show us how to do it, in the Center, which is utterly critical. It's a Ninja art. And how do you make contact and traverse that chasm of alienation, even in social media?

But Steve's point remains -- it's a powerful and important point. It's the little things, but of course, life is made up of all those little things, and they never actually sit. So, thank you. Beautiful.

>> I was just wondering, I think the things you say about social media are true for people our age, but young people -- it's just a question -- they seemed wired differently. I mean, they really grew up, doing all these things by the age of four. They just seemed wired differently. I'm just wondering, do you think that's genuine, their wiring?

>> MG: There's definitely genuine different wiring, for sure. There's definitely genuine different wiring, but there's a kind of tragic lack of connectivity. First off, there's an inability to read. Everything is kind of five minute clips. You know, a whole group of young people who were around me, about two years ago -- Michael, Dustin, a whole group of people -- were all kind of arguing, we can only have three minute clips in anything we do, because no one is going to look at anything more. Maybe. But I'm actually not willing to give up reading. And, so, I think there actually is a kind of anesthetizing, that's actually happening in the Millennial Generation, which is actually painful; which actually has enormous price.

So, I'll just give you one example of it. This is a typical thing that happens. People are going out -- they're 21, 22 -- they break up. So, he blogs about her. And it's like, "Really?" It's like this happens all the time. And I've talked to a whole group of kids, like 21 to 30, about this, over the last two or three years, and they all look at me, saying, "Why can't I blog about them? It's my blog." It's your blog? You just had a private relationship with someone, in which you shared intimacy and confidence. You broke up. You now get to blog about it? Really? I mean, it's kind of a shocking lack of awareness. Because there's this sense, that some of this blog, because it's my blog, and you can write about anything you want on your blog. And you're being creative on your blog, and you're sharing on your blog. And, actually, we need to claim some eldership, here. And we need to gain some transmission of what's private and what's public, and what are those distinctions? I was talking to one guy, who a couple of you know; we did a dialogue -- Garfield; Michael. And Michael said, "Privacy is dead," kind of jubilantly. And Michael is this very hip, wonderful young man, who has really awakened alive in this

social media. It was kind of this jubilant proclamation of the death of privacy, because “that’s just the way it is.”

Well, no. Actually, what we need to do is actually create an ethic in social media. We need to download into that system, some ethics and a sense of things. But end of conversation, because I just want to stay where we are, in terms of comfort. Any other questions, as we are in the Dharma? Take it away, sister.

>> So, you said before that we each have to find --

>> MG: There’s a forbidden pleasure, which you’ve made, out of your range, because you’ve placed a pleasure limit -- it’s what we talked about last night. And you’ve said that that kind of pleasure is beyond my possibility, so I’ve got to identify, what have I unconsciously said is not available to me.

>> So, the forbidden is my own choice?

>> MG: Correct. A thousand percent. Good? I’m just going to look for a couple of new voices we just haven’t heard in awhile. Anyone? Sequoia, then, Brad will end; and we’ll go into exercise.

>> My question is about addiction and avoiding discomfort. My addiction has been primarily food, and it’s not like drugs or alcohol, where you can never eat again. And it gets, really, more of a problem, with pleasure and avoidance. When I heard you speaking about the discomfort, as a way -- a certain amount of discomfort is the way to pleasure. I think my question is about the process or how to do that, and is that going to be incorporated into the Unique Self Recovery Program you’re working on?

>> We’ll get to it tomorrow. Let’s just say a couple of sentences, and get to Brad, which is as follows: You’re right -- you can’t avoid food, nor would you want to. That’s the beginning of an eating disorder. And an eating disorder, itself, is actually a form of not being able to hold pleasure. And, so, therefore, I binge, and I’m ashamed. I don’t have the right to the pleasure, et cetera, which is why you have to actually work. One of the things that Laurie’s done such a brilliant job of is actually identifying that unless you work with the underlying trauma, you can’t actually work with the eating disorder. That, actually, behavioral/cognitive reprogramming is not going to do it. Because, actually, the eating disorder is driven by an actual core alienation from self, and you need to engage in what Laurie and I are calling “Re-Selfing,” in a very sensual way. So, let’s kind of put that as number one.

But here’s number two: in eating, there actually is addictive eating, a thousand percent. And what you can do is you can actually choose to actually become very aware of eating. And what will happen is you’ll actually find your eating patterns changing. And you actually need no diet rules, at all. You don’t need to follow a diet. You just need to do a very simple thing: eat when you’re hungry. If you just eat when you’re hungry, you’ll be completely fine, because most eating that happens is covering up emptiness. Most of the time, when we reach to eat, we’re not hungry. We’re eating, because we had a hit of emptiness; a jolt. So, we reach to food, to cover up. But you need no diet -- you need no kind of rigorous program. Just eat normal, healthy food. You’ll be absolutely fine. You can eat cake; you can eat cookies. Just eat the cookie you want, because you’re hungry. It’s usually one.

For me, personally, that’s the thing I’ve actually engaged in, intensively in my life, because I actually have, for whatever reason, I have a deep sense of feeling everything around me. And, so, one of the ways I dealt with that was eating. And, so, the notion of kind of eating one cookie didn’t exist. I ate all the cookies around me, because I’m in that eating mode, and it gives me a respite, a kind of comfort

from the intensity of reality, which I feel intensely. And I actually had to train myself, and I used every possible egoic trick until it actually became natural. I made a bet with John Mackie, our Board Chair, a thousand dollar bet, that I could retrain my eating. And, then, John said I couldn't. And John has a very highly trained eating. And I made that egoic bet, because I didn't want to lose a bet. So, I figured that was a good way to start. So, use the male ego whenever you can. I'm going to lose a bet to fucking John? No fucking way. So, but I used that as a way to just enter it, until I completely retrained myself. And my system just changed, and, now, I just eat when I'm hungry. And I love eating. I madly love eating. But I actually get full much easier. That actually changed my physiology, and I'm actually full, in a different way. I derive a much greater pleasure from eating now, then I used to. It's paradoxical.

And, so, you actually have to work with it, and the key is -- it's a one sentence key. Eat when you're hungry. And just making that discernment changes the game. Brad, finish this up, and, then, we're going to head into some work.

>> First, a deep bow to you, Lynn and Diana. Finding a way to give herself permission in the realm of the forbidden. Me, I had to give myself permission to what? To see myself, to see my Unique Self. And, then, thinking of getting out of the realm and escaping the world of forbidden -- and, then, realizing, from what you said to me this morning, in fact, you said pseudo-eros was here. In fact, there is a ton of eros, here. In fact, there's this huge grasp of eros, here. And the realm of the forbidden -- this is the realm of the forbidden. Fruit, when eaten, transformed my body into the pseudo-eros. This is the realm.

>> MG: Yeah. Amen. Thank you. So, we're going to, now -- and I really want to invite everyone, to really drop in, now, and let go of the addictive eating. We're in contemporary Western society. It's only been three hours since we ate last time. Just relax for a second. There's a great exercise that's about to happen, and exercising it actually makes it happen. We'll take about 25 minutes. We're going to eat at about 7:00, which is perfect.

Now, just the last words, in terms of the Dharma -- because Jeff and Shelly are going to take us into dinner. Take all the time you need. Just take us into it -- which is, today, we laid the groundwork. What's literally going to happen tomorrow, just in terms of the sheer gorgeousness and excitement of the Dharma, everything's going to exponentially explode tomorrow. So, if you thought today was like an exciting, great Dharma day, this is just groundwork. We're just kind of laying the groundwork. And, tomorrow, you're going to see, it's going to be such a wild -- the Dharma is so beautiful, this Dharma, and it becomes so real and alive in our lives, and the entire day tomorrow, we're going to, very briefly, do the principles, then, we're going to literally spend the day on Levels of Pleasure, identifying a level; practicing a level. And we're going to go from central to whatever the levels are. Central is not exactly one of the levels -- it will fit into one of the levels. But, actually, we're going to get it fully on every level. And tomorrow is going to be an audacious day. Tomorrow is the day for audacity, for holy, radical audacity. It's a day to stretch. We've been kind of fooling around, here, as it were, for a day and a quarter. Kind of shirts are off; a couple of bras are unhooked; some pants are coming down. Things are happening in the room. Things are moving in the room. We're kind of moving. So, tomorrow, we're going to step into it, a whole other level, in deep, radical, alive -- the Dharma is going to go like that. And the practice is going to explode. And, then, we take it home, on Sunday morning. Take the whole thing home.

So, now, let's just give Jeff and Shelly our full, deep attention. When they finish, they'll bow with us -- when they finish their exercise -- to the God in the center of the room. We're off our dinner.

Our schedule tonight, just so they don't have to say it afterwards, so they can just kind of be in the exercise. So, we're going to eat at 7:00. And I think, something like, just a very short, because we're not in a really big voice, for a big chant evening. But we'll do kind of a short, kind of Sabbath ritual -- one chant, one story, which is our custom, if you're up for it. Yeah?

>> Yeah.

>> MG: So, we'll do that what time? Jeff, Shelly?

>> Why don't we figure we do it an hour after the dinner bell gets rung.

>> MG: Is an hour enough for dinner?

>> It can be.

>> MG: Let's say an hour and 15 minutes and really, what we want to do is, I want to make sure that after that short thing upstairs, we've got a couple of hours to hang, if you want to. I want people to really have a spacious evening. Just a spacious, beautiful evening.

I want to actually start tomorrow at 10:00, not 9:30, because I want people to feel like you have just really a spacious evening. Just relax into the space and into the pleasure of it. And I don't want to be, "It's a pleasure summit. We're rushing to get our pleasure seminar done." Just kind of like, we'll start at 10:00. We'll be good. Just relax into the evening. Have a million fantastic conversations. Heather will be visiting different rooms. [laughter].

It's going to be a great night, everyone. It's happening here. Okay? Yes, let's give a deep bow to Jeff and Shelly. Take us away.

>> Shelly: So, if you have a pad and paper around me, you want to just place it to the side; or a computer. So, just put any writing utensils and materials to the side.

So, if you allow your eyes to close, come into your [00:58:39*] and just be in delicious absorption of the Dharma that we've been experiencing.

So, you can close your eyes. Extend your legs out in front of you.