

>> MG: Now, the first thing we want to do is give up any attachment to lunch. Step One. We just ate three hours ago, so we're all good. We've checked in. We've got it all covered in the kitchen. So, we're going to do just one level. We're going to do Level One Pleasure. Just looking at the whole scheme, between now and noon tomorrow, that's the right thing to do. So, we're going to enter into Level One Pleasure. And we're going to enter into it, both what the level is, which we're going to describe briefly. Then, we're going to exercise it and, then, we're going to dance it. What we're going to do with each one of the levels is we're going to describe, exercise it and dance it. Describe, exercise it and dance it is the Holy Trinity.

So, do we have a drum roll in the house for Level One Pleasure? Level One Pleasure is physical pleasure, as expressed through the five senses. Now, of course, what's noteworthy is, is that is usually how pleasure ends. Usually, this is understood to be all of pleasure. So, usually, Level One Pleasure is understood to be pleasure. That's what it is. Pleasure is Level One Pleasure. What we're saying is the physical senses, the five senses, the physical world as expressed through the five senses, the tangible, accessible world, through the five senses, that is Level One Pleasure. It's going to be Level One of Six, of which, by itself, of course reframes the entire conversation, just in that first sentence.

Now, clearly, getting that pleasure is a skill. Peter said beautifully during the break, "Pleasure is a martial art." A nice way to say it. Getting that pleasure is a skill. You need skill to get that pleasure. So, if you look just at the five senses, just at the five senses, which are seeing, hearing, touch, fragrance, taste. We covered them all. Those five senses, themselves, in each one of them, there are many different levels, many different dimensions, many different levels of depth you can get, in pleasure. So, you clearly understand, right off the bat, the idea that a) Pleasure is a skill. b) Delayed gratification -- just to apply. They'll apply more and more, as we go up the levels.

But just, off the bat, a couple of our principles begin to apply. Delayed gratification is a key Pleasure Principle. The greater the depth of the pleasure, the greater the skill you require in getting the pleasure. So, we, for example, pointed out that there's no Pornography Appreciation classes, but there is an Art Appreciation course, because the greater the depth of the pleasure, the greater the skill is required. So, if you're doing your Bowery Bum thing -- you're in that incarnation, and you get some cheap Manischewitz wine, which, as I pointed out many times before, which is important to know. Manischewitz wine and Gefilte fish are, actually, the two legitimate causes of anti-Semitism. [laughter]. I just thought I would share that. You take a quick hit of Manischewitz wine, it's just what it is. Yale University has had, for forty years, a wine tasting course. Because you want to get the skill of wine tasting, to actually know -- and not just that you kind of drink the wine, swirl it around in your mouth, and you pretend like you're experiencing something -- but you can actually taste the different grapes and what year they're from, in different parts of your palate. You have enormously, ecstatic experience of wine.

Now, I'm not a connoisseur of food. Laurie's much better than me at good food. I keep trying to get her to go to Denny's, which makes me very happy. But, there it is. Subway, I'm fine. But I remember being in Los Angeles once, about thirty years ago. I was in L.A., and I was in the beginning of college. I

happened into a restaurant in L.A. -- I remember it, to this day. Someone took me there, and it was the most ecstatic, ecstatic eating experience in the world. Recently, in Chicago, I was at an event called "Accelerate." It's actually where I met Brad Blanton. We become friends at that event, because we were both keynoting at that event, and we had a great time together. There's a restaurant in Chicago, which it takes months to get into. You get into this restaurant, and they organize this entire journey of eating, where you eat a particular kind of thing, and it explodes your mouth. It goes all down your palate. Oh my God. It's "Wow." They created this fine art, and, of course, you can go to that restaurant, the one in Chicago and either eat quickly and pay a zillion dollars for it; you can actually, really appreciate it.

There's an art -- every one of the pleasures of the five senses needs to be actually developed. In order to receive the pleasure, you need great skill. So, receiving the pleasure is a very big deal. Remember, if you take a pleasure, you take it. So, technically, you've taken the pleasure, but you haven't received it. To receive the pleasure is not the same as having the pleasure. The fact that you've had the pleasure, technically, doesn't mean you received the pleasure.

So, pleasure is a skill. Part of the skill is knowing how to receive the pleasure. We'll talk about that in a second -- Principle Two. Three, delayed gratification is essential. Four, the greater the depth, the greater the skill and effort are Principles Four and Five. You begin to get a sense of how these Principles work.

Let's go a little deeper. So, there's a koan in Biblical mysticism, which has three words to it. I'll give them to you in Hebrew and in English. It's about this Principle. They are **[00:07:04*]**. You shall eat; you shall be satisfied; you shall give blessing. So, the mystics point out, they say, "Well..." And the legal scholars also comment on this extensively. They say, "This is the source, in the Western Canon, for the idea that we call Grace." Grace after meals comes from this three word koan, Deuteronomy. **[00:07:34*]**. You shall eat. **[00:07:38*]**. You shall be satisfied. **[00:07:38*]**. You shall give blessing. So, the mystics and the legal scholars point out that you're only obligated or responsible to say Grace after meals, if you've eaten enough to feel satisfied. So, that has legal implications. If you just have a bite, you don't say Grace after meals. But, then, the mystics commenting on the legal scholars say, that, although, there's a certain amount that you need to eat legally to be considered sated or satisfied, I've you're generally awake and enlightened, you make a blessing, even if you've eaten only an olive. Because the enlightened one knows how to be satisfied, having eaten only an olive. What a wonderful teaching. It's a complete mystical koan. You get it in your body, and you're like, "What's that about?" So, what it means in your body is, is if you receive the olive, you can be fully satisfied with just an olive. But the fact that you've eaten it doesn't make you satisfied. You have to know, because part of the skill of pleasure is how to receive the olive. When you receive it, even an olive satisfies you. I just want to go a couple of more steps. I'm going to flow with this, just for a second.

The reason this is so important, is because life -- and this so critical. Life never fully satisfies us. Let's get it. Life is a world of partial satisfaction. That's its nature. Life is full of partial victories. To be able to be satisfied by partial victories; to celebrate partial victories -- and this is critical, in the Dharma of Unique Self Recovery -- every line. To be satisfied by partial victories is a big deal. It's a very big deal.

We're actually in an interesting season, from the perspective of the Hebrew Mystical calendar, which, the next moment in the season is Hanukkah -- the feast of lights, which parallels, always, of course, with Christmas. So, Hanukkah is a story. Now, the story of Hanukkah, the way its told is, is that there was a King, Antiochus Epiphanes, who was a Seleucid, Greek King. He invades the Temple in Jerusalem. The righteous Jews throw him out of the Temple. There's a great military battle. They're victorious, and we're celebrate Hanukkah. That's true, as far as it goes. But if you know the historical story, there's only one little piece missing, which is, in the first set of battle, the Hashmonean brothers, Judah and his five brothers, were successful in evicting the Seleucid King, Antiochus Epiphanes. That lasted for about 15 years; then, he came back and conquered the whole thing. They lost the war. So, Hanukkah -- it's wild, if you get this. Hanukkah is the celebration of a transient, partial, ephemeral victory. That's shocking. The way that the Jewish people celebrate it, they completely miss the point. They meaning, me, as a part of that community, when I celebrate it. But the community, the way its taught, is just completely wrong. It's called this triumphant victory. It's not. That's the whole point. The point, mystically, of Hanukkah is that it's poignant. It's vulnerable. It's transitory. It's ephemeral. And we're celebrating this partial victory.

You could tell this story as a tragedy, easily. Except for one, all four of the brothers, the famous Judah Maccabee -- I don't know if you ever heard that name. Judah was killed. All the brothers were killed, except for Simon. They lost all the big battles, in the end. It's this temporary moment -- but, then, you celebrate that moment. Wow. That's the capacity to receive. That's so powerful. The skill of pleasure is the ability to fully received and be filled by the moments of pleasure we have, and, then, to connect the dots into the narrative of a life. Because it's we who connect the dots. We're the writers and weavers of the narrative. The Sacred Community of Scribes decided to weave the narrative of Hanukkah into a celebration. And, so, paradoxically, this story, then, gives fragrance and energy, throughout history. By deciding on a narrative; by making rhetoric decision about the nature of the narrative, that narrative, then, becomes a font of blessing. The same story could have been told differently. That's a wild, ecstatic, mystical understanding. That's a lineage transmission. It's very different than the esoteric story of a triumphant military, in 165 B.C. Different story.

So, Level One Pleasure is about knowing about how to receive the pleasure. And knowing how to receive the pleasure is a great skill. It requires delayed gratification. It requires the capacity for receiving, for becoming full. The greater the pleasure you're going to get from one of the five senses pleasures, the more skill and more ethics you're going to require, to get the pleasure.

Now, let's go one more step. What is the counterfeit? A couple of people have studied this with me, so I'm going to ask you to sit this one out. But, what's the counterfeit? What's the counterfeit of this level of pleasure? Remember, every level of pleasure has its pleasure, and it has a counterfeit. What's the counterfeit of the pleasure? Just sit with it. Take it away, Carol.

>> Greed and excess.

>> MG: So, greed and excess is a version of the counterfeit. That's a version of the counterfeit. When it's really excessive and greed, of course, you realize that you're not really getting the pleasure. So, you

lose the pleasure. We're going to create a new distinction in the Dharma. Let's distinguish between the obvious counterfeit and the subtle counterfeit. So, that's completely fair, as the obvious counterfeit. That's a good obvious counterfeit -- greed and excess. The reason I call it the obvious counterfeit is because we get that Nero feasting in Rome isn't having a lot of pleasure. You can look at the gluttonous scene, and you're repelled by it. But it's an obvious counterfeit. Let's look, now, for the subtle counterfeit. Take it away.

>> Owning or possessing [00:15:27*].

>> MG: So, owning would be a form of "Linger thou art fair?" That the Faustian Principle, Linger thou art fair, meaning, I've freeze-framed the moment. So, owning a pleasure might be a way of trying to make it mine. I'm not in the flow of the pleasure. I make it mine. So, that's true, whether it be a violation of trying to freeze-frame the pleasure. Good.

But there's a subtle counterfeit. Laurie?

>> [00:16:01*]

>> MG: So, again, instrumental pleasure would violate the Principle of being for its own sake. That's absolutely true. So, these could all be forms of counterfeit. But there's one, where it's not good. It's violating a rule, but in itself, is a form of counterfeit, because you actually haven't developed the skill to get the real pleasure. Peter?

>> What about the common practice of accumulating wealth?

>> MG: So, I'm accumulating. Now, if I'm accumulating wealth, why am I doing it? What am I trying to create in my life? Surety, which gives me a degree of safety, which gives me a degree of control. What else? Comfort. So, accumulating wealth -- there's really two things that are happening. One is, I'm trying to give myself a sense of comfort, but I'm also getting a kind of pleasure from the accumulation itself. So, let's say that comfort -- you never actually experience the pleasure, but you're creating a comfort by having this security. You're creating a comfort in the act of accumulating it. So, there's a comfort dimension. So, comfort might be a form of the counterfeit.

There's an even more subtle form of the counterfeit. What would it be? When you're not actually getting the full pleasure -- you haven't developed the skill for the full pleasure, in these five sense pleasures -- take it away, John.

>> The word pretence comes to mind.

>> MG: There's a dimension to all of these. There's a dimension of counterfeit, there, absolutely, but there's a very blatant form of subtle counterfeit. Sequoia?

>> Coveting.

>> MG: Coveting would be, again, the shadow of this pleasure, so it's related, absolutely. Susan?

>> Is it about the transforming nature of the pleasure?

>> MG: Trying to hold it or trying to own it, like we heard. So, owning it. What else?

>> It's destructive.

>> MG: There could be a destructive form. Once it's destructive, you're not weighing properly the destruction, so it's out of the balance. But there's a core -- go ahead, Lynn. We're talking about the counterfeit form of Level One Pleasure. It's one word.

>> What does it begin with?

>> MG: Novelty. Novelty. Novelty is when I'm actually not developing the skill of getting the pleasure, so, what I look for is a new body. Maybe a new set of breasts will do it. Maybe a new form of food will do it. A new fragrance will do it. In other words, novelty is the counterfeit form of the depth of this pleasure, because novelty is a bypass. What happens is when you experience the new form of it, you get a full hit of the pleasure. But the way it works is, you know, the universe has a great computer screen, a great virtual world. So, you get a free download of the pleasure for ninety days or whatever the novelty period is. For whatever the period, that set of breasts, that man, that food, that fragrance, that new music -- whatever it is. Whatever it lasts for, that novelty period, you get a free download from the universe. But, then, you've got to actually invest and buy the program. You've got to invest money, time and effort, in learning how to work the program, in order to get the pleasure. Peter?

>> It's kind of being exposed to piano, where you don't want to bother to take lessons, but you just tinkle on the keys, and, somehow, that's okay.

>> MG: And you're delighted by it, and it gives you some pleasure, for a period of time. But, then, if you don't actually learn the skill, you can't get the deeper level pleasure. When you actually learn the skill, the pleasure you get at the piano is exponentially increased. So, the greater the pleasure, the greater the skill required; the greater the effort required, et cetera. But the counterfeit form -- so big yes.

Let's just stay for a second with the counterfeit form. The counterfeit form is always novelty, which is why, by the way, the consumer world, economically driven, is always psychologically smart. Simply the best psychologists are always in the marketing firms of major corporations. Sometimes, they're beautiful and Holy. Major corporations have offered great gifts to the world. I've said many times, that major corporations are bringing more blessing and evolution of consciousness into the world than any other single force in the world, today. So, the demonization of business is a superficial misunderstanding of reality. It misidentifies Crony capitalism, which is corrupt, at its core. Crony Capitalism is corrupt at its core, when the genuine Consciousness Capitalism, brings great blessings into the world and has actually moved more people in Maslow's Hierarchy. Authentic Capitalism, Consciousness Capitalism, has moved more people from survival needs through to getting, actually, belongingness needs met, by being able to create a home, to meeting self-esteem needs, than any other single force. Since the evolution of consciousness is the evolution of Spirit, it means that, actually, Capitalism, in its conscious form, is actually a great partner and, maybe, the greatest catalyst in the evolution of consciousness.

When I wrote that on the web, I got attacked by any number of people who are idiots, to say it clearly, meaning they just don't know how to think. "Oh, capitalism is bad." They watched a Michael Moore documentary -- who's a bigger idiot. Every fact he says is unchecked, unbalanced, unnuanced. It's shocking. And people just say shit. My friend, John Mackey, challenged Michael Moore to a debate and Michael has not yet agreed. We'll see what happens. But his demand was \$100,000.00. They offered him \$50,000.00. They're still negotiating, as of the last couple of days. So, here's John saying, "Let's do a debate about capitalism in the public sphere to clarify this issue -- I just want you to get this, for a second -- and Michael is saying, "No. No. Not for a penny less than \$100,000.00." So, there's a good capitalist.

You've just got to be really careful. Everything is Dharma. One of the great tragedies of both the conservative world and liberal world is everyone just repeats shit. "We're anti-capitalist. Corporations are bad." Really? Let's get some information on that. So, what we do is, we take the worst example of a corporation and run -- which is clearly, obviously corrupt -- then we say corporations are bad. Well, I've got to tell you something, that's the dumbest idea I've ever heard in the world, number one. Number two, which you have basically done, by doing that idea, is you've basically destroyed, psychologically, about half of the planet. Meaning, we're all affected by corporations. The leading edge of our society works in corporations. So, what do you do when you tell millions and millions of people they're involved in evil? What happens to their self-perception? Nothing good. And, actually, why? Corporations have done more for lifting people out of poverty than any other force in history. So, we really need to hold that, in a powerful way. Of course, we need to completely critique Crony Capitalism and Corrupt Capitalism, which deserves a blistering critique. Because it's corrupt at its core, and, obviously, socialism is not the answer. The answer is Conscious Capitalism. Socialism is an utter disaster, in every form. But we've got to go for the conscious form of it.

Now, just out of curiosity, why are we talking about this? No, there's a reason. Let's get the segue. Novelty -- thank you. So, the smartest psychologists are in the marketing departments of corporations. Sometimes, they're Holy and beautiful, which is how I got off on this tangent, and, sometimes, they're cynical and corrupt. So, one of the examples of cynical and corrupt is play to novelty. There's a play in the marketing world. I talked about it jokingly yesterday, but, actually, my friends, we do not need four million kinds of candy. The sugar download into American health is so fundamentally destructive to health and causes more heart disease and more cancer. The download of sugar into society is driven absolutely by greed -- simply driven by greed. Simple. That's Corrupt Capitalism. That's capitalism in its corrupt form. The reason I offer the conscious one, is I didn't want to talk about Corrupt Capitalism and put that in the space, without holding a larger picture. Yes?

>> Isn't it driven by addiction?

>> MG: Sugar absolutely creates addiction. That's one of the things that's actually true and critical, for Unique Self Recovery, is that there's two forms of addiction in the country. You're absolutely right. There's obvious addiction, but, actually, we have the shadow of the corporate world is driven by greed, downloading sugar into society, creating an actual national, pathological addiction, which, itself, then,

creates an enormous amount of heart disease, cancer and destruction. That's actually true, in the reality. If you want a Spiritual practice, wean yourself off sugar. I've entirely weaned myself off sugar, just completely. Wean yourself off sugar. You just don't need it. Sugar is, absolutely, 1,000 percent addictive and destructive. It's a pseudo-eros. It's not great food, where we're kind of appreciating the depth of great food. I'm not saying don't eat rich and beautiful food. Do it on occasion, but do it in a way in which you're genuinely appreciating the food, and you're receiving the food. As opposed to addictively, popping sugar, in one form or the other, which is just a form of pseudo-eros, which creates destruction. It creates enormous destruction.

So, just ten seconds and, then, we're going to open it up. What's the spiritual practice? What's the price? I want to stay with the Principles for a second. This is the last Principle we'll do, then we're going to move into exercising it. What's the price for this pleasure? Remember, we said every pleasure has a price, and we said every pleasure has a spiritual practice. In this case, the price and spiritual practice come together, and they're one. If you've heard this from before, then, don't share it. Someone who's never been in this Dharma, what's the price? What's the spiritual practice? Just stay with it. Carol?

>> Well, I'm guessing it's slowing down.

>> MG: [singing] Slow down, you move too fast. You've got to make the morning last.

Slowing down is good. What does that mean? Let's give that a word.

>> Subconsciousness.

>> MG: Subconscious -- so, give that a word. There's something very specific. That's absolutely correct. What was the word, there?

>> Attention.

>> MG: Laurie, out of the ballpark -- attention. The price is the practice of attention. It's the practice of attention. It's placing your attention. There's a beautiful, beautiful word in the original mystical text, the Biblical mystical text, for attention. The word is simat, first word. Second word, lev. Simat lev. Simat lev means to pay attention, but the literal translation means, to place your heart. You place your heart. So, the Hebrew for attention is the placing of the heart. Isn't that beautiful? So, you're placing your heart. So, to pay attention -- what changes and what transforms Level One Pleasure; what evolves Level One Pleasure is the placing of the heart, and it's paying attention. It's slowing down, for sure, and paying attention, whether it's in the sexual; whether it's in taste; whether it's in art appreciation; whether it's any other sensory form; whether it's fragrance. It's the paying attention. There are always, minimally, a hundred blessings in a day. If we would actually learn how to fill up with those blessings - - and we think, "Oh, we know this one." I heard a couple of people talking yesterday, "We know Level One. Let's get to the higher levels. We actually don't. If we did, we'd be filled with joy in this minute. Because the amount of Level One Pleasure coming at us, in your lives, from the texture of our skin to the colors that engage us; to the sounds that we find; to the fragrances; to the touch are so unbearably

ecstatic, that you almost can't do it.

One of the reasons there's certain forms of pleasure that I avoid is because they seduce me in. One of them is not a Level One Pleasure, actually, and it goes in a particular place. I'm just going to throw it out, for a second. I always pray briefly, because I happen to enjoy praying. I could get lost in praying all day. Prayer is one of the most sensual, gorgeous art forms. I just know about myself, and 30, 40 years ago, that I could get lost in prayer. So, I've actually curtailed my prayer, because it's almost addictive to me.

But you can have a Level One Pleasure. You can get lost in it. But if you get to that level, you're in good shape. But, first, get to a level where that's a problem. That's the level you should get to. You should get to a level, where you feel like, "Oh my God, I can't do it. I'm just going to get lost in it." That means you're in Level One Pleasure, and, then, what happens is, Level One Pleasure fills you.

And certain people have it. Laurie has a very, very sophisticated sense of visual pleasure -- a piece of furniture; a piece of art, which is very beautiful; a piece of clothing. One of the things she's brought to me is that particular fineness of that Level One Pleasure, which is a very sophisticated sense. It's an evolved sense you actually develop. Then, that actually fills you, in a certain way. So, actually, as just an example, I feel a certain fullness from that level of pleasure that I didn't actually feel, several years ago. Because that level of pleasure gives you something of the artistic/visual pleasure, like the touch pleasure of gorgeous furniture. Those of you have been in my home -- Steven, that desk. It's an awesome desk. But if you actually let them and receive the pleasure, it actually fills you. It actually gives you a sense of fullness. It's not a greed. You get the difference? Like, give me a great desk -- you can have a great desk and never even notice it. You can have this great desk, and it enters you. It actually locates you.

Remember, [00:32:34*]. All is God, and God is all, in Yiddish. Meaning, that's the non-dual realization. If I would say it in evolutionary terms, it's sentience, all the way up and sentience, all the way down. It's the split between that which is alive and that which is not alive. The more you know about cosmology, the more you know about physics, the more you know about consciousness, the more that split starts to disappear. So, really, it's sentience, all the way up, all the way down. You know what I mean by that? Sentience means aliveness. Sentience, all the way up, all the way down. Remember the "Sound of Music?" "The hills are alive..." Remember that? It's like that. Everyone got that?

So, it's sentience, all the way up, all the way down. That's the "Sound of Music," so the hills are alive. So, let's hold here. A couple of questions, and, then, we're going to exercise. Jeff?

>> I have a favorite song for six months, but, then, I hear it later, and I think, "What's up with that?"

>> Novelty.

>> Is it all in here, or what, actually, is out there, in the object? The problem of being involved in the pop music thing, is the item itself doesn't sustain a deep inquiry, so you're compelled to listen to Top 40 forever, because a Top 40 song doesn't, actually, bear the weight or the depth. If you want to get into

variety, you have to go into discomfort of the thing, that's hard to listen to. You may actually have to listen to a symphony.

>> That's fantastic. I'm going to repeat what Jeff said, because it was so important. I just want to repeat, not as a question, but as a statement. Because there's actually a lot of depth of Dharma in there. So, let me just reflect it back.

So, one is -- I want to use, not the word variety, but novelty. Let's stay with the word novelty. Novelty. So, I've got this great Top 40 song. [singing]. "I thought the world had enough silly love song," back when Paul McCartney was letting Lynda sing with him. Is it really Paul McCartney or not? We don't know. Let's just leave that one. We're leave that one, for those of you who got that.

So, here we go. So, Jeff says, so beautifully, that in some sense, I hear the song. It's a new Top 40 song. I'm just totally moved by it, for six months. And, then, it comes up on the radio again, and it's like it's got nothing. Why? Well, because, originally, it was giving me a download of its novelty, which is the free download, from the universe. But, actually, the song, itself, didn't quite have the depth to sustain me going deeper into it. Which is the difference between -- and we talked about this offline, yesterday, you and I. It relates back to your question, about great music. Is there a difference between great music and not great music, great art and not great art? The answer is, of course, there is. The post modern notion that there's no canon is bullshit. Of course, there's a canon. Of course, there's a difference between great art and not great art.

Oh my God, you go on the internet and someone puts out a piece of new art. All the people are flaming on there and say, "That's junk. What was he doing?" So, this guy has worked for twenty years. He created a great piece of art. Basically, a bunch of people living at no pleasure level, with utter superficiality, who refused to recognize there's any hierarchy. Because they haven't put the depth and the work into actually creating -- just critiquing him, and, "How can you even say that any art is better than any other art?" It's utter nonsense. Of course, there's great art. One of the litmus tests of great art is, is you can actually be with it, for a long time. It's actually infinite. It's got, virtually, infinite depth, and you can keep going deeper and deeper and deeper. And new layers open up, and those new layers -- now, watch this for a second -- not only in the art, but in you. There's actually a symbiotic, reciprocal merging of the art and the artist.

If you read Kandinsky on art -- and Kandinsky, we'll talk about it, maybe tomorrow. He's one of my favorite people in the entire world. I just wrote an essay, called "Post Postmodern Art," and art is one of my new crazes of the last year. I'm into art, in a crazy way. Reading, looking at every piece of art I can find. But, you know, we should do a whole Wisdom School just on Kandinsky. One of the things that he pointed towards, was this effacing of the split, between the art, the piece of art and the artist. Because there's, of course, a question, when you interpret art. It's how do you interpret the art? How does art criticism happen? So, one of the things that's alluded to -- Kandinsky doesn't go all the way -- but, really, the art and the artist actually merge. So, the critic says, "It's not about the art or the artist. It's about me." So, that's the Postmodern critic move. The Postmodern critic move is it's just me. Well, no. The critic has a piece. The art has a piece. The artist has a piece. But, actually, it's all happening in

the interiority. And it's all happening, also, externally, because it's an objective piece of art. The objectivity and subjectivity actually blur into each other. Great art actually allows you entry, and great art doesn't have to be classical art. Great art can be Postmodern. It can be from any period. But a great piece of art invites you into a journey with it. We spend hours and hours on each Dali, and each time, something new emerged. Some of it was there. Some of it was in us. There's actually an erotic union between the critic, the art appreciator, the artist and the piece of art. There's a quadrinity. There's an erotic quadrinity between those four, in the best way that happens.

Now, a superficial piece of art can give you an initial hit of pleasure. But it can't take you all the way in, because it just doesn't have the depth, and the opposite of the Holy is the superficial. That's big. Pleasure and depth come together. That's wonderful.

I'm going to go to -- is there a new voice we haven't heard before? Let's take a couple of voices. Mary Ann?

>> I just want to say the number one principle of somatics is learning how to direct our awareness and our consciousness onto our old --

>> MG: That's absolutely true. In semantics, which Mary Ann is going to be writing a series of essays on Thomas Hannah, who's the greatest somatic thinker, probably in the last century. He's basically gotten lost. So, Mary Ann's project for the next couple of years is going to be to recover him in the world. In somatic work, whether it's somatic psychology or any somatics -- but it's to be knowing how to place your attention. That's absolutely right.

Last one to comment, so we can go to exercise?

>> Something's striking to me. Really, the piece of art on the internet -- what forum was that placed in? If that piece was seen in the art museum by the same person, without all the chatter and without the temptation of commenting and saying, "This stinks." There's actually some invisible space around what is seen and what's seen.

>> MG: Absolutely. That's completely right. John's pointing to the great Postmodern site of [00:40:08*]. That's the person who developed it. It originates as early as Kant, which is context is everything. The world is context within context within context within context. There's always an invisible space. A good artist actually invokes the invisible space. Yeah, Sequoia?

>> So, when you were talking about the practice of placing attention and placing the heart, that sounds a lot like mindfulness. What's the connection there?

>> MG: Well, what is mindfulness?

>> What is mindfulness?

>> MG: What is it?

>> I don't know. I'm asking you.

>> MG: Attention. So, it's placing attention. So, you're absolutely right. The core practice of

mindfulness is about bringing your attention back. That's absolutely true. I thought about having a larger conversation about it, now, but I decided against it, because of time; but, yes. You're absolutely right. Mindfulness is about placing attention. The key that I was talking to Peter about is, is of course, what do you place attention on? Do you place attention on the fact that you're not actually real, so that, you've got to get beneath the personality, to what they call "no-self." That's one tract. Or do you place attention on the fact that your ego isn't all that you are. Underneath it, is an irreducible uniqueness. So, what do you decide to place your mind on will actually complete change the experience of mindfulness and the results that's going to actually yield. That was our conversation. Mindfulness is absolutely about paying attention. So, big yes.

>> But in terms of what we're talking about, here, in the senses?

>> MG: Got you. You're absolutely right.

>> Novelty is a way --

>> MG: Novelty is actually pseudo-attention. What does novelty do? Everyone get this? Just relax into the space. It's all good. So, just stay with it for a second. Just relax into the space. Sequoia said something important, here. You framed it in a really nice way, which is, what does novelty do? Everyone get this? It grabs your attention. So, you're not actually placing your heart. It's a great distinction, Sequoia. I just love it. I got really excited about it. You're not placing your attention.

What's marketers try to do, they try to grab your attention. So, when your attention is grabbed, that's pseudo-eros, which is actually the opposite of mindfulness. I didn't quite get where you're going, but that's great. Sister?

>> I'm hanging with this novelty thing. That was troubling me because what I think is a real pleasure is in discovering novelty, which, I guess, is going deeper. So, when I go for a walk, my practice is looking for novelty. How is the same walk different, in this moment? So, I think this difference you're saying about grabbing --

>> MG: I love that distinction. Had I know you were going to say that, I would have called on you earlier. [laughter]. But teasing aside, that's a great distinction. That's a beautiful, beautiful distinction. Let me just amplify it back, because it's so beautiful. She has a great distinction, here, everybody, which is, there's a distinction between novelty that comes at you and novelty that you're discovering. I just love the distinction. Beautiful. Sequoia, **[Karen*]** and Jeff -- each of them just added beautiful depth to the Dharma. This is how it happens. So, let me just reflect back to what **[Karen*]** said. **[Karen*]** said.

So, there's novelty which, someone's put it in your face. So, in other words, when you dump the person you're going out with, pick up another one and, then, dump that person, that's not discovering novelty. That's just refusing to go deep. When you keep switching forms of food, keep switching candy bars, that's not discovering novelty. Discovering novelty is when you discover novelty in unexpected places. When you take the same walk you did every day, and you seek to re-experience it. When you discover

novelty in the infinite depth of the relationship you're in. Like that. Great distinction. Thank you.

Let's go for Lady R, in the back.

>> A big part of novelty is titillation.

>> Titillation is exactly the word to use. That's correct. Titillation creates craving. You can actually feel it in the word -- titillation. You've got that sense of the Ah! in that. Let's hold, here. Let's hold here.

Just a deep breath, just to take in. Beautiful. Deep bow to the God in the center of the room. And, now, we're going to go into a wondrous exercise with Jeff and Shelly. This is worth being alive for.

Now, find a part of yourself that's a creature of habit, that hasn't eaten in three and a half hours, in the Western World. Had a couple of snacks in between. "Oh my God, why am I not eating now?" Just relax. Release the contraction. It's all good. That's habit. And I want, really, Jeff and Shelly to give us the fullness of this exercise. And from there, we're going to go into lunch. From there, we're going to have an hour and a half break. Not two hours. Then, actually, we're going to try and get through most of the levels of pleasure today. We may do a short half-hour, hour section tonight; we may not.

But we're now in. Stay on this for me, for second. This pleasure of the next day and tomorrow, it's just never going to come again. This is just such a gorgeous time. It's such a unique time. We're in the Dharma. And you creating the Dharma. So much got created this morning, we should be graced, to just stay in. Everyone, in their own individual life, is going to have to work it. You get a little tired, it's okay. Self-regulate. You'll be fine. We slept well last night. We're going to sleep well tonight. No one is suffering. If my mother was here, she would say, "What do you mean? We're having such a hard time. Why is everybody upset?" But if you get to a discomfort moment, just work it. Just work it.

So, we're not going to do the pandering/ take care of everyone, we're going to lovingly hold the container. We're going to lovingly honor everyone, obviously. But we're in it. It's such a wondrous time. So, let's give Jeff and Shelly our full delightful attention. Take us in, sister and brother.

Wisdom School: The Dharma of Pleasure.
Audio: 09-Saturday Morning, Part 2
TRT: 00:48:35
Speaker: Marc Gafni