

>> Okay, here we go. So, we have a very, very, very exciting two days, that actually started yesterday. Two and a half days, but we're kind of stepping into the Dharma now, and we're going to go in every piece. So, start now. Every dimension of the Dharma, at some point, we're going to exercise, including this morning. So, again, when you kind of feel like -- especially if you're new, and you haven't been with us, in Wisdom School. You're going to have this feeling, at a certain time, "Why aren't we doing exercises? Why are we just talking?" So, I really want to just invite everyone to move beyond that and, really gently, we're going to do tons of exercises the next two and a half days, but we have to, kind of - - we talked about it last night. It's very important to understand, we live in inescapable frameworks, and therefore, everything we experience is interpreted. So, therefore, what we're doing is, we're unfolding a framework to understand the experience, and we're going to unfold a framework about pleasure. We're going to be pleasuring. There's our verb. "Pleasure" is our conversation, and we're going to kind of hit it in every possible way we can, and let it hit us. And hit it with fierce thrusting; hit it with quivering tenderness, letting it kind of enter us and kind of find our way to pleasure. And everything we talk about -- well, not everything, but a lot of what we talk about, we'll, then, experience, but, then, the experience will be refracted through the prism of the Dharma. So, here we go.

What's the best place to begin? So, the best place to begin is always where you are. So, Victoria walked in this morning. She said to Laurie, "Does he have a fever?" No one talks to me anymore. I shouldn't even say -- like, I wasn't there. "Does he have a fever?" Laurie says, "I don't think so," but, then, when Victoria left, Laurie checked it and said, "He does." I said, "Tell Victoria. Maybe I'll get some extra sympathy." You got to use it. You've got to use what you've got. You know what I mean? You've got to use what you got.

So, no, a "fever" is absolutely key to our pleasure conversation. So, a fever is where we start, because what happens when you have a fever? When you have a fever, the homeostasis of your body resets. So, your normal fever -- everyone knows how a fever works, right? You've got 96-point whatever -- 8, I think -- 98.6, something like that. Something with an eight, a six and a nine. And that's your homeostasis. And, then, your body's equilibrium regulates around there. Then, when you're sick, essentially, the homeostasis point of your body resets to, on a bad day, 104. You know, today, probably just 99. But it's a reset, and the entire system adjusts to that reset. Now, that's Step One.

Step Two -- the greatest plague that's actually just ripping apart the Western world and, particularly, our part of the Western world -- you know, we're all in that category of what Paul called a bunch of years ago -- Paul Ray, a great guy -- "Cultural Creatives." Remember that word, in Paul's survey, a bunch of years ago? And we're doing, actually, a conversation with him, at the Center for World Spirituality. He's a very interesting man. "Cultural Creatives," meaning we're kind of educated, kind of liberal. There's a couple of closet conservatives, here, which we're not going to out. I am, occasionally, one of them, on particular issues. Sometimes, a little libertarian, but we'll discuss that later. And we're kind of educated; kind of post-traditional; believe in creativity; you know, believe in kind of doing a little yoga, on the side. You know, cultural creatives. You get what I'm talking about, right?

So, in cultural creatives, the single biggest scourge, literally, mental health scourge, is addiction. And addiction is all over the world, an absolute disaster. There's some people I know -- Nance has done work in trauma and addiction, deep in her professional field, you know, her original, when there's other people in the room. Laurie kind of lives in that, runs a treatment center, now, for chemical addiction;

has run treatment centers of different kinds, for the last thirty years. And I'm sure there's other people in the room who have done deep work in that field.

So, addiction. An addiction is something that really caught all of our eyes, you know, at some early point. It caught my eye, as well, thirty years ago, when I began to think about it. And, actually, the way I met Laurie, is when she read a piece I had written about addiction, which really kind of part of how we met. Addiction's a critical issue. So, I want to offer you a definition of addiction, as Step Two. Addiction is the inability to derive pleasure from everyday life activity. It's a fantastic definition of addiction. It took me 25 years to say that simple sentence, and Laurie's been deploying versions of this sentence, as other people have, in treatment centers. And, so, addiction is about pleasure unwoven. It cracks through a lot. That's what Dharma does, it cracks. What does "addiction" mean? Addiction is pleasure unwoven.

Now, if that's true, that means that the way to heal addiction is to reweave pleasure. The way to heal addiction is pleasure rewoven. You get that? What you basically do, is you basically create a trajectory, which actually fundamentally changes the way we deal with addiction. Now, a sub-theme, in our entire weekend, is going to be addiction. Now, that's going to be a sub-theme in the entire weekend -- addiction and its relationship to pleasure. Okay? And we're going to get back to addiction a little later. I'm just going to talk about it for a few minutes, now, and, then, we're going to kind of branch off in two other directions. We've got three core movements, to make this morning, the symphony; and one of them, we're going to deeply exercise, with Jeff and Shelly.

But just to kind of get the first movement, because, again, that's why Dharma matters. If you get the right definition, everything follows from it -- everything; the whole game changes. So, if addiction is pleasure unwoven, then, naturally, the healing of addiction is pleasure rewoven. So, what would it mean to heal addiction? It would be the ability to get maximal pleasure from normal life activity. Okay?

Now, let's just stay for a couple of seconds, just within neuroscience. Let's just play with it, for a second; just to play with the kind of neuroscience game for a second. So, do you remember -- what was in the mid-fifties, Olds and Milner did those first experiments, and those core experiments, where you'd have a mouse, and the mouse was getting injections of drugs, VTA and NA, that I never pronounce correctly -- ventral tegmental area of the nucleus accumbens. But we'll call it VTA and NA, the way they're kind of referred to in the literature, which are part of the pleasure center in the brain. So, you've got to kind of direct those drugs to the brain, and the mouse is going, "Fucking A. Nice." Right? It's nice. Now, we, of course, have, in our brains, VTA and NA, as well. Did that same core structure in the evolutionary chain -- whenever you go up the evolutionary chain, we transcend and include. So, we have a more sophisticated version of this VTA and NA.

What would happen, you would then put the mouse on an electric grid, which is killing the mouse, and the mouse would stay on the electric grid, because he had to stay on the electric grid, in order to press the lever to get the download of drugs into VTA and NA. Now, what does that mean? That means that, in the mouse's internal equilibrium system, you stay on the grid, even though it's literally killing you. It's literally killing you, but you stay on, because something in your brain has reworked your understanding of what's going to allow you to survive. So, survival becomes the drug, and without getting that, you can't really understand addiction. What happens in addiction is, is that your internal

experience is about a contraction in time. You're not thinking in large segments of time. You're not thinking about tomorrow, the day after. You revert back to a kind of, very primal, instinctive, animalistic human being. Your timeframe shrinks, like when you're fasting. And when you're fasting, you're thinking about -- the worst part of fasting? You want food, now. You're not thinking about the trajectory of your Unique Self unfolding. You're hungry, and there's a moment in hunger, before you break through -- there's a breakthrough, in hunger, to the other side. But before you break through, if you've ever done real fasting as a practice, there's a moment when you contract around your time, spatial dimension, completely contracts to right here, right now, and you want food. So, the experience of addiction is the next 15 seconds. You get that? There's a contraction in time, to the next 15 seconds.

In the next 15 seconds, what do you have to do? Survive; you have to survive. How do you survive the drug? There's a message, which is recoded to the drug, and I'll explain how that happens in a second, because it's the same mechanism as a fever. Life is so painful that you can't get through the next 15 seconds. Now, I have a feeling that some of us, myself included, might recognize that experience. That's actually not an unfamiliar experience. Strangely enough, but it's not about them -- those people. It's about us, and the experience that life is so painful, that I cannot get through the next 15 seconds, right? Now, then, what's happened, though, hardwired in my brain, is the drug becomes equal to survival. So, I take the drug. The fact that the drug will cause me not to show up to my interview, that everybody's worked so hard to get for me, because they really believed in me again, after I've convinced them, for the last ten months, that I'm finally back. And, then, when I fall off the wagon and don't show up for the interview, they think I'm an evil, son of a bitch, crazy person. And, then, I'm so shamed -- and as Laura likes to say, shame is the route -- this kind of shame of all evil. I'm so shamed, that I get lost in this toxic shame bind, which is utterly destructive.

How we work with shame is a big issue. I'm giving a -- for the first time, a new course called, "Sex without Shame," a telecourse. And my friend, Brad Blanton, emailed me last night and this morning, again. We've been emailing back and forth, because, he said, "I'm showing up for that one." And Brad's all about, "Let's remove shame from reality," and he's a great guy, and he'll be playing with us, at the Center. He's just wonderful.

So, the idea is, no one gets the reason the addict actually, often, again, took that pathway is because there was a pathway in the brain circuitry that said to the addict, that the only way through the next 15 seconds is to take that drug. Only that drug will give me -- and here's the next sentence -- the necessary pleasure you need to survive. I don't want to say anything about that sentence, because we're going sentence by sentence, here. In order to survive, you need pleasure, meaning you have to have an experience that the world is good enough. You have to have an experience that the world's not infinitely painful. The world's a very painful place. What we do is we shut down; we shut down to the pain. And we shut down to it very expertly. What we manage to do, is we manage to block out most of the pain circuitry that's coming at us from the world, and we literally have a mechanism that actually ferrets out all of the painful impulses. We shut down to them.

Now, today, I want to add something. This is utterly critical. It's never been noticed in literature. I had a meeting two days ago -- I can't pronounce her last name, but she's the key person in America writing on genocide. A young scholar; a brilliant, brilliant young scholar; Polish. What's her last name? Give me a last name.

>> [inaudible\*]

>> Right. Something like that. So, Patricia actually just joined the think tank as a scholar, two days ago. And took on a particular book project, which I've been working on for the last six months for her and, then, passed it over to her. She didn't know about it until the meeting, but she took it on fully. I mean, she's fantastic. And one of the things that I talked to Patricia about, was that -- Laura and I have been so crazy, the last three or four months, in terms of being in different cities, I haven't had a chance to share this with you. But part of the reason that addiction is increasing is because there's another phenomena happening in the world. This is just so wild, and it's just crystallizing the last three or four months. So, when you hear it -- it blew me out of the water, when I heard it in my mind.

Just listen to this. For the first time in the history of planet Earth, we are in the position of God minus one. Meaning, how do we understand God? And, again, the God you don't believe in doesn't exist, so get rid of that problem. A God you don't believe in doesn't exist, whatever that God-force is. What is God? God's all-knowing -- omniscient. Whatever that force is, omniscient. And God's also, in all the great traditions, omnipotent. So all-knowing and all powerful. For the first time, we're close to all-knowing.

Turn on CNN, and you know about all the suffering happening all over the world, everyplace, in real time. That's never happened in the history of planet Earth. Not only do you know about it, but just in case you didn't get the idea, we're going to give you graphic visual images of it, and they're going to be available 24 hours a day. Driven, of course, not by need, but by greed. Ted Turner, at a particular moment in time, made a decision which kind of created CNN, and a lot of things happened that drove that system. But it created this world in which all the pain in the world is actually in your face, all the time. And, too, you're not omnipotent, meaning you have no power over it whatsoever. Now, the fact that the Divine Force seems to have chosen not to exercise that power -- it's called "The Problem of Theodicy" in religion, which we're going to skip, because we're not into that conversation today. But, just in terms of our experience, it literally reframes our reality. For the first time in history, we're exposed to all the pain in the world, and we're utterly, totally impotent.

Now, what do you think that does? The answer is -- and I had this, like, wild realization -- addiction. In other words, the reason addiction's going up in such a wild way, in the cultural creative world, is because the cultural creatives have this sense, that we should be able to impact. The sense of, "This is my issue. This is my problem." But, actually, the only way I could impact, is to somehow shut down. That's the general experience of most people, because I'm impotent. What can I actually do to stop 100,000 people from being killed and 800,000 people from being killed in one month, in Rwanda? In a brutal way, filmed everyplace. So, what's happened is, the gap between the ability to heal and the ability to feel has widened, larger than it's ever widened in history. And the gap -- let me just say it again -- is the key formulation. The gap between our ability to feel and our ability to heal -- that gap is where addiction happens. In that gap, what happens? Our hearts shut. Why do our hearts shut? Because they have to. What else are you going to do? You're going to go out and kind of play with Phineas, as you watched, kind of some horror scene. So, what you have to do, is you have to shut your heart in some way, to that horror scene, because you've got no other choice.

Now, here's the deal. The heart is one. You think you can shut your heart, but not shut your heart. "I'm going to shut my heart to that." But that's not how the heart works. The heart doesn't work that way.

When you shut your heart, you deaden something inside you, and you deaden your ability to feel psychosexually, existentially, morally, emotionally, because that's the way the heart works. If you get this, this is a kind of -- this is the first time I've said publically, this phenomenology, but it's a new phenomenology, that puts a bunch of pieces together. And you begin to understand, "Oh, addiction. Right. Right."

So, what is addiction? It's so fucking painful, you with me? It's so fucking painful, I'm going to medicate, in some way. And there's lots of ways to do it. You might want to write six books a day. And there's lots of ways to do it, and some of them are more lethal than others. But, you know, in other words, the point is we just so involve ourselves in something that will absorb us, even if, it's actually not the right path for our growth and our transformation -- our survival, because our survival depends on being able to medicate that pain.

And here's the paradox: I remember when I was 22, 23, and I was in Times Square, before Giuliani made it so much less interesting. [laughter]. You know, at a particular time. And there was one of those places, outside one of those movie theaters, outside one of those places where all those holy people congregated, where there was one of those -- you know where they have those bins, where you have fifty cent books, and you pass by, and you kind of ruffle through them? There was a book there, called *Blessed are the Addicts*, and I picked it up, and I read through it. It was like a 120-page book, and it was the best book I ever read on addiction. I don't even remember who wrote it. It obviously didn't get far in the world. And his basic point was -- he was a Priest in Times Square who had worked for forty years, in one of those little homes, with addiction. And he writes, that when you're working with someone with heavy addiction, and they're not in the addiction, he said you can't even imagine the level of kindness, goodness, sensitivity. And he kind of wondered in the book, and I wondered with him, what the correlation was. And it took me years to kind of answer that question, to myself. The answer is, that a person who's prone to addiction -- there's actually about five different factors that create proneness to addictions.

I'm over-simplifying now, but at least one of the five factors is this deep, open heart; this inability to go about business as usual. The opposite of the holy is not the unholy. The opposite of the holy is the superficial. And the ability to live at the surface and go about business as usual is often not available to the addict, because the addict, who lives in all of us, who lives in different ways in all of us, feels so intensely.

Let me just give you a second on the neuroscience and we'll kind of finish this first piece. So, what actually happens in addiction is the same process that happens in a fever. It's in a fever, the homeostasis of the brain is reset, now to 99.0. In addiction, what essentially happens is every activity has a certain dopamine count. And dopamine, by the way, is one of the newer chemicals that's a pleasure chemical. We actually know now, in the last 15 years of studies, there's actually a complex of chemicals. Dopamine is only one of them. Let's just use dopamine as our example. So, dopamine is released whenever pleasure is experienced. Pleasure is experienced in a number of ways. One of them is when something extraordinary happens. If you put a penny into the gumball machine -- remember gumball machines, like back in the day? Who misses gumball machines? I just had this wave of nostalgia for gumballs. Gumball machines -- yes; yes on gumball machines. Do you remember when you put in like a penny in a gumball machine and instead of one gumball, like two come out? That's a

surge of dopamine. And they actually did studies on that. There's actually kind of one of the earliest double-blind studies on gumball machines and dopamine, because when you get two, you feel kind of held by the world. It's good. It's like, yeah, you've got this like surprise, too. And, so, you get an extra surge of dopamine, which comes from this extra pleasure you got from that surprise, that extraordinary surprise.

Now, when you take drugs, what drugs do is they flashflood the brain with dopamine. That's what happens. So, Brad's doing his drugs there -- we're just picking you, because you're right in front of the best class, is Brad, and I always pick you in the beginning of our talk. It's great to see you, man. Awesome. So, you flashflood yes. You flashflood dopamine. And what happens is, it wipes out the homeostatic structures in the brain. There's a deep, double-blind loop of glutamate, that goes to neural chemicals. Glutamate kind of anchors the memory in the brain. The whole system, which I could go through in great detail. I actually wrote up several pages of it. I decided it's too much. But the system of homeostasis in the brain that regulates how you're going to experience the dopamine; how the memory is going to be anchored in the brain, of the dopamine is completely wiped out by the flashflood, and you have a spike that's recorded in your brain that says that this, the flashflood of the drug, which causes the flashflood of dopamine -- this is pleasure. And anything else, other than this, isn't pleasure. It doesn't get you there.

So, remember the word "hedonist?" So, the hedonic set-point of the brain is reset. It's from 98.6; now it's at 107. If you don't hit 107, you don't feel like you're getting pleasure. If you don't feel like you're getting pleasure, you die. You get that? So, that's what happens, when it's actually your hedonic set-point in your brain has been reset, so you actually don't experience normal pleasure as pleasurable. So, bringing your mother apple pie, and your mother says, "Wow. Thank you so much," and you feel like a good son -- that's nothing. It just doesn't exist; like you didn't do anything.

So, what you have to do is -- now, what of course happens? What happens is, after you've kind of created this new hedonic set-point, after a certain amount of time, that doesn't give you pleasure, either. So, you have to reset the hedonic set-point, and you have to up the mast. "That kind of sex doesn't work; let me add a second person. Okay? That's good. Let me add two masks. Okay, that doesn't work. How about a whip? Okay, that's good. A goat?" You keep going. [laughter]. Lynn, you can work on the movement from whip to goat. Later, we'll get to it, okay?

But what happens is, you keep resetting the hedonic set-point of the brain, because you're not getting pleasure from the ordinary experience. So, that's the ideology of addiction. So, what we see is addictions all about pleasure. So, addiction is pleasure unwoven. So, therefore, healing addiction would be pleasure rewoven.

So, I just want to throw you out an image and go to Part Two. And we're going to come back to this image time and again, because we're going to become this person this weekend, and we're going to actually reset the hedonic set-points of our brain, up-regulate our dopamine receptors and change our experience of pleasure. So, the vision of -- and this is kind of stunningly exciting. It's just so wild. The vision of the addict is this wonderful person who lives in all of us and who hasn't turned off their cell phone, who actually experiences -- he's unable to experience pleasure from ordinary -- what we might call "normal" pleasure.

Now, watch for a second. What's the contrasting experience as the enlightened person? What's the nature of the enlightened experience? You with me? Take, for example, the Japanese tea ceremony. A famous tea ceremony and one version of Buddhism. What do you do in the Japanese tea ceremony? You drink tea. Do you drink really good tea? No, ordinary tea. Do you think it is like really beautiful -- no, actually, ordinary tea in ordinary vessels. What have you done? You've ritualized drinking tea and you're able to derive maximal pleasure from ordinary activity.

So, look at our two poles. The typology of addiction is you can't get pleasure from ordinary activity. The typology of enlightenment is you get maximal pleasure. The more enlightened you are, the more pleasure you get from ordinary activity. Just look at that phenomenology, how gorgeous it is. It's like, "Wow." So, in other words, the phenomenology of enlightenment is -- I mean, the experience of enlightenment that we're all reaching for, here, in this next two and a half days, is enlightenment. Enlightenment means to get maximal pleasure from ordinary activity.

Now, we haven't defined pleasure yet, so let's -- we'll bracket that. But just to see that, for a second. And it's addiction, actually, contrasts with enlightenment. They're actually in direct relationship to each other, which is stunning. Like, wow. Just to see that -- that's our first kind of movement in our symphony, to kind of have that in the space. This ideology of addiction, this kind of understanding of addiction being the inability to get normal pleasure from everyday activity, with the understanding, too, that without pleasure, you die; it's pleasure or death. But you have to have an experience that life is sane, that life is good, in some way. If not, then the pain of the world overwhelms you.

Three, in our particular life circumstance, in the course of history, the gap between the ability to feel and the ability to heal has been so exponentialized, that addiction has, then, spiked, in direct response. Four, which is why addiction lives in the community of cultural creatives, more than it does in any other community, and it's an utter scourge in that community. The amount of damage that we all know in our lives, the lives of people close to us, is beyond imagination. And it comes from -- the more you feel and the more you can't heal it; the more you're omniscient, but not omnipotent. The more painful it becomes, the more you have to medicate it, and if the medication doesn't work, you up the dose; you flashflood; you reset the hedonic set-point; and the games have begun. And you don't know how to get off of it.

So, how do you get off of it? The way you get off of it is pleasure, rewoven. You have to reweave your experience of pleasure. You have to relearn how to get pleasure from ordinary life activity and more than that, you have to redraw -- and here's the last sentence: you have to redraw your pleasure map. You have to re-understand what it is that gives you pleasure. That means you actually have to exercise your power of understanding of what Adi Da called "Reality Consideration." Adi Da called this "Reality Consideration." So, what we're going to do together, is we're going to do a Reality Consideration -- that's what we're going to do -- which is a form of meditation. You think meditation -- when you sit, and you go into an altered state or you chant. Actually, one form is meditation, what the Dalai Lama likes to call "Analytic Meditation," comes from what he calls "Reality Consideration."

I've told this story many times, but it's a worthwhile story. When we were together in Castel Gondolfo -- there was like thirty of us, kind of hanging out and talking for a week, and my friend, Michael, who runs a church called the GOP. He's a great guy. He has great dreadlocks. And Michael was leading a meditation -- Michael Beckwith, and Dali Lama walks in late, to the morning. He had called the

meeting, and Michael's doing this very deep -- and everyone's kind of flying all over the place and feeling their altered experience, and Dali Lama says, "What is this?" And Michael says, "Your holiness, I'm leading a meditation." "Haha...that not meditation...hahaha. Meditation -- analytic meditation. Focus; purpose; change view of reality. Hahaha. Nice, but you do nice, too."

So, we've got this weird meditation. You kind of feel good for a few minutes. Now, meditation is you do a reality consideration that changes your understanding of the way you experience reality. So, Adi Da called that, translating loosely, from the Kashmir Shaivite Tradition -- he called that a "Reality Consideration." So, we're going to be doing together, as a meditation -- this entire movement is a meditation. We're going to be doing a reality consideration, in order for us to experience what Rosemary and Diane are preparing for us, in the highest possible way -- the highest epicenter of pleasure and to actually expand our pleasure maps. We're going to actually go way beyond lunch. We're going to completely redraw our pleasure maps, in an essential way.

Okay? Let's just kind of hold there, for a second. Let's kind of break for a second, before we go into Part Two. Part Two of the symphony, we're going to actually do -- it's going to be short, and, then, we're going to exercise it. Just relax into it, for a second. Let's just kind of just take some silence, just to kind of draw it in.

And when we sit -- and what we're going to do for the next day is we're going to actually use sitting for the first day, instead of chanting, which will just be a little easier for me, with your permission. So, I'd like to ask everyone to just shut your eyes, for a second. Sit up. And we're going to do, just, in silence of presence. And, then, we're going to open for questions, afterwards. We're going to do classical [00:30:38\*], just sitting; just sitting. So, the legs are unfolded. The back is as straight as it can be. Neck is back. Shoulders are dropped down. If you know how to do a mudra with your fingers, then do it. If you don't, it's completely fine. Palms should be either up or down, relaxed position. Feel your spine lift up into the sky and lift down into the earth as if you are the pole connecting Heaven and Earth. Locate a part of your body. We're going to just breath into that part of the body a/k/a Pranayama. Pranayama is a breathing practice. So, I'm going to mention a part of the body. We'll breathe into that part of the body. On the inhale, we'll place our intention in that part of the body. On the exhale, we'll release the contraction in that part of the body.

Forehead. Ahhh. You want to hear your breath. Crown of the head. Ahhh. Shoulders drop. Back of the neck. Ahhh. Shoulders drop again. Neck is straight. Ears. Ahhh. Jaw. Ahhhh. Cheeks. Ahhh. Shoulders drop. Upper chest. Ahhh. Belly. Ahhh. Upper back. Ahhh. Shoulders drop. Lower back. Ahhh. Inner thighs. Ahhh. Yoni/Phallus. Ahhh. Anus. Ahhh. Left and right leg, in upper thighs. Ahhh. Underarms. Ahhh. Knees. Ahhh. Knees to ankles, both legs. Ahhh. Ankles. Ahhh. Soles of the feet. Ahhh. Full body breath. Ahhh. And, slowly, rotate the neck clockwise or counter clockwise, whichever works. Ahhh. Rotate the left wrist; the right wrist. If you're in a position to do it without moving heavily, the right ankle, with the right wrist. The left ankle. Eyes closed, full body breath. Ahhh. And for two minutes, we drop into meditation, and in meditation, whatever thought comes up, you allow it to come up and allow it to pass through. The active meditation is not stillness, but the bringing of your attention back to center, after your attention wanders. And, then, dropping in, again and again, to the center. As the thought comes up, it's important. Let it be there, receive it and let it pass. Shikantaza, just sitting. Just bring the thoughts back to center, when they drift away. No judgment, just bring them back.



Thoughts drift away, mind back to center. Mind is presence.

And as you're ready, come back with delight, with joy, slightly refreshed, awake, alive, aware.

Hey, everyone, meditation is awesome, and one of the things that, actually, we're going to be starting to do is more meditation. I've been critiquing the way meditation is taught for 25 years, and I realized, the last two months -- actually, in light of a conversation I had with Peter. It was after that conversation, about a month ago. I think it was something like a month ago, when we talked that afternoon, that we need to actually start really bringing unique self-meditation into the mindfulness world. Peter's kind of been gently saying, "Mindfulness, mindfulness." And so, we just made the first contact with somebody at the -- the person who's running the biggest mindfulness program in the public schools in Oakland, and I'm going to put them in touch with you. We have someone in Oakland who might be able to do it and maybe begin that conversation. It's taken awhile, but that's a critical conversation. So, we need to actually do meditation in a new way. For lots of reasons, the meditation world doesn't get you there. And we need to actually engage that conversation. I've been critiquing it for 25 years but never engaged in it. And I realized -- Peter helped me out of that kind of "Aha" after our last conversation. I just haven't got back to him about it, which is okay. I think maybe we should do something about this, instead of kind of critiquing it. So, we're going to kind of try and step into -- and for the first time, we're offering, in January, a meditation course -- the first time in 25 years -- and mindfulness and how that works. So, that's a big, direct result of you, sir.

So, anyone have any questions -- just kind of, any questions, comments. I want to just, before we go to Part Two -- Part Two's going to be the Movement Two in the symphony and big exercise, and Part Three is going to be one big exercise. That's the rest of the morning. So, we finished with kind of the straight Dharmic piece. We're going to go into like a different movement, but just with the first piece of the symphony, just any kind of questions, any kind of -- clarify. Lynn, please?

>> In the work that [00:39:22\*], he talked a lot about the Pleasure Principal and how pain and pleasure kind of come together, because you can control the pain, but not the pleasure, so much. And in, like as we're growing up, there's a way that, as children, because it can be painful, that we attach a negative pleasure to the pain. Right? So, from that perspective -- and it goes unconscious. Right? So, you're acting out from that.

>> Right. So, early fantasies come from there. That's one of the sources of fantasies.

>> Because your original need has to come from the fantasy.

>> That's right.

>> So, from that perspective, like, when you talked to me about addiction, let me just say that I was an addict, so I have personal experience with it. And my experience was -- not so much that the pain was so overwhelming, but that the nothing -- right? It was so intensely -- like, the disconnection, the lack of any kind of sense of anything connected.

>> Stop there for a second, because that's so important, what you just said. Can I just break for a second? So, Lynn's saying something so important, I actually, energetically, in the subtle energy of the room, kind of felt this together, as we were doing this earlier piece, and I thought you were kind of depth in it, so Lynn adds something that's actually so important, because, actually, the only place we

can access something is from the inside. So, although I've never been in formal addiction, but I have a deep sense of all these experiences, and some people have different versions, within the room. But, you know, what Lynn adds is so important. Because I've heard it time and again. And I meant to say it, and you -- it's so good that she brings it into the room. One description you hear is pain. But the other description you hear is exactly as Lynn says -- a kind of nothing; a kind of -- I've heard the word -- blah, time and again; blah. A kind of -- you know, George Steiner had a word for it, which the fans were called, [00:41:58\*]. [00:42:01\*] is just the -- just that: the blahness, the nothingness, and the word -- whenever you hear a description of it, the word I hear most often is futility. The word "futility," no reason, right? Futility.

We just did a series of dialogues in the Center with Marty Cooper, who's a leader in depression, a Unique Self in Depression and the ideology of depression. Just the sense of futility -- and the other word you used, Lynn, which was so important, is nothing's connected. So, it's the opposite of what we're about to talk to. It's the opposite of eros. Eros is the sense of this inner connectivity. The feeling of it is, like, just nothing's connected. So, Lynn adds in some really important terms, here, and experiences, so, thank you. Do you have a sentence you want to go to, or are you just going to put that in the room? Either way is good.

>> I also work with people in addiction and that, underlying the pain, seems to be that disconnect is so torturous. So, from that place, when you're talking to me about reworking -- I'm going to call it the Pleasure Principal -- reworking it, from the place of, like, I'm coming to it, like, even before you get the drug, right?

>> Exactly. That's the only place you're going to rework it. That's exactly what we're doing. That's exactly. Bingo. And you actually have to rework the entire circuitry, way before you get to the drug, so that you're actually receiving it within an entirely new circuitry. I think what we're talking about -- I mean, you and Laurie should definitely talk to each other. Laurie's kind of taking a lot of this and creating a new book and a new whole treatment module, called "Unique Self Recovery," which we're going to actually deploy in the treatment world, to make this real and active and enacted in the world. And Laurie, in the Think Tank, that's the project she's kind of taken on, and it would be delightful for you guys to work together. And that's a critical, critical area, so I just really appreciate Lynn putting the words "nothing," you know, kind of "futility," you know, "disconnected" and just this deep understanding, you've got to rework -- you've got a pleasure re woven. You've got to rework the whole thing. Yeah, Brad? What's your name, Brad? Okay.

>> A few things.

>> It's good to see you, man.

>> I'm glad that you didn't name this pleasure, because as I told Jeff, I wouldn't have come to this. And when I heard it last night, I said, "What the fuck? Doesn't he know anything about addiction?" So, thank you.

>> Yeah. [laughter]. That's fucking hilarious. That's awesome. I'm with you; I'm with you.

>> Coming from the communities that I'm either am nominally a part of or work with, you know, the 13 million people involved in the criminal justice system, sixty to ninety percent of who are involved

with substances; over a third of them are addicts. That we've criminalized that, so that we increase the pain to nominally give ourselves some form of satisfaction. I'm not sure of that. There's a couple of questions, here. A -- you haven't defined pleasure.

>> Correct. We haven't gotten there at all. That's correct. Brother, we know each other. Bracket that. We have not defined -- the entire weekend's going to be that. You're right; we have not done that at all, yet. Don't even go there yet. Just hold it there. But you're absolutely right. You're noticing, completely correctly as you usually do, we haven't defined it. The entire weekend is going to be about that. So, cool? Love you. Awesome. Okay. Sista?

>> I wanted to bring the work of Eckhart Tolle into this conversation, not feeling pleasure in the ordinary daily activities---

>> No, thank you. Just tell everyone your name.

>> Susan.

>> Okay, it hasn't changed. I want to stay with Susan for a second. So, first off, Eckhart is doing -- you know, I love him dearly, but I'm just going to call it -- Eckhart's doing the classical, non-dual teaching of Nowing. So, it's really -- I want to just kind of credit it, with total love for Eckhart, but it's really credit to all the non-dual teachers who are teaching this. Because he's teaching the classical non-dual teaching. So, I just want to give that to the thousands of people teaching that. But, yes, I completely agree with you, which is about the Now. I'll just say two things about it. The most important one is a big "Yes." Mindfulness to the Now is extremely important, in terms of experiencing ordinary pleasure, and that is the Japanese tea ceremony. That's part of its great contribution. So, first, a big "Yes." One can really receive the "yes." And there's no "but," after the "yes," just an "and," which doesn't, in any way, nullify the yes. "Yes, and..." And that's what Peter and I were actually talking about -- is that's insufficient. In other words, the non-dual teaching of being in the Now, as kind of True Self, part of the One and the Now, is insufficient, to actually keep a person in the Now. And we're going to talk about that. And it's one of the great kind of tragedies of the non-dual teaching. When I spent an evening at Peter's home, talking with his daughter, who works in this field and describing, actually, the pathologies of getting lost in the Now -- who am I, in the Now? I've left behind my "me." What's my identity? How do I work with that? I did an interview a few weeks ago with Nathan, as you know, about kind of how that pathology works. So, actually, you need to be in the Now, not as True Self, meaning "I'm part of the one." You need to be in the Now as Unique Self. And that's what tragically missing in my friend, Eckhart's, work. Unique Self is not there, and there's a kind of idolatry of the No-Self and the Now, which, actually, doesn't work for most people in a sustainable way, over time. So, if you put the True Self, which is what Eckhart is teaching, with Unique Self, the conversation begins to happen. So, that's kind of one. So, big "yes," "and" and then, one more "and, and." One more "and."

Because every comment is so important here, so I want to just kind of create a new word. Okay, let's just kind of get a new word in our space. I want to call it, in the Dharma, "Nowing." I'm going to create a new word, "Nowing." Okay? Nowing. It's like "Wowing," so there's "Nowing." And Nowing means as follows -- and this is part of this process, which we're called "Unique Self Recovery" or "Re-selfing." And one of the technologies of Re-Selfing is Nowing. I've been working with that term for a couple of months. Annie has been working with it, with me. And Nowing means that there's all sorts of

things that keep us out of the Now, because the Now is too painful. And, actually, all of the healing, which is what Susan is pointing to, is available in the Now? But you can't enter the Now, because there are things that are so painful in the Now that keep you out of the Now. So, the process of Nowing is becoming aware of what's keeping you out of the Now. And, often, you've got no idea what it is. You think you know what it is, but it's something, actually, completely different.

And people are always smuggling. So, there's a process -- let's call it "donkey smuggling." A couple of new, kind of Dharmic ideas. We're going to kind of Re-Selfing, and one of the technologies is Nowing. One of the things you have to watch for is donkey smuggling. So, donkey smuggling works somewhat like this. You know the famous Nasreddin story. The famous Nasreddin story, about this man. He's crossing the border, riding his little donkey, and everybody knows he's got something hidden in the donkey, because he's clearly a smuggler, and he crosses the border every day and each time, they're going to get him off, and they search every orifice in the donkey, and they search every orifice in him. And they know he's smuggling, but, Eric, they just can't find anything. They just can't find anything. That goes on for 25 years, and, finally, the guard is like exhausted, and the guy's -- every day, he kind of comes with his donkey, and they search everything. And it's like 25 years in, and he says, "Listen. I know you're smuggling, and you know you're smuggling. I haven't been able to find it for 25 years. This is my last day. Like, I'm out to pension. Let's just have a kind of, you know, Amnesty International one day. What are you smuggling?" He says, "I'm smuggling donkeys." [laughter]. That's donkey smuggling. It's a great Nasreddin story from the Sufi tradition. Donkey smuggling -- you're searching every place.

So donkey smuggling is, you think that's going on, but you're slipping something else in. So, often, the proverbial argument about it is the cap on the toothpaste or not. Who the fuck cares whether the cap is on the toothpaste, right? Really? Does it really matter whether the cap is on the toothpaste? But you're always donkey smuggling. You're mad about, "You haven't fucked me for a week. Why haven't you touched me for a week? I'm furious with you." "That fucking cap is off the toothpaste! Oh my God." So, you're feeling, actually, sexually unsatisfied. You don't want to actually name that, so you call it the cap on the toothpaste. You've donkey smuggled your sexual dissatisfaction into the toothpaste. So, donkey smuggling happens all the time. Donkey smuggling is critical. You know, in the Couples Retreat at Shalom, you have to introduce a practice in identifying donkey smuggling. And what you can do, is you can just kind of say, as soon as it goes on, just kind of say, "I smell a donkey someplace. Is there a donkey in the room? It's around. Smell a donkey." [laughter].

So, donkey smuggling is a great technology for Nowing, because you need to actually know what donkey is being smuggled in the room, because donkey smuggling gets in the way of Nowing. And, so, there's a number of techniques that I've been kind of thinking about the last year of how you work with Nowing. So, in order to work with Nowing, you've got to get into the room. To get into the room, you've got to get past the pain that's present in the room -- you've got to get past that, to allow yourself to be in the room.

Now, another way that Donkey smuggles in -- this is back to Laurie's field and Nance's field -- is trauma. Trauma prevents you from being in the Now. It doesn't let you in. It does a lot of things, but one of the things it does is, something in the Now evokes trauma, so you get out of the Now. That's one of the ways it happens. So, you've got to find your way into the Now, and when you're in the Now, the

Now has enormous resources in it. And that's a beautiful thing. And that comes from the great mystical traditions.

So, for example, you've all heard the name Yaweh. Right? A famous name. We don't pronounce that name in the tradition, but if you pronounce it, it would be pronounced "Yea-ho-vaa." You put that together, you get the name, which is a yud -- it's four letters. It's a yud, then a hey, vav, hey. Four letters. Yud is the smallest letter. It's a point. So, Yud is the divine point, which means "future." Yud is always ya -- future. Hay-hvh -- hey - vav- hey is **[00:52:22\*]**, the Now. That's what it means. So, the name of God is the memory of the future, which you can access in the Now. That's the four letter name of God. Like, wow. Like, that's the inside of God's face. That's the inside of God's face. Ya -- is the future. Ya. Now, the yud, it's like this little -- but, then, you pull it down, it becomes a vav. A vav. You pull it down, one letter, and it enters into the Now.

So, the name of the God is the memory of the future that you live in the Now, right? And it's not enough to work the trauma, and it's not enough to work the donkey smuggling, in order to Now. What you actually have to bring into the Now is the seductive evolutionary attractor -- seductive in the best sense of the word -- of your highest self. You have to have the highest version of God having a **[00:53:43\*]** experience -- available, awake, alive in the Now. And that is going to seduce you out of the morass, like, "Oh my God, do I really have to grade 16,700 papers in the next four hours? I'm going to die. I'm going to completely fucking die."

So, the answer is, I've got to actually hold this memory of my future, of my most seductive, awake, alive, sensuous -- you've got to find your fuck, as it were, which has nothing to do with sex. Do you know what I mean by that? It means you've got to find your eros. You've got to find your aliveness. You've got to find the full, Unique Self that you are, and that's actually the memory of your future, and that takes you into -- that what lives in the Now. Your Unique Self connects you to the Now. But we're going to come back to all of that. But all this was by way of just really honoring that question.

So, last one, last kind of question/comment. Pronounce the name again, carefully.

>> Carrie. I really related to what you were saying about the cultural creatives a great deal, and I just want to share an experience, in learning, that I went through. I was sensitive to weather. I still am, and I can feel a front come in. I'm an energy healer, so I'd do this energy stuff to try to clear it, and it wouldn't stick. And, so, I shifted perspectives and thought, "What is weather?" And I thought, "Well, it's like the emotions of the whole planet. If Gaia is a feeling-being, the weather is that." And that's what I'm feeling, as it comes through. And, so, I did my energy healing, like the Chakra thing, but what I did was I started praying at each point, for everything I could think of that was upsetting me that week. You know, everything I heard on the news, every horror tale, you know, all the refugees, all of this, all of that, all the victims. And oh my God, I don't know what it did for anyone else, but boy, did that make me feel better. And it stuck, and it worked in a way that focusing on myself was not at all. It wasn't getting at it.

>> Amen. Thank you. Beautiful. Thank you very much. Deep bow. Ready to go? We good? Drum roll. Can we have a little drum roll, here, a little activity, a little action? Steve, give me a drum roll, man. Awesome. Here we go.

So, let's kind of defy the laws of gravity and sickness, and let's just chant a little bit, just because we

have to. Okay? So, let's just find kind of a simple chant. Help me out. And you guys carry the chant, because I'm kind of gone, gone, gone. But we just kind of need some holy chanting.

[00:57:10] [chanting] [01:03:51]

Okay. That was fun. *Good Morning in Vietnam, Part II*. Amen.