



GRATIFICATION, DANGER AND ESCAPE

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Gratification, Danger and Escape
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I. Gratification, Danger and Escape

Introduction:

This series of teachings were offered by Gregory Kramer at an Insight Dialogue Retreat held in Barre, Massachusetts in October, 2015. The theme of this retreat is the Buddhist teachings on **Gratification, Danger and Escape**.

These teachings were offered in person to retreatants. They have been collected and annotated to facilitate their use for study by individuals or groups. The transcriptions have been left unedited so the reader can "hear" the language of the teacher. Each talk includes a title, the type of talk or teaching, a list of key words, the length of the audio file, a brief summary of the content and selected quotations. Contemplations posed during the session will be listed. You will also find links to the audio file and to the transcribed text.

The files are organized in the order in which they were offered as each offering builds upon the prior teaching. Each of the recordings have been labeled "Level 1" or "Level 2." "Level 1" indicates the content is clear, straight forward and readily accessible. "Level 2" material is more complex, subtle or nuanced. This notation is intended to help guide the student in selecting and working with the materials.

At the end of each summary, there is a link to the audio file and transcript. These files are located at Dharmaseed. Use this link (<http://www.dharmaseed.org/retreats/> with retreat code RCKQ) to access the pages with the files listed.

Summary for the Series

This retreat is focused around the Buddha's teachings on gratification, danger and escape. We begin by discovering and getting to know gratification. Gratification is most easily recognized through sense pleasures. Whether it is a crisp apple or a gentle touch, the mind grasps at pleasure and there is gratification. Danger arises as soon as we cling to the pleasure and begin to feel its loss. Escape from the endless cycles of grasping and fear is the Eight-Fold Path, which leads to release and liberation.

The early talks introduce the Insight Dialogue guidelines, Pause, Relax, and Open. These initial talks provide an opportunity for 'settling in.' Subsequently, the guidelines of Trust Emergence, Listen Deeply and Speak the Truth are introduced while we investigate Gratification, Danger and Escape.

The following Suttas are offered as references:

- Saṃyutta Nikāya 36, Connected Discourses on Feeling, 6. The Dart
Very clear on body and mental pain
<https://suttacentral.net/en/sn36.6>
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn36/sn36.006.than.html>

- Majjhima Nikāya 13, The Greater Discourse on the Mass of Suffering
Bigger picture of suffering and escape as removal of desire and lust
<https://suttacentral.net/en/mn13>
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.013.than.html>
- Saṃyutta Nikāya 36, Connected Discourses on Feeling, 23. A Certain Bhikkhu
Connects Gratification, Danger and Escape with the Eightfold Path, i.e. cessation of
feeling
<https://suttacentral.net/en/sn36.23>
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn36/sn36.023.than.html>
- Majjhima Nikāya 75, To Māgandiya
Layers of refinement of pleasures
<https://suttacentral.net/en/mn75>
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.075x.than.html>
- Saṃyutta Nikāya 22, Connected Discourses on the Aggregates, 26. Gratification
(1)
aggregates—Buddha’s investigation before awakening
<https://suttacentral.net/en/sn22.26>
- Saṃyutta Nikāya 22, Connected Discourses on the Aggregates, 28. Gratification
(3)
aggregates—they ARE gratifying, painful
<https://suttacentral.net/en/sn22.28>
- Saṃyutta Nikāya 35, Connected Discourses on the Six Sense Bases, 13. Before
My Enlightenment (1)
sense bases
<https://suttacentral.net/en/sn35.13>
- Saṃyutta Nikāya 12, Connected Discourses on Causation, 60. Causation
Gratification as causing round of craving, danger as bringing cessation
<https://suttacentral.net/en/sn12.60>

May providing these teachings be of benefit to all beings and be a balm for relational suffering

II. Introduction to Coming Home to the Body: The Pause

Type of presentation: Guided meditation
Length: 32:53 minutes
Keywords: Pause, form, breath, intention
Level 1

Summary: This is a beautifully paced meditation that invites us to come home to the breath and the body with curiosity. The stillness and slowness evoked in this teaching assist in deepening the experience of Pause.

Quotes:

" As you sit, notice the very act of sitting is a Pause. Feel the sitting experience of intentionality that motivates our sitting right now. You don't have to think about what the sense of purpose is. It lives in the body-mind conditioned by prior practice. "

" Mindfulness refines the sense of here, now. "

" Pause is the interrupting of conditioning. "

" Let it be simple. The body is sitting, and in the Pause, this is known. Just like this. "

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48228/>

III. What is it to Pause?/ Noticing the Value of Practicing Together

Type of presentation: Contemplation and walking meditation
Length: 40:41 minutes
Keywords: Pause, sati, mindfulness, remembering
Level 1

Summary: This teaching is on the meditation instruction, Pause. It is a teaching on mindfulness. When we are engaged with each other in interpersonal meditation, the Pause also has a very specific role of helping us remember. While we are speaking and listening, Pause reminds us to come home again and again to the present moment.

The contemplations begin with the practice of bodily awareness. This is followed by a period of walking meditation. The last two contemplations ask the questions, 'What is the intention of the heart?' and 'What has motivated you to be here?'

Quotes:

"... mindfulness fosters mindfulness, energy fosters energy, love fostering love."

"... the quality of mindfulness comes from diligence and intention."

"Mindfulness (is) being established, and given the space to be established as a priority, above and beyond what we are actually saying."

Contemplations:

1. Notice the state and physicality of the body. Explore what it is like to Pause before, during, and after speaking.
2. What is the intention, the direction of the heart? What motivates you to Pause?
3. "Action rises out of intention." What has motivated you to complete the actions necessary for you to be here and present with this practice today?

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48234/>

IV. Introduction to Relax

Type of presentation: Guided meditation

Length: 39:25 minutes

Keywords: Pause, Relax

Level 1

Summary: This is a spacious guided meditation based upon the instructions Pause and Relax. It is an opportunity to deepen and strengthen receptivity.

Quotes:

"We recognize the wisdom of Relax, the doorway to tranquility...the great kindness of that."

"The delicate experience of calming is known, clearly and simply by awareness. What is that like?"

"The sweet gentle voice that says, 'It is OK to let experience be just like this.'"

<http://metta.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48644/>

V. Relax

Type of presentation: Walking meditation

Length: 1:44 minutes

Keywords: Relax, accept

Level 1

Summary: We are invited to notice the shifting of tension and release and to accept how things are.

Quotes:

“ Ah, it’s like that. What are the legs doing? Just walking, the body is just walking.”

“ And when the mind goes off, mindfulness knows this. And then see what that experience is like, and offer accept.”

<http://metta.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48643/>

VI. Relax and Trust

Type of presentation: Contemplation
Length: 32:25 minutes
Keywords: Relax, trust, sensitivity, conditioning
Level 1

Summary: This practice session introduces the meditation instruction "Relax." "In individual practice, when we practice the meditation instruction Relax, we are practicing right at the intersection of body and mind. The mind offers this opportunity to Relax, to let go of the body perhaps, and if the body is able to receive that, then the muscles themselves respond, loosen; plus whatever else happens at more subtle levels ... it can be noticed by the mind and the mind begins to calm down. The mind-states change in tandem. There is the opportunity for the mind to bring forward the skill of practice. And the difficult sensations of the body are met with accept, receive, allow."

The contemplation practice begins with practice on Pause. Noticing tension in the body, we offer Relax. A short walking meditation follows this practice. The last contemplation is on mutuality of practice and the trust that supports it.

Quotes:

"We are sensitive responsive creatures. Notice this and invite Relax, allow, receive; just this."

"We are not, shall we say, just victims of our conditioning and our reactivity. We are participants as this moment is created anew each instant."

Contemplations:

1. Notice any tension or resistance in the body, and offer Relax. See if it shifts. And if it doesn't shift, offer accept, allow. What is this like?
2. Reflect on your practice of Pause, Relax and receiving while in the presence of another.
3. Explore the mutuality of this practice. Explore the trust within it. Notice trust as it arises, shifts and perhaps diminishes in the between. How does trust effect your practice?

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48660/>

VII. Introduction to Open

Type of presentation: Guided meditation
Length: 40:21 minutes
Keywords: Open, Relax, natural boundlessness
Level 1

Summary: With exceptional languaging, we are guided through the investigation of Open. The words and phrasing allow one to sense a natural knowing and release and create a gentle flow into a felt-sense of spaciousness. “There is nothing holding or held.”

Quotes:

“Let the body-mind relax and soften around the thought and expand, open and land, like a mist in a valley, on the whole of the body. Any tension or any distraction, any pain, any resistance, any mind-state can be met the same way. Knowing, relaxing around softening.”

“So if you allow the body-mind to relax, open further beyond the shell of the skin you can sense the vastness in which the body is; the space of this room, the space of the sky, the space of the universe, boundless, boundless. So letting this knowing relax into the boundless.”

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48662/>

VIII. Noticing Open

Type of presentation: Walking meditation

Length: 2:45 minutes

Keywords: Open

Level

Summary: During this walking meditation practice, we are invited to notice clinging and identification as it arises and the spaciousness of Open.

Quotes:

"Notice when your mindfulness is rested with a particular object like your feet...and then intentionally relaxing and softening and opening wider, spatially."

"Notice the obsession, the identification, the fusion with the object that is so important, become the universe. Don't push it away. Receive the thought and notice that it dissolves once you stop feeding it the energy."

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48663/>

IX. Open

Type of presentation: Guided meditation and contemplation

Length: 43:55 minutes

Keywords: Open, construction of 'I am'

Level 1

Summary: This audio-file begins with a guided meditation focusing on the sitting body and asks, 'How close are my hands, my face?' Then expanding the awareness outward beyond the body we inquire 'What is out there? What is in here?' Using the instruction Open, we explore the experience of self, other, and the vastness beyond.

Quote:

" There is an open field of awareness that can be known, dealt with, and at the same time there are the particulars of each of us, of our humanity. We have an opportunity to both the perspective of the particulars, the embodiment of the story, the complications, and the vastness."

Contemplations:

1. What is 'in here? What is out there? Explore the field of internal, external and both.
2. Notice the movement of spaciousness. Or you may notice when there is a specific contraction into particular objects. This contraction is not bad, it is just part of experience. Just name experience as it actually is.
3. Explore the mind knowing particulars and at times spacious. Investigate the forming of self and other as you speak and as you listen.
4. Explore both the particulars and the spaciousness as you speak of the particulars of your humanity and that of your partner's, meeting in the vastness.

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48664/>

X. Exploration on Gratification and Danger

Type of presentation: Contemplation

Length: 18:06 minutes

Keywords: gratification, Pause, Relax, Open, sense pleasures, contingent, impermanence

Level 2

Summary: With this audio file we begin practice on the theme of the gratification, danger and escape, starting with the gratification of sense pleasures. We are invited to experience gratification and notice how it feels when it comes up. The exploration continues with investigation of perceived advantages and the dangers or disadvantages of gratification. How does the gratification serve or not serve?

Quote:

"I would like to suggest with beginning with something simple, which is just the way that each of us has set up our home lives. Whether it is the gratification of our vehicles, our kitchenware... And for those who are itinerant, the beautiful things we carry with us that give us some sense of, 'Aw here is my little thing. I feel at home. I am happy'"

Contemplations:

1. Explore the gratification with the experience of the sense pleasures. Pleasant experiences, where the mind gets attracted in greed, in wanting. It could be the pleasure of beautiful things, or the pleasures of a particular lifestyle, or job, or circle of friends. What is the gratification there?"
2. Allow yourself to touch the gratification. What is that? What is the experience of being gratified?"
3. Can you notice in addition to the experience of gratification, that the body-mind perceives some benefit or advantage with setting up a life this way? How does this gratification of sense pleasures serve? What is that feeling?"
4. The hazard or fault of our gratification is that they are contingent and impermanent, subject to disruption, decay and loss. Just as you were invited to touch the felt-sense of delight or glee or happiness at the moment of gratification, don't back away from the felt-sense of what is disadvantageous, difficult and hazardous about this gratification. How does it feel to recognize the disadvantages of the things you really love and care about?

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48665/>

XI. Opening Practice to Larger Groups

Type of presentation: Contemplation
Length: 16:05 minutes
Keywords: Open, relational practice
Level 2

Summary: In this practice, we are invited to explore what happens as meditation expands from individual to dyad and to group practice. How can a larger group practicing together support awakening and release?

Quote:

"Interpersonal meditation brings us to the threshold of words and the wordless."

Contemplations:

1. What is it like to meditate together in a larger group?
2. What qualities of individual or dyadic practice can be brought to the larger group practice?
3. Is there something that can be learned about the essence of meditation from practicing in the different size groups?

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48666/>

XII. Introduction to Trust Emergence

Type of presentation: Guided meditation

Length: 8:52 minutes

Keywords: Trust Emergence, arising and vanishing

Level 1

Summary: This short guided meditation is an invitation to be at the tip of emergence.

Quote:

“As the body, as the mind becomes still, we begin to apprehend what is not still.”

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48667/>

XIII. Touching into the Gratification of Clinging to What is Painful

Type of presentation: Contemplation

Length: 38:42 minutes

Keywords: gratification, dukkha, impermanence, Trust Emergence, Open Level 2

Summary: We are invited to Pause and Open into the relational. In the first contemplation, we observe, "What is noticed in the flux?" This is followed by a period of walking meditation to "feel the connection between relaxing and opening to the flux." Then we are invited to attune to impermanence as we explore the gratification of clinging to what is painful.

Quotes:

"...you have this gift of your partner speaking, of flux incarnate."

"Being touched by the actuality of human experience and knowing its impermanence."

"Notice any activation of the body-mind. The activation itself is fluxing."

Contemplations:

1. Attune continually to the flux, to being in relationship to the 'changingness' itself.
2. Touch into the constructed and the constructing process as you contemplate the gratification of the mind obsessed with something that is painful or harmful.

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48681/>

XIV. Introduction to Listen Deeply / Speak to Truth

Type of presentation: Guided meditation
Length: 2:30 minutes
Keywords: Listen Deeply, Speak to Truth
Level 1

Summary: This is a brief guided meditation in which we are asked to inquire into who is speaking and who is listening?

Quote:

"Who is speaking those words?"

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48682/>

XV. Escape from Perplexity and Uncertainty

Type of presentation: Contemplation and walking meditation

Length: 42:32 minutes

Keywords: Speak the Truth, Listen Deeply, escape, "I am"

Level 2

Summary: In the first part of this practice, we are invited to explore the instructions Speak the Truth/ Listen Deeply by attuning to the mind and body to the source of speech. The speaker is invited to investigate the act of speaking and the process of words forming and being spoken. The listener is invited to investigate the act of listening. The second part of this practice is an exploration of a section from the Nissaraniya Sutta (means of escape). This sutta teaches that escape from uncertainty and perplexity is achieved by uprooting the conceit of "I am." As we investigate this in our lives, we are asked to continue to be aware of the process of speaking and listening.

Quotes:

"Where does speech come from? We can say clearly it comes from the mind. And because the body must speak it, it comes from the body."

"For this is the escape from the arrow of uncertainty and perplexity: The uprooting of the conceit, 'I am.'"

Contemplations:

1. Speaker: Investigate how words emerge in the mind.
Listener: Investigate sound touching the ear, and how these sounds are instantaneously perceived as language.
2. Speaker: Give attention to the actual transduction of energy from the body to physical speech. You can observe and name what you can of that process.
Listener: Explore how the physical ballet of speech is heard and becomes something understood. Explore this physicality in real time, here and now.
3. Speaker: Touch in your life the actuality of uncertainty and perplexity. What is emergent, that quivers within you right now?
Listener: Notice what you hear comes through the impersonal channel of the perceptual process but blossoms into understanding and feeling.

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48683/>

XVI. Intention of Shared Release

Type of presentation: Guided meditation
Length: 11:21 minutes
Keywords: shared intention
Level 1

Summary: In this session, we are invited into large group practice. We investigate what we gain from practicing together, in dyads and in this larger group. What do we bring to the large group from our individual practice? We inquire together how our practice is going.

Quotes:

" Whatever stillness might be present.....Just as the surface of a pond [has] many waves when the wind [blows] across it [and] you can't see down into the water. When the water is still, you can see down in."

" Not only does one in interpersonal practice see [into] the water internally, but one through stillness, can begin to perceive clearly through the waters of the between."

Contemplations:

1. "What qualities of the whole group will combine with the qualities of the individual [to enable clear seeing?]"
2. Silently, ask yourself, "What experience, knowledge or qualities of the mind are present... that support the shared intention of release [or] effacement?"
3. Reflect upon and share, How is the practice going?

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48684/>

XVII. Investigation of Truth

Type of presentation: Dhamma talk
Length: 24:41 minutes
Keywords: meditative truth, wordless, authenticity
Level 2

Summary: A Dhamma talk exploring the different layers of "truth." What is "truth" when we Speak the Truth? We investigate layers of truth together, listening with Metta, loving-kindness.

Quotes:

"I still can't call it objective truth but ... the words seem to capture that bare truth."

"Well, even the facts of our lives have no language..."

"...when there is the authenticity in the speaker, where the internal is reflected in the spoken with fidelity...(and the listener) is sensing into the receiving of the bare truth, and the receiving of the authenticity and the receiving of the dhamma truth."

"...metta provides the safety, the security."

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48685/>

XVIII. The Perplexity of "I am"

Type of presentation: Contemplation

Length: 42:58 minutes

Keywords: Listen Deeply, Speak the Truth, Brahma Viharas, clarity, bare truth, metta

Level 2

Summary: We are invited into a contemplation of truth using the guidelines Listen Deeply and Speak the Truth to see the bare truth of the presence of perplexity. We investigate the perplexity in the experience of "I am" supported by the compassion of our partner.

Quotes:

"You are bringing language to experience that has no language inherent in it."

"...but what did your heart hear?"

"Can our meditation practice, the mindfulness of the Pause, the settling into intimacy with Relax, invite us with Open to be with another?"

Contemplations:

1. **Speaker:** Investigate, where is the 'I am' in the perplexity, in the fear or the doubt? What is the experience of it or how did it come to be?
Listener: Investigate and cultivate that aspect of metta that is spacious.
2. **Speaker:** Touch down to where the 'I am' is at; the root of the perplexity and allow the quivering of 'I am'.
Listener: Fully receive with compassion and sympathetic joy.
3. **Together,** investigate, does the 'I am' exist or not, do the perplexities exist?

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48686/>

XIX. Escape

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of presentation: | Contemplation |
| Length: | 37:56 minutes |
| Keywords: | goodwill, compassion, appreciative joy |
| Level 2 | exception: the first section is a review of the guidelines and a sutta reading |

Summary: Gregory briefly reviews the Insight Dialogue guidelines and reads an excerpt from the Nissaraniya Sutta (The Means of Escape). We are then invited to explore the capacity for goodwill, compassion and appreciation already present in our lives.

Quotes:

"First you take care of mindfulness, then mindfulness takes care of you." Ajhan Sobin

"Speak the Truth is action. It is coming forth, standing in the world; action in speech. It's action in the body, action in the mind....It is the place of the bare truth of authenticity, of living the deepest teachings in action."

Contemplations:

1. Explore how this goodwill is established in you. Touch that.
2. Notice in your life, where compassion has developed and been brought forward into its natural flow.
3. Explore the experience of appreciation. How is this already in your life?

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48687/>

XX. Fabrication of 'I am, you are, we are'

Type of presentation: Contemplation

Length: 34:42 minutes

Keywords: contact, perception, constructing process, consensual delusion

Level 2

Summary: This set of contemplations encourages deep investigation into the fabrication of "I am, you are, and we are."

Quotes:

"What happens when we repeatedly bring mindfulness to this 'between', to this social constructing process? What is this? There is a rich, quite profound...tradition of bringing mindfulness internally to the fabrication of self and here we are doing it together, [investigating] the fabrication of self and other...We can't do it alone. Not possible."

Contemplations:

1. Using single words to keep it simple, and staying very close to experience, notice what it is like to be mindful in the body. What is it like when you become aware of any kind of holding in the body-mind?
2. Notice the specific sense of mindfulness of the body and of the mind-states. If there is a feeling of tightness, intentionally offer Relax, receive, allow, and name that experience."
3. Explore this movement from internal to the external, and to both internal and external, as you offer yourself the guideline Open. Open explicitly into the relational but continue touching the internal."
4. Notice what it is like being at the edge of emergence as we meditate together. Keep it simple. Pause, Relax, Open, surrendering to the emergence.
5. Explore this constant flow of becoming, formed out of the senses, contact, perception and the construction process. Pause, Relax and the mind Opens to the relational experience. Is there the emergence of 'I am', of 'we are'? Is there any way to describe this constant flow?
6. Explore giving some particulars to the 'I am'. One or two issues that are most paramount in your life right now. Try to get to the essences, to flesh out for yourself and the other, this worldly, 'I am.'"
7. Notice what happens when you are invited into this 'don't know what's next' experience. Be mindful as you sit in contemplation of the experience of your specifics. The 'I am' emerging and vanishing. As do the specifics of the others sharing their presence with you. I am, you are, we are. It is all assumed, seen and invisible. What is this?"

8. Explore, 'What is being fabricated here? The ideas you have about each other. The ideas about ones self in relation to the other?' What has been built in this relational presence?

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48688/>

XXI. What Brings Us Here?

Type of presentation: Contemplation
Length: 17:01 minutes
Keywords: Eightfold Path
Level 1

Summary: During this practice, we explore our intentions. What brings us to practice and to the retreat? The Eightfold Path is offered as a possible reason. We are invited to see whether the factors of the Path are present during practice. Does our practice, alone, together with another or many, support living into the path factors or support living into our intention?

Quotes:

Contemplations:

1. What is our intention? What brings us here to this practice?
2. What is our meditation practice? Does our practice service and support that intention?

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48689/>

XXII. Gratification, Danger and Escape Escape Being the Eightfold Path

Type of presentation: Contemplation

Length: 37:54 minutes

Keywords: gratification, suffering, impermanence, escape

Level 2

Summary: In this set of contemplations we are asked to reflect upon a relationship in our life which most 'fermented'. We investigate the danger of gratification, of the hungers to survive, to find pleasure, and safety. Then we reflect upon the wholesome alternative of the Eightfold path.

Quotes:

"So here we come to look at this human situation with honest eyes, honest hearts, and we do so together because with you I can see what I cannot see alone, and together we can not only discover what is difficult to discover alone but also support each other in the refinement of the lens of seeing, of the mindfulness, investigation, energy, joy, concentration, tranquility and the balance of equanimity. We together can open the possibility."

"...when you invite in the dangers with the gratification, you drop yourself into the middle of the whole construction process with all of its wholesome and unwholesome qualities."

Contemplations:

1. Explore the gratification you experience from that relationship in your life that is most fermented: What are you getting from it? What is nourishing you? What is being gratified?
2. Explore the dangers of this very same relationship. Is the mind holding on in a way that creates pain?
3. Bring the Eightfold Path to the actual lived experience of this relationship, investigating what this wholesome alternative of escape might mean?

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48690/>

XXIII. Consciousness

Type of presentation: Contemplation

Length: 18:41 minutes

Keywords: bare fact of sentience, mystery, luminous, simplicity

Level 1

Summary: This contemplation is a brief reflection upon consciousness, awareness of awareness, awareness of the obfuscations and the experience of being human.

Quotes:

"In meditation we become intimate with experience. The mind calms down and the noise that hides from us ... aspects of how it is to be human in this instant."

Contemplations:

1. What words can you give to the bare fact of cognizing, the bare fact of sentience, the bare fact of experiencing what is happening? It is a delicate practice filled with everything, yet is empty of all things.
2. Reflect upon consciousness arising; that which is not rooted in ignorance, and that which is rooted in ignorance.
3. As we sit together, reflect upon how tender is this "both," this 'all,' and this specific human experience.

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48691/>

XXIV. Tanha

Type of presentation: Contemplation
Length: 11:28 minutes
Keywords: bound and unbound, craving, becoming
Level 2

Summary: This is a brief contemplation on tanha, or thirst, which was practiced in a larger group of 7-8. We focus primarily on the hungers to be seen and to escape.

Quotes:

"Thirst, hunger, craving. And like lightening bugs we flash in and out of these primal urges to exist and be seen and be validated, to manifest as 'me' and have that 'me' received. And the urge to escape from that very contact, that might puncture whatever sense of stability we have been able to fabricate. And so with each glance we might find these urges manifesting in the form of thoughts."

Contemplation:

"How is the self manifesting, bound up [with hungers, manifesting itself into the world]?" Also asking, "How is the mind not bound up?" and "What is safety and non-safety but the reaction of existence, of becoming."

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48692/>

XXV. Eight Fold Path

Type of presentation: Dhamma talk

Length: 27:52 minutes

Keywords: path, inquiry, wholesome, Eightfold Path, Right View, Right Livelihood

Level 1

Summary: Gregory offers a Dhamma talk on the Eightfold Path, helping us to see that "the totality of life can be understood and worked with within this sense of a Path."

Quotes:

"How could the ceaseless sensitivity of the body-mind, (how could) anything be outside of this vibrating system of evolution? How could any instant be outside this constant opening and closing of the heart?"

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48693/>

XXVI. Right View and Right Intention

Type of presentation: Contemplation

Length: 24:41 minutes

Keywords: enactment, cultivate, Listen Deeply

Level 2

Summary: We contemplate Right View and Right Intention. How can they be practiced in our lives? How is it cultivated? What inclines the body-mind towards the wholesome? What circumstances support you? What do wholesome emotional orientations feel like?

Quotes:

"How we see the world, how we see ourselves determines, or provides the framework for all conscious decisions, (of all) our emotional reactions. The whole feeling tone of our lives is set by right view or wrong view."

Contemplations:

1. How do you conceive of, or relate to the Eightfold Path?
2. Contemplate the actual possibilities of practice. How does your life manifest the Right View path factor?
3. Inquire "How [can I] practice and bring this quality of inquiry right here without distancing myself at all?" and "How do [I] bring inquiry and the practice of Right View into those moments when things are great?"
4. How do you intentionally cultivate a wholesome direction of the life and of the mind? What supports the development of a life inclined to disentanglement rather than entanglement, to humility rather than grandiosity, to generosity rather than miserliness and holding?
5. How do you bring forward the classical intention towards harmlessness as an alternative to cruelty and blindness? What circumstances support you? What ways of remembering support you?

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48694/>

XXVII. Equanimity

Type of presentation: Contemplation

Length: 27:51 minutes

Keywords: equanimity, balance, sutta, Open, brahma viharas

Level 2

Summary: This is a deep and rich set of contemplations on "Equanimity as a bridge between individual meditation practice, relational practice and our world as related beings."

Quotes:

"Equanimity as a factor of awakening provides balance that allows the most delicate and penetrating transformative insight. As the world dissolves, as self dissolves, perhaps there can be balance."

Contemplations:

1. "What is to be noticed, experienced of the heart at ease and balanced?"
2. Investigate Open as you explore "equanimity as a living quality between and among us."
3. Explore, "What does it mean to you, [to be this] human being with all the personality and so on, [and] to invite the actuality, the possibility of equanimity right here?"
4. "How is it [equanimity] cultivated in your individual practice? How is it cultivated in your relational formal meditation? How is it cultivated in your life outside of formal practice?"

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48695/>

XXVIII. Development of Wholesome Qualities

Type of presentation: Contemplation
Length: 9:00 minutes
Keywords: wholesome qualities
Level 2

Summary: During this session, Gregory provided some pointers and options for contemplation practice. This session invites us into large group practice.

Quotes:

Contemplations:

1. How are the meditative qualities? How do they support the Dhamma?
2. Were there any constructions that developed around the larger group? What happens when it is not longer supported by the structure of the retreat?
3. Going back to an excerpt from the Nissaraniya sutta, explore whether some wholesome qualities like good-will, compassion, appreciation, equanimity, or the uprooting the conceit "I am," have been developed or established? Is it here? Has it been developed?

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48696/>

XXIX. Going Forth with the Practice of Insight Dialogue

Type of presentation: Contemplation

Length: 23:02 minutes

Keywords: whole life practice, meditative qualities, unbinding

Level 2

Summary: This rich set of contemplations explores the practice of Insight Dialogue and what it might bring to our whole life path. What is its value? How can you implement the Dhamma in this very life?

Quotes:

"...And yet so much power (and) this conduit to the meditative qualities and the dhamma being met with another."

Contemplations:

1. Explore what meditative qualities might be present? What will support their further development?
2. Contemplate the sense of inspiration that could be present. And in going forth, explore the polishing, deepening and implementation of the Dhamma in your life.
3. Reflect on relationship and how you might value this on your Dhamma path, on your path of wearing away of self, and the arousal of compassion, the deepening of wisdom? How do you cultivate that? What is the value, the power? What does diligence in this domain look like in your life?

<http://www.dharmaseed.org/teacher/77/talk/48697/>



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