
Love and Impermanence

From grasping and attachment to simply seeing and appreciating

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It's a pleasure to be here. We have a little bit of time together to look at how our mind operates. In particular how the anxious quality of the ego-self creates a lot of trouble. Generally speaking in our culture we believe in love, that is to say, we believe that another human being can save us. *Only you. With you I have everything.* For a while. We imagine that other people can save us. It's a common feeling. *Without you I'm nothing. You fill me up.* There are so many love songs with words like that.

This raises the important question 'who am I?' What is the lack in me, which I seek to fulfil by finding you? Who are you and how do I imagine you to be, what qualities you have? We have ideas about ourselves and ideas about the other. One of the functions of meditation is to bring us close to the actuality of what is manifesting so that experiencing phenomena as they are, we can see if our idea about phenomena actually brings us close to how things are. Usually we think if we have the name for something and we can describe it, this brings us to what is there. Actually it brings us close to our idea of what's there, but not to reality. We spend time in a jungle of concepts which provide a kind of illumination, but the clarification is established inside our belief that the concepts we hold, speak about how things are.

When we start to meditate we become aware that our mind is full of thought. We find ourselves caught up in an ongoing commentary about experience: judging, developing opinion, reinforcing our assumptions. The more we can see that, we might see that our view of the world is mediated through, or veiled by, this network of interpreted concepts. It's not that concepts are wrong or bad, they just have to be applied in the right place. For example, unless you're a rock star, you probably don't wear dark glasses in your house. If you wear your concepts all of the time, your view of the world might be a bit hazy, which means your relationship to other people is a bit hazy.

Since people here have very different experiences with Buddhism I will try to set things out in a very simple and clear way, whilst not missing the main point.

In the Tibetan tradition there are many styles of practice. They are referred to as vehicles or ways of travelling to the goal of awakening. Each is organised into a view, a meditation, behaviour and a result. The meditation we're doing today is from the first vehicle, which is saying *'I'm wandering in confusion, when I sit to meditate, I see I easily get distracted, I'm all over the place, so I have to learn to control my mind.'* That is linked to making decisions about behaviour such as avoiding stimulating circumstances. The aim is to be calm so that I can develop my potential. In some ways it's a path of mastery. The assumption is that if I get rid of all my limitations and develop my full potential then I can become like the Buddha. It's all up to me and if it doesn't go well, there's no one else I can blame. To follow that kind of dharma path, you have to grow very wide shoulders, because you have to carry everything yourself.

There are nine different vehicles and this weekend I will focus on dzogchen, the ninth vehicle. 'Dzogchen' means the whole or the great completion. When we sit and meditate we soon notice that our

mind is moving. My 'self' then decides that I don't want my mind to move by itself since, after all, I am the boss of my mind. If my hand were to suddenly jump up and grab my ear, I would be quite upset. It should behave itself! So, if you begin your practice from the position of the ego, you are in an ongoing struggle to get yourself back on track.

The dzogchen view is not to jump into judgement. We simply observe. Lots of things are moving in my mind: hopes, fears, memories, sensations and so on. Things arise and pass. They're there for a while and then they're gone. There are many things in my mind and they are all moving in all different directions. It's going to take a lot of energy to try to control them. What happens if I don't control? I get angry for a while, I get jealous for a while, I'm sweet and friendly for a while. If you look at your politicians, the great leaders of your country, are they predictable, are they reliable? No. If your leaders are not like that, why should your mind be like that? The mind is not an animal to be tamed. In the Buddha's teaching the mind is described as an elephant or a buffalo and it gradually comes under your control. But when you observe what is experienced, there are experiences outside, and sensations internally. This movement doesn't come to an end. That is just how it is. Maybe movement is not the enemy, not something to be constrained and controlled?

When you start with an idea of how you should or could be, then this idea or image becomes the point that you try to align yourself with. Dictatorships often have public art works of paintings or sculptures of good citizens and good workers. There are also camps and gulags. That's because these structures of dominance always have a template. Whether it's the churches, the political parties or your own ego's idea, when you believe that the idea of how things should be is the truth, then to be good, you fit in and if you're bad you don't fit in.

From the point of view of dzogchen, of trying to see your mind, this kind of interpretive framework is stupid, blind, blunt and cruel. It's blind because it doesn't invite you to see, it advises you to see what you're told to see: *'This is what the Buddha is like and if you want to be like the Buddha you have to become like that.'* How do you get there? Who is it who is trying to get there? *'Don't worry about that, just try to get there.'* You don't know who you are, you don't know how you are, but you do know that you should be somewhere. This is called fascism. Let's not do that.

Our interest is to be present with ourselves and let the actuality of existence reveal itself, however it is. The more you start with an image of how it should be, the more you are introducing a prejudice, a pre-disposition, which means that you're trying to become something. So how can we see in the most simple, neutral way? If you notice there's a lot going in your mind when you practise, you might have the thought that your mind is very disturbed. You can have that sentence with or without mustard. If you apply mustard – *'My mind is very disturbed! That's clearly wrong, it shouldn't happen!* – Then I want to scrape off the

mustard. Am I disturbed by my disturbed mind? Well, sometimes I'm happy and sometimes I'm sad. When I'm happy I'm happy, when I'm sad, I'm sad. I am unreliable, unpredictable, inconsistent, and yet, if I am sad, when I am sad, what else should I be? What's wrong with being sad for a while? I taste happy, I taste sad, different taste. Just as if you are painting and you have a palate of different colours. If you only had one colour, you might sell your paintings for a few years maybe but after a while people would ask you to extend your range, vary your colours. Some colours you might want to make public and others you don't want to be seen.

We don't want people to know that we feel envious or jealous, or that we feel a failure, it makes us feel bad, we don't want to feel bad. So you can see that the judgement about our situation blinds us to the actuality of our feeling, our tendency is to merge into the feeling and then we collapse into despair and become suicidal. We struggle to separate from it. We might take some medication or do some sports to try to shift the medical balance.

Neither merging into nor holding oneself apart

In the meditation texts these two positions are described again and again. Don't merge into, don't fully identify with what is arising and don't shift but be present with it. Whatever is arising is here, which is the flavour or the colour that is filling your life at this moment. It's not always going to be like that, all these phenomena are impermanent, they arise and pass. If you merge into the feeling it becomes the totality of your experience and seems as if it is going to last forever. Therefore people take radical decisions: *'It feels like the truth of me because I have become this arising. The transient has become the truth of my existence.'* In Buddhism this is called illusion. We're taking patternings of experience -which are impermanent- and acting towards them as if they were an eternal truth. Either *'it is true and real'* or *'there's nothing to be done because it's true and real'*. In the meditation practice we will do our main focus to stay present with whatever is arising, while avoiding these two extremes of merging or enforced separation. We will see that our experience is ever-changing, that life is dynamic.

When a baby is born, it's given a name, people come to see it and say, *'Oh, this is Magda.'* Nowadays they'll probably have thousands of photos of Magda, all these changes of Magda. Look what Magda can do now! Look how Magda lifts a spoon! Look at Magda taking her first step! Magda exists. Does Magda exist in Magda? The mother sees Magda, but who is there? The baby is not intrinsically Magda. It's not produced in a factory with the name of the product on the forehead. The name is a convention. We happen to call this child Magda, but it could have been called many other names. Due to causes and conditions – maybe a saint's day or some family tradition – it was named Magda and when we say that name we know who we mean. She is Magda, we refer to her with that name. Someone is there. First a non-walking Magda, then a walking Magda, then a walking and talking Magda. Is walking and talking Magda the

same as non-walking Magda? The face of a baby at three months and at three years is very different. The sensory and motor skills are changing, the expressive range of emotions are changing. The use of language is developing. Is this still the same person? Yes! How do we know? Because it's Magda. The truth of Magda is the name. The most enduring factor in Magda's life is the name. Since you've been born you have been thousands of people but generally the name continues. The name is abstract, conventional, assigned. Is a signifier, what it signifies? When we say Magda and we look at the girl are we describing this form, this phenomena, or my idea about Magda? No Magda, we don't do that, be a proper Magda so I can love you, because if you are your own Magda and you became a delinquent Magda –and you know how long is the waiting list for child therapy in Warsaw- so please conform. Be the Magda that I love and that I know you really are. Magda is an idea. My self is an idea.

Co-emerging with the environment: the fantasy of being individual agents.

Each of us exist in two different planes. The first is the unfolding of our potential moment by moment in conversation with circumstances. How you manifest, how you show yourself depends in who you are talking to and where you are. If you were in a catholic church you would not be sitting in the floor. Catholics don't need to sit on the floor but for some reason, buddhists seem to need to sit on the floor. This is a situational thing, your body takes on this particular posture according to the idea of where you are. When you are not being a buddhist you don't sit on the floor. You have a mental frame and an environmental frame and, as it arises, you find yourself sitting on a cushion. When you came into the room you don't know exactly how it would be. You find yourself, for different reasons, sitting in different places in the room. It's not something that you fully control but you work with the circumstances and you find yourself sitting in this way. As you enter into the room, you look around and see where other people are sitting, your relation with this field of experience reins_your body into a particularly position. You are co-emerging with the environment. Of course you can tell yourself *–I am sitting here because that is what I decided to do, this is where I wanted to sit, how I wanted to sit, this how I like it-*. You are doing what you like according to circumstances. If you are sitting in a chair you could probably imagine a more comfortable chair. If you are sitting in the floor you may imagine having more blankets or something around.

The key point here is the fantasy of being individual agents. *I am living my life on my terms*. Magda is being Magda. According to what? According to the shape of the flat. If Magda is the first child this is a different field of experience from her been the third child. Is a different world. The new mother and the experienced mother will relate to the baby in a different way. Magda becoming Magda is Magda plus. Is never just Magda. Magda plus mom, plus dad, plus flat, plus the dog, plus siblings and so on. There is Magda's mom like Magda's mom's mom. If there is no grandmother there is more stress on Magda's mom. This is not an optional extra, this is the actual living field in which Magda is evolving and manifesting out of her potential. Along with the expectations that people around have about_who she is or who she should be,

Magda starts develop recognizable identities. There are certain patterns of behaviour that the young girl starts to fit in. Some children try to be very pleasing to their parents and get attention that way, others are more provocative towards their parents and get attention that way. Everyone needs attention, without attention we die, especially small babies. That is the reason babies often cry in a way that wakes mama: *If you don't take care of me I am dead.*

We are social creatures that interact with other people, but as I develop my identity, my personality, my way of being this particular person, the great potential I had as a small baby is freely availed off less and less because I am increasingly utilizing some settled ways of relating to other people. When a child of three or four has a temper tantrum they are resisting having to fit in. It's not a battle they are going to win. How can I be me, an autonomous individual, if I have to sit in with patterns established by other people? If I do what you want then I am going to lose myself but if I just do what I want I am going to lose my friendship with you. We all work within this kind of tension. How can I find a little niche in the world where I can flap my wings a little bit?

Who I am and how I am

There are a few factors here. One is we emerge of the *how I am* according to circumstances. This is occurring in parallel with *who I am*, which is the maintenance of a self-sense of me being me, in a way that will also fit inside my narrative, my story line of who I am. This *who I am* as an imputed essence of me, is just me being me. It seems to be something inside bringing me out. *I am the display of myself.* In buddhism we are interested to see what is this self. The self is the idea of a self. The *Magda-ness* of Magda is the name Magda. The *James-ness* of James is the name James. If you take away the name you have the performativity of the co-emergence of the multi-factors operating in the field. I become me with you.

Each of us is here for all kind of reasons. We are doing the activity of being here together according to the co-arising of circumstances. I am here talking with you about buddhism because I have been involved in this for many years. There is no inherent buddhism in me. I've just been swimming in the ocean of buddhism or Dharma for a long time, so what I can share with you is streaming pathways that arise through me while I am with you. There is not a box inside me, "buddhist James", that I keep closed if I go to the supermarket. I don't need to be *buddhist James* to buy potatoes. I need to be *James with some money in my pocket* to buy potatoes. But if I am going to be here talking with you I need to be *Buddhist James*. Is that a particular identity inside me or does it arises through being here? What is arising is something which belongs to all of us. Is the truth of the field.

The main thing is we don't know. In buddhism this is called dependent co-origination: on the basis of this, that arises. On the basis of me studying Tibetan and so on, certain things can arise to this life stream which I manifest at the moment. After some time, as I get older and more tired, I probably won't do this

the same way or as much. 😊. Due to the fact of not being dead yet, I am here. I will be dead. When? I don't know. How amazing! We don't know when we are going to die. How can you plan for your life if you don't know when you are going to die? You have no idea of the shape of your existence. You don't know what thought is going to arise in your mind in the next moment, you don't know what sensation is going to arise in your body. You know a lot of things, but you don't know much. The main things we don't know. The reason we don't know them is because they are unknowable.

We live in a time of knowledge. We scrape knowledge out to try to have a knowledge that explains everything in view. An old say that comes from India and it is popular in Tibet is that it's easier to cover your own feet with leather than try to cover the whole world. If we were to cover our own feet with leather we would like to see up what is the shape of my foot. It is difficult to buy shoes if you don't know what size your foot is. How is your mark, this is the focus of our enquiry.

Can love be eased out from attachment?

I am a stream of experience yet I imagine that there is a continuity to 'I, me, myself'. *As far as I can remember I have always been me.* That is a sentence we can all say. It's been me. It seems a meaningful thing to say. It seems to be obviously true. *I am me and not you.* I've always been me. I was not you yesterday and me today. You have always been you as far as I know, but I definitively have always been me. But then if I look for the ingredients of me? Believes: they have change a bit. Memories? Changed a lot. Plans? Always changing. Thoughts, feelings, sensations? We are like a cake made of imaginary ingredients. Our life is like a children's tea party. This is us, this is your life, an imaginary cake, an imaginary person. It is quite enjoyable. If you play with small children everything is imaginary. It feels is important because you believe is important. When you get older and you retire from work all is vanished, it was imaginary. We also are relational in our value. My buddhist knowledge can be of some use to you, but if I go to the factory and intending apply for a job I'll be out. We believe that this is important. Whether it is important or not is your mental activity.

You are going to die. This existence will be gone. You have the chance to stay immersed inside your dream time or become curious: Where is the dreamer? Who is the one that believes that I am me? So you have the content of your mind: memories, plans, everything you know, arising and shifting in endless permutation and yet, you are aware of something occurring. So, the continuity of this clarity about been alive, been present, is something generated by the content of your mind. Are you present because you yourself is the one that is present? Or is presence an illuminating quality which shows you been here? These are not philosophical questions for us. These are ontological questions about the nature of our being. This is the most intimate sense of ourselves we can have. When I tell myself a reassuring story about my existence am I enlivening the feeling tone of my life or I am singing a lullaby putting myself to sleep?

We want to look at the fixed sense that we have of ourselves and of the people we love and get involved with. Can love be eased out of attachment towards a more open appreciation? Very often if we appreciate something we want to get it. *You are special so I want you with me. If I add you on to my life I going to improve.* But that only works if I see the other as an apprehendable object because I can think of myself as an apprehendable object. This is what we are going to investigate in this time together: see if we can have a clarity which is non conceptual, so that instead of simply building up images and storylines of who we are, we can direct fresh presence experience to the illumination of what we take to be ourselves and others. This is an interesting thing to do on a Saturday.

The radiant display of the mind: Not one, not two, but in the middle

As I was indicating earlier there are the many different approaches in buddhism. Many of them are concerned with the path to awakening, going from here to there. In dzogchen we want to go from here to here. We are already here but not quite here. We are not quite where we are because we don't quite see it. In the traditional example, when you look at a mirror you see reflections. The reflections are in the mirror. They are how the mirror shows itself but not the mirror itself. In the same way, your mind shows itself as thoughts, feelings, memories, plans and so on. This is the radiant display of your mind. This is the flow of experience.

Very often we are not aware of this because we sit inside a separation or a division: *I am me here, I am looking at you there. You are nor me, I am not you.* Our starting point is often separation, isolation, autonomy, individuality. But of course if I say *I am here, you are there*, that is a proposition, that is a statement, it is a sequence of concepts: that there is an *I* which is here, that there is a *you* which is there. We can only have this kind of discourse because of the arising of thoughts mediated through language. These are experiences. We experience taking and listening, moving and sitting. This is what is revealed.

What is the basis of the revelation? Clearly, a mirror has a clarity which a piece of wall doesn't have. When you look at the wall, you see the wall. When you look at the mirror you see the reflection, which is not the reflection *of* the mirror but is the reflection *because* of the mirror. That is to say, the mirror shows itself through displaying what is not itself. Although a particular reflection is not the truth of the mirror - because the mirror has the capacity to show many different reflections- the reflection is inseparable from the mirror. They are not the same. They are not one thing, but neither are two things because there is no way to extract the reflection from the mirror. The mirror and the reflection are non-dual, not two. Not one, not two, but in the middle.

In the same way, we have a mind that is our awareness, or the basic illumination capacity that is how we know anything is there. Just as the mirror reveals the reflection, so the mind reveals thoughts, memories, plans and so on. It also reveals motorcars, factories, houses, trees, plants. Every kind of

experience you have is revealed through your mind. Now, a mirror is able to show many different reflections because of two main factors: one is that no reflection defines the mirror itself, and secondly, that reflections arise as co-emergent with an article placed in front of the mirror. One could say that the potential of the mirror is evoked by placing the object in front of it.

The potential of the mirror is not like the potential of a seed we may use for the garden. The seed is a potential. When is put in the earth with water and protected from too much cold and given some sunlight it starts to germinate and you get the plant. That is to say that the plant has a specific cause which was the seed from which it manifested. But the mirror doesn't have little packages of seeds at the back. It doesn't have a particular capacity for showing a tree or a car. Its potential is not the potential of *something*. It's the potential of the openness, or the lack of predetermination in the mirror which allows these different reflections to arise.

It is the same with your mind. Since you are born you had many experiences that you can understand as *my* experiences: *I have this experiences because I am me*. This is the egocentric story we can tell ourselves: *I am the maker of my experiences*, but a little enquire will indicate that this is false because if we look *life happens through us, to us, with us*. I find myself being like this. I am aware of myself in the moment of the revelation of myself. *This is to say, ourselves - I, me, myself- is an aspect of disclosure, not an aspect of causation.*

Co-emergence

There is a lot of writing nowadays about the self as a performativity, but in fact ourselves is part of the performance. When we are walking, walking movement is *me* walking. *I am walking* is a commentary, a conclusion and an act of colonialism. Walking is going on. Who is walking? Walking is walking. *No, no, no, no, I am walking*, but how do you do this? Some little puppeteer inside is pulling all the strings to make yourself walking? What is the agency of walking? Imagine if every movement you made with your body was a conscious one which you had to prepare for before you did it. That would not be very nice. You would be so preoccupied with all the micro instructions: *Elbow down, no too far, up again*. You find yourself co-emerging with the situation.

If you observe this again and again you can see it directly by yourself. This is the meaning of the term *non-dual*. My life is *with*, I am always *with*. I am with the sit, if I get up I am standing with my feet, if I step down I am with the movement of my hips as I put one leg at a lower level than another. *My body is always dancing with the shape of the environment*. Always. If you go to a Chinese restaurant and get chopsticks your relation with eating is very different from having knife and fork. There is a different kind of finesse. According to the chopstick my hands take on a particular formation. Different patterns of muscles are being employed. You can take a unitary direction of living, *I am using the chopsticks*, but the chopsticks

are causing my hand to take that particular formation. You have to do what the chopstick says. If you haven't been to a Chinese restaurant for a while you forget and if you do it for a while you can pick up a single grain of rice with your chopsticks. You are then trusting the connectivity between the grain of rice and this two sticks in your hand. You are collaborating with the chopsticks. So, who is in charge? It's not a master-slave story.

So many of the stories of the ego are represented in terms of *I can do this, I am the doer, I am the maker*. As if, out of me and as an isolated act, this fully formed action arose. But if you think about everything you do, washing your hands, putting on your socks, explaining something to a child, explaining to the policeman why you parked in the wrong place, each of these is a situational activity. It would tend to work best if you appreciate the activity. Telling the policemen that they are wrong is not usually a good idea. You see the police uniform and you think that probably there are some personality problems inside that uniform, so before you speak you gargle with olive oil so that your words are gentle and soft: *Officer is so helpful that you notice this, I am sure you find as well drive in the cities very exhausting, sometimes I get so stressed, I get desperate, do you ever feel that way?* If you can establish relatedness then you are in it together.

The key point is always losing the game, bring everything into play. Games are boring, free play is always fresh. Games are already formulated. It is in free play when you see directly the co-emergence. Ordinary conversation is like that but because of our tendency to fall asleep in the conversation we are probably more likely to see the co-emergence if we do dance improvisation because there the unpredictability is more manifested. When you are talking with different people, you don't know what you are going to say, you don't know how closely you are going to stand from that person. Spatial differentiation, degree of eye contact, vocabulary, all of these are emerging in this unestablished moment.

As human beings, because we tend to be lazy and stupid we throw away our freedom to be in fresh spontaneous contact and replaced it with ritualized social convention. The advantage of witch is that you can meet without meeting. *Hello, how do you do? Please don't answer, I am not interested, but how do you do?* This ritualized social choreography manages uncertainty and social anxiety at the cost of formalizing alienation, because you are formulating yourself according to a set piece of rules of transaction.

Let's return to the image of the mirror. The indeterminacy of what the mirror itself is, is the basis of its capacity to show many different images. Because the mirror is ungraspable in itself, there is no identifiable essence to the mirror. This indicates that there is no restriction on the potential of the mirror. If we look at the wall, there is some potential for fascination in that wall. If you were locked in a prison cell you might be able to get many hours of fascination from the wall. If the wall was a painting, the painting is less determined than the wall. Looking at the painting the eyes are moving around tracking colours

combinations, contrasts and so on. The shaping of the formation restricts the potential to a certain degree. That is to say, the painting has an identity. If you see it in a gallery it will most probably have a title, which is like a name, so you know you are looking at something.

The mind is not like a painting. The mind is showing more and more and more. However, you also have the patterning of what you take to be your identity: your likes, your dislikes, what you are drawn towards, what you are more wary of or suspicious of. There is a shape to you and we often take this shape as being somehow determined by myself. *This is how I am. This is what I like to eat and this is what I don't like to eat.* On the basis of this choice, which is always determining a line between included and excluded, we establish the periphery and the contouring of ourselves. This is a description of your potential. *Identity, especially anxiously maintained identity, becomes a fore closure on accessing the potential of the mind.*

This is why once you have established your basic competences in life, not knowing is better than knowing. Not knowing dissolves the boundaries of identity to open it to fresh input from potential. If you have a highly formulated identity, for example if you have been imprisoned for ten years, or you've been in the army for ten years, when you leave these settings it is often very difficult because the choreography demanded by closed institutions is very precise. Outside in the big world there is a lot more freedom. In prison you know how you should behave. If you go out and you walk in the street here, you don't know how you should behave. You could sing and hop and you won't be arrested. You might be embarrassed. That is a very good way to test how anxiously contained your identity is. *There are many doors to freedom and one is to allow other people to laugh at you.* Our own seriousness is *What I am saying is very important.* Only for us. Who wants to hear this kind of stuff? This is a minority interest. And because it is a minority interest it is a dance. It takes two to tango. If you were not here I wouldn't be speaking like this. This is co-emerging.

Co-emerging together and with the environment

Moment by moment your life is an effulgence, a radiance of experience, some of which looks object and some of which looks subject. That is to say, experience, the content of my mind, what is revealed in, through and as the mind, is ever-changing, inseparable from the mind but not the same as the mind or definitive of the mind. Say for example, I am habitually quite angry, you may then say James is an angry person, that anger is an ongoing trait or flavour or colouration of the person who is known as James. But could I say *my mind is angry*? What would that mean? If you put in front of a mirror something which you take to be disgusting- like a dead dog full of maggots- it would be stupid to say that this is a horrible mirror. It's a horrible reflection, but it doesn't determine the mirror. *I am angry.* That is the reflection, that's the showing, that's the display. If you impute from there some essence of James, you collapse the openness

of the potential of awareness of being present into a self that is identifiable as having fixed enduring characteristics.

That is a really key point to investigate for yourself. For example, if you were talking with a friend about some problem: *I don't know, I feel so stupid, why did I do that?* You seem to be establishing something about yourself, but you are speaking with someone, you are relating, you are creating a moment of connectivity with that other person. It is an intimate moment because something is being revealed that might otherwise be concealed. But, what is being revealed? *I feel so stupid, how could I be so stupid, I am really stupid.* Who is the one who is stupid? The conversation goes on and now you are laughing, now you are happy. Before you were self-blaming. What has happened to the one who is really stupid? Now your friend ask you for some advice and you say something quite wise. Surely there is a contradiction, how can you be really stupid and wise as the same person?

We often think that people are a bit conflicted inside and this often a basis for novels and drama – the flaws in the hero who becomes the anti-hero. A lot of writing on the structure of novels and plays indicate that. You want to have a complex character, with nuances, a polyphony. It is a very helpful idea because so many voices arise as us, not just ten or a thousand, we have access to millions of voices. Millions of different combinations of facial expressions, gestures, repetitive speech and so on. The permutations are infinite.

When we relax we show more of ourselves. When you go for a job interview you have a more intentional presentation of yourself. The key point here is to see that *what we call our ego self is a patterning arising moment by moment with circumstances.* Is not guaranteed or established or certified by any enduring self-essence. Which is amazing. I am emergent in a situation and this emergence is arising from the connectivity of the field which ground or basis cannot be caught. To put that in formal buddhist language, the ground of everything is emptiness. Is unsubstantial. It doesn't mean that there is nothing at all because this emptiness is the openness of what is yet to be shown.

I've picked this glass up several times now this morning and each time I've picked up is different, for no particular reason. I was aware I put it down there with two hands, it's not a problem, but for some reason I put it down very carefully. At another time I wouldn't do it like that. Why? We'll never know. It is just this, just this, just this. Now, if *just this* is happening in connection with the field and I have a sense of the feeling tone of being with you, then I don't have to think how I shall behave because *the mood of our being together is the feeling tone within which I manifest.* That is to say, I am emerging with you.

Children play together, at work you work with colleagues, even if they are not in the same room. We are always in intercourse, in interplay. For just as in the ocean the wave has a crest and a depth, up and down, up and down, when you are having a conversation with someone they speak you listen, then you

speaking, they listen. Like waves going up and down, expressing, receiving. You get up in the morning, you look out of the window, you see how the weather is and then you decide what coat you need to wear. There is fashion of course, but there is the weather. If you are eighteen you might prefer to be cold but show people your ass but as you get older it feels better to be warm. In that way you are in ceaseless conversation with factors. Weather, age, health, confidence in your sexuality or not, so many factors could occur on how you present yourself. I decided to wear my blue sweater, what does that mean? A thought arose in my mind: *this sweater is warm* and I followed the thought. Did I make the thought? No. I caught the thought. Or did the thought catch me? So now I am wearing the blue sweater. Again and again, start to see how your mind is operating.

Non conceptual awareness

In the buddhist tradition we talk about studying or listening, then reflection and then meditation. So I am setting out some ways of looking. These are practices. If you have some soup for lunch how you hold the spoon? If you observe, you and the spoon are emerging together. If you don't collaborate with the spoon, the soup will go on your cloth. The spoon has a shape, if you don't get the angle right it won't hold the soup. This is the meaning of non-duality. Not subject onto object, not I am dominating the world, not I am doing this, but to see how you are coming into formation in so many different ways with different situations.

I am revealed to myself through my participation. You put a vase of flowers in front of the mirror and the reflection reveals some aspect of the potential of the mirror. If you hold this metaphor in your mind the situations that you encounter will bring about your emergence within that frame. Your life has already happened before you think about it. The thought comes after the event. You got to be there before the thought. This is the meaning of non-conceptual awareness. Just observe how you are picking up the spoon. You put the spoon in the soup and in the soup there is some vegetables hanging on the edge of the spoon, will they fall off or not? It is very immediate. Maybe you have to put the spoon back on the soup and take a smaller bit of vegetable. Moment by moment our existence is very precise because there is a conjunction of the circumstances coming together. *Not me over the world, not the world over me but a collaborative emergence.*

So we have now a sense of the particularity of the moment, this particular expression arising within a field that is open, which contains self and other. What is the field resting on? What is the ground or the base of the experience? We can call it the mind but that is just a word. If you stay present, there is a showing. Who sees the showing? We call it the mind or awareness. We are here together in this space, each of us has a particular perception because of where we are sitting and what is open up in front of us from our gaze. *You can interpret what is going on, you can tell yourself about what is going on, but prior to that there is this. The commentary comes after the fact of the showing.*

Normally we have a duality of showing and shown but when we look at the mirror the shower of the reflection is the mirror, what is showing is the reflection but are they two different things? Can you take some scissors and cut between them? That what shows and what is shown are inseparable. In the same way, in this room everything is revealed. On top of that you can run your own particular identifications, commentaries, likes and dislikes and so on. But before the mind moves, before these formulations occur, there is *this*. Each moment is *this*. Then you can make sense of it, but what is *this*? All comes together.

When you think about it you can conceptualize *I am inside my body looking out at you*. That is a story. That is an interpretation. If I stay with the immediacy, I can feel my hands on my knees, the hardness of the wood I am sitting on, the slight tension in my shoulder and I see all of what it is in front of me: red blanket, man, woman, chair and so on. That is already half way to an interpretation. I don't see a man and a woman. I see shape and colour. The interpretation man and woman comes after what is here. The field discloses itself as light and sound. Within that, the movements of interpretation arise indicating a particular kind of meaning to the pattern.

The showing was intrinsic, the interpretation is contingent. As soon as you go into the particularity of the people you see in the room, you have linking and no liking. Somebody may look threatening or boring or sexually interesting, there is some kind of charge or energetic vitality in what you encounter. Before that there was just *this*. Undifferentiated light and colour. Undifferentiated in the sense that although there is different colours it's all at once. All at once. Immediate. Not mediated, not passes through some process. The processing comes after.

For the point of view of Dzogchen these are the three aspects of our mind. Mind is open empty, if you look for the mind you can't find it. However is no a dull empty. It's an openness which allows everything just as the indeterminacy of the mirror itself allows every possible reflection. This openness is uncontaminated. It can be very annoying of you are angry with somebody and you are really trying to say something important and serious to them and they make you laugh. Why am I laughing? I am piss off with you! Stop making me laugh! This is really annoying. Have you had this experience? This is so important to see.

[Primordial purity](#)

We are taken out of ourselves quite easy because there is not self to begin with. In psychotherapy sometimes it seems that the patient can't be taken out of himself, but that is because of resistance. They are actively not been taken out their selves. When they stop struggling then easily they come out of themselves. Our healthy organismic relatedness is ceaseless transforming according to circumstances. That

is to say, *self-ing* is a showing. None of us here has a fixed self. We have many selves or many potential selves. They are non-definitive.

The empty open ground of the mind is never determined or marked or shaped by anything which has occurred. This is referred to as primordial purity. It's an unchanging, indestructible purity. This is to say, the capacity of the mirror to show reflections is not altered by some particularly horrible reflection. If you were to take the mirror from your house and take it to an abattoir and hang it up there for a day were it see lots of animals having their throats cut and so on, when you came to collect it back at the end the day it would have to go to a psychologist. The mirror would be very upset. Whereas is a vase of flowers or a chicken having his head cut off, this is equanimity. The ego self is very concern with good, bad, right, wrong. The openness of the mind is not. It is indifferent. It does not care. Caring is an aspect of our energy formation as it arises, but mind is just open. We see everything. Everything is revealed.

In dzogchen meditation texts there is the term *free fall*, like a water fall coming down a hill. When you are sitting in the practice let the mind just come however it comes. Don't try to edit or improve your mind. This doesn't mean that you are going to become completely unmanageable and act out your worse tendency, rather, it is an encouragement to release the anxiety which interrupts the immediacy, the spontaneity, the intuitive connectivity of how we manifest.

Let's do some practice. Shift the position. There is nothing in particular to focus on, the focus of our practice is whatever occurs. We relax, open, open and allow whatever comes to come. The key thing is don't merge into the moment and try to hang on with it. Whatever is arising, if you don't like it don't try to push it away. If you stay with this image of the mirror, no reflection damages the mirror. No thought or feeling or memory damages the mind. When you realize that, the need to edit experience ceases. We will do this kind of sitting again and again for short periods of time. Often when you do that practice it seems so strange, a bit pointless and meaningless. When you have that experience that is an indication that you are tilting over to your ego self that wants to know what is going on.

Two paths

Is very important to see the difference between clarity and knowledge. In this context, clarity is the basic facticity of what is occurring. Just *this*. What it is, what it means, is something you are introducing into what is occurring. You are selecting and editing and organizing from this field of experience something that makes sense to you. So you are employing your interpretative matrix as the validator of truth.

Here we have a crossroad. Two pathways: one is to stay open and relaxed with whatever comes, even if it seems mad or stupid or meaningless. Almost like see it as a dream. Dreams are often very strange. Patterns arise and go. If you stay with non-intervention you start to see this is the intrinsic lucidity of the

mind, this is the mind's way of showing. Because is not *my* mind, it doesn't have *me* as the central focus. When you were a child if you had a reasonable mother she would like to cook the kind of food you liked to eat, because you were her child. So when you think *this is my mind, I, the ego, the owner, the boss, this is my territory*, then we want to have *my* mind on *my* terms.

According to the tradition the mind is open. It is ungraspable, not a personal possession. As we see with the mirror, the mirror is no the owner of the reflection, is not determined by the reflection, it is just a hospitality to whatever is occurring. This basic hospitality of the mind is very important because it allows the unimpeded clarity to show itself. When you take this clarity and apply your own frame of reference it may not make much sense because you are trying to pull experience back into the familiar constructs that reassure you that you know what is going on.

The key thing is, again and again, just relax, be open and be with whatever it is. If you came into interpretation and you are introducing habitual ideas and formulations into the emergent moment, you won't see things as they are, you will see things as you take them to be. Therefore your habit formation as this independent ego self will continue as the centre of the world. So, when you find yourself strongly rejecting what you think is bad or merging into, or holding onto what you think is good, just relax in the outbreath, the mind open. How would I find my mind if I keep telling it what it is? Awareness is what is showing, it is the illuminator. If I remain in my shrouded cave, in my ego cocoon, don't allowing myself to be illuminated by this clarity but instead pointing out the fault of the clarity – *this is not the way I want it* – then I am simply returning to myself. The door to freedom is closed by my own attachment to my idea of how it should be.

Beneath and beyond the limitations of our personal identity

In the Buddhist tradition it is said that there are six different realms of existence. You could be reborn as a dog or a frog, in all kind of strange situations. Imagine if you are a feminist woman and when you die you are reborn in Afghanistan. It would be a little difficult to get back in the burka. How could you be wearing a burka? You wouldn't do that. But if you were born in Afghanistan you would be acculturated into wearing a burka. Your value, who you take yourself to be is created in this historical moment. The politic scenario could change very easily and people who have found freedom may find themselves back in a box. But is *your* life. Not when the state police you. If the state police and you are an enemy of the state you should not be on the street. But *I am just asserting my freedom*. Your freedom is an insult to the state. Our president has said that this kind of behaviour is unacceptable. Don't be too hopeful for democracy, there are wars all over the world and there is no reason why they won't come here.

This is summer time. There is money, there is freedom, and you get a passport, but autumn and winter can come very easily. Ten years ago Syria was a happy prosperous country and now is a disaster. Just

happened like that (*finger snap*). Some crazy fucker starts being aggressive and trouble, trouble, trouble. So that is why from the buddhist point of view it is said: look at your sense of self, it is unstable! If you take *I am me*, because *I am me*, it is a sign that you are crazy. You are you because of all kind of social factors that are going on. Poland is next to Ukraine. Why the Russians came into Ukraine? When the Russians came into Ukraine, the brave NATO didn't march in. That could have been Poland! You are in the EU, for how long? Who is keeping you safe? Mr. Trump doesn't want to pay for NATO. Like that, we are hanging on threads all the time. When you see this, you realise that this construct of ego identity of me knowing who I am and how I want to live and what I want to do, you realise is a theatre.

What is the ground of my being? If we take it to be a socio-political- economic construct, that due to the action of many different millions of people we find ourselves in a culture which, at this moment, allows freedoms to minorities and so on, you see this it is not established. That's why in the buddhist texts it is said that you can have a human life now, next life who know where you will be. As long as your sense of yourself is an identity, a construct, a narrative story line, it's dependent in all these factors staying in place. When they shift....very different.

That is why in buddhism we are concerned to go beneath and beyond the limitation of our personal identity, to see that awareness – the clarity which illuminates every moment of our existence- is not a construct, is not an aspect of our personality, it is not something generated by brain chemistry. It is the intrinsic light of the mind. When we rest in that, we find an indestructible refuge that is unchanging, it is the clarity of the openness of the mind. The energy of the mind, the potential of the mind, shows many different patterns. None of them is stable. None of them is a true essence. You manifest situations. What you take yourself to be is the interplay of your potential in this energetic field.

You can experience that for yourself: in every situation, observe yourself making choices. A choice could be quite neutral *oh, I'll eat that" or it could be "oh! I'll really need to eat that or arhg! I would never eat that*. When you observe the strong valences being perceived in the object, this is really good. When you catch your mind working in that way, just try to bring up the sense *this is really good, for me. I say it's really good because I like it. The goodness of the object is my liking of the object*. If the object was inherently good everyone would like it but they don't. So you think it is in the object but it is in the mind. When you stop projecting values onto the objects of the world, then you see the simple clarity of everything.

When the mind is forgetful of its own ground it arises as ignorance and then is permanently involved in selecting, attributing value and so on. This is mental activity. When you relax the mind and you don't project meaning out onto the field, the field starts to show itself. This is again something that you can start observing by yourself. How busy you are judging, assuming, defining. The more you define the object

the more you define yourself, and the more you define yourself the more you cut yourself off from your open potential and get fixed in a very narrow band width.

Stupidity

From the buddhist point of view our problems arise because we have adopted central points of reference in the self. For example, in this room the ceiling is held up by pillars and we can say that the pillars are strong and hard. We know that because if we push them or punch them they are stronger and harder than us. So my embodiment becomes the checking framework for the qualities of the world. The pillar is not hard for some of the machines they got operating outside. The hardness of the pillar is relational. When they come to knock down this building it won't take them so long because they use machines which are much stronger than the concrete. So, the pillars are hard and strong relative to my human body but not to the steel tip of the destroying machine. The more we see this it help us to see that whenever you make a statement about anything, it always got a missing part. The soup was good for *me*. I was a fly and smell the soup, and I flew into the soup, the soup would be my death. No so good. So, the soup is good for *me*. For *me*. For *me*.

This is not to emphasize I am such an important person but to say that all experience includes *me*. I don't have access to objective truth. My world is irreducible subjective. Subject and object arise together. *As I participate in the world, the world is revealed to me through my participation*. So, if I am hungry the food is likely to taste better. If I got plenty and just missed the bus *Ah! These things happen*, if I am really in a hurry and just missed the bus I am pissed off. The bus came, stopped at the stop and left before I arrived. Completely neutral. But I don't live in a neutral world, I live in a world of happy and sad. The world is flavoured. *The colours of the world, the moods of the world are revealed through how our experience arises for us*. This unique specificity of *my* flavours is *my* existence. This is why if you want to understand another human beings you have to spend a lot of time with them. If you don't do that you just put them in a category.

I am very lucky I am able to stay in Agata's flat, who has many cats. I don't know about cats, I just think "cats", but Agata can explain about their psychology, this one is shy and this one does this and that other does that. Because of her loving eye towards the cats, the different qualities of this cats are revealed. Just as farmers know that their different cows have different characters, different qualities and different modes. I am passing the field a cow is just a cow. This is my stupidity. I am satisfied to say *It is a cow* and put it in its package and because I know it is a cow and I know that I am not very interested in cows, my curiosity ends.

In buddhism this is what is meant by stupidity. We talk of the five poisons. The first one is this kind of mental obscuration that functions as an assumption. A cow is a cow. This is my obscuration. If I was

really to be interested in a cow, I'll watch how it walks, how it breaths, how is relating to the other animals. Most cows don't mind having sheep in the field, some cows are not so happy. Makes a big difference, but not for me, it is just a cow. Then you start observing your own mind and you see how you make yourself stupid in relation to the world. This is to say, the world shows itself as a richly textured experience, full of detail, but when you put it into a little packet and you stop looking.

In the dzogchen texts again and again is talked about the vision, in seeing, in receiving the precise details. That concepts can easily make us stupid is an area which is quite difficult for us to understand. As soon as I know it is a cow, I don't need to look further. That is stupid. I am satisfied with the concept of cow. The actual living phenomena, this animal, breathing, walking across the field, looking with her big eyes, this sentient being, is *just* a cow. This process occurs also in the human domain when we get the rebranding of the Kurdish people as "terrorist" by the Turkish government. Once that name is put on them, they are really in danger, because we know what they are. They are captured inside this title: "*terrorist*". All the details of these people lives are wrote out. Same with the brand "*refuge*". All kind of people become refugees, good people, bad people, doctors and thieves, but you won't get into the living detail if you say *Ah! They are refugees.*

In this context, *stupidity means falling asleep in the concept as if there it was a full relationship between the concept and what is taking to refer to.* If I know this animal in the field is a cow, I now know what it is. Maybe I don't know anything about cows but if I know it is a cow that is enough. If I know this person is a terrorist that is enough. How you take terrorists off? It's very difficult. In Guantanamo Bay there are still Afghans who were captured at the time after 9/11. They were taken to Guantanamo Bay because they were label terrorist. After tens of thousands of hours of investigations there is no evidence that some of these people were terrorists, but once the level "*terrorist*" has been put on to them, and we know that terrorist are dangerous, they shouldn't be released. We don't want to see that the label doesn't show the detail of life.

Projecting names onto objects make us blind. In this short text on dzogchen on Gonpo Wangyal he says that everything you see, everything you would ever encounter, whether living is or not living, absolutely everything is simply a name put by your mind. There is no inherent existence in any phenomena. You have the potential of what is arising as shape and colour, then the concept allows you to add adjectives and adverbs and do all kind of associations, but it is your mind. What you encounter is the movement of your own mind.

An invitation to free yourself from the burden of assumptions

In my psychotherapy practice in London I see quite a lot of women in their thirties looking for a man. They go on the website, they go out on dates, they saw the picture of the man, exchanged some

messages with him and after three days they realize he is a dog, hardly a human being. Why is this? This is because of the power of psychotherapy. My painful job is to teach women that most men are indeed dogs. Women tend to be marvellous at pretending that dogs are men. They fall in love with the potential they perceive in the man and they think *I am sure I can make this work*. There is no evidence of that out there, the evidence is all in here, in the longings, in the hope, in the imagination. You have to look. Your mother never taught you to look at men. They are probably lying to you. Their interested is not in you, it's in your underwear, *I know that, I know that*, you think he loves you! He doesn't know you. *"But he is really interested in me!* In your ears? In your toes? Probably not the main thing. Does he wants you? All of you? Does he sees all of you? Is he curious about all of you? No. Self-obsessed. Delusional. You also are self-obsessed and delusional. This is a marriage made in a psychiatric hospital.

This is the heart of buddhism, to see things as they are. To see people as they are. Is not an insult to people, we all have limitations. If you are honest about the patterns and limitations of the people you encounter then you can work with them, but if you deny the limitation, if you want to pretend to yourself that this person is other than what it is in front of you, then you are deluded. This is the relational form of what Gonpo Wangyal is saying. Everything you see is only a name put by your own mind, therefore you just have to really see what is the relation between the name and the form which is there. If you take the name to mean what you believe the name indicates, then is difficult to see the actual phenomena. The phenomena is what is showed.

Very often when I talk with these women and ask what their first date impression was, they answer *Oh I didn't like him, but then we went talking, and I though well ...maybe*. So you were seducing yourself and once you were seduced by yourself it was very easy for him to seduce you. Your belly said *uhu, maybe not* but then *oh well, I've nothing to do this weekend, maybe.....* So then thoughts start going around and around, you self-hypnotize and then you become convinced that he is who you think he is, that your thoughts have got direct contact with the truth of this person. In fact your thoughts have covered this person with your projections.

This is why relationships between people are often very difficult: we imagine and project rather than check out. Your own mind is always part of your experience, you are not experiencing the objective truth of what is there. What arises for you is your experience of this building, this tree, this flower. This person is my imagination of this person. The *you* that I encounter is *you for me* and you are not only you for me, you are you for you, you for your mother, for your boss, for your friends. Each of this people gets a different you. *Each person is like a carrousel and we have access to one particular figure that is dangling on the carrousel as it goes around.*

On the basis of this partial perception, which has already been wrapped in your hopes, fears and assumption, you think you've really seen the person. *I know you don't like him but I see something different in him, he is really nice when you get to know him.* Of course, when you get to know someone you are not exactly getting to know them, you are getting to know your image of who you think they are. *We don't love other people, we love images of other people as created in our mind.* That is very strange.

Who are you? Who I think you are. Even if you tell me who you are, I would only hear that in terms of how I can hear. Which is to say, if I hear what you are saying, is not that I am a piece of paper that is having something written on it. *I hear what you are saying with my ears.* My dishonest twisty editing ears. My selective ears. The purpose of this is to ask you to investigate: Do you really have objective access to the world? Because if you don't have objective access, if you only have subjective access and your subjectivity is very cloudy, then you are lost in the forest and granny's house is far away. Night is coming, wolves are hauling *Oh, this is a nice guy, he is really cute.* Oh little red riding hood!. This is what is meant by reflection, really seeing how you cheat yourself. This is not an insult, it is an invitation to start to free yourself from the burden of assumptions.

Now we see the return of nationalism. My country, right or wrong, my country, the best country. The idea of the country is a wonderful place. Now everyone in Europe will be very happy that Great Britain has decided to destroy itself in a public act of suicide. We will leave Europe and dig us a grave in the Atlantic. It is appropriate because Great Britain was a great imperialist power, a Great War mongering power, a great slave trading power, a great lying, cheating and stealing power. You can hardly find a war zone in the world that wasn't a British colony. Does people in Britain believe this? Not at all. Great Britain. We don't want anything to do with Europe, because you are beneath us. We stand alone in perfect autonomy. This is mad, this is insanity. Nothing stands alone, everything is dependent co-origination. Britain is a good example of nations been built on lies. Most European countries have plenty of skeletons in the closet, things we cover up, things we don't want to know. We ourselves we have skeletons in the closet that we don't want to know about. So how are we going to be honest? From the buddhist point of view is useful to reflect and see how the constructive factors which give rise to identity are often not very healthy. We need to get access to the aspect of ourselves which is not conditioned by thought. This is the mind itself.

[The five questions: instructions on how to enquiry how we are.](#)

What we want to look at is: is the mind something similar to all the other things I know? If we look around this room everything has a shape, a colour and a size. If you go outside and you walk in the streets in Warsaw you see the same, everything has shape, colour and size. So the first question is: does your mind have shape and colour? Then the second question is: does your mind has size? Everything in this room has come from somewhere, everything in this room is situated somewhere. We are all located someplace,

when you go outside everything is in its place: the bird is in the sky, the car is on the road, the car has come from some place, the bird has come from an egg...where does the mind come from? Does it come from anywhere? Everything is somewhere, rest someplace, it seems to stay someplace even if for a short time. Where does your mind rest? Is your mind inside your body? You've been told that your mind is inside your head, in your brain. This is an idea. What is the truth of this idea? Who is having the idea? The mind reveals the idea? I know that in my mind is arising the thought that my mind is in my brain. Where is this awareness that reveals the thought? Everything goes someplace. The day goes into the evening, the rubbish is collected...does the mind go somewhere?

These are the five questions by which we can investigate if the mind is a thing like every other thing. Can we catch the mind? Can we categorize it? Can we see it as having defining features? If the mind is not like that, and the mind is not caught, is not a thing, then grasping cannot catch the mind. We grasp at things and the things we grasp at are concepts. You can go outside, you see a car, it is obvious to you that you see a car, the concept "car" and the object are married together. The concept "car" is linked with language, different languages have different words for car. Car is a convention. What is there? Some people think cars are attacking our life on Earth, other people think they are very useful. What you call a car is revealed through interpretation, if you don't apply a concept to the car, what is there? How could you describe it?

To describe something is to pull it into concept, but the shape is there before concept. You don't have to believe what I am saying, it is just a suggestion, you can investigate for yourself. There is not car without your mind. When a fly lands on a car, it is not landing on a car, when a bird shits on a car, it's not shitting on a car, not for the bird. How long are you going to be a human being? Fifty years if you are young or lucky. For many people is getting less. Another twenty, ten, five? And then you won't be looking with human eyes. It is a different world. It is amazing. If you were a cat, would you like cars? Cars are very useful for cats because they hide under them looking for small spaces where other people can't get into. If you start walking through the world as a cat it would be completely different. This is also a basic dzogchen practice: spend the day as a chicken. Then the colours and shapes of the world are reconstituted according to chicken-ness, little worms become very interesting because you are a chicken. Cars are interesting because you are a human, and you are a human for a while. As a human, this is how it comes together, it doesn't come together like this for a chicken.

There is not inherent truth in the object, there is not inherent existence in the object. When you see a nature programme on the television, on elephants, you see how they walk and how they operate together as big families, they seem so amazing. While you are watching this on the television someone with a chainsaw is cutting the tusks out of a living elephant. How is this possible? Because they look at the elephant and they see money, we look at the elephant and we see something different. The truth is not out there, because if everybody feel what I feel about the elephants they wouldn't be stealing their tusks. It is

relative, that is why dharma practice usually begins with taking refuge because when you come out from the veil of your assumptions, samsara is a very scary place.

On the level of manifestation everything is relative, which is why we take these five questions: we want to see if the mind itself is relative. Is it shifted by the emergence of other phenomena? So we sit for a while with these questions. We are here. This is the revelation of our awareness. We are present and this presence seems to be self-illuminated by the brightness of our mind which reveals whatever is occurring. Where is this? Is it resting in some place? Is it inside the body, outside the body? Above the body, below the body? In another planet? Where is it? We are here. Mind is here. When we are investigating these questions we can get a little bit distracted or sleepy. Don't get lost in that. If you need take a big breathe and slow your breathe out, energise yourself a little.

The main thing, as we looked before, is don't go into thought stimulation. We are very biased towards relying on thoughts, our tendency is to trust thoughts, but from the point of view of this practice the thought is the child. The child is the display of the mother, he comes out of the mother. The mother always knows more about the child than the child knows about the mother. Awareness is open, the thought is a formation which is arising and passing. It is unrealistic to think that child-thought is going to tell you about the mother. Stay with the mother, mind itself, your mind is here. *Don't confuse the mind and the content of the mind.* The mind doesn't move, the content of the mind is always moving. When you are enquiring about these five questions some propositions arise for you and they seem to be true. Just stay with them. If it's the child it will be in movement and it will vanish. The mind doesn't move. The mirror doesn't move, the reflections move in the mirror. Does the mind go anywhere? If your mind really vanishes you would have no experience at all. Something is occurring. The mind is there. Is it going away? You can return to these five thoughts again and again

You can find many discussions about these five questions in dzogchen texts. They talk about the nature of the mind and how the mind is. With these five questions you can get very close to yourself in the moment of being here. The mind is present, it shows its presence as your presence. Who is the one who is here? Is it a who, it is a what? To be present it is to be present as someone? We all know how to be here as ourselves: I am me, in my body, with my thoughts, my memories...that's the familiar way in which we weave together the shaping of our identity. But that is movement, it is activity. If you don't do the work, you don't get the identity. The mind is not doing anything, like the mirror is not doing anything. The mirror doesn't get tired, it doesn't get worn out by showing lots of reflections. The mind doesn't get worn out because it is not working to show, it is just showing. *Illumination is how the mind is. Inherently bright.*

This is your mind, it is not the Buddha's mind somewhere else. So if you sit down and you feel tired or a little heavy, this is an experience arising. If you go to the theatre and the lights don't work it's not much

of a show, doesn't matter how good the dancers are, you have to be able to see them. So, feeling dull and heavy and stupid is the play of your mind. Put the lights on. You know you feel dull and heavy and stupid, so if you just merge into the arising feeling *oh, I am so tired*, you are blinding yourself to the fact that heavy and tired is an experience that is emerging. It wasn't there before, it arose due to circumstances and after sometime it will vanish. It is not who you really are. So, in the very moment when that feeling arises, whatever it is, happy or sad, expansive or contractive, don't merge with it, don't stand apart from it, but be present with it in the way the mirror is present with the reflection.

At first these words may not mean very much, but if you spend some time getting to know how you are, not what you are but how you are, you will see that the clarity of the mind is a constant display of movement.

Attachment

The more we experience ourselves as an unfolding process and we see how there is not fixed essence or substance to ourselves, we start to see that the same applies to other people. People are not things, there are not discreet entities, although when we see people we can see their physical shape and we can see them walking in the environment so clearly that they seem to be separated from it. They are certainly separated from a fixed location in the environment, they are not like a tree, yet none the less, we are always in the environment, we are always somewhere. Our somewhere-ness is part of how we show in our different forms, our different moods of closeness or distance.

We are dynamic energetic forms moving in a field of energy. You can't 'get' other people; they are not commodities, even though people are trafficked for sexual purposes and for cheap labour and so on. There are many subtle forms of slavery. To enslave someone is to limit his freedom. The first thing that you need to do is to collapse his dignity. In the old days when we had public slave markets the slaves were strip naked, they had no way to hide, everyone else was clothed and they were naked. So when you have a family structure with very dominative or invasive parents, parents who know best, who are convinced of the rightness of their ideas and invade the child with their judgements, the child has nowhere to hide and they often collapse inside.

When you collapse inside, the heart sinks and the spine also becomes soft, it becomes over plastic, the rigidity of the skeleton is not in dialog with the wonderful, soft pliable nature of our muscles and skin. If you become too plastic as a person you become moulded by circumstances. So, the children in this situation when they go to school they easily get bullied because they go under the power of the idea that somebody else is able to define them. *I am who you say I am.* Usually in that kind of structure what people are saying to you is that you are useless, that you are ugly, that you are stupid and so on. But if some says you are wonderful, you are beautiful, you are amazing, that is also a form of enslavement. *You exist and I*

can, in my perception of you, know you so well that I can come to a conclusion about you. In terms of the content of the communication, it sounds quite positive: *you are so beautiful*, but implicit in that is that if you stop being beautiful I won't like you. So, when someone says *you are so beautiful*, you should give them a bill for all the face creams you are going to use trying to maintain your beauty. You are being bounded into an image and that is difficult.

What we have been looking at all day is how our embodied existence is shifting according to circumstances. We are available and then unavailable, we are happy to meet and then maybe not so happy, but we want to feel safe with the other person. In the field of therapy, in terms of child development we talk about the need of what is called "object constancy". For example, if the behaviour of the parents is predictable and the child is fed on time, gets up early and goes to bed regularly, this creates predictable rhythms which allow a sense of security in the world.

Of course, people are not so reliable, but when you get used to the sense that my security depends on you being able to be freely available to me, for my purposes, when I wish, then in order for me to feel safe, you have to behave in a way which I would always be able to know what is going to happen. People with that kind of structure often become very jealous. Why are you looking at that woman? You like her better than me? This kind of insecurity is really saying that you have to control your life and your world and not respond to any circumstances which would make you less predictable to me. So, we end up with this clean attachment: *I love you because you are the one I need.* What do you need me for? *I need you so that I can feel like me. You make me feel like me. I don't feel like me if you are not there.* This is the situation of a three-year-old child. When mammy is not available anxiety arises, the child is only settled when it is child-plus-mamma. Many people when they become adults maintain the same structure. They have never planted themselves vertically. They are not centered and grounded where they are in whatever circumstances, they are structurally off balance and looking for someone else to protect them. It could be an outer form like alcohol, a specific person or many different people, an intense habit form like anorexia or bulimia, cutting or plucking hair. These are self-soothing activities, although they are disturbing as well. They are ways of trying to settle oneself when one is upset or overwhelmed by what is going on.

If I use you to make me feel OK then my relation with you is that you are a means to an end. The relationship is functional in terms of my psychological need. So, if I say *I love you* and it sounds like this is just about you, as you are, that is actually disguising the fact that I love you because of the function that you play in maintaining my sense of self. I have incorporated you into my sense of self. This is what small children do with their mothers. The mother is like an artificial limb for the child. Mom becomes a part of me. Mom is like an additional brain outside yourself. A lot of small children's communication is like that. When you apply that in adult life then you have dependent attachment, which also means that a deeper spiritual independence will never come because I became so dependent on you that I lost my integrity.

You often get this A-frame relationships where two people collapse onto each other. Probably the healthier form is an H shape where two people are grounded in themselves and they link. They can go close and fuse and separate and do their work and meet together again. In all these situations they have the sense of *here I am, I am with you*. If somebody goes away and the partner says *do you missed me?* Hopefully we will be able to say *No, I am quite fully doing whatever I am doing, why would I miss you? I hope you don't miss me*. This doesn't sounds very romantic.

The drama of romantic love

If you want to be mindful and present you are mindful and present with phenomena. With what is showing. If the beloved is far away then what is showing is something different. You do your work, you talk with a friend, you are there. Like that song that says "*every time you go you away take a little part of me*". This is tragic, this is ridiculous, why would you want to lose part of yourself? Projecting your life into other people creates a pseudo closeness, a fusion which denies the fact that you are born alone, you live alone and you die alone. You might be married to someone for fifty years and spend every night in the same bed and you are alone. Alone is not necessarily lonely, if you are at home and at peace in yourself, what is lacking? Lacking gives the sense that something is missing.

When we look at the mind, does the mind have a shape or a color? The basis of my presence as this form in the world is the openness of the mind. Awareness is infinite. Although I say *my* awareness is not *my* possession. Awareness is the mother of me, I emerge within the field of awareness as a movement of energy with other movements of energy, and if I don't forget the ground then the open spaciousness of the mind is always available. So I can be relaxed and at ease and then without losing the spaciousness we manifest interpersonally, getting close to people, engaging in different ways for a while.

What do we need? We need contact *because contact is where we experience the non duality of self and other*, but if I need 'you' then we have duality. I am separate here, 'you' are there with your qualities. 'I need you. I need you because I know you are so good for me.' That is not something to be believed, that is the imagination. Why? Because you are unreliable. You mutate, you change. You are not a stone. Hopefully this is true in all of us. *If you want something immutable marry a stone*. People are always shifting and changing. You can enjoy contact, but *you can never get another person*. Relationships go wrong when we start to collapse on each other. *I build my world around you*. Why? Why did you do that? *You are the basis of my existence*, this is ludicrous, it is laughable. How could you be the basis of my existence? That is an idea of fusion. When we look at ourselves, when you put food in your mouth, my stomag doesn't get filled. Oh James, you don't understand these things, is a *feeling*. I need you. What do you need? Me? What do you know about me? Is what you imagine. I can tell you ten things about

me that would make you run away. But I won't. I need you too. It is a bit of a cover up: the drama of romantic love.

It's not that we shouldn't fall in love, some of us can't help falling in love, but if you can catch it in the moment is a movement of energy, it's a wish to engage in a dance, to have co-emergence, to have synergy, which probably doesn't last so long but is very filling and life affirming. Just as you don't know what sensations will arise in your body or what thoughts will arise in your mind, other people are also unpredictable. So when we say *I love you*, this implies that there is a reliable 'you' to be relied on. *I will always be there for you*, sometimes you are not available because you are not in the mood. Earlier today that little girl that was sitting at the back was wanting her mother to go over and look at the bracelets and mom was talking with someone so she grabbed her mother's hand: *Who in the universe could be more interesting than me, your daughter?*, you should have eyes only for me! The fear of the loss of immediate access to the loved object is terrifying when you are anxious.

Refuge

In buddhism when we say *I take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha*, we are taking refuge in the idea of the possibility of liberation, of been free of reliance on hopes and fears. We open into the path by becoming aware of the limitation of this deluded notion that I exist as a thing. I am not a thing, you are not a thing. You cannot say *me*, you cannot say *you*. What does it means to be safe? To awaken to how one is. But I have to be able to look. We say love is blind, when you are blind you don't see too much. In practices like tantric practices you transform romantic love into devotion. Your longing for a saving other is removed from the human domain and centered on a deity. It could be a peaceful deity like Tara or a dancing deity like Vajrayogini, there are many types of deities out there.

When you have a connection with the practice you always have access to the deity, they won't betray you or let you down. You would betray them because you forget to do the practice. You have the high idea: *I will do this every day* becomes once a week and then once a month. But they are there, available although they don't need you, you need them. You need them in order to find out how not to need. Then you are free. That is the tantric transformation of the desperation of devotion into the dissolving of the whole mandala into emptiness.

Connectivity

We are social creatures, we live together, and surely we can help one another. That is a good idea, but help each other to do what? To be grounded and centered? To live with dignity? To find out more about how we are? To be curious? To work with circumstances? To work with the changes of inner feelings and outer situations? These are important tasks but they are not linked with romantic love. Essentially,

between people the most important thing is workability. We have our different chakras, which is one way of thinking about the aspect of ourselves which pulse in an outer relatedness. We have this genital energy which is a drive towards seeking the other. Then we have the energy of the navel, which is the point where the inner duality of subject and object meet. We have the heart, the throat, between the eyes and in the top of the head. You might meet someone and have a very strong sexual connection but not real heart connection. You might have a very playful energy from the navel but have no real communication in terms of discussion or conversation. The possibilities of our relating are not volitional. You find someone sexually interesting or not, it arises as a kind of given of the interplay of your embodiment. With some people here you might find you have a lot to say, with other people you smile at them but there is nothing much to say. Our connectivity is revealed through our participation together and this availability shifts and changes.

This should help us to have more sense that the other is not an object, is not a thing. You cannot appropriate a person. You can be open to be with them in some way, for a while. To live like that you have to be honest because when when different aspects of your embodiment engage with the other person, they may fit and then not fit. If you are with someone and you come home and you say *Oh something has happened today, I really need to tell you*, if the other person says *Well I really need not to hear you*, that is not considered friendly. Then we do a little of blackmail:-*but I thought you were interested in me- Yeah, sometimes- Sometimes? - No, I want you there all the time, fully available, on my terms*. This is a violence. It's not a personal violence, is not that you are been really horrible with that person, it's the structural violence of not living with the freshness of energy.

Grasping

If you want a reliable thing you can take some water flowing out from the tap, fill up the ice tray, put it in the fridge and tomorrow you have little ice cubes. They have a definite shape. If you say to them *I love you* they just sit there, but when the ice starts to melt it flows out. Water is without inherent shape, it takes on shape according to circumstances. We are like water, fire and wind. We have the earth element but is not dominant, so we shift and move. To bring a synchrony of the movement of your energy with that of another person all the time is a very big request. This is why in buddhism there are so many critics of grasping, of the idea that there are things to get and that you can hold onto something stable. People change, we change. How to live with that? You have to be fresh. How to be fresh? Dissolve into the space which is the ground of your being. How will I do that? By not grasping at yourself.

Grasping at self as something is exactly the twin of grasping at other as something. Your self-knowledge is a delusion. You've wrap yourself in stories about yourself, which rather than revealing who you are, is how you hide yourself from yourself and from other people. Our life is based on *Let see. What shall we do on Saturday night? - Let's see, maybe you'll be tired, maybe I'll be tired - But we need to make*

plans - Make a plans with the ice cube, I don't know how I will be! The plan is a violence, the future hasn't come and the future you imagine is unlikely to come. You will get a future, but it won't be the one you thought you were going to get. And you won't be who you are when the future arrives, who you are now will have dissolved.

That that means we don't know anything? We know how to stay relaxed and hopeful and responsive to work with circumstances, to not enslave other people in order to feel free ourselves. How would I know what to do? You won't know what to do, you don't need to know what to do. You will do something. *But maybe I'll do the wrong thing!* That is OK, you then say sorry. If you make too many plans you become extended out into the future. In order to survive financially we often need to do the kind of work that involves planning, which is based in mechanization of human beings. You are expected to function on a mechanized way, every month you need to do your report, you have to do this, and you have to do that. Have to? If you are taking it up willingly is your adult dignity: *Yes, I will do that because I have to,* but if this *have to* is imposed on you, then is a kind of violence.

Space

Computers with its algorithms are always pre-figuring the shape of things. What keep us fresh is enquiry, living on the growing edge of our existence, moment by moment. When we feel very alive is usually because we are feeling life just manifesting as us. Our life, our vitality, our presence, is here reveling itself as us, in this moment. So, to relate to other people in that way we don't need to ask them to pre-form themselves in order to fit into some template.

We are very far away of that in our culture now. In the old days when we were doing the harvest with a scythe, a heavy physical work, there it would be many breaks in the day and bring out some beer and sing harvesting songs, and it would be an organic process. Tractors don't have organic processes, they have deadlines to bring things to the factories or to the markets. Forgetfulness or a lack of mindfulness can be a blessing some time. If we were more aware of the violence of our structure we would be very unhappy. This unhappiness manifest as depression, anxiety, eating disorders, addictions and so on. These are symptoms manifesting in the individual but actually the problem is structural and is pervasive.

We have created an inhuman world and we are starting to see the consequences in terms of climate change. Not knowing when to stop because we don't see what we are doing. To set fire to the Amazon jungle, is quite a thing to do. Huge trees burning out, so many wild animals burning. They are sacrificed for the idea of the benefit of growing soya beans and maize. The maize is for the pigs, to make them fat, for fat people in America to get fatter. The intoxication by the idea allows you not to see the phenomena right in front of your eyes. The same way you have a project at work that your boss wants you to do, this is an idea, but you have to do it. Next week he will want another idea, and another, and another.

How to inhabit this? The project means you project yourself into the future. You have displaced yourself from here to there. You take your mind out of your body and you put it in the future. Many people are disembodied in this way.

One of the objects of meditation practices is to re-inhabit. Only by actually be in your body you can start to know how these five elements are working as the body. A demand to do something is like wind and earth, something solid is been propelled at you like the roof of a house that comes off in a hurricane shutting towards you. But the wind needs space. As long as the hurricane is over the ocean it doesn't cause too much trouble, when it hits the island, then the trouble begins.

The mind needs space because the agitation of life sets up these various winds which operate through the prana channel. How would I find the space? We are always in space. Space is our mother. The space we move in is the form of the womb of the great mother. It is empty, and within the space all these energetic forms arise without inherent existence. They are here and banish. Mental formations make them important and serious. We can loosen this. You can work hard, you can do many many different things but in a very relaxed easy way.

Working with intimacy

Strive in pushing yourself is not very advisable. Energy arises from space. Thought arises from the open empty mind, so experiencing energy as the play of the wind in the open sky allows you to move as required easily, and the more you can do that, the less exhausted you are, the less in need of compensation you are, and therefore you can relate to other people without having your need and your hunger and your emptiness as your calling card.

The open emptiness of the mind is not a lack, is the basis of every experience arising to fill the space of the mind. Lack arises when the individual ego marks out territory with a boundary and then operates as an import-export agency, trading with the environment as if was something outer. But we are *in* the environment, we are *of* the environment. The open ground shows the non-dual field of subject and object arising together, within which, moment by moment we take on different forms, connecting in different ways. From that basis, relating to other people is much easier because if you are sensitive to your own situation, if you appreciate the qualities of the many different factors of your life, then you can start to appreciate other people.

When you sit on the meditation your mind may be very excited or anxious or dull. Do not enter into judgment, don't try to change the situation, be with the mind as it is. I am dull, I am having a full cup of dullness, a full cup of anxiety, a full cup of loneliness, a full cup of *I am wasting my time meditating because I can't do it*. Whatever is arising, if you stay with it, it will give you its whole flavor. Everything is what it is

but if I don't understand depression, or irritability, or frustration, you will say *James I am very disappointed in you*. I am likely to justify myself or feeling attacked by you, but if we know: *oh yeah, I have many failures, are you just realizing how disappointing I am? This is a great moment! we should light some candles and celebrate your eyes are starting to see*. I am just an ordinary person wondering around. This is how the energy of the Buddha's heart shows itself: ordinary hopes and fears. Hopes come, fears come. For the ego hopes are better than fears, for awareness it is just stuff, one or the other, happy, sad, in love, desolate, arising and passing, arising and passing.

The more we are relaxed in the open spaciousness of awareness, the less demand we put on other people to conform to the image that we have of the ideal person to make us feel safe. So, finding this unborn ground of your own being is very helpful for working with intimacy with others.

Raw, fresh and naked

We have many books available on dzogchen and non-dual understanding but we want to study the way that doesn't cover up the freshness of our mind. What we are looking for in the practice is presentation. The presenting of our mind. We are used to representation, things which are presented having been cooked or prepared. Representations hook more interpretation and associations and we build up more links in the semantic web. For the purpose of practice we want the simplicity of just this. In dzogchen we talk about our mind, which is the mind of each of us, which is said to be primordially pure. When something is pure it means is not touched by anything else. Our cloth gets dirty through our contact with the world and with our sweat and so on, but the mind is alone. This doesn't mean is cut off or isolated, it's just alone. Using the image of the mirror we saw yesterday, for example, in the side mirror of a car, reflections after reflections arise and in each moment the mirror is fresh and able to show a new reflection. It doesn't become stained or tired. This is primordial purity.

In our lives many things happen and we tend to accumulate certain patterns of experiences, certain tendencies, which build up a kind of layering of the complexity of our self. The mirror is not like that. Moment by moment, instantly arising and instantly dissolving. It is non-cumulative, it doesn't grasp or hold on or build up anything. The mind has openness, not a dull empty openness but an openness which is present and available. This is described as being raw, fresh and naked. If it is raw is not cooked, nothing has been done to it, it hasn't been processed in any way, it is fresh, just completely like the first moment in every moment. It is naked because is not covered over in anyway. When you think of the mirror, the reflection arises in the mirror but the mirror still naked, the reflection is not something hidden in the mirror, there is no mirror essence behind the reflection.

When we take up these five questions and we are looking for the mind, what we can find is that the mind is not something somewhere else. I live in my skin bag. Inside the skin bag is my heart and lungs and

so on. This is the inner content which by functioning maintains the integrity of the skin bag. When we meet each other and we have some contact, we are showing on the level of the skin but that is because there is something inside, behind, maintaining and displaying our vitality and potential for connectivity. If you look again and again, you see that there is nothing behind the mind, and the mind also is not behind something. The reflection is the mirror. There is not more to the mirror than the reflection, and yet, is not correct to say that the reflection is the mirror itself because the moment of the reflection doesn't define the potential of the mirror.

At every moment of your life experiences are arising and passing. They arise and pass because the mind itself is not sticky, but if you think about your mind and you think about all what happened since you woke up this morning, then there is a selectivity in that memory, some things stand out, others have already passed into oblivion. *So, your sense of self develops a contouring, like picks and valleys in the mountain.* When you remember an incident, you can tell that to someone else and it becomes elaborated into a story, but all that was happening is not a story, is exactly this, just this and then gone. Your story is a representation, you are taking *about* something, you are thinking *about* something, it is no raw, naked and fresh, it is prepared, elaborated, edited, and presented.

When we sit, we do it with our gaze open, resting in the space in front. Experiences arising revealed by the mind which is not a thing. The mind is infinite and because it is infinite it is able to display endless final moments. Moment after moment is arising and passing. We sit here together, words come out of my mouth, a sound formation, a moment of connection through the sound, and the sound dissolves into silence. It is movement that then dissolves into stillness. It always vanishes, but the vanishing is not a loss. If you lose your purse, your money or your car keys that is a loss. Your ego self is dependent on certain aspects of the world in order to function. They are necessary for the continuity of *me* in *my* life. If I lose my passport it will be difficult at the airport. It is necessary for travel to show people that I am who I say I am. A passport or an identity card is a representation. If you don't have the representation you won't be allowed to present yourself. This gives you the flavor of samsara, we don't trust presentation, we trust representation.

All-at-once-ness

Primordial purity is the fact that moment by moment the mind is open. If a tragedy happens, if you feel terrible, if events turn your life upside down, these are patterns of movements of energy. You still there. If you start to go blind, you still there. If you have a leg amputated, you still there. You are there as a presence. Your sense of self is altered. You are aware, and this awareness is the showing of the altered sense of self. When you feel angry or dispirited, frustrated at this change in your sense of self, the patterning of the content of experience is so intoxicating that you identify with it, it becomes who you are

and what is lost is the awareness, which is the revealer of the experience. There is not difference between the reflection and the mirror.

Similarly, is not that we have the mind itself in some pure transcendental realm. The mind itself, your mind, is what you are moment by moment. Forgetfulness of how the mind is open, empty and pure from the very beginning leads to non-relaxation because your attention then is focused on patterns of movement, patterns of emergence, and you try to sort it out: *Which bit of this is me? Which bit of this is not me?* We go close to experiences, we identify, we merge in them, then something happens and we withdraw. If we can stay with the openness of awareness, what we experience is all-at-one-ness.

We are sitting here in this place and all this happening all at once. We stand up and we go out of the door, through the door, you turn right, you go through the room, you go around, you turn to the right, upstairs and so on. You can know about that, tell yourself a story about that, but if you just stay open you see what I call *myself* and what I call *my environment* arise together. All our experiences, all at once. Is not like a painting that builds up stroke by stroke, adding, rubbing out, building up an image. If you turn your head one way and then you turn your head another way, instantly everything is there and you with it. This is *instant presence*. In Tibetan it's called *lhan chig kye pa*. Coming all at once, uncompounded. A compound is a gathering together of different things and the putting them in particular patterns and packages.

You can experiment yourself: look around the room. You can do that from the sense that you are inside your bone box: *I am here, looking out at these people, this shape of this room. I see a window, now I see the pipe fixed to the wall, now I see the bright yellow*. So we have looking, identifying and naming. You look around and you see this thing, and then his other thing and then this person. You are engaged in composition. Very busy. Selective activity leads into liking and not liking. We want to look more at what we like and less to what we don't like because our attention is the medium for value in the world. We attend to what shines to us.

The Ki, or prana, or life energy, flows out with our sense organs and when we like something it starts to shine for us. If we don't like it doesn't shine so much. Then our world is experienced as full of some important things and many unimportant things. This simplifies our experience as an individual ego-self for, if everything was interesting, how could I make choices? *It's through the ceaseless process of making choices that I shape and re shape continuously my ego self*. What arises within, what I take to be *me*: sensations, thoughts, memories and so on, is unpredictable. What I will experience through my sense organs is also unpredictable. So, the process of selectivity, which is going on moment by moment, is in a shifting field of interaction of great complexity. That's a lot of work. That is what is called karma. Karma means activity. You say *this person is interesting, this person is not so interesting. I want to spend time with the interesting person, I don't want to spend time with the not so interesting person*. But maybe the

interesting person doesn't want to spend time with you and the not so interesting person really want to spend time with you. This is our life, we know this, this is the life of the ego self.

When you observe this ceaseless process of selectivity and you just relax, you realize this is movement inside a field that is already here. *All-at-once-ness precedes selectivity. You get it all without effort but you don't know what to do with all of it because you are someone and someone's' want something, they don't know what to do with everything.* In order to maintain my someone-ness you need to work out what sort of something you are and what sort of something I am. Are you my kind of something? This is how the ego manifest within the field of clarity.

There are not two factors, there is not god and devil, someone making the good bits and someone else making the bad things. Ignoring of the giving-ness of everything and the fact that we are always already part of this everything is what leads us to this limiting particularization of our sense of self. Meditation gives us a chance to relax our relentless selective investment and avoidance of parts of the world.

Mind is open, displaying itself as a clarity of this field which is changing as its reveals different patternings. Within this, what I take to be myself is a participation. I am energy participating in the field of energy. Sound, light, smell, taste, movement, it's all dynamic. It's a flow phenomenon. *We are ripening in the river of life.* We are water within water. It's only our interpretative delusion which makes us feel that we are apart. So, these are the three aspects of how we are according to dzogchen: our mind itself is open and empty, this reveals the immediacy of all-at-once-ness and within this, as part of it, we participate.

Not knowing

In your embodiment you are organized for selectivity, you are selecting from the field and *the field is the showing or the shining force of emptiness.* Everything in the field is empty, this is to say, it's devoid of inherent existence. So when we make selections we are selecting patterns of energy. If you are offered a banana or an orange you can think of these as two different things, you can say both belong to the family we call fruits, but they have different shapes and colors, we can eat the skin of the apple, and we cannot eat the skin of the banana. This particularity in the shape and color and smell and so on, says this is an apple, this is a banana, but how do I know it's a banana? Is yellow, is curved, it has an end though bit where was stuck on the banana tree. The banana reveals itself to me through color and shape. If I stay with the simplicity of that I see oh! Banana is a name that I give to that color and shape. By call it banana I pull it in to the field of my interpretation and knowledge. If you were going in holidays to some nice hot place and the plane crash over the forest, and you were the sole survivor, wondering in the jungle, you feel hungry but you don't know what is growing, they could be many delicious things there, but they might be poisonous. If they are poisonous you won't have another chance. They may taste delicious and be

poisonous. Now you are hungry and anxious. You think you will regress and suck your thumb because you don't know. This is the human condition: our experience tends to be mediated through knowledge. Knowledge keeps us safe.

Traditionally it is in the field of art that people open up to the possibility of not knowing. Starting with a piece of paper or canvas and without thought just make a mark and then see how the mark calls for another colors and shapes. You don't have to know, you can trust the emergence, or you might be a more anxious kind of person that has to know in advance what you are trying to paint. I want to paint something" and what I am going to paint it with? Colors! I'm going to paint a banana. As soon as you see the banana, most people stop looking at the painting. Lots of research has been done on tracking the movement of the eye with relation to paintings. If you don't know about painting you tend to have a recognition and stop looking .*Oh yes that is a Matisse, what is next.* If you are used to painting your eyes go around following the strokes and the intensities contrasts and so on. You can see this is an image of a banana but that's not the end of the story, you are interested in how this banana is emerging out of colors.

This is like meditation, we are interested in how thoughts and feelings emerge, how are these patterns painted on the canvas of the mind, because is the how that permits the reification. So when you look at the painting and you say *Oh! This is a banana*, you arrived to a conclusion and that's the end. If you are more curious about the brush strokes, the knowledge of what is represented in the shape is not the end. The full stop *-It's a banana-* is turned into a comma, into see how the play of yellow and green has allowed the particular sense of the banana's color to arise.

Conclusions are good for the ego, *I know what is what...Now I understand...Now I see what's going on...It's like this.* And it's already gone. Because our life is dynamic and ever changing, as soon as you got hold of something its already dissolved into the next moment and the next moment and the next moment. The capacity to receive the unfolding revelation of how life is moment by moment, which is ever fresh and shiny, gets turn down, becomes muted by the anxious requirement of having definitive knowledge. Instead of attending to how, we focus on what. *Oh! It's a banana.* End of story. If you look at how there is not ending to the story because all the different factors of our lives are leaned together as part of this infinite kaleidoscope.

Within the field of clarity, in the immediacy of all the phenomena arising at once, we find ourselves participating as movement. This is a journey without beginning or end. This turns into this, turns into this, turns into this. When you stay with the *this* you have the freshness but if you try to catch *this* and make it into an entity think about, then you can compare *this* and *that*. Now you know "*Oh yes! This banana is from Brazil, it taste different than the banana from El Salvador.*" This is, unless you work in an export-import

agency, a meaningless abstraction. You know *about* something, is like eating cardboard, there are not vitamins on it at all, its empty information.

Most of our education has been empty information. We know *about* things which are functionally, vitally, irrelevant. When you are eating a banana, what is important is the texture, the color, the smell. Brazil? El Salvador? Who cares? It is good, and that means it is good for me at this moment, because some kinds of bananas are very sweet, others are not and at different times your palate gest more or less attuned to sweetness. In India there are many kinds of bananas, the very small ones are often very sweet, very good for smashing up for babies. As you get older you don't need sweet taste so much. It's like that. It is how I am, in this moment, in this context, like this. Can I say *I will be like this tomorrow?* Only if you speak about yourself as an idea. *I know what I am like*, but I am not like anything. You are *this*. You have an existential choice, to be *this* or to be *like that*.

Simply present together

We operate in the world by telling other people what we are like. When you tell someone *about* yourself you are creating, or helping to develop, a likeness of yourself in their minds. There is an image of you developing in their minds been fed by the stories you tell them about yourself. I tell you *about* myself so that you can think about me. This is the royal road to desolation and loneliness. *Darling, I've been thinking about you all day...* and what should I do with your thoughts about me? The though is not a kiss. If you give me a kiss I get something. You can think about me for a hundred years but that's you, is not me. That is what means representation: image building. This is where our mind is very deceitful because the more multi-textured and multi-dimensional is the image I have of you, I feel I am getting closer to you.

Thinking about people is not helpful. In the hospital system you have to write notes about a patient. The person comes into the clinic and becomes a patient. People write things about the patient. What is in the notes about the patient doesn't tell you about the person, because the person and the patient are not the same. The person is becoming a patient. You have to sit in an unpleasant waiting room, you have to wait for the professional to take your information, which he formulate into true knowledge about yourself. He gives you a diagnosis. This is just a way to give people employment.

In the seeing is a revealing. When this is packaged into a story, the concrete, which is inexpressible, is re packaged as the abstract which is expressible. So, I am talking with you about dzogchen. Dzogchen can't be talked about but I do it, it is my private obsession, I am very glad you give me this opportunity to come here. So we have to hear the talking about in a very gentle way. Words are not going to help us to find out the truth. The function of the words is to soften us up like a massage so that we can be more pliable and allow more possibilities to emerge. Talking about ourselves is not showing ourselves and of course we don't show ourselves like an actress on the stage, we show ourselves without showing, we just

are and other people see. Their seeing will depend on whether they are opaque and clouded by their longings and desires or avoidances, or whether they can receive.

This takes us back to the title of this little event we have together. If love or closeness or intimacy is based on attachment, the attachment is always to the idea of the person. The person -as disclosure, as the unveiling of herself moment by moment- is like water running through your fingers: you have the sensation that there is something going on. Color, shape, sound, movement. It is self-arising and self-vanishing, self-liberating, moment by moment. Like being at the sea and watching at the waves going up and down, up and down, the water glistening at the top. You receive it, but what can you say about it? When I watch the waves and the sparkling light I feel softened inside, my thinking goes down, I am just with the emerging experience, I can't say anything about it. What was I doing? I was looking at the sea. Was I looking at the sea? I was being with the sea, but that doesn't mean anything. What was occurring was not a *something*, it was presence before the thing-ness processing began. Thingness processing reification construction comes after the immediacy of the altogether.

The practice of meditation help us to be here, be here with this. As soon as you are with another person you are already into self and other. Being present with the field is also to be present with the movement –endlessly, shimmering- within the field. This is our authentic mind, is a co-presence, there is nothing to take away and we haven't gained anything. For example psychotherapy: some people think it is about insight, see more deeply the structure of what is going on and then something can be written about and made public. Sharing that understanding can be helpful to other people because now we understand the structure. That is one way of perceive it. But when we are simply present together this presence itself releases many of the structural tensions because tension, anxiety and the defenses against them cut us off from being in immediate connectivity.

We open to the field, without entering into judgement, without selecting this is good, this is bad, and - particularly in a conversation- without saying this is important, this is unimportant. Sigmund Freud understood this very clearly: you shouldn't commit yourself to a pathway of interpretation. The interpretation should be given when it is no longer necessary, because if you are giving interpretation is like having a copper sulfate solution where you put a thread and after sometime crystals start growing around the thread. This is to say, the patient will crystalize himself according to the indication offered by the therapist. When we are longing for love, we seek to make ourselves lovable, we seek to become the one who the other wants, but if I become the one that the other wants, who will the other become? Who will I become? I don't know what the other wants and generally speaking the other doesn't know what he want either. So this is very foolish. People spend a lot of time thinking how they should be in order to make relationships work.

Workability is essentially about co-emergency. When we take a break soon if you go to the toilette you have to follow the path to the toilette, life is life, it is very obvious. You are attuned to the particularity of the building. If you are swimming in the sea it is more interesting because the sea has tides and currents and waves and you don't want to get a mouth full of salty water but the waves are a little bit unpredictable. This is like talking to someone else, the other person is not static like the stairs, you have to stay present in the moment of their arising. In a situation like here, when we meet with some people we shake hands, with some people you get a little hug, with some people you get a big hug. It is an energetically co-emergent moment. There is just something in the air as you go towards someone. Some people just smile. There are many permutations of how we connect, is not a ritual, you just find yourself in closeness or no closeness.

This is how life is unfolding: we are participating within the field of experience as it is, in this moment. Is not about knowing, it is about having a feeling tone. You may have hugged someone yesterday but today is more distant. Why? You will never know. You can't say, it just is, because this is the formation of energy prior to conceptualization. What does that mean? Maybe we don't like him? That is a concept, if we stay with the concept you will be in a labyrinth of thought and memories, wondering in the wilderness. Is just this and is non predictable for the next moment. This is different way of living raw, naked, and fresh.

Make yourself available. When you are available you receive this emergent sensation of the other, you can go back or you can go forward. To be available doesn't mean to be a slave, you are not at the mercy of the other, but it does require that you receive the how-ness of the other person through your senses. No the what-ness. What-ness is conceptual, is already packaged, the how is shifting and changing, which means you need to be ready to shift and change, which means you should be light, able to move, unburden by expectation, un-narrowed by judgement. You are *in play* and that can invite the other to be *in play* and if they don't want to play you go away because there is always the next moment. *He is the only person that can make me happy*. That is an idea, not only an idea, it is a neurotic idea. It's a great method for being unhappy. To be present in the moment is to be in this moment.

Equanimity

When we lose access to the openness of the mind we become immersed in the realm of polarities, good, bad, right, wrong. Inclusion and exclusion. We usually include some things and we exclude others. The view of dzogchen is the great inclusion, everything is included, including all the things that we may ordinarily want to exclude. The key way to find this great inclusion is through equanimity. Whenever you project a definitive meaning in anything you encounter, whereas is a person or a situation, you are giving it a value. The intrinsic value of everything is that is pure from the very beginning and empty of personal existence. So, if we meet people and we find that we like them, or even strongly like them, the fact is that

you see their face, you see their eyes, you hear their voices, which are all movement of patterns that are dissolving. This moment will never be repeated. How not to consolidate this into some image of the other?

When we include everything it does not mean that you homogenise it. Each person has a unique specificity, a quality of how is manifesting with you in this moment. We have two ways of understand this: from the point of view of dzogchen this is the manifesting of the energy of the ground. Our basic openness bring us into this particular display at this moment and within this we have specific ways of connecting with different people, at this time, in this places. This is to say we have the diversity of the display of emptiness.

Every reflection that comes in the mirror has its particular shapes and colours but each reflection is identical in being a reflection, it has not personal essence from its own, is a showing of the clarity of the brilliance of the mirror in this particular moment. When we look around the room everyone we see is a mode or a pattern of the clarity of the mind arising from the emptiness of it. There is no one to get. When we share energy with people all kind of patterns can emerge, but there is no one inside them to catch. Is the unpredictable interplay of co-emerging energy. Is the freshness of our life.

These are the two pathways: a pathway of arising with awareness or a pathway of arising with assumptions. This is why in our practice we stay with how things are, not trying to get more of the thoughts or sensations that we like or less of those we don't like. We want to have an open hospitality to whatever is occurring without bias or prejudice and in that way to have equanimity whatever is arising. Equanimity is not dull and flat, for example, if we have a big stage and we have people dancing on the stage, we expect them to be moving out, if there is an earthquake and the stage starts to move about, that is a different matter, it is difficult to dance if the stage is moving too.

Equanimity is like the stage, there is a basic calmness, spaciousness, openness, there is a free movement of whatever is arising and in this field we arise as subject and object. Sometimes you feel like subject and someone else is the object, and sometimes they appear as the subject and you appear as the object. Sometimes subject and object are moving inside yourself, you have a thought about what you did yesterday. *I wish I haven't done that*. That is a subject-object formation. Because you have equanimity you can feel this thought arising, you have the taste of it, but is not the total truth. If you merge into the thought then you get the emotion *Oh! Why did I do that!* and then you start moving this way and that way, acting and reacting, confirming your sense of being an isolated self, unsure how to behave in the world.

Relax and open

We relax. Open. In the openness many appearances arise. They are uniquely just this, just this, just this and then they are gone, there is no path. There is no person. When I think *Shit! Why did I do that yesterday*, this

is now, you cannot go to yesterday. The thought of yesterday is a perverse thought of now, is a cloudy form of now, because you are thinking about something which is not here but by the emotional identification with what you think about, it is as if you had gone there or it has come here. The past is gone. If you've been in a relationship and it's difficult and they vanish, they are not here. Where are you when you are thinking about them? If there is a lot of emotion linked with the thought about the absent person, you are stupefying yourself because you are here and what is arising is a thought. Lots of them? Smile! Like little white summertime clouds passing and going. *But why did they leave? What did I do wrong? Maybe I need to find out.* Now you have a lot of thoughts, are they helpful? Who are you? *I am a troubled, inadequate person.* Like a school report card "*You must try harder*". This takes you into activity. Relax.

From the point of view of dzogchen all is relax and open, be with the thought, and see what the thought is. If you buy a second hand car from someone and they say *If after a week you don't like it, bring it back and I will give your money back* and they give you a false address, at the end of the week you take the car back, knocking on the door and no one there. This is the same with thoughts, the thought comes in the mind, the thought tells you something about your life: *I should've been more kind, I should've supported their fragile ego.* That is a thought. Where is the thought? Is already gone. Why would you believe a vanishing thought? You still here, that thought has gone, but if you follow the thought you will not have a sense of being here. This is the fundamental crossroad in life: if you stay here, everything will come to you but if you go chasing memories and thoughts and elaborating plans you will be displaced. You will be on the train of thoughts.

How we are in the world with other people is not something apart from the practice of sitting. We don't use sitting just for go deep inside ourselves because when we go into this openness, this openness is inclusive, all the people we meet are already inside the openness of the mind. This, and then this, and then this. If you stay with awareness there will be plenty of thoughts, if you follow the thoughts there will be very little awareness.

Awareness is inclusive, it includes thoughts, feelings, sensations and so on, but thoughts and conceptual elaboration are exclusive. They exclude awareness because they are formulated in terms of duality: *I am thinking about you, I miss you.* Subject-verb-object. Who is the *you* that I miss? This is a concept, but now with this concepts of you I have more memories, how we were, all what we did. Every time you follow one of this little pathways of concepts there is not space for awareness, although paradoxically, every little pathway of conceptualization is moving within the space of awareness because that is the basic space of existence.

Not doing

When sitting all is arising at once. Receive everything, don't select, don't choose, don't restrict yourself into the finite moments, maintain the finite in the infinite. The mind is infinite, is not limited. Every finite is within the infinite, but if you go into a finite moment, although this finite moment is not different from its mother ground the infinite, it cannot show openness. This is why, again and again, when you find yourself caught up in something, identifying, fused into a particular emotion or sense of what is happening, don't try to change it, don't do anything at all. Just stay present with it. That is a strange kind of instruction because you have to do non doing, which is very hard. You have to not do the doing which would interrupt non doing.

Awareness doesn't do, conceptualizing ego does. Not doing means just letting it go, not interfering, not mobilizing. Some people character is very strongly directed to quick mobilization, they find their power and energy in doing something, but here is nothing to be done. This may feel very stupid, you may feel you don't know what is going on. That is because your sense of self is a construct which you maintain by your activity. We have to go through a transitional phase in which we relax the habitual actions which confirm our sense of who we are. Like a caterpillar that at a certain point has to stop moving and make a cocoon and after sometime out of the cocoon becomes a butterfly. Your meditation is your cocooning yourself. This is what we do.

The non-duality of emptiness and appearance

Imagine you have a little crystal hanging by a window and in summertime a ray of light comes from the sun, it goes into the crystal and then dancing on the wall you have this rainbow colours. These colours are the potential of the clear light revealed. The movement of these vibrations together will show as clear light, when separated out then you have red and green and blue and so on. When you look at this reflection you say that is red. That is a very different experience from just seeing the redness. Seeing the redness in fact before the naming of red. In Dzogchen tradition this is called the description of *tsal*, which is a form of energy. When you are sitting in the practice, what we call thoughts, feelings and sensations emerge, there is a showing, this is the showing of the potential which is revealed in this particular moment as if it was being reflected through a crystal.

The empty mind has the potential to show many different forms, but in this particular moment, because of the angle of the light and the configuration of circumstances it brings forth these thoughts, these sensations, these feelings. If you stay with this what you will be experiencing is the emergence of the mind. The mind doesn't emerge as itself. Just as when the reflection shows in the mirror, this is the mirror emerging but is not emerging as itself, and yet it is emerging as itself. This is the no duality of emptiness and appearance.

When you grasp at the colour and you say is red, a particularly intense red, it is as if there is something there, something has been born, something has come into separate autonomous existence. It is easy to see with the crystal that if you put a piece of board in between the window and the crystal the colour light will immediately cease, the light is a showing, is a movement of energy. You see red, you see orange, but they are not there, these are your concepts, this is the grasping mind. The grasping consolidates what is there and, in doing that, hides what is there.

This is the instruction for meditation: when experiences and thoughts and so on are arising, if you grasp at them as being something, this involvement will disguise from yourself what there actually is, which ceaseless display, unfolding, showing. Like light flowing, is not a thing, is like a river of experience. Therefore, we have the basic instruction: don't go after past thoughts, don't wait expectantly for future thoughts, don't identify with the thought emerging, don't hold yourself apart from it. The reflection arises in the mirror, as the mirror.

When you are sitting in the practice, what arises in your awareness, as your awareness, is non definitive of the ground but is precisely itself in the moment. So, whether we are sad or happy or angry, however the mind is, don't change it. Is just like light coming through the crystal. If you stay present with whatever is arising it will vanish because is movement, there is nothing there. When you conceptualize, the addition of the thought to the appearance creates the illusion of something there. The illusion is a form of experience, something that is real for us because we believe on it.

Is not that concepts are bad or wrong, you wouldn't be able to function in the world without them, but when you act them on to everything is a congealing, is a thickening. This disguises the fact that thickening is a form of movement. You seem to arrive somewhere, you look at the color of the wall and you say that is red. Something is there, the light goes through the crystal onto the wall, reflected on the wall into your eyes. This is only a circle of movement. Your conclusion brings the experience into culture, into human conceptualization, but what is it in its nakedness, in its rawness, in its freshness? Concepts are like monosodium glutamate, they bring a particular kind of taste to things. You end up with the taste of something-ness because of the additive.

[The three kayas](#)

In India they make an opposition between yoga o bhoga. Yoga means restraint, focus, effort, trying to achieve something. Bhoga means to enjoy. When we do yoga we are all linked and yoked into the structure patterning of our lives. Bhoga is something more free flow, a pulsation of giving and receiving. In the buddhist tradition the qualities of the fully enlighten Buddha are described as Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya.

The mind of the Buddha is Dharmakaya, which means the presence will all potential, all possible dharmas are within the awareness of the Buddha. Sambhogakaya means that within this space everything can be enjoyed. How would you enjoy sadness? Sadness is an experience, a showing. When you see that it is the showing of the potential of the mind, that is a form of radiance, then by staying with it, you have this particular patterning of resonances, flavors and qualities. We often think that sadness is a state, but sadness is a movement. When you feel sad the muscles on the shoulders and the neck usually go down a bit, you collapse a little bit into sadness, the diaphragm is a little tense, there is a constriction. This is something you can experience: what happens to your posture, your gesture, your capacity for eye contact, your breathing. You are living sadness. Sadness is living through you. Then you have some happiness, you feel envious, these are all modes of experience and all can be appreciated and enjoyed because of their unique specificity.

Within Dharmakaya you have equanimity. You are settle enough to be with what is arising. If you get very excited by the joy of one thing or the horror of another, then you are into desire and aversion, adopting and rejecting. *I know what sadness is like, I don't want to be sad, I won't be sad, I'll do something else, I'll eat some cheese cake, I'll drink some vodka, I'll watch some porn.* Human beings have many different ways of avoiding been sad. If sadness is unpleasant, why would you stay with it? But what it is sadness in its phenomenal aspect? In its conceptual aspect we all know we don't like sadness, but when you position yourself starting from concepts you don't go near the phenomena, so you are not open to the phenomena. That is the last thing you want to do, so you are in aversion. How would you taste it? The soup is in the bowl, but you don't want it, it's horrible. But you didn't try it. You don't want to try it because you know is horrible. This is regression to four years of age. Most of our life is structured in this way: we turn away from many of the potential experiences of life.

When you feel sad, lonely or confused, don't merge on it and make it your identity but appreciate it, it has a texture and it's colored. Sour is a taste, we usually don't want to have too much sourness, we might like more sour than bitter. For most people bitter is quite challenging but what is bitter? Bitter is not an abstract concept, it does something to you, what? It is horrible. That is a value judgement. Its bitter, bitter is this. Sad is this. Loneliness is this. This is what we do in meditation, we try to remove the conceptual package from experience because the concept is both constructing a particular dimension to the experience and is providing the basis for apprehend the experience, for taking hold of the experience.

So, again and again, however the mind is, let the mind be as it is and then observe how you enter into judgement, how you take up a position. *This is good, I want more, this is not good, I want less.* On an ordinary dualistic level this is a sign of your intelligence, from the non-dual point of view this is the mark of ignorance because the judgement is blocking experience. It is blocking enjoyment because you don't know how to enjoy everything. That is the meaning of the Sambhogakaya: everything is OK.

Compassion

The name of the founding Buddha of dzogchen is *Kuntuzangpo*, always good, everything is good. It doesn't mean that you always chose what you take to be horrible, it's not a heroic path and you are not striving to overcome your limitations. Bitter is bitter, if you really know what it is, that is what it is. Sad is sad. So when sadness occurs you experience its arising as a flow moment by moment by moment. If you stay with the sadness, in the sadness but not merged with the sadness, then sadness suffused you the way that the reflection suffused the mirror, and then is gone. When you are really open to it, the paradox is that it doesn't leave a trace. When you close yourself against the experience, you make a barrier to the experience and the experience opens its bag, takes out the spray can and puts some graffiti all over you: the mark of existence. This is very wonderful in fact, that the more you open to everything the less marked you are because the ego cannot open to everything, only awareness can open to everything.

By relaxing and opening is that you make this invisible transition between being wrapped in self-identification and being present as open awareness. If you refine this in your meditation practice, when you are with other people you are connecting with them and you can have the full experience of how they are, being very clear that there is no one there to catch but that we all have the capacity to reveal. The more we are open to the revelation of ourselves and the reception of the full revelation of another, the more you have the vitality of contact. When we are self-protected, we become inhibited and thereby we become unavailable and therefore we don't get what we need.

Life is contact. In this moment, here is everything and we are moving and responding and you feel different things with different people. Our vitality can help other people to feel vital and we can live without fear, without hope, just in the vitality of the moment. Then you experience directly the self-liberation of each moment. Of course you can maintain your work, you can maintain your family life if you have that, you can develop and maintain a relationship. In fact, this will help you to do that, because you realise that you can never be complacent, you never feel you've arrived some place. *Now we are in a relationship and I know you are going to be with me...I don't need to worry about you so much*, then of course it gets difficult. But if you see that you are always living in a moment of time, you can't fall asleep into the situation because you want to be alive, you want to be present, and that can help the other person to be present so you have co-presence.

That is a pretty good way to live and of course is compassionate because if you are fully present and the only basis for that is awareness, you are bringing into direct contact the other person's possibility of being aware. Without being like a missionary going around knocking on people's doors, by the very way you live, you can give them some hope. Not hope on something else, but the hope of *oh! this is OK, I am*

here, this is it. This is all there is. Is just this. This is always changing but is this. If we are here with this, this is as good as it gets.

Our brief time together comes to an end. Whatever merit there it is for our study and practice together we dedicate to all beings. Although it has been a short time together we have covered the main points of the Dzogchen approach. It's helpful in its depth, it is helpful in its radiance, and it helps to make us more aware of our intrinsic connectivity. I hope you stay with the flavour of it and bring it into your lives.