



Ordinary Mind Zen

Ending The Story of Me

Transcript of <https://soundcloud.com/ordinary-mind-zen/ending-the-story-of-me>

...So the title of this talk is *The Story and the Ending of the Story*. So when the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni Buddha, said that “I teach only suffering and the ending of suffering”. So, we could also say we teach story and the ending of story.

Of course, when we talk about the ending of suffering in Buddhism or the realisation of the happiness we already are, we’re not saying that we’re bringing about the ending of poverty and discrimination, etc in the world on a global level. We’re speaking specifically about the dissolution of the sense of the separate self that most of us experience. A dissolution of the separate self and the realisation of our self as this aware presence, and in that realisation, there is an ending of suffering and an ending of the maintenance or the doing of harm to oneself or others.

Now, if everybody on the planet was -- had the good fortune of the kind of conditions and circumstances we have here, now, in our life, and this is the path that all human beings would take. All human beings want to be happy and peaceful, free.



Ordinary Mind Zen

But, as we know, when we're faced with hunger or other forms of violence it's extremely difficult to realise ourselves as awareness. So, you know, I have a lot of gratitude for living here and now in this place and with you folk here, how we support each other to bring about the ending of suffering and the realisation of happiness in our lives and the lives of others.

And then we all go about our own expression of that love and that happiness. Some of us might play music, others might work as a social worker, some might work as a teacher, for others it might be voluntary work, some people might just love their garden, but we express that love in all different kinds of ways, according to our individual natures.

In our practice principles that we chant at the end of a period of practice, we chant, "caught in the self-centred dream, only suffering, holding to self-centred thoughts, exactly the dream." So, what is this dream that we talk about, that we're caught in?

It's the dream of the separate self. It's the self that we imagine ourselves to be – a little me in here behind these eyes and a not me out there – and we learn very quickly as an infant and then as a small child that the not me or the world is not going to always meet us with tenderness and compassion, unfortunately, and that's the



Ordinary Mind Zen

beginning of the construction of the wall and of the separate self. And, of course, as we grow, we are conditioned and enculturated into that sense of separate self and we identify with all the kinds of identifications that we are recruited into, and at a certain point when about three or four we also start to engage in the telling of stories and people tell stories about us and we tell stories about ourselves. So, in many ways the separate self is perpetuated and maintained through the telling of stories.

I'm not suggesting that *all* narratives that we tell ourselves are bad or negative. Obviously, they're not, but some of them are, as you know, and in my practice as a counsellor or in your experience, your own personal experience or in terms of your friendships, you can see how as persons we can get quite caught sometimes in negative stories, very common ones being "I'm not good enough" or "I'm a failure", or I'm this or I'm that... Or we can experience ourselves as... and the "me" in the story is the centre of the drama and so this is a very compelling dream that we're all caught in.

Ultimately this dream, this sense of separate self which is suffering in a sense is suffering. It's not that there is a separate self that suffers but that the actual separate self itself is suffering and this can often be characterised - in the Buddhist tradition



Ordinary Mind Zen

we often talk about attachment or aversion, or we can talk about seeking and resistance, how the separate self goes out seeking and searching, seeking and searching. Seeking and searching for happiness and peace and love, and it goes seeking and searching in the wrong places all the time. [CHUCKLES].