



Before we actually begin let's generate our motivation to make sure that we are listening and participating in the dharma with the correct intention. Let's make our motivation one to learn about ourselves and specifically to learn how to identify and then transform our jealousy and how to develop our good qualities, particularly joy and rejoicing, so that we can progress on the path to full awakening. And while we're on the path and after we attain full awakening as a buddha may we act continually for the benefit of other living beings with a mind that cherishes others more than ourselves and a mind that rejoices in the goodness and virtue and good opportunities of others. Set that as your motivation for listening now.

Because we're comparing: "And they're better than us, so...ugh!" You know, who wants to admit that? And jealousy is also incredibly painful. I don't know about you, but I found it maybe one of the most painful emotions. Yeah, when you're jealous you just sit there. You're stuck in this cauldron of discontent and hatred and ill-will and—you know. I never feel good when I'm jealous. You know, when I'm angry I feel right. Okay. Of course, that's afflicted and deluded, but I feel right. Jealous, I feel, you know: Bad and wrong and inferior. And it's just lousy.

Plus, there's something in the back of my mind saying, "Oh, children, you're jealous." And it's like, oh, I don't want to admit that I am. So, yeah, it's quite an uncomfortable emotion.

What do we get jealous about? Just about anything. Because jealousy is involved with comparing our self to somebody. When we compare our self with somebody who's equal to us, that's called competition.

So society says, "That's okay." When we compare ourselves to somebody that we're better than, that's called pride. Society says, "That's okay," even if you're stuck up and you're kind of unpleasant.



When we compare ourselves to somebody, but we come out less, that's jealousy. Okay. And we can't bare to see them have whatever good quality or good opportunity they have. We can't bear it. It's like burning in our heart that they have this and we don't. So we'll get jealous over anything. You know, at work, somebody got a promotion that we didn't get; somebody gets praised; we didn't get praised. Romantic relationships, my goodness: Jealousy just proliferates. “My boyfriend, girlfriend, looked at somebody else and said, ‘Hello. Ahahah!’” You know? Can't stand that.

You know, even in dharma circles, sometimes especially in dharma circles, jealousy comes up and it's really insidious. *Somebody else got to be with the teacher, got to have dinner with our teacher, and I didn't. Who is that other person? Why are they so important that they get to do this and I don't? Yeah. And how come the teacher knows them and shakes their hand, but doesn't know who I am? Yeah. And how come the teacher rides in their car, but doesn't ride in my car?* And look at So-and-so: They are so still when they meditate, perfect, and I'm like this.

[Laughter]

You know? And it's not fair. I'm jealous that they sit so still. And after they come out of meditation they kind of go – like, they've just been absorbed in *samadhi* or emptiness or, you know, real *bodhicitta*. And I come out of meditation and I'm just mad, because my back hurts and my knees hurt. Yeah? And somebody else, oh, they study so well, they know so much. And, you know, I've never been very good at studying. I don't know very much. They know Dharma better than I do. Yeah, and So-and-so's done more prostrations than I do. They finished the whole *ngondro* on prostrations and they've done *Vajrasattva* and they've done refuge in guru yoga... and me? <sighs> I haven't done any of that. I'm a failed Buddhist.

<Laughter>



And so we just get jealous, you know, you name it. Yeah? We get jealous of somebody who's older when we're little kids. We get jealous of older siblings because they get to do things that we can't do. When we're older we get jealous of younger people, because they look better than us. So jealousy is just based on discontent and comparison. And our heart is never at peace. So we'll get jealous of other's possessions, you know. They have this new flashy, red sports car. Yeah, then you know they're a middle-aged man.

[Laughter]

But we get jealous. How come they get to have a flashy, red sports car and not me? You know? Or, “Oh, look what I got?” You know, my husband got me a new diamond ring. You just visualize—

[Laughter]

Yeah. But, you know, we look at somebody else's diamond ring and it's like, “Oh, that's terrible.” You know, how come their husband got them that and my husband didn't get me that? People get good opportunities that we don't get. They have good talents that we don't have. They're musical or artistic or athletic and they're better than us. Yeah. Anything, we'll get jealous of. And we'll just stay stuck in that pain for quite a long time. You know, often plotting how we're going to destroy their happiness. I think that's another reason why we don't like to talk about jealousy, because when we're jealous, we want to destroy somebody else's happiness.

We want that happiness for our self. But it's kind of embarrassing to admit that you want to destroy somebody else's happiness. That's not such a nice thing to do. But that's what we want to do. And we'll sit and plan it out in great detail...sometimes while we're sitting in perfect meditation position. Planning out how we're going to destroy their happiness and we're going to



get the recognition instead. And then, of course, we dedicate the, well, there's no merit. We can't dedicate that!

[Laughter]

There's a lot of negative karma; you can't dedicate that.

[Laughter]

So you're kinda stuck at the end of your session.

[Laughter]

Okay. So what exactly is jealousy? Here's a definition we have: It's a disturbing state of mind that comes from the depths that involves an inability to bare another's fortune due to being attached to goods and services. It involves hatred and has the function of causing discomfort of mind and not abiding in contact with happiness. That's a technical definition.

Okay. An inability to bear another's fortune. So, you know, especially at Christmas time “May everybody,” you know, “live in peace; may everybody have their needs fulfilled; may everybody be happy and content...except that person, who has happiness and contentment and I didn't even do anything to give it to them! But I can't stand that they have it.”

So jealousy's quite contradictory, isn't it? You know, because we're always, at Christmas, saying, “May everybody be happy and fulfilled.” We recite the Four Immeasurables every day: “May all sentient beings have happiness and its causes; may they be free of suffering and its causes; may they never be separated from sorrow-less bliss; may they abide in equanimity, free



of bias, attachment, and anger.” We have these beautiful wishes for sentient beings. But when they’re happy and we don’t think they deserved it, because we should have it, then throw the Four Immeasurables out the window. Let’s make this person miserable, because that’s what jealousy wants to do.

It wants that happiness for ourselves and it wants to destroy it in other people. If we talk in terms of non-violent communication, jealousy is kind of a reaction to an unmet need. We have a need, maybe for communication, for recognition, for appreciation. We have some need. We’re not getting our need met, but somebody else is. Okay, so it’s an unmet need for us, for connection or love or whatever. But we can’t stand somebody else having that need.

With jealousy we always come out less than. We’re always inferior. We’re less than. And with some people this becomes a whole way of looking at life. With some people, jealousy is just something that happens from time to time; with other people, jealousy becomes the whole framework through which they view life—always this comparison and always coming out less than and finding others’ happiness or opportunities unendurable.

And so that becomes very problematic if it’s our whole take on life, isn’t it? Because then every time we meet somebody we can’t approach somebody new—“Oh, here’s some sentient being,” yeah, “maybe we can be friends? How can we create a good relationship? They’re probably of interest. They have new experiences I’ve never heard of.” We can’t approach a new person like that. We always approach a person as if they’re dangerous because they might be better than me. And they might have something that I don’t have. So we approach any new person always with this comparison coming out less than, being upset, and also feeling sorry for ourselves.

Jealousy is also a big breeder of self-pity. And self-pity is so seductive. ‘Cause it’s just like, “Oh, poor me. “Oh, they have a better opportunity than me. They’re better looking than me. They’re more talented than me. They’re more popular than me. They’re more skilled than me. People



notice them. They don't notice me. Everything—I just can't make it on any degree and everybody's always better than me. And I'm worthless.”

And we spend our whole life like that. Anybody here? Yeah. We have a life-long pity party. Okay.

So how to notice jealousy's coming up in mind. There's a lot of different kinds of thoughts that lie behind jealousy. So it's very good to notice what those thoughts are. And here is where this mental factor “introspective awareness” comes in, because it monitors the mind to see what we're thinking, you know? What our emotions are. And so when we have sharp introspective awareness it can find certain thoughts even when those thoughts are lurking beneath the surface, but certainly influencing us very much.

So what kind of thoughts are behind jealousy? Well, one is: How come they get this and I don't? I think sometimes that the first words that American children learn—three words aside from Mama and Papa—is “It's not fair.” Yeah? Did you learn to say “It's not fair” early on? I did. You know, whenever I didn't get something and my brother or sister did, “It's not fair!” Yeah. So you'd grow up with this whole mentality of “It's not fair. How come they get this and I don't? How come they can do this and I can't? It's not fair.”

That's a big story that lies behind the jealousy. So why do they get to go there and I don't? How come they get to do this and I don't? Even the abbey, you know? How come somebody else gets to study more than I do? How come somebody else gets to travel and go here and there and I don't get to? Always this comparison thing. Somebody likes them, but they don't like me. Even when you look at all the pictures of the nuns out there, I'm the ugliest nun.

[Laughter]



Yeah? Everybody else looks bright and rosy and I look...yeah.

[Laughter]

They look better than me. People like them; they don't like me. Even if I try I'll never be as good as them. The world's stacked against me. I never had the same opportunity that they had. It's not fair. So also listen for the thoughts that start out, "I never..." or start out, "They always..."

I never get to do that. They always get to do it. I never get recognized, even though what I do is better than them. They always get recognized even though their work isn't as good. Why do people appreciate them more than me? Why do they have a loving relationship and I'm all alone? How come my boyfriend fell for her when I'm much better? So it always boils down to comparing our self with other people and coming out less. So it's quite painful. Yeah? Because we can't take this to the international court.

[Laughter]

We would like to, because "it's not fair." But, you know, nobody's going to hear our case. In fact, other people don't really care very much.

[Laughter]

Which is even worse! Because I'm suffering and they don't care. It's not fair. Poor me. Okay. Oh my goodness, you know? And so jealousy also acts to feed low self-esteem and a sense of low self-worth. Nobody recognizes me, and that's because I'm just inferior to start with. Okay? So how do we get out of jealousy?

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