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Rick Hanson: [00:00:00] I'd like to explore with you something that I think is actually sort of missing in the Buddha Dharma, especially, well, certainly I'll speak to, I think it's missing in both early Buddhism and in Zen. Tibetan Buddhism has some practices for this, which basically has to do with, what do we do with the painful residues of life experiences, the baggage, the patterns? The stuff, the trauma material that just gets lodged in our nervous system. How do we actually clear it out? So first I want to name some really useful things from Buddhism in general about this and then slide more into some fundamental neuropsychology for how we help the brain to unlearn some of the painful material it's learned over the years.

Rick Hanson: [00:00:55] Well... First off, we have, certainly in Buddhism, many practices in which we shift our relationship to our emotional baggage. Let's say, I'll speak for myself, that you grow up and for whatever reason, you feel very much like an outsider with your peers. Maybe you're bullied, maybe you're not so bullied, but you don't feel like you ever really belong. You don't fit in, you wanna fit in. But you're not good at fitting in, so you don't fit in and you get rejected, so forth, so fourth. Welcome to my school years until I left for college. And so you're dealing with that. Well, one thing that Buddhism is really helpful about, including in early Buddhism, is to develop a capacity to just get up, take a step back, or a few step backs. Maybe get a few rows back from the screen. Looking up at it, eating some popcorn, but still, wow, that's really painful. But with getting some breathing room around it, the mindfulness trainings, the ability to steady your mind so that you're not so hijacked by what arises, establishing a greater sense of quiet as foundational in you, as kind of like the space in which the noise occurs, the noise of those residues and that baggage.

Rick Hanson: [00:02:25] Developing a greater sense of wholeness, of unification, of being undivided so that there's less tendency to reject or hate or feel ashamed of different parts of yourself. As I quoted Dick Schwartz, you know, in Internal Family Systems, it's, you know, no bad parts. Buddhism is really helpful in this way. And you recall what I just went through in the meditation around steadying the mind, quieting it. And coming to singleness. So it's very helpful in that regard. Buddhism is also really helpful in terms of seeing the nature of experiences in which let's say that baggage arises, say for me, feeling unworthy in groups or like small and invisible, tending to interpret neutral events as rejecting when actually they're not, those are experiences. That's mental content. You know, that the story, the narrative, whatever is arising as an experience can be recognized directly as made of parts that are connected and changing. Compounded, interrelated, and impermanent. Parts that are connect and changing so that, speaking of myself, that kind of slumping, sleepy, dissociative, sort of beta swerve into invisibility and oblivion, went around some sort of dominating powerful alpha figures, that's an experience. The body sensations are experiences, the emotions of it, the thoughts of it. The desires related to it, the behavioral enactments of it the shrinking away, maybe subtly, those are all experiences. And with growing insight, growing wisdom, you can recognize their emptiness. They exist emptily, frothily, foamily, cloudily, not brickily, fixedly, not. And that growing recognition of the nature of our baggage, our patterns, our triggers, our sense of being triggered, the somatic sense of it, insight into that can be very freeing. It's still there, but it's better to be a cloud than a brick, it has less impact. It's less horrible, it's easier to bear. When it has a sense of swirliness and dynamism, it's moving, it's changing.

Rick Hanson: [00:05:16] Buddhism is certainly really helpful about that. And then third, in terms of our baggage, Buddhism is really helpful in terms of especially early Buddhism, original OG Buddhism, recognizing the pitfalls in getting caught up in craving or clinging, including the craving or clinging that's negatively balanced as resistance. Rejecting going to war with different aspects of yourself or different kinds of experiences. And there's a lot of insight that if, for example, we fight with our baggage, what you resist persists. Doesn't make it better, makes it worse. If we cling to forms of self-medicating around our baggage. If you get caught up in, you know, Soothing ourselves with eating or other things Those forms of clinging create suffering. They're not effective. They are problematic. There's a lot of good material definitely in Buddhism about that sort of thing and You know the definitely good stuff there that said 2500 years ago and I'm not deeply schooled in Tibetan Buddhism and there are many schools of Tibetan Buddhism, but I've never really come across in original Buddhism, early Buddhism, or in Tibetan Buddhism or in Zen, I've just never really come across what, certainly in the last hundred years, particularly the last fifty or so, we've really come to recognize as the developmental parfait built from the bottom up layered nature of the psyche. Such that we carry with us and are very affected by, we're designed to be affected by learning at all ages, particularly learning in childhood, especially if it was painful and particularly especially if It was painful in childhood and involved other people. The brain prioritizes that kind of learning and I'm not saying this to criticize Buddhism. It'd be like, you know, criticizing Isaac Newton because he left out general relativity. Well, he didn't know about it. And so that said, we do know some things that the Buddha did not know scientifically, certainly at least, and other teachers in that lineage, and we can learn from those things. We can make use of those things, we can draw upon a more developmental model that takes into account especially childhood experiences.

Rick Hanson: [00:08:11] So I wanna explore with you some methods for modern neuropsychology, and I wanna highlight some in particular. And explore with you some of the ways in which they could they relate to conventional Buddhist practice in, I think, a wonderful kind of synergy or synthesis. And the material I'm going to get into a lot has to do with using positive experiences that are matched to heal old baggage. That involves a kind of linking, if you're familiar with the way I talk about that. And if you're interested in this, you can learn more about it and books I've written and so forth. Now an example of this in early Buddhism has to do with what are called the hindrances. These are five major hindrances to practice. Gil Fronstel has pointed out that a good translation of the early language of Buddhism is translated as hindrance, could also be translated as coverings. This is what covers over our true nature, the light that already shines within us or hinders us. In the natural movement forward in our practice, all right? And just very briefly, maybe we'll explore these more in a future day. The five hindrances are, I'll do this from memory, attachment to sense pleasure, which includes pushing away pain, ill will, so getting caught up in that righteous, vengeful, aggrieved case, kind of hostility toward others, that's a hindrance. Another one is called restlessness and remorse. Or you could say anxiety and anxious and, you know, regretful preoccupations that hinders practice that kind of caught up in that. Fourth would be what's translated routinely as sloth and torpor, funny words. You know, just being tired, lazy, indolent, not giving a darn, that's a hindrance to practice. And then last, doubt, toxic doubt, pernicious doubt. And so for each of these, it is traditionally taught that there are antidotes or matched beneficial experiences that we can link to that negative material, right?

Rick Hanson: [00:10:30] The idea of linking is simply that you're associating something quote unquote negative with something positive. We do linking routinely, it sounds exotic, it's really natural. When you are mindful of something painful, that's linking because there's

both that which is painful and the mindfulness of it. In effect, to use a metaphor, if you pour a teaspoon of salt into a single cup, swirl it around and drink it, ugh, too salty. But if you take the same amount of salt and then you pour it into a nice big bowl of clean water, swirl it round, and then pull out a cup and drink, you'll hardly taste the salt at all. Well, in much the same way, the pain, the salt, can be held in a much larger container of Open awareness, stably, quiet, open, peaceful awareness, let's say with training, and then you're linking the pain to that broader untroubled space, that's a kind of linking. With regard to the hindrances, so I'll go through some of the kind of common antidotes or matched resources, and we'll explore this together. And then maybe we'll open it up. For kind of issues from childhood that are fairly commonplace. I've named one for myself, feeling left out and unwanted, like the runt of the litter, as my dad would put it, who grew up on a ranch in North Dakota. He was not saying I actually was the runt of the litter, but that's an expression, you know, from his ranching days.

Rick Hanson: [00:12:13] Why don't we start with attachment to sense pleasures? So we're. Yeah. We want more, more, and more. Dopamine nation. We want, we want, and we want. Well, what might be an antidote to that? Which introduces the broad notion that it's really useful to have something matched to the issue. So to jump ahead with, consider doubt, pernicious doubt. One of the antidotes to doubt is conviction. And trusting yourself, trusting what you know to be true. That's a good antidote to self-doubt. But Trusting what you know to be true or conviction is not well matched to Dealing with kind of addictive pleasures It's not matched to it. Okay, we need to match the medicine to the ailment And that's a key guiding principle very often in therapy and in personal growth and in life We try to address some kind of underlying issue with some beautiful experience, but it's not matched to it. A common case of this is when people are anxious, when they're, you know, they're they're worried about a threat coming or they're worried about what's actually happening in their life. And then somebody says, well, look on the bright side, be grateful. You want to bop them in the nose. It doesn't speak to the fear and the sense of threat, the alarm of the scared monkey to be grateful for all the food in your cupboard. Great, that's not my issue. It's not matched to it. So one of the major teachings of the Buddha coming from a monastic tradition is that a sense of contentment with what... What one already has, is really nicely matched to attachment to sense pleasures. If you have an urge to do something that you know will be short-term gain and long-term pain, whatever it might be, if you could pause for a moment and help yourself feel that you're happy enough already, there's enough already. You are enough already You can find that sense of contentment, then that withdraws fuel, withdraws energy from those urges on various kinds. So you can see how contentment is matched. Right? I could go through a few other items. I'll just... Why not do that?

Rick Hanson: [00:15:08] So now we have ill will. What would be matched to ill will? Well... If someone has wronged you, let's say for real, they really have mistreated you, and you've had it up to here about that, and you're getting really caught up in your righteous case about them, what is a resource or beneficial experience, a flower that would be well matched to that weed of ill will? Probably several things. And maybe what might be interesting. Is we'll do it this way, that I will name an issue, then I'll ask you to nominate what you think could be matched resources, what might help you if it was more present in you. Okay, empathy for that person that you have ill will for. Yeah, beautiful. What might be some other? Patience. Patience is a good general purpose one. Yeah, support, meta, common humanity. Yeah, Beautiful. Loving-kindness. Yeah compassion Sense that even though they really have wronged you they're they're suffering I'm gonna name a couple that may not immediately occur to you. It might be seem a little counterintuitive when someone has wronged you I Find that it really helps to calm me down When I have been

wronged by someone to have a strong feeling of being on my own side Now you might think that that strong Sense of being loyal to yourself would actually fuel the ill will But often I find it actually doesn't, that ill will very often comes from a sense of weakness. That, you know, they just knocked us off center and we feel aggrieved as a result. But when you get in touch with the fact that, hey, you're on your own side and you're gonna see clearly here what actually happened and you gonna make a good plan, then increasingly your focus is on yourself and less sense of helplessness, more sense of agency. More sense of effectiveness. Right, sometimes I think people jump too quickly to, you know, empathy, compassion, kindness, love for them. I'm not ready for that yet. You know, they knocked me silly or they really hurt my kids or they did something outrageous politically. It sometimes feels inauthentic. It's like a spiritual bypass to jump to this sort of super lovey-dovey stuff and maybe what's helpful first. Is to move into, hey, I'm going to really see clearly what happened, and I'm gonna honor how I've been hurt by this, and I am going to stick up for myself inside myself in a full way. In a funny way, that often can calm you down, because then you feel stronger and more on your own footing, in addition to the various things that other people have said. So you can see the idea of matching.

Rick Hanson: [00:18:30] Now, later on... Going to get into more of the neurology of actually how to do this in your own brain by engaging your mind which means engaging underlying neural activity. But for the moment we're exploring the notion that there can be matched well-matched antidotes or medicine for for what the baggage you're carrying. And I'm using the example in Buddhism of the hindrances. Okay, let's take a look at a third hindrance, restlessness and remorse. Restlessness being a kind of agitation. You can't settle some of that comes from temperament. You know, we're just sensation seeking we have Greater need for stimulation that makes us kind of restless. We've got it. We don't want to sit quietly I'm not going to speak to that. Why don't we look at remorse? So there you are remorse We could spend three sessions on remorse. We're not going to. But think of something that deep down inside, you know, you feel bad about it. You feel bad what you did. And let's say it was more than just you were kind of clueless or unskillful or there was a better way that's worthy of correction that actually in your mind, you committed some kind of a moral fault. Maybe your moral fault was to harm yourself. Okay. Or maybe it was to harm another person, where you really crossed a line. Whatever that might be. What could be matched and helpful for remorse? And I just want to pause for a second. Isn't it good to realize that we can look for resources, experiences, inner strengths that we develop that are matched to our issues, that will help us? All right Seeking repair, knowing that you're seeking repair. Beautiful, fantastic, great. So these are really good, love it. I wanna name self-forgiveness, obviously. And self-forgiveness doesn't have traction in my experience until we fully feel all appropriate remorse, which does not mean beating ourselves up out of proportion to what happens. And getting caught up in ruminating, just repetitive punishment of oneself. When you get the lesson and you've suffered sufficiently, it's okay to turn a corner and to move toward forgiving yourself and even a kind of absolution, kind of wash and clean. I had a client who, looking to how to disguise this, Just had a lot of feelings of Shame self-shame. It was really undeserved as is the case for for children very often, but in any case she was carrying a lot of shame. And one way she handled it was by there were some beautiful small little streams or rivers near where she lived and she would rest in the stream in a hot day and have a sense of the cooling pure water washing her clean, washing herself. So, a kind of self-forgiveness, an absolution she was giving herself. So that would be very targeted in a resource that would well be matched to remorse.

Rick Hanson: [00:22:18] I want to introduce an idea here, I'm going to start moving into more of the techniques, the neurologically informed techniques of this, in that when we

bring into contact the appositive with negative, it's really important to be able to have the positive win, as it were, and to keep refueling and regenerating the positive so it doesn't get distracted by the negative. And also to get in touch with matched resources that are developmentally matched. For example, if the Morse is has to do with something you did recently as an adult in, let's say, middle age. And you feel pretty bad about it. But what's underneath that is maybe something that you just felt kind of bad about when you were in high school or even younger in middle school in which you maybe let somebody down or bullied somebody. Even a little bit. I'm thinking of a couple of situations like that in my own history. And so now we have, as the brain does, the present time reactions are being amplified by and connected to earlier similar. And the similarity could be fairly remote or intuitive or associational, but still somehow the brain is connected. It's a giant association. Machine, early or similar, kind of a stack is a term that can be used. And so what do you do then? Well, if you're going to enable a kind of release in these younger layers of yourself, it helps for what you're matching to them to be at their developmental level. So if I were to think through some, you know, shame I still carry. From a kind of bullying I did briefly while I was horsing around with another boy that was just uncool. Some kind of major logic, it just sails right over the head of the inner 10-year-old. You know, but if you can feel that you're bringing to bear a kind of comfort or soothing or kindness or concrete language that's appropriate to that younger layer of yourself, much as it would have been appropriate to that younger person you once were, then it's going to be more effective. That's a good general point, okay?

Rick Hanson: [00:25:12] So we have two to go in terms of the Buddhist hindrances. The next one is sloth and torpor. Well, one of the great resources for sloth and torpor is getting enough sleep. And maybe you need a nap. It's okay, right? There's a place for that. But experientially, you know, of one of the antidotes to sloth and torpor is kind of intensely positive experience. Something that's really enjoyable. And maybe it's enjoyable. In ways that are sort of unrelated to meditation or anything like that, it's just energizing, right? So if you're feeling like you're unmotivated in your practice or you don't have any juice for it anymore, turn toward what's juicier. You know, the breath is boring. Maybe it's better to focus on loving-kindness and being lived by love and opening out into love broadly. All right. Maybe that is juicier for you. Maybe active forms of meditation that are more energetic and lively, you know, that's a good antidote to sleepiness, let's say. Maybe if you're doing some kind of formal practice and you're just, you can't stay awake, leave the meditation hall and skip a meditation period and go for a vigorous hike in the hills, which I would do routinely, which would really energize me for rest of the day during, let's say, a meditation retreat, you know, these would be matched. Sloth and torpor is especially important to pay attention to insofar as it might be a clue that there's something not quite right with your body and something to pay to attention to. Maybe it's just a more general lethargy that would be served by, frankly, doing what everybody says we ought to do, you know, getting whatever, a few days a week of some kind of vigorous physical activity, whatever you like, maybe more than that. You know, bring more energy in. Or maybe there's some kind of underlying illness. Inflammation is a broad reaction to science, bodily defense. It's the innate, primary, most ancient wing of the two wings of the immune system. Innate immunity rather than acquired, which is the more recent aspect of the system. And anyway, inflammation is systemic.

Rick Hanson: [00:27:38] And if you just kind of notice you're sort of achy, notice that achiness brings down your mood, brings down energy. It's an understandable biological reaction because then it helped our ancestors to survive by getting them off the field of battle as it were because now they felt mopey and achy and depressed. But they were miserable, but at least they lived to see the sunrise. So that could be a clue if you're

grappling with sloth and torpor. It's a good thing to pay attention to. Pay attention to the body. Okay, last one, doubt. Doubt, especially self-doubt, second guessing. You know, it's sort of like a version of obsessive-compulsive checking. You have to keep checking yourself to make sure you're a good person. You have keep checking that, you know, you've earned to be alive yet one more day. So what's a good antidote for that? So I'm kind of curious, what are you coming up with as antidotes for doubt, especially self-doubt? In Buddhism, there's a focus on doubt related to the teachings, or doubt in teachers. I'm going to focus it more psychologically, more conventionally, you know, doubting yourself, doubting your own goodness. What are good antidotes to that? So I'll toss in a couple that might not be quite so obvious. I'm not saying at all they're better, they're probably worse, but I'll just toss them in for a variety sake.

Rick Hanson: [00:29:07] So Doubt functions often as a defense against disappointment. It's a defense against trusting and being disappointed, or making an effort, doubting in your own ability to fill in the blank, write that poem, sing that song, write that book, start that project. You know, you doubt it. You doubt yourself. Well, what's, you know, if doubt has a payoff, if it has a function, a reward value of some kind, what's one of its functions? It's a defense against extending yourself, sticking your neck out, and then getting disappointed by some result. So one of the matched resources for doubt is the ability to tolerate some disappointment in this life. A version of that is in the title of one of my Just One Thing newsletter essays. Relax, you're going to be criticized. It's like... Relax, you're going to be disappointed sometimes, okay? And just go, yeah, okay, I'm going to play the odds. I'm gonna try five things and three will probably succeed. One will be so-so and one will be disappointing, but I don't know which one it's gonna be, so I've gotta try all five. And I'm gotta get three wins, even if I'm disappointed one in five times. So that's one.

Rick Hanson: [00:30:40] And then another is to stand up for what you know. Your mind. Stand up for what you recognize. You know there's a line from people who try to undermine our clear seeing, including politically. A line, kind of a jokey line is, who are you gonna trust, me or your lying eyes? Well actually you ought to trust your eyes, as you're seeing clearly, right? When they show you who they are, believe them the first time, as I think Maya who may have said it. So that's another antidote to doubt. Okay, so you see the overall structure, okay, we have material with baggage of different kinds. Next week, I'll explore this topic further. If you like this idea of kind of tackling underlying negative material and doing something about it, you might like this stuff I'm gonna get into, which for me, I really like because I'm going to get into the deep end of the pool. So we have negative material. The Buddha talked about hindrances because they're real, all right? They really... Then there are more specific versions of that from childhood. And I think I'll do a bit of a grab bag here, lightning round with you on some childhood issues. And we have that material, it's there. It's not bad if we go to war with it or cling to its opposite, that's not so good. What we can do though, is the alchemy, the wonderful alchemic of healing in which we can use the positive to heal the negative by linking to it in ways that are matched. Including developmentally.

Rick Hanson: [00:32:19] And then staying with that experience in ways that, through the wonder of positive neuroplasticity and disrupting the reconsolidation of negative material in the neural nets of memory, we really can, over time, clear the negative. We really can. And if you've got monastics who are meditating 12 hours a day in very relatively quiet settings for decades. Maybe that alone can gradually slowly clear that negative material, but. The brain is designed to hold on to it. And if you don't have access to that level of monastic practice, if you're like me, and you need results, you want results here and now, including for the people you're helping and working with, we need faster methods, we need more

effective methods. And also, why carry that baggage around any longer than you need to? When the pain no longer has gained, it's time to let it go. It's what you would say to somebody else and it's what can say to yourself too. So, okay good. Great, great, great.

Rick Hanson: [00:33:31] All right, so I've kind of flowed through some good Buddhist-y stuff. What are some examples? Anybody want to put an example or two in the chat? And then we could explore what might be a matched antidote or a matched resource, okay? Do sloth and torpor relate to depression? Very often. Depressed mood. Slides into sloth and torpor, or just the, you know, I don't mean these terms so pejoratively, weariness and anhedonia. That's a funny term. Anhedonia means not really finding pleasure in things that you once found enjoyable, just blah, blah. Very often that's a major symptom of And, you know, so, which is worth attending to, particularly if... You try some of these more standard level interventions, level one interventions that I'm talking about here, and they don't budge the underlying weariness, fatigue, and meh, you know, experience of living. Well, then it's time to go to level two and look for, you now, talk to a therapist, think about your physical health altogether because depressed mood is the, probably single most common symptom across all the melodies. That are listed in the physician's encyclopedia.

Rick Hanson: [00:34:56] Of all the symptoms, one of the most common symptoms crossing the board is depressed mood. So depressed mood is often a, not always, but could be a signal of some underlying physiological issue to attend to. What do we got going? Dealing with negative people. Okay, okay, okay. So let's suppose that those negative people are really negative, right? Okay. And so what. Well, the so-what is that they stir up experiences in you, let's say of various kinds. They make you mad, or they create disappointment in you. Or it's just a drag to be around them, OK? What would be a good inner resource, a strength, for the exasperation that comes up around negative people? No, right. What would be a good one? Well, I'll just toss a couple in and you're welcome to name it yourself So they're negative over there and I'm getting exasperated and like I can hardly believe it fed up over here Well, one thing that helps is a sense of boundaries. A sense that they're over there, I'm over here, their mind is their mind, my mind is my mind, I'm not implicated in their mind stream, right? Their circus is not my monkey, or something, some expression like that. The sense of boundary, the cognition of boundary and even the felt sense of the boundary, they're all over there. So a greater sense of separation, disentanglement. If you're someone who's very emotionally porous, as some of the most beautiful, most sensitive people are, and still, you know.

Rick Hanson: [00:36:50] Boundaries can be very fuzzy, showing up your internal sense of me so you're not swallowed up by we, would be a great resource for dealing with negative people. I'll just say maybe one more thing is to know what your plan is. You know, if you're feeling like you don't have a plan, well that's going to really affect you. But if inside yourself you think, okay, I'm trapped here for the next 15 minutes in this car with Uncle Bob, who's ranting about. Fill in the blank. Okay, I'm stuck. But you know what? I'm never going for a car ride with Uncle Bob, ever. I'm gonna walk if I have to. If you know your plan is, or maybe you make a plan of a different kind so that you're not going to be so affected in the future, that too would be a nicely matched resource. And then knowing that I've got a plan, knowing that you have a plan is really helpful.

Rick Hanson: [00:37:49] Okay, what's another one? Why do so many people seem to come here for mental health help? I thought this was a meditation and dharma talk session. Well, for me, the Buddha's first noble truth is about dukkha. It's about discomfort and suffering, emotional reactivity. Much of his teaching was about emotional reactivity. It's completely appropriate to draw on the tools of the dharma to address reactivity in the mind

and I'm also a psychologist and different teachers have different kind of setting focuses if you will I know teachers who basically are kind of very minimalist and they're there to do open awareness and there might be a few questions that will the answer to almost every question is just be with it and know that it's not you? Okay, great. And maybe that's more your cup of tea, right? So I just say that.

Rick Hanson: [00:38:53] One of the things I personally really love and I encourage reading in the Pali Canon, in a good translation, what comes through again and again is the open-hearted invitation of the Buddha. He didn't say to people who would ask him all kinds of questions, why are you asking me that dumb question? Now, if people came to him... Like a lot of the Brahmins did at the time, to argue with him philosophically, right, to engage him at that level, he would be pretty blunt with them. And he would, you know, do things essentially like saying, you know I hear you, I hear, you I hear. What's it like to be you? Are you happy? Are you loving? Are you a loving person? Are you personally virtuous? Are you taking care of your side of the street? You know, he would address them. But ordinary people, you know, the uneducated villagers that would ask him questions most sincerely about what to do about family problems, or a child who died, or a friend who would not pay them back financially, he would speak to their questions quite intimately. He didn't get high and mighty, like, I'm the Buddha. How dare you ask me that question about your neighbor who ripped you off of the corn that you gave them.

Rick Hanson: [00:40:14] So anyway, so I just think that's a really useful thing to keep in mind. Well, I think that is about it. We're toward the end. The point is, it's normal to be affected by the life you've had. And part of compassion is recognizing that there are many people who may have been more affected by life than you've been. Not necessarily, but perhaps. I myself... Had a really unhappy childhood, and I have a zero score on the ACEs list, the adverse childhood experiences, 10, kind of a list of 10 experiences. I didn't have any of those. My parents did not divorce. Drugs and alcohol were not a big issue. I was not molested. I was not abused. I did not have significant mental illness as a child, et cetera, et cetera, or have to be with people who did. And still, even without... You know, the big kahunas of yaks. That can be a lot of impact, drip, drip drip. You know, the kind of grinding, critical atmosphere in my home and the fear of being caught doing something wrong and, you know the kind of chill in the air between my parents and atmosphere of bickering and nitpicking and ugh, you know that adds up over time. And if you have a sensitive temperament, genetically or for maybe something happened to you, you're gonna be more effective. It's understandable. So you know what I mean? There's a wide range.

Rick Hanson: [00:41:57] And I think about and related to this question of what do we do about, you know, is this an appropriate gathering to address forms of unhappiness and factors of un-happiness? You bet it is. I'm not here to do therapy with people. And there's a level, as I say, mental health issues that go way beyond the tools of Buddhism or the tools or the Wednesday evening meditation. And... Acknowledging when the tools here don't really address those issues, yeah, go get more help. But sure, there's a lot of help that's available in level one for addressing these things. And I think about the poem, I'll try to do most of it from memory, from Miller Williams, father of Lucinda Williams, go Lucinda, who writes, have compassion for everyone you meet. It's not conceit. Goes on a little bit and then he concludes, for you do not know what secret wars are going on down there where the spirit meets the bone. We don't know, you know. Maybe you're so developed that, or whoever anyone is, that you're really pretty far along. You know, people do develop, and it's beautiful. That's the point. We develop. Increasingly, we're less bothered by certain things, and that's wonderful.

Rick Hanson: [00:43:21] And almost certainly, those fruits of your practice were due to your own virtuous efforts, and they were probably also due to various forms of good fortune. And maybe, at least in my case, they were due to a certain amount of advantage. You know? That operates through disadvantaging others. We rarely earn 100% of the fruits of our practice. So even if there are a lot of fruits of practice in you, there's a place for humility and kindness and compassion for other people. For you do not know what secret wars are going on down there where their spirit meets their bone. You walk down a street, you know, you see people's faces, you look in your mirror, you a photograph of yourself, you see the secret struggle. And finishing up here, our kindness and spaciousness and interest and common humanity, camaraderie for those, for others who are grappling with difficulties is a kind of linking in the moment. And think about the ways in which an accepting, encouraging, respectful look or word or touch from another person really lifted you. You know, even just a few seconds or breaths worth of that, in much the same way, we have that opportunity to lift other people as well.