11_11_26 Talk*

*This is an automatically generated transcript, so there are errors.

Rick Hanson: [00:00:00] Before my prepared talk, I'd like to make a comment on the meditation and then speak to two questions that came up in the chat. The first comment is that it's really valuable to have a global sense of being in ways that are good for you and good for others too. So it's sort of like a global sens of being. We can focus on cultivating particular factors in the mind. You know, like tranquility or compassion in Buddhism, let's say, or we can cultivate things like gratitude or sense of grit. You know, we can focus on different factors. There's a place for that. More fundamentally though, what's the total package? What's a state of being that's fairly global described in simple ways, typically. That's a good base for you. Like, centered. And present or grounded, peaceful and open-hearted as a kind of an integrated package for you. So, there's... They're both the global ways of being that are good. I think grounded, peaceful, and open-hearted is good.

Rick Hanson: [00:01:23] And more generally, I just kind of invite you into reflecting on what's your overall state of being and appreciate that your overall state of the being is a kind of floor on which everything else rests. So if you can get that floor right, you know, your overall attitude, your overall way of presenting and being and resting, then everything kind of originates from that. So not to get all caught up in, oh my goodness, I've got to find the best possible global state of being. I'm just naming it as something to reflect on. And it also goes to levels of identity. The more that you can have a sense, for example, that it is your nature, deep down, to be grounded, peaceful. And open-hearted and warm-hearted, that that's kind of who you are. That's your resting state, that's your home base. The more you're, you know, able to stabilize in that, the better that could be for you. So just a passing observation to reflect on, okay?

Rick Hanson: [00:02:24] Then I got a comment from Maria McCleary at 55 minutes past five, who writes, I was meditating the other day following your open presence meditation. I became aware that there was an undercurrent of self-criticism that I realized is there much of the time, though not always in awareness. As I worked to let that go, fear came up. I wondered if that fear was protective or how to deal with fear if it comes up while meditating. So there are a lot of questions in this. First, there are different ways to meditate. One form of meditation is to keep letting go. Aware and letting go. So you're in a state of open awareness, you're making the minimal necessary effort to stay present, and otherwise you are just disengaging from everything as it rolls through awareness. You're not following after it, you are not resisting it, you're not labeling it, and you're trying to understand it. You are not trying to grow from it. You're not trying to help us sink in? You're just letting the movie roll. Sometimes there are versions of this in different traditions, there are subtle differences sometimes, but there's kind of a general similarity between what could be called open awareness, or just sitting, or luminous awareness. You're just there.

Rick Hanson: [00:03:51] So in that kind of deliberate practice, you would just, the fear is there, so what? It rolls in, it rolls out, it sticks around, whatever. You're not trying to do anything with it. Now sometimes, on the other hand, it could be skillful to actually move out of that just bare witnessing mode of being, choiceless awareness, it's also called, and actually inquire and investigate, oh, fear isn't as interesting. Here I am in this very open place in which the deeper layers of my psyche are becoming revealed to me. How interesting, how useful. And you might explore it. And you might. Sense down into what is younger about it or the body sensations of it. You're not trying to fix anything, you're just exploring. And in the process of exploring you, you may learn things about yourself. There

might be some releasing as you unpack and open up and disentangle different aspects of your psyche, your stream of consciousness. Great, that might be appropriate to do. So you kind of make a choice, myself, I confess, I will. Typically rest in open awareness, and then if things bubble up that are kind of interesting, reep, I may divert, you know, for a little bit, few minutes maybe, then kind of get some good value there on the cushion and then all right, all right. I know enough now I can kind of go back to the deeper undertaking that you know that I'm engaged in at the time.

Rick Hanson: [00:05:22] The other thing I'll just say is that isn't it interesting that as this person says, there's a maybe an undercurrent of self-criticism. And then if we start moving into letting that go, letting go of over-the-top, excessively harsh self-criticism, maybe an anxiety starts coming up. Ooh, you know, what could we be afraid of? Related to letting go self- criticism. Different kinds of things, you an obvious, usual suspect in therapy world would be the fear that if you're not hard on yourself, other people will be. In other words, if you are not hard yourself. You'll mess up in some way. You'll take your eye off the ball, and then whack-o-la, some kind of shaming attack will come rolling in from big brother, big sister, you know, big coach, big parent, whatever. So that's interesting. And then what's useful is to appreciate that you can definitely guide yourself. You can encourage yourself. You can hold yourself to account. You can remind yourself, as my friends would sometimes around rock climbing. Stop whining, Hanson, and start climbing. You know, there could be a place for that, but that's really different from harsh criticism. And in the knowing that you can prevent what harsh self-criticism is trying to prevent and that you could accomplish what that criticism is trying to accomplish without the collateral damage of feeling bad about yourself and getting really kind of mean to yourself. Well, when you know that, then there need not be anxiety or fear. About releasing self-criticism.

Rick Hanson: [00:07:04] And then the other question or comment that came in. So, dear Dr. Hansen, on your comment on grieving as an indicator of what we value, can we then value something without attachment so that we can have equanimity, that we will be okay no matter what? Thank you. I suspect that Sue here is already tuned into the answer to the question. Definitely yes. The Buddha never spoke against desire per se. And there's a lot in Buddhism, certainly early Buddhism, which I'm most familiar with, that is about healthy desire. The Eightfold Path is about desiring wise view, wise intentions. Wise intentions are full of desire. They wish that others be happy. The wish that others not suffer, as wholesome desire. There are even two distinct words in a key language of early Buddhism, Pali, P-A-L-I. The word for, you know, the desire that creates suffering is often translated as craving. The root of it as a word is thirst. Something is missing, something is wrong, pushing us into a drive state. And then the word for wholesome desires is chanda, chandas. Beneficial desires. So there's definitely a place for that. And I've been thinking here about this, you know, well-known metaphor in Buddhism of the first and the second dart, which I'll be talking about a little more in a moment.

Rick Hanson: [00:08:42] The first dart has to do with the inescapable, inescapable, unavoidable pains of life. Physical pain, you drop a brick on the foot of a Buddha, that foot will still hurt, the inevitable pains of loss, of aging, of losing those we love, for example. Then there are the second darts of our reactions driven by craving, which create suffering and harm. All right? First dart, second dart. There is a place for grieving, mourning. There's a place for feeling sad, for sorrow. There' s a place those are the first starts of life. Now, There are also the first cookies of life. If you take issue with my metaphor here, I apologize, I don't know, cookie monster, just seems like a good thing, cookies. All right, so there are the first cookies of live, the sound of children laughing, the beauty of a dawn, the taste of a cookie, getting your back scratched when it itches, feeling good about

accomplishing something challenging. There are many first cookies in life. No problem. Just like first darts are not inherently a problem, first cookies are not inherent a problem. It's part of life. Trouble begins when we get caught up in the second and cookies. The cookies we create ourselves in our reactions, our cravings, our clingings, our attachments to the pleasures of life, subtle and, you know, I just... And commonplace. That's when trouble begins. Isn't that an interesting addition to the metaphor of the first darts? I like it. I like identifying a cool, neat idea. That is the first cookie. But as soon as I start getting caught up in, oh, wow, I'm pretty smart, now the second cookies are coming and lots and lots of suffering begins. Okay? All right. Great.

Rick Hanson: [00:10:48] So here we go into my kind of more formal talk and I want to kind of create a framework. In the previous two weeks we've been together, two weeks ago I talked about this teaching from a great Korean Zen master, Jin-ul, about sudden awakening to our true nature, peaceful, spacious, unbounded, unconditioned, beyond language. And the gradual cultivation of the capacity to rest in our true nature and to become increasingly permeable to it. Beautiful. So here we have this pointing to toward true nature and the recognition that with our body minds we have some practice to do. There's a line from Suzuki Roshi, you are perfect as you are and you could use a little improvement, gradual cultivation.

Rick Hanson: [00:11:45] Then last week, I explored an aspect of what I think is a kind of home base and very down-to-earth ways for our own deep nature or an approach to it of heartfelt presence. You could use other words if you like, it's the global state of being in which we are really present, we're really here with an open heart, with love, if you will. That state of being. Is an opening that you can follow and follow as far as you go and see what you find. You can follow that into the qualities way down deep in the ground of reality that seem to be timeless and even with qualities of beneficence, generosity. If only the generosity, the endless giving of the arising moment, heartfelt presence. That then takes us into our topic now about the fundamental matter of impermanence. What is impermanent? What is not impermanant? And how can we draw upon wisdom, including the ultimate grounding in what is not subject to arising and passing away, as we grapple with That aspect of impermanence... Which is loss. A central driver of Siddhartha's journey, as best we can gather from the biography, The Life of the Buddha, in his late 20s, he walked away from, in this era, 2,500 years ago, a very privileged and comfortable life. He had a wife, he had a child, either born or on the way, and he walked from all of it. We can think about the morality of that in terms of... Standards 2,500 years ago, and we can also think about the morality of that abandonment of his wife and soon-to-be son from the morality now of us today. That's kind of a side topic and an important one, certainly. I'm going to keep moving here.

Rick Hanson: [00:14:05] And Siddhartha left all that in his quest for an ultimately fulfilling, reliably fulfilling basis for and everlasting sublime peacefulness. And as the story of his life has it, he soon encountered four messengers, four heavenly messengers. He encountered someone who is ill, he encountered someone who was aging, he encountered someone who was dying or dead, and he encountered someone who has engaged in spiritual practice, wisdom practices of various kinds. And we have here, obviously, the first three of these as reflections of transience. Here he was, in the prime of life, mid-to-late 20s, wealthy by the standards of his time, as best we know healthy, in his prime of his life, and yet he knew, eventually, that through that certainly three of the four heavenly messengers would come non-king. Aging, disease, and death. How to practice with all that.

Rick Hanson: [00:15:21] And in his own journey of practice, at least as we know from his own account, he moved through progressively more sublime meditative attainments, and yet each one faded away because it was subject to arising and therefore subject to passing away. He was conditioned, and he kept looking and looking and for that which is not subject to arising and passing away. Which he ultimately found and came back from to tell us about and help us in our own journey find our way to that, both as a destination and as an aspect of our own practice along the way, which I'll be getting to toward the end of my talk here. Which, so to think about this, you know, confrontation with impermanence, Certainly a central aspect of life. Central. To early Buddhism, is this exploration of impermanence. And what it means both macro, like losing loved ones, losing capabilities, losing our own life eventually. What does impermanance mean to us at the macro level? And also what does it mean to, we could say, the micro level as well, of very short time scales?

Rick Hanson: [00:16:42] Now, to preview the end of the story. The Buddha was known as the happy one. How could it be that a deep facing of the endless losing of the present moment could lead someone who penetrates into that with enormous clarity? What kind of clarity could lead someone to be happy? So we'll be exploring that here. So contextually, you could understand that, of course, even as in this moment it ends, the ending of this moment is endlessly offset by the arising of the next one. Why don't people talk about that part? You see throughout early Buddhism, you see throughout lots and lots of philosophy and lots and lot of existentialism, this focus on only one of the two aspects of existence, the ending-ness of the present. There's very little attention to the arisingness of the next one. As a matter of practice, I think the foundation of practice is clear seeing. And it's really important to see clearly the arisingness, the booing of you, the way that the making of you is an ongoing process. That's really half of the truth. It's important to include that half. And Due to the brain's evolved negativity bias like Velcro for bad experiences but Teflon for good ones Understandably We tend to be more Affected by what we lose than by what? We gain this is inherent in our biology.

Rick Hanson: [00:18:59] The psychologist Daniel Kahneman, bless his memory, won a Nobel Prize in economics for identifying the ways that people are more affected by losses than gains and more motivated to prevent losses than to acquire equal gains. We're affected, so it's understandable. You know, we have the Understandable sorrow and grief of our losses like loved ones, objects. I was thinking as I prepared for this talk of a very significant memory of my childhood. I was probably about nine or 10 maybe. And I was a quiet, shy, young for grade kid who skipped a grade. And I knew I was loved, but there was a distance between me and my parents. And I had made at school this art project in which you probably did this yourself as a kid where you would cut out strips of paper and then you would glue them. Together into a form a loop, and then you would do that one after the other so you would have an intertwining collection of loops that then you could string up, you know. Three feet long, six or 10 feet long. And I had done that in school and I wasn't particularly arty. And I was just really glad I did it. And I have it kind of in a loose pile, probably on my desk, because I brought it home. And I came into my bedroom and my mom who was very loving and also kind of controlling and organized and things had to be a certain way. It was her way to kind of ward off disaster as someone who grew up and with a fair amount of chaos in her own background. And she had taken those, you know, that art project and hadn't really understood it and just crumpled it and threw it away. I was so hurt. I was devastated. And I didn't want to... I was awkward. I didn't want to reveal how hurt I was. I was very stoic. And, I kind of turned away. And she looked at me and she could... She was stricken. I could tell. She felt really bad. She didn't realize that she had done this. Like, whoa! And I didn't know how to mend with her and she didn't know how to

repair with me. I left, I went, I just kind of shrugged and left the room and, hoy, loss, loss of an object, loss of a moment that could have been a repair, you know, loss have an opportunity for closeness with my mom, you know things like that.

Rick Hanson: [00:21:23] So that's one example, we lose objects and we can lose what's associated with them. We can lose possibilities. We can realize that we are just never gonna publish that book. Boat has sailed, that bus has left the station, we can realize that, you know, we're never going to be able to repair that person because they're not here anymore, or they have cut us off, or we realize in terms of a possibility that we're just getting too old to climb Mount Everest. It's just not going to happen, right? Or you lose capabilities, you get older, your hearing fades, you need your wife to say that again, what? You know, you're not as sharp as you used to be, you lose your fitness faster, it takes a lot longer to gain it. Things change, right? So in the realness of appreciating that, not withstanding the fact that the losingness of the present is offset by the gainingness of the next arising, still it's understandable that we are indeed really affected by our losses. And indeed it is natural to have grief about them. So I'm going to focus on this in a Buddhist perspective. And if this material is interesting for you and you want to go further than in just, you know, 45 minutes or so, I'm gonna be exploring it with you. If you like, check out this four hour workshop I have. It's on grief and loss. It's really about the psychology of all that. If there's financial need, we're really happy to scholarship people in. We love doing that.

Rick Hanson: [00:22:55] So just knowing that that material is sitting there, if you'd like to check it out, I'm to keep going with this more Buddhist-y stuff. Okay, so One of the key teachings, as I've said, is to feel the first darts, to feel the feelings, feel the feels of grief without adding second darts to it. How to do that, easier said than done, as Leonard Cohen, some of his best lines here, teaches us, I know your burden's heavy as you wheel it through the night. The guru says it's empty, that doesn't make it light. We can have wisdom into the impermanent nature of our grief. We can wisdom into all of this, and still, it can be really painful.

Rick Hanson: [00:23:45] One of the things that can make loss particularly hard to bear is if we have associated unresolved remorse, or guilt, or shame associated with it. Even in complicated situations in which we know that there were many factors in play, including with the other person. If we feel that part of what was in play is our own misdeeds, misjudgments, bad actions, bad attitudes, negligence, et cetera, that can complicate the loss further. So part of dealing with loss is letting yourself feel it. Now, maybe you need to empty your bucket of tears one spoonful at a time, as I have, very appropriately. Maybe you need swing into the pain like a pendulum, as Peter Levine teaches, and swing back out again, pendulating. But spoonful by spoonful, swing by swing, there's a feeling your feelings fully. The central manual of practice in original Buddhism is mindfulness and the establishments of mindfulness, including through investigation, the depth of our own feeling. There's just no replacement for feeling the feelings.

Rick Hanson: [00:25:12] Second, how do we face our losses? Well, there's a lot of Buddhist wisdom about facing them, especially in their macro forms, as an inherent, inescapable aspect of life. This is where the teaching of the four heavenly messengers comes in. And don't forget the fourth, spiritual practice. There are also the five reflections. They're stated in different ways. I'll say them like this. These are questions. Is it given to me to avoid illness? Is it given to me to avoid aging? Is it given to me to avoid death? Is it giving to me to avoid being separated one way or another, one day or another from all that I love? And is it given to me to avoid inheriting the results of my deliberate actions? That's

part of life. And you know, we might like rail against those questions, but as we, you know wisdom is certainly facing, that's part, part of our life. You know, it's quite something to walk down a street and to look at faces of strangers passing by.

Rick Hanson: [00:26:44] And one by one... Take a moment, half a breath, to look at them and know, oh, you too will die someday. And to see how you feel about that. You know, sometimes in gatherings, I'm in a group of friends, we get together once a month, and a fairly large group, and in my mind, of course, is who among us will be the first to go, or the next to go? We've actually lost two people already from the group over the years. You know you realize you're part of that and they're looking at you that way and you might be the next one to go You don't know That's common humanity You know it makes it easier to bear our losses to realize that others have lost as well This is not looking on the bright side or a spiritual bypass or sugarcoating anything But there's something that makes it easy to bear the large-scale macro losses of life to know that other people have lost too.

Rick Hanson: [00:27:48] There's a lovely quote here that really has touched me. For thousands of years, people have said goodbye. Hi. Had two friends as a couple who loved each other dearly, deep in practice, and in the morning, when they parted company to go to their separate jobs, when they said things like, see you, or bye-bye, or love you, they would take a moment deliberately, just a beat, if only a beat. And register the fact that life's uncertain and they might not ever see that other person again. And as it actually turned out, kind of protect their privacy and not give identifying details, but one of them went into the hospital for a very routine procedure and acquired an infection and was gone in a day or two. Twist. I had a dear friend who on his birthday, his 70th birthday, began feeling unwell, was taken to the ER, and within hours of entering the ER learned that he had a terminal diagnosis of late stage cancer. And he was gone six or seven months later or so. We don't know, you know, and just, and realizing that it's like that for them makes it easier to include that it could be like that, for you. And... There's a lot of commonplace wisdom about this, in terms of dealing with these kind of macro scale losses, including just appreciating people and the time you have with them. And knowing that, we are all hostages to fate.

Rick Hanson: [00:29:47] There's deep Zen teaching in which Master Yun Men was asked, so what is it that trees wither and leaves fall? He said, body exposed in the golden wind. When our kids were younger and living with us, they would sometimes go off to an event together in a single car. And as they pulled out of the driveway, knowing that they were good drivers or that they would be with a good driver still, you know. You go out, statistically, once in a while, one in a million, one in 10 million. I had to live with the fact that I wasn't certain, certain that they would both come home. And we live with this. I think Jimmy Chin, a wonderful rock climbing guide and filmmaker, says the greatest risk of fall is taking no risks whatsoever. How do we live? Right, how do we live? Me We include it. For me at least, it's really important to focus on what's under your control, what's onto your relative influence. The Buddha was right there, you know, his last words. Things fall apart, tread your path with care. You know, what's unto your control is how you live today or more exactly how you'll live in the next minute. What are you bringing to the next minutes here? Minute after minute after minute. No pressure, just love unfolding. Lived through, love living through you unfolding in the next minute.

Rick Hanson: [00:31:21] The proverb, I think, in Tibet is that if you take care of the minutes, the years will take care themselves. I think the most important minute of our life is the next one, minute after minute after minute. So if you know that you have lived with a whole heart, with gusto and intention and ethics and a learning orientation, and that's how

you've lived during your Okay. Amidst you know that I slipped here and I slopped there on the whole good on you That's what's under our influence, day after day after day. So then I want to talk about the micro losses that have to do with the transient nature of all experiences. It's interesting, lately, cue the laughter lines, maybe. I've been reading Ecclesiastes. This is a fantastic translation from Rabbi Rami Shapiro. Somebody told me about this book. In fact, I think, yeah, a friend of mine who's a professor of Christian contemplative practice. It's a fantastic book about, and it's a translation in which there's an emphasis on the emptying of every moment. Every moment, The bottom is falling out beneath us, even as... We are buoyed by the next arising and endless emptying. Now, the author of Ecclesiastes is really focused on the losingness of life. Okay, but that's part of life, including a continual losingness of life moment by moment by, moment by the moment.

Rick Hanson: [00:33:04] And as the Buddha taught, you can only lose what you cling to. If we're not clinging, we're now losing. It's passing away, but we're no losing, because we're not trying to possess or hold on. And as you come closer and closer to the present... You become less and less attached to what's passing away. Now, the brain is designed to try to cling to what is endlessly changing, to stabilize it, to keep it for survival purposes, to essentialize it, to form static things out of the tremendously active burr, fizzing and bubbling in the nervous system. That's an inherent kind of tension that flies in the face of the nature of reality as endlessly changing as the temporal dimension of the four-dimensional Big Bang universe is continually expanding, drawing us endlessly into the next moment. The brain is trying to hold onto the present, can't do it. That creates a subtle tension that's inherent in lived experience, alongside other things that feel a lot better. What do we do about that?

Rick Hanson: [00:34:31] The more that we come into the present, the more the we disrupt the brain's tendency to be a prediction machine and to be fixated on becoming. And neurologically, to help yourself come into the present it's really useful to stay in touch with, you know, what is kind of happening right at the front edge of now. Rather than getting caught up in labeling it or reacting to it. You know, just a sense of receiving the arisingness of the present. And it helps to have a kind of beginner's mind or a childlike mind, even a sense of wonder and delight in what's arising in the present, that can help us in our practice, rest in the eternal now and be less, you know hurt or suffering by what is passing away. Now that strategy is about the micro losses of the transient present. And it doesn't really touch the fact that you're still really sad that you lost those cool, you know, purple and blue bands that you glued together, you know as a nine-year-old boy, and that you've lost opportunities for sweetness and love with your mother, and that will never be gained. You know, knowing the transience of the present doesn't help may feel any better about that.

Rick Hanson: [00:35:58] Like Leonard Cohen says, you know. The Guru says, this moment is empty. That doesn't make it light. And, to name another way to practice from the Buddhist tradition with our losses, and I'm going to give you a quick summary here. The first headline. Is to feel the first darts of life without adding second darts. Second headline, facing macro losses as an inherent part of life and accepting that we must bear that part of live if we are to enjoy the rest of it. Third, recognizing micro losses in the transient nature of all experience. And not overreacting to them by trying to cling to them. You can only lose what you cling to.

Rick Hanson: [00:36:54] Now my fourth headline here for practicing with loss in a Buddhist frame is to look for trustworthy refuges that you can count on. If we lost it, we

could not count on it sticking around. Now maybe, of course we couldn't count on it sticking round, but in any case, it didn't stick around. What are the things that generally stick around? Well, in the Buddhist tradition we have the three refuges of the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha. In other words, could be understood as we have a refuge, we can take refuge in or find refuge in. Or even abide as the refuge of the teacher, the teaching, and the community of the taught. You can take refuge as well in your own good intentions, your own showing up, your own quiet grit, your perseverance, your own willingness to admit your mistakes after a certain amount of whining, in my case, you know. That's you. And you can Take refuge in what endures of life, life altogether enduers, even as individual living organisms pass away. The world endurs, you know, reality altogether. Here's a lovely quotation from Li Po. We live together, the mountain and me, until only the mountain remains. These are lovely forms of refuge, lovely forms of refuge.

Rick Hanson: [00:38:36] Okay So the fifth headline that the Buddha really pointed to is to find your footing or have at least an intuition of that which is beyond all gains and all losses. That which is not subject to arising and passing away. This can get very airy-fairy if you simply have an intuition of something or other that is always just prior to the present. In which, or... The present is occurring. The present moment of the Big Bang Universe is occurring super. You might relate to this in other kinds of ways. I'm going to offer here three quotations from the Buddhist tradition that speak to that which is beyond gaining or losing. This is the ultimate kind of stuff expressed in the Buddhist tradition. This can be expressed in other ways in other traditions. Including in theistic ones, like the Abrahamic traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and in other traditions around the world that point to a transcendental aspect of reality. Here we have in the Buddha's Sutta, the entire world is in flames. The entire world is going up in smoke. The whole world is burning. The world is vibrating. The world of experience. But that which does not vibrate or burn, which is experienced by the noble ones. In other words, they found it, it's real. That which is experience by the Noble Ones where death has no entry, in that my mind delights. It was a nudge toward practice to the extent that you find that which is worthy for you, even if it is subject to passing away eventually, or even if you find that which ultimately is timeless and eternal, delighting in it, delighting, in that which wholesome and wise is good practice.

Rick Hanson: [00:40:54] Another quotation. From a wonderful teacher, highly recommend her work. Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo, woman originally born, I believe, in Great Britain, who spent 12 years in retreat in a cave in Tibet. Spent many more years than that, also in retreat, in various ways. Writes here, we're not trying to acquire something. What we're trying to do is to recognize what we already have. Innate, obscured, covered over, distracted from, perhaps, but always already true, underneath it all. And then this quotation... From Zen, there is something that does not die. True nature does not disperse like a mist. Knowing true life, you can be at peace.

Rick Hanson: [00:42:05] So here we have the great matter of life and death and we have the great manner of your own life. As Mary Oliver puts it, tell me what shall you do with your one wild and precious life? How shall you practice in the next minute, the next day? How shall you live, knowing that eventually you will cross a line and have less than one year to live, and most likely not know when you've crossed that line. There's a sweet spot in which we don't freak out. We don't get all morbid, in which we really appreciate the giftedness of a human life. And also, there is a certain nudging from Coach Buddha, Dr. Buddha, who reminds us that things fall apart. You will fall apart completely one day. Tread your path with care. Which to me, in two meanings of the word care, mean heartfelt and conscientious. And then meanwhile, just finishing here, realize that all around you, everyone else is subject to the same fate. I don't mind dying, I think. We'll see how I really

feel. It really bugs me that my kids are gonna die. You know, the people we pass on the street, they are subject to the same fates that we are, that you are, and This is where you've heard me quote this before. Probably the lines from Miller Williams are have compassion for everyone you meet.

Rick Hanson: [00:44:11] And then later in the poem, he writes, you do not know what secret wars are going on down there where the spirit meets the bone, you know, other people are frail, too. You know, as Dylan says or saying, One who is not busy being born is busy dying. They're dying, they're dying too and they know it. So that this can take us to tread more lightly on other people. I'll finish by making the point that in our, in America, certainly, and probably in other countries in the world, political divisions can be very intense, very hot. And I find for myself that looking at someone whose politics I find disgusting, morally appalling, and yet still. And yet still, they too are exposed to the golden wind. They too will lose all that they love one day through the passing of others or their own passing. They too, will feel pain. They too have their last weeks. They too may experience the light suddenly going out. And it does something when you look at people in that way. Opens your heart wider. It soothes you, helps you be more grounded, helps you move into love, and it's good for you, even while being good for others too. So thank you so much. Thanks for being here with me.