

# Lojong class 1 - 1:23:21

Hi, I'm Jason. I'm creating a series of videos. That include a bunch of trainings I provided about a year and a half ago about low John, which is, it really means mind training in Tibetan. Language. And it's a 12. 12 ish week, class that contains many, very deep, teachings and a bunch of guided meditations as well.

And, So I just wanted to say a couple of words about Lojong before you begin watching the trainings. Number one. It's a very. Helpful and powerful way. To deal with the difficulties in this modern world in today's world. I'm recording this on July 12th, 2022. In today's world, we have a great deal.

Of animosity. There's a war with Russia going on. There's climate change. There's a ton of political animosity. And so we need tools and we need ways to cope with. And deal with all of these difficulties. So these low John teachings, if you take these and you apply yourself and you actually want to learn about them,

These teachings are very, very swift and effective way. To reduce anxiety. Increase happiness. Become more peaceful. And, They give you a package of practices that you can, you can use to take yourself all the way from your current situation to becoming a Buddha. So they're very, very powerful and I hope you enjoy. Okay. Take care.

. So,, what is LoJo. there's, there's a bunch of really, , detailed, , descriptions of Lojong. this simple sort of explanation is it's mind training or thought transformation, but I also like this other definition, cleansing or purification, as in purifying, one's mind of craving hatred and delusion.

Now, when you see that craving hatred and delusion umno, this is, this is the called the three poisons. Some of you may already know what the three poisons are. Another way is of describing the same three things is desire, avers and ignorance. Okay. Desire is just simply wanting something. A version is simply not wanting something, pushing it away.

Right. And by the way, when we say desire, The way that it's described in Buddhism as the three poisons, sometimes people say, Hey, isn't, isn't desire sometimes good. Like I have desire to practice Dharma. That is a positive type of, , what I would call aspiration. I wouldn't use the word desire because Buddhism has this, you know, the word desire is kind of a sticky, negative kind of desire attachment.

, you're kind of locked into prison because you're wanting this thing and you can't let go. Right. And every one of us know, know that really well, way more than we wanna know. , but this cleansing, our purification , of the mind that is locked into desire, a version and ignorance. That's what lo John's about.

And it's such a beautiful, beautiful, genre of Tibetan teachings and. I'm really grateful that we have access in the old days in Tibet, way back, you know, a thousand years ago, in order to, to gain access to these teachings, you had to undergo the LA rim, which is like the foundational stepwise progression of teachings.

And then once you ma kind of went through LA rim, you could then attend Loong teachings. , for us it's nowadays you can just log in and receive Dharma. You can go to the apple bookstore, the Amazon bookstore, and receive Dharma. So we're very blessed. , and don't forget to sort of have that gratitude in your heart because for us in 2021, it's so easy to go and buy a book.

Whereas back in the old days, you know, I have to imagine. A lot of these people in, in old Tibet were walking over very dangerous mountain passes to go and get teachings, you know, so don't take it for granted. We're very, very blessed. And this is a once in a lifetime opportunity for us to practice these very, very meaningful teachings.

So , do we need LoJo that's the question? So kind of going back to my slide originally, I had this question of why do we need LoJo and then I was like, wait, don't make an assumption.

Maybe we don't need Loong.

Do we need Loong do we need thought transformation, right? Says who, who says we need it, prove it, and, and I'm kind of saying this to myself, right? Of course. I'm, you know, I'm facilitating this class along with you.

My Dharma friends, my, my beautiful Dharma compatriots. I'm leading this class and, or facilitating it or going through it with you. , so I believe in Loong, but that doesn't mean it, that we all need it. Right. So when I say, prove it here, this is actually very meaningful because when we think about the Budha, what he said was beautiful, amazing, extraordinary abnormal.

And what I'm talking about is he said, don't take my teachings on blind faith. And it's like, whoa, cuz you look at all these other religions and there's a lot of, you know, there's a lot of very rigid ironclad teachings, right? , from other

traditions, where there are certain beliefs that if you don't sort of follow the teaching, you're, you know, , you'll be penalized or, I mean, in some cases there, as we know, even now you go to certain parts of the world, certain parts of the world, and you're not really free to practice the, any religion you want.

There's a lot of pressure, and ideology that kind of prohibits that. So I really think it's beautiful and precious that the Buddha said, don't take my teachings on blind faith, analyze, examine, you know, , contemplate the teaching and see, does it make sense? Do I really legitimately.

Believe what they're saying. So I believe that , if I'm going to make a statement like we need LoJo, then I have the burden of proof. I'm like the, when there's a, like a court case, the prosecutor, the burden of proof falls on the prosecutor, right? Because we're all assumed to be innocent until proven guilty in our legal system.

Do we need Lojong. So that's the question that I want to talk about. Okay. And the burden of proofs on me to present a logical coherent, meaningful, , hypothesis for you all to examine and say, do we need this?

So now as I make this statement that we need LoJo we need thought transformation. We need to purify our minds of desire, aversion and ignorance. That's that's my hypothesis. Why do I say that? Okay. Just a very simple direct kind of, you know, plop you over the head answer is that we're prisoners.

Okay. So why do I say we're prisoners? Well, for a long time, I've believed that. just from my own experience, you know, meditating, contemplating the teachings that have been given to us, , for a long time, I've really believed that each one of us is kind of in a conceptual prison of sorts.

And the reason that I say that is because we, we live in this illusion of being free. We think, oh, we live in America, it's a free country. But see, the problem is that each one of us is we're bound. We're bound by our views. You know what I mean? Does this, does this resonate with all of you? Do you guys understand where I'm coming from when I'm saying we're prisoners?

so why do you say that, , just outta curiosity, I think this is a beautiful point for us to talk about for a few minutes. I next, I think it's just the way that we're, we're brought up in the world. We live in the things, we see the things we learn. , and then, you know, obviously the experiences and, and things we occur in our life.

, I, I think that feeds into a lot of that. Not that we have to be prisoners, but I think until we do something about it, just based on all those factors that, you know, I think it leads us into that, that kinda mindset where we're stuck and this is what we know, and this is what we feel might be. Right.

Yeah. Yep. Anybody else? That's beautiful, I really like that.

Anybody else? I would just say personally I feel like prisoner is like, you're always in this state of, I need to achieve this in order to be happy. And it's like, constantly, like once you achieve it, then there's something else. So you're never content. If that makes sense. That makes so much sense.

I love what you just said. Oh, I gotta get this right. If only right. Perfect. Isn't that beautiful because we're, we were born in America, right? So we're so consumerized, our minds are so consumerized. It's like, I, I mean, I can just tell you guys a little bit about me. So I, I grew up in Indy and I played a lot of sports, right?

So like I wrestled and I played football and those are pretty aggressive sports, you know? And. And I just remember, like, there's so much pressure on all of us now I'm 42. So I don't know how it is nowadays. I assume it's similar, but there's a lot of pressure to, to perform academically. Right. There's a ton of pressure when you're playing sports as a kid, , get out there and win.

It's all about winning. And then I join the Marines and they don't really teach you how to free your man. They teach you how to be a, a drone, you know, like one shot, one kill was what we were literally taught in bootcamp. Like day one, one shot, one kill. Oh my God. So and then, you know, and then I got out of the Marines, I did four years and then I get out and I start going to school really like got my grad degree and my master or my bachelor's in master's.

And the reason I was doing that is back to what said. And is it ? Am I saying right. It's , but I'm all sorry about . This is like Tyra said achievement. Right? So I got out of the Marines and like I was going to achieve because I was running something now I didn't really understand it back then.

And when I was in my twenties, I was running away from a fear of failure. A fear of socioeconomic failure. Not having enough money, not, not, I guess not being good enough. Right. I mean, I really believe if you get a high education, you get a big house and you have all this material stuff. I thought that was the thing to do.

That's what I was raised to believe. Right? Like and were saying, so I love this, you know, the prison of achievement, the prison of, if I get this, then I'll be happy. If I, if I get this job, then I'll be happy. If I get this car, then I'll be happy. If I can just get the right boyfriend, girlfriend, husband, wife, then I'll be happy.

If, if only my brother respected me more, went saw what I did for him. If only this other person that I'm helping, if only they saw how much, how hard I, and, and by the way, it goes on forever. There's just literally, it's infinite. How many conditional requirements we put on our happiness, right? And I think that's what this conversation becomes.

. So this conversation of us being in prison is, is really important and, I'll open my kimono and , , I'll be totally transparent with you guys. I grew up in an alcoholic household and, , and then I became a really hard drinker.

I started drinking when I was 12. I don't drink now. I'm, I'm sober and, you know, have been for a, for a lot of years, but I used to go to a program which is anonymous. So I won't say the exact name of the program, but I'm sure you guys can fill in the blank. The program had a step. The step one is called admitted.

We were powerless over alcohol in that our life had become unmanageable. And I haven't, you know, I haven't studied some of this stuff for a long time, but when I started coming into Dharma and I had this epiphany again today and yesterday, as, as Dharma practitioners, we are basically saying It's, it's kind of like we're saying we're alcoholics, but instead of it being alcohol, it's everything.

So we're sort of admitting that we're addicted to everything. We're, we're addicted to wanting all these things, whether it's objects or, you know positive reputation support from people we're around, we're addicted to what we want. Right. We're addicted to the things that we consider to be pleasant.

And I'll share a slide with you guys in a second that actually gets into this. I really believe this. And I believe that I believe the Buddha believed it and I believe his goal was to help us wake up from this kind of cloud we're in, where we believe that we, that, that our happiness is conditional.

Right. I, I really, I really believe this. So very good conversation. Anybody else have anything to add about the idea of us being prisoners? Anything else? All good. Okay. I do have one thing I would add. Yeah, please. It just reminded me. I used to work as a Casa with abuse and neglected children.

And one of the things that really struck me was that it wasn't just that the kids were abused and I was trying to intervene in some way to be helpful in that situation. But the kids had a different worldview than I had about abuse and neglect. And so their, their ability to understand how harmful their current circumstances were.

It was their normal, it was what they'd grown up with. And a lot of them didn't visit other households with very different examples of parenting and of family interaction and family dynamics. And so when you mentioned alcoholism earlier, just reminded me of that, that sometimes. Our world, our little worldview or what, what we're surrounded with is all we know.

And that's true in the material sense that if we live in a country where we see constant media representations of the good life means you have a lot of money or you have a lot of possessions, or you have all the things you've mentioned the right girlfriend, the right clothes. We only know what we know.

So opening our minds up and taking a step outside what we're used to to begin to see that there are other possibilities out there. And with LoJong, there are other ways of adjusting and shaping the way we think. I think is so powerful because sometimes I agree with the idea you talked about, about being caught trapped, but sometimes we don't even know we're trapped.

We're, we're stuck in it. And we're it's it's. So what we're used to that we don't even realize how stuck we are in these patterns and behaviors and ways of thinking. I love what you said and, and I would just say you tied it so perfectly to the point that I wanna articulate, which is that when I think back to the program, I was in the, the very first step is admitting you have an issue.

I mean, most of you have known somebody that had some kind of addicting addiction, right? Whether it was drugs, alcohol, I mean, there's all kinds of addictions, gambling, whatever you name it. Or even being obsessed with a boyfriend or a girlfriend, almost everybody knows somebody that fell into one of those.

Right. And in order for the person that's caught, I love word of caught in order for the person who's caught to fix their situation, they have to admit it. Very first thing is we have to admit it. So in Lisa's example, you're talking to a kid who lives in an abuse, abusive home, or a, a problematic home.

And they think it's normal. They don't understand it's a problem because it's all they've ever known. and you could say to a degree, most of us, even though

we're practicing Dharma, the question is, do we really, in our heart believe we're in prison? You know, I mean, that's, it's, it's, I don't know if the question seems as deep to you as it does, to me, you could say it's everything you could say.

This question is everything for us. It is a of paramount importance, because if we don't admit, we have a problem. If we don't admit that we're trapped in some sorrow and that we are, even if we're practicing Dharma to some degree, I I'm gonna just go out on a limb and say, none of us are enlightened.

None of us are liberated. None of, none of us, you know, when our, when, when that person that we care about, whether it's family or, or a mate, when they say something to us that is offensive, right? I'm just gonna say most of us are not absolutely free in that moment. Most of us are not full of bliss when somebody's telling us we're fat or we don't work hard enough or, you know, pick, pick one of the million things that people say to us.

So why is that? Why is it that we allow our happiness to be conditional? Why is it that we allow our contentment to be conditional? Why are we prisoners? We have to decide that we have a problem.

This discussion of us being prisoners to me, this is important

So I want everybody to think about this between now and next Saturday. I hope I'm blessed enough to have all of you join next Saturday. I want us to really think about this, this idea of us being in prison, conceptual prison.

I'm not talking about physical prison. Most of us are living in some sort of a non jail home materially, but you could argue that somebody in solitary confinement could be a million times happier than one of us. And why is that? Well it's because the mind is what predicates and this was kind of the Buddhist central theme, right?

The mind is what predicates. Contentment or lack of contentment. It's the mind. It's how, and I'll hit this on some of my slides. It's how we perceive reality. It's not the things that are coming, right. A brand new Bentley might mean a lot for one person.

Whereas for somebody else, they might say, I'm fine. I want my used Honda, or in my case, I want my 10 year old Chevy that I've been driving, that's kind of the discussion that we're on here. so really I urge everybody to, to think about this deeply, cuz it's kind of like, do we fully admit that we have a problem and

this speaks to what's called contemplating some Sarah, do we admit that we're locked and bound under conditions?

That predicate our happiness. Okay. So we're prisoners, right? This is my hypothesis. So I want to take you guys through a few specific things. So there's something called the 12 links of dependent origination. And this was a teaching that the Buddha gave that kind of summarizes the wheel of life.

Okay. And it's a beautiful, beautiful teaching. It's very technical and it can be a little difficult to understand if you haven't, if a teacher isn't taking you through it, but there's a couple points of it that you can just kind of extrapolate out or extract out and talk about that are very powerful.

Okay. when we make contact with an object of our senses, by the way, every one of us, the way we experience the world, It cannot transcend our six senses, seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling tactile touch or sensation and mental objects, which you could you call thoughts or, but mental objects, meaning, you know, the voice in your head or, or an image or a memory, or a thought, something happening upstairs in the mind right

that's how all of us experience the world. So our six senses, ? The, the sense of sight, smell, taste, tactile sensation, sound and thought, or, or mental objects. Those six senses have sense objects. So the, seeing sense of course has visual objects or form as its object hearing has sounds as its objects.

Those objects when we make contact with them. , when you're seeing consciousness or eye consciousness makes contact with a form, you immediately categorize it. It is immediately established as attractive, unattractive or neutral.

Okay. You could also say pleasant, unpleasant and neutral. I'll tell on myself here. I don't like onions. I have a very sensitive nose for some reason. And so I really do not like onions. If my mother-in-law takes.

Sometimes she'll, she'll cut onions green onions. If she takes the smallest onion and cuts it and puts it somewhere in the house, I can literally just follow my nose and find it. I'm talking like a tiny onion. So for some reason I'm really sensitive to onions. So it's funny because as we're going through this, we, we look at this thing, right.

We make contact with an object of our senses, whether it's a sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, or mental object. Right. And for me, just kind of, again, I'm telling



on myself the question is, could I sit down and eat raw onions? You know? Okay. I wanna talk about Dharma and, and talk about all this stuff and, and really bring the question of, are we in prison?

The question, can I, could I eat onions right now? I'm gonna pass. So. So maybe I'm not practicing what I'm preaching. I don't know. But there was a guy there's has anybody here ever heard of the 84 Mahasiddhas it's old Tibetan teaching the, or the 84 CITAs or Maja. So there are these 84 tantric masters way back in the day.

If anybody's interested. Let me know. I can give you the name of a book that I'm reading. That's really beautiful and I'm, I'm not very good at saying Tibetan words and Sanskrit words, but I, there was a guy, one of the 84 guys. I think his name was Luipa, Luipa, something similar. And what he did was pretty powerful.

what he did. And he lived in ancient India and he was a lay person by the way, not a monk, but just, just like us, a lay person. He went to, he met some lady who was kind of a realized being, and she told him like, dude, you're you're, you're totally, you have no clue. You're still addicted to food.

She basically, and he was supposedly, he was pretty well studied and he was, he was a practitioner. She was like, dude, you don't get it. She was like, you're still addicted to food. So what he ended up doing was going to live near where these fishermen fished it was the river or the ocean,

and you know what he did, he lived there practicing meditation. He lived there as a homeless beggar and he would eat fish guts. and he used that as his practice, so when I think about that, could I just sit down and eat raw onions? And I'm sure all of you have something that is your version of raw onions.

Maybe it's maybe you don't mind onions, but maybe you hate celery or maybe you hate this or that, whatever it is. it doesn't have to be food. Maybe some of you love country music, or maybe you love hip hop, but you hate classical or you hate country pick something. Here's a good one. Maybe some of you don't like Republicans maybe some of you don't like Democrats.

Okay. I don't know what, what your views are in this political landscape, It's pretty easy to say. You know, that, that other party, that other political party, they're just horrible. What a Democrat or Republican you, you lock in on a view and then you say that other party's horrible.

Right? That's what we do. Don't we to, to a degree and maybe we're not extreme. Maybe, maybe we're refined and sophisticated about our dislike for them. And we think we're right, but let me pose a question who taught you your political views did when you were born the minute you can't, the minute your mother gave birth to you, did you have a political view at that time?

Anybody did anybody come out a proud Democrat or a proud repo? I'm a proud Republican. Well, you couldn't talk, but maybe you came out with like a, you know, a hat that said, make America great. Again, maybe you were born with that hat or maybe you were born with a Joe Biden hat. Of course not right. You guys know him joking, but if that's true, if we were not born that way, then where did our views come from?

Where did our views come from? Now? A lot of the time, most of us are taught by our parents, right? Who taught our parents any guesses, their parents safe guess, right then who taught their parents then who taught their parents. So then how far back are we gonna go here to figure out why we're a Democrat or a Republican, or to figure out why we have, I mean, there are a lot of people in the world that have racist views.

They have opinions about different types of people. So you really have to look at why we have these feelings. Right. So going back to the slide that I was on. I wanna tie this back to the discussion about prison. When we experience contact with an object, that object is immediately established as attractive unattractive or neutral.

And you have to ask why the short answer is we filter everything through these kind of like, you guys have heard the, you've heard the old saying rose colored glasses, stop seeing everything through rose colored glasses. You guys have heard people say that, right? Everybody sees things through rose colored glasses, because we are conditioned everyone.

We are conditioned through these habitual patterns, right? . Or no. Oh, I was just thinking that if we don't see things through rose colored glasses, then maybe we see things through sort of dark tinted glasses. Yeah. And my argument is that no matter what color the tint, whether it's positive or negative, it's a distortion of reality.

And it is the, it is the reason that we're locked in prison. . And to use traditional Buddhist language. We're talking about karma. Let's use an example. Does anybody here believe sweets are not addictive. Like for me personally, I've, you know, I'm 42, I've experienced over my lifetime.

The minute I start flirting with and consuming desserts or Coca-Cola or some type of sweets. And I watch myself rather carefully before, you know it, I want to have a dessert a week or something like that. Right. Has anybody ever experienced the same thing I'm talking about? Yeah, absolutely. Right. So this is a very good one to use.

I mean, is anybody here immune from sweets? Some people are like, Hey, I don't care about sweets. I need salt. I want Cheetos. Or I want, you know, something salty. I mean, all of, you know, sort of to some degree, either sweets or maybe you're kind of hooked on salty food, but I really like that idea of looking at as an example, just looking at sweets.

So the minute you take that, I'm gonna tell on myself last night I had some lemon. Merangue pie or some coconut lemon pie. And the minute you consume it, you eat it. And then, invariably, a day or two later after dinner, you're looking and thinking about the same thing. So what happened? Your tongue tasted this, this food, and instantly it was established. as attractive, unattractive, and neutral what we're doing when we consume something and we create this attachment is we're, we're creating a condition. We're creating a mental seed.

It's a karma it's karma. Anything you think say, or do CR creates a karma. It plants a seed that will later come to fruition. when we eat the, the pie or the cake, or drink the Coke, we're planting a seed, or you could say we're, we're, we're going into the prison cell and shutting it.

Now, some people would say, yeah, that's fine, Jason, but I can consume the sweets and then not be bound by it. there was this old tie master named Ajahn Chah. Some of you guys might have heard of his name. there was a student that came to him and said Aja Chah, I want to be able to possess money.

I think I can have money without being attached to it. Now he's a Theravaden monk and the Theravadens have really, they're really strict about the Vinaya , the Buddha's code for morality and ethics, the Vinaya. And the student told Ajahn Chah, he said, I think I can possess money without being attached.

And then Aja cha said, well, as soon I would like you to eat a block of salt, a big block of salt. And, and I would like you to tell me that it's not salty. As soon as you can do that. I'll tell you, you can possess money without being attached to it. And I kind of laugh at that because I, I really think all of us are going to experience that attachment if we take in sweets.

And by the way, please, don't think I'm trying to tell anybody that you can't have sweets. It's totally up to you. Buddhism's not about trying to convince somebody that they need to follow our. Gospel. I mean, it's not about that. What it's about is my job is to share something that's, that's meaningful and, and it's to help you and help me, help us together, realize we need to have a realization about reality.

This all leads back to that prison, right? So the question is, is our view distorted based on our biases, whether that's drinking a soda and having that, that pre designated bias that we love it, or whether it's looking at the other political party and thinking they're bad or thinking our political party's good.

That's that's. Yeah. Oh, sorry. I didn't wanna interrupt you. I just had one example to share. Yeah, please. We, our community in Lafayette, Indiana host the Tibetan monks from D and goong monastery every year or two. Yeah. And a few years ago when we were hosting them, one of the Indian restaurants in town were really excited that the monks were coming and they wanted to offer them a meal, anything they wanted from the menu for the whole group of monks and the hosts that were hosting them.

And so I approached the monks and said, you know, this, this Indian restaurant in town that's very authentic, has offered to make this meal. What would you like? And I showed a menu and you know, a couple of them could, could speak or read a little English and some couldn't. And I just got a blank stare.

And I said, no, really anything don't be, don't be shy. You can order anything on the menu that you want. If there's something that is true to something that you like in India, that they can cook for you. They're so happy to do that. If you see anything, any combination. And I realized afterwards that it wasn't that they did or didn't like anything on the menu.

It was that they had so trained themselves to just accept whatever was offered and to not discriminate between the two so that they wouldn't be disappointed. They they'd really set up in their own minds. That sense of deep gratitude and appreciation for whatever came their way. And so even if they did at some level, have, you know, some deep down favorites of things, they reminded them of something their mom made or, you know, memories attached to it.

They were very neutral about it. And I think that they felt like if they, if they expressed a strong preference, they were making themselves open to the exact same pull that you described with sweets. That if you. That you're happier in life. You can find deep contentment. If you can find a way to celebrate whatever

comes and to at least be open and accepting of whatever comes rather than being caught in grasping for particular things.

Beautiful. Wow. Can I frame what you just said? that's fine. I probably couldn't even repeat what I just said, but it was a nice lesson for me. It was really powerful and they clearly enjoyed when we got the food delivered and the, the restaurant went over and above just getting a sum of everything and they clearly truly enjoyed the food when they had it, but they weren't gonna go out of their way to grasp for one thing or another.

They were gonna enjoy just whatever was there. Yeah. I love what you're saying about the openness, right? Mm-hmm because that's really what this. I mean, you know, the, you have to ask the question if you can be open and I mean, radically open to whatever arises in front of you in your life, would that lead to enlightenment?

Think about it, The way that we produce karma is the moment arises for us. And we have a habitual tendency. We categorize it as pleasant, unpleasant neutral. So everything that arises, we already have a bias to it. And then we, we categorize it as pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral.

But what if you could. Transcend that bias. What if everything that arose was beautiful, magnificent, and you just categorize it as your experience without putting it into those buckets, then what happens? That's the question, right. So we're kind of on this thing about, you know, about prison. So I really like the conversation and I really like what you said about the monks and you made this reference to openness and I think that's so important.

We have this contact, right? Just kind of going back to where we are. We experience a sight, sound, smell, taste, physical touch, or a thought that arises. So one of our six sense objects arises and it's immediately established as attractive unattractive, neutral, or you could say pleasant, unpleasant or neutral.

we're filtering everything and we're not truly experiencing anything. Nothing that we experience is experienced nakedly in, in its totality. Nothing is experienced in its infinite potential because we have so many biases. We have, we have Karmic habit patterns. That distorted our view. They, they act as a kind of like these glasses, and you can't see what's in front of you. You can't see the, the form that you're seeing. The thing that you're hearing, you can't hear it for what it is, because you've already decided you either like, or don't like country music or you like, or don't like hip hop or you like, or don't like heavy metal or you hate Mozart, but you love Bach or whatever.

We have all of these biases and they distorted us. And that's why we're prisoners. That's what prison is. Now. The next thing that happens is feeling right. So you've got this object that is immediately established as attractive. And what does that lead to? It leads to a pleasant feeling, feeling in the Buddhist sense is not like, Hey, talk about, tell me about your feelings.

It's not that it's more like something that we experience. One of these six sense objects is, is experienced as pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. That's really what this is. Okay. So these objects that we experience, the, the pleasant, the, the attractive objects arise as a pleasant feeling, the unattractive objects arise as an unpleasant feeling, and then the objects that are neither attractive or unattractive arise as neutral.

Okay. So this is very, very important because we're talking now about why we're prisoners, if an object arose and we clearly saw it and we had no feeling about it. Would that be peace and contentment? Would that be liberation? Would you be liberated if, to take my example? I could sit down and eat fish guts like that.

Great. Tantric master, I told you about, if I could sit down and eat fish guts, would I then be liberated with no flavor? And, and by the way, everything else that you ever experienced was like that, and you didn't have any grasping, it's a question to contemplate, does that lead to liberation now after we have a feeling arise, then craving comes.

So when we experience an object it's immediately established as attractive unattractive or neutral, and then, once the. Object arises. And there's an immediate categorization as attractive unattractive neutral. Then there's a feeling that comes up.

It's either pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. And then, and then finally craving comes in and it's basically just desire and aversion conditioning ourselves. Right? So back to the Coca-Cola the minute you taste that beautiful fizz or maybe I could use the example of ginger. I love ginger ale. You taste that beautiful ginger ale.

See, and see how I talk about it. I talk, call it beautiful. Right? I'm already biased. I tasted ginger ale. There's it's established as attractive. And then that causes a pleasant feeling to arise when I consume it. And then I have desire right now. I have desire for this thing that I've consumed.

and where it really gets problematic is grasping. This is really the prison. So grasping is a stronger form of craving. Craving is kind of like desire. And then grasping is a much stronger form of desire. And what grasping does, the reason grasping is so dangerous is because we have something called dormant karmic propensities.

What is, what is a dormant karmic propensity. It's a, it's like a memory or a thought it's something deep in our, in our mind that's dormant. Meaning it's just kind of there. It hasn't, it hasn't, it hasn't arisen yet. Right. So it's something, maybe it's something we saw or experienced when we were seven and it didn't.

Purify itself yet. Cause everything, we experience plants, a seed, ? Everything we think say, or do it plants a seed, you could say it stores itself as a memory inside of us. And then if it doesn't get purified fully, if it doesn't ex, if it doesn't fully manifest, then it just stays there. Right. So what happens when we grasp, when we get this really strong desire or aversion is then it allows these dormant karmic seeds to manifest.

So. When they manifest, then it just creates more and more addiction, so to speak. Then we want the desired things more and more. The things that we're averse to, we get more and more angry, right? We get so angry. And that's why this is how murder happens because these cravings or these, you know, something you have strong desire for or something you're averse to you keep acting these things out over and over.

And it's like a snowball. It gets bigger and bigger. Eventually you have no control. So all of this kind of goes to why I'm saying that we're in prison. This is a really good explanation of grasping by Geshe Lhundub Sopa. He ran the big monastery over in Wisconsin called Deer Park he's passed away, but he was a highly renowned Geshe master.

And he said, this is his description of grasping. You guys can read it. It's the powerful form of attachment that we call grasping at things as the moist span. It acts as the moisture that awakens and stimulates and nourishes the dormant karmic seeds that you've deposited on your mental continuum from previous actions.

The latent seeds of past actions are always present. So this is what I was explaining a moment ago, you experience something, it there's a seed. Anything you think say, or do creates a seed, you could call it kinda like a memory or, or, or, you know, a memory that's stored in you. I, memory's not the right word, but it's kind of like that it's, it's stored in you.

So the latent seeds of past actions are always present, but they require the moisture of attachment in order to ripen and bear fruit. Once the two levels of attachment, craving, and grasping actualize the potentiality of a karmic seed, it ripens quickly into a resulting experience. And so this is the discussion about being in prison, right?

you can call it karma prison. So here we are, we all think that we're free, but we're trapped under a mountain of infinite karma that we've created in past lives. Okay. whether or not you believe in reincarnation, it's pretty much a fact. And there's a great deal of data that kind of supports reincarnation there's tons of books and data on near death experiences.

There's some psychologists that have experienced past lives when they're doing treatment with their patients there have been psychiatrists that have hypnotized their patients and then their patients had brought up all these past life experiences.

And if anybody's interested in this, I can share a book with you. And I'll tell you when I first started studying Buddhism and Dharma, I wasn't sure about reincarnation because I'm a scientific guy and I kind of believe what I see. And I go off of logic now. I've I believe it. I really believe that we, we do reincarnate and it's because there's a lot of data out there that supports it.

my belief is that we have a mountain of Karmic seeds habits. Propensities that we've created in the past. Okay. Not just in this life. Definitely we've done it in this life, but these are karmic patterns that we've been doing since timeless time without beginning or since infinity.

So you just imagine you've lived a trillion lives or something, and you've continued to strengthen these patterns. And that's why some, some children are born and they're called a prodigy. They're a a prodigy on the piano. They're a master pianist and they're pianist and they're they're seven or eight, right.

Or some child comes and they're a, they graduate high school when they're 10 and then they, they're a doctor by age 15. These are you. You might say, well, gosh, that person was just born. Brilliant. I don't really buy into that. I believe that they had. you know, a lot of karma they, they developed a lot of karma for those things.

So taking a pause here, any comments or questions about this idea of us being in prison, based upon all of these memories, ideas, views going all the way back, if you don't believe in reincarnation is totally cool, but let's just go back to your



birth. Everybody here believes you were born, right. Go back to your birth in this lifetime.

And how many things have we stacked up? We have all these opinions and ideas. So does everybody kind of see where we're going by calling this the Karmic prison? The conceptual prison?

I don't want you to just be like, yeah, he's right. Cuz that's not what this is about. We really have to analyze exam and study contemplate and then say here's the data. I believe this. Or here's the data and I don't believe so.

You know, like when you have an argument with somebody and then the feelings get really kind of tense and you both kind of raise your anger levels a little bit and you guys, we, we both think that it's me versus this other person and I'm right. And they're wrong.

Right. Are I'm right. And they're wrong. That's what we believe. But you have to ask the. Who's having that argument, the views that each of you has, where did they originally? So, so you could argue that each one of us has learned from our parents, our family, our teachers the news, social media. So there's all these things coming into us.

Right. And that is that's karma. It's, we're experiencing things, they plant a seed and then we create kind of like a belief, an opinion of view. And we think okay. My dad said, Democrats are good. And, and he used to argue with my grandpa and my grandpa believed Republicans are good.

My dad believe. Democrats are good, but now he passes this idea on and every day as a kid you're conditioned. And by the way, I'm just giving an example of Democrats are good. It could be whatever view or behavior that you have about the world. And then all of a sudden you're having an argument with somebody about this political thing.

And you really believe that that's your view versus their view, but we're not understanding reality. Reality is their view in my view, came from a million different places, right. And a million different people. And then if you just go back generation to generation, to your parents, grandparents, great grandparents.

So when we think we're having a conversation, it's not us, it's not our view. We're totally bound by the inputs of our surroundings. Does that make sense or is it, no, it makes sense. So we are sort of deceived and we think that we, we

think that there's an "I" and we think that we have all these views and, but really we're all the way we see the world.

Isn't a rising, it's a result of previous causes. It's, it's an effect of previous millions of previous causes. Maybe, actually, maybe infinite, previous causes, you could say so great questions and great.

So now, okay. We've had this great conversation. Jason said, Hey, we're in prison. And then he said, Hey, maybe I'm not right about that. Let me, let me see if I can prove my hypothesis by the way. Did I prove that we're in prison just real quick before I go on you anybody, not anybody, not believe we're in prison or did the hypothesis get proven for the most part?

What do we think?

Not sure. We definitely believe that we are prisoners and we are born to experience. and overcome it is what I believe, but is what I've been reading so far? I don't know if you've read the but you have, I mean, I have one and I've checked it out, but yeah. So yeah, I have started reading it and this is what I, this is my interpretation of it.

And we are born to experience this as humans. All the challenges that we confront are the same each and every human being experience, the same thing. And the part to enlightenment is what we are talking about is when we when we overcome or give up all these addictions and all those things that tie us to the physical materialistic part of us or the world, that's the part to enlightenment.

And yeah, I mean, I don't have much to talk about, but I just thought it tell you. Oh, I love that. I love what you said. That's beautiful. That's really wonderful. Yeah. I it's, it's like we're put here to learn and ascend right. To, to a, to rise. Mm-hmm past all of our selfish addictions, our selfish desire, our selfish aversion.

One of the most powerful ways to cut through this, in fact, the only way to cut through this is we have to have mindfulness now.

I'm gonna give you a couple of quotes here from, from LoJo texts. So Atisha is kind of like the, like the, the godfather, if you will, of, of Tibetan Buddhism, and especially he founded what would become the Kadampa lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, which was like a very powerful lineage. So he says with mindfulness awareness and heedfulness constantly guard the gateways of your senses again and again, three times both day and night examine the flow of your thoughts.

So bottom line. The way, this, the way all of this works is thoughts spring up. I'm sure most of you know, about the voice in your head that constantly talks, you experience something and then the voice in your head talks. So you that's, that's basically a thought you, so you have thoughts coming up, you have emotions coming up memories.

We have to be mindful of all the things that come up, because if we, if we're not mindful, then we get hijacked and then we, and then we're continuously locked and bound into this conceptual prison where we're a slave to what we like a slave to what we don't like. And there's no contentment. So it all starts with mindfulness.

And that's why meditation is a great way to strengthen mindfulness. So if you sit down and you meditate and you watch your breath, or you watch whatever your meditation object is, you'll see right away. That distracting thoughts continue to arise, but the more you meditate, the more you're able to sort of be aware of all these thoughts, that flow.

So it's very important if we're gonna cut our karmic habitual patterns, all of our addictive behaviors, you know, whatever they may be, whether they're drugs and alcohol or material, materialistic, whatever they are food, you name it there. The way that we cut them is by being mindful, Keep strengthening our awareness, just knowing what's going on with our mind.

Here's another example from Thogme Zangpo he, this is the author of another Lojong text called the 37 versus a Bodhisattvas or the 37 practices of bodhisattvas. He said in short, where wherever I am, whatever I do to be continually mindful and alert, asking what is the state of my mind and accomplishing the good of others is the practice of a body sofa.

So once again, most of us are hijacked by our thinking before we even know it. And then we're off yelling at somebody. And then later we recognize like, oh man, I kind of messed up. I, I shouldn't have yelled at that person, but it happens so quickly. The only way that we can start to make a difference is we have to, we really have to meditate because if you don't meditate, your mind is not, you're not gonna develop the clarity and the awareness.

Of your mind's functioning. Most people when they start meditating, they think they can't meditate. They're like, I'm a horrible meditator. I can't, I can't stop my thoughts. And it's like, no, that's good. Now you see what's actually going on your whole life. You've been in the dark and you can finally see what's going on.

We call this the monkey mind. The good news is it. We all have Buddha nature. We all have the potential to completely transform our minds. We are not concrete blocks. We're actually blocks of ice. And when the sunlight shines on ice, it melts. So we all have the ability to transform

Cool. So Tilopa was an old Indian master and he was a. To he was like a tantra guru and this guy named Naropa was a scholar. And he was at Nalanda university. He was a renowned scholar, total master memorized all these texts. And for some reason he felt like something was missing. So he went to find this guy Tilopa.

He traveled, who knows how far to find this master. And eventually he found him. And one of the things Tilopa taught Naropa was, you know, he said, "son, it's not appearances that bind you. It's grasping cut through your attachment Naropa". So in other words, it's not the things, it's not the world out there that binds us.

It's how we respond to it. somebody cut could come up to you right now and start cursing you out and yelling and you could get really mad and then you guys might fight and then. who knows what? I mean, maybe somebody's life could be ended, but there's another way somebody could come up to you and yell and you could allow your mind to be free.

We are not, forced to do anything. We have the ability to cut the attachment in our minds. Okay. And that's what Loong is about. That's what the next several weeks are gonna be about is we're gonna spend time. There are these beautiful ways, practical, beautiful, simple ways that we can apply tactical behaviors that will cut through all of our habit patterns.

And there's one more, this is a Zen master way back in China, actually Chan C H a N. That's the Zen before Zen became Zen. It was Chan in China, which is supposed to be the word Jhana, which is meditative absorption. So, so Seng was a Zen master. And the reason I bring this up is pretty much every enlightened Buddhist master.

We'll tell you something similar to what this guy's saying. So he said the great way is not difficult for those not attached to preferences when neither love nor hate arises, all is clear and undisguised when he says love or hate's talking about desire and aversion. Okay. So when neither desire or aversion arises all is clear and undisguised, meaning we can see reality.

We're no longer imprisoned. We're no longer OBS. We're no longer locked behind all of this. Bias that obstructs us. We can see what's going on. Okay. And then he says separate by the smallest amount, however, and you are as far from it, as heaven is from earth. If you wish to know the truth, then hold to no opinions for, or against anything to set up.

What you like against what you dislike is the disease of the mind. And it's like, is it this simple? You could, you could say it is, you could say it's that simple. It's all of our wanting. So just imagine for a moment, right? Imagine you weren't trapped under wanting pleasant things and, and being averse or pushing away, unpleasant things.

What would life be like? It's probably hard for most of us to answer that question because, because most of us are not there. But that's, that's, that's what we're going to aspire to as LoJo practitioners and that's what is totally possible. Each one of us can transform our minds. You know, you think about Olympic athletes, they're not born as master athletes, right?

They practice over and over again. And then eventually they can pull vault over things and they can jump 20 feet or whatever. They can throw heavy things really far it's practice. And so if you really want to, which I'm assuming most of us do, if we really want contentment, it's here for the taking, we can be totally free no matter what happens to us.

Think about that for a moment. Think about being totally free, no matter what, no matter who dies no matter who divorces us, no matter. We lose our job. We get sick. Imagine, imagine all those things, the waves of life happening, and we're totally pristine. Can you guys imagine that?

Does anybody think this isn't, this isn't possible? I don't think so. Anybody like skeptical

it's okay. If you want. I think it's perfectly obtainable. Me too. Me too.