

## **The Secret**

[english transcription by Indira Fernando]

For this evenings talk I am going to be  
addressing a subject

which is central to Buddhist teachings but  
is difficult to understand

You see understanding that craving or desire

and how that actually fits into our  
modern day lifestyles.

specially for those of you who know  
traditional Buddhism

You know in all of the schools of Buddhism

We have something called the  
Four Noble Truths

and the second Noble Truth says quite bluntly

that craving is the source of suffering

And so as Buddhists we are supposed to

somehow let go of craving, have no desires or  
few desires

But then how do we actually practice that

in our daily lives because we actually do

desires that what of we want.

Does that mean that we should all become monks

and nuns or just give up our jobs and just live

on the streets? Not look after our kids, not

have the latest cloths. What does it really mean?

It is a difficulty (for many Buddhism) for many Buddhists

trying to reconcile our lifestyles with the idea that suffering is caused by craving. So I am going to investigate what that really means especially in our lives today And I thought we can actually start by just knowing that our present world is in great danger because of the untrammelled or unrestricted craving of our species; always wanting more and more and obviously that cannot be sustained.

Few years ago we were talking about Ozone layers.

Now we are talking about global warming.

Interesting to see what comes next.  
It all seem to come by just using too many resources

And it's tough being a modern western person

to see how can we actually deal with this.

because yeah once we finished our house then we can actually start worrying about global warming.

or once we got what we need then we can actually try to help other people.

Unfortunately sometimes that's not really sufficient actually to save our future.

We see like so many wars and so many arguments and so many

competition over limited things. So we wonder is this the world

we really want to bequeath to our children or is this the world we

really want to live ourselves. As far as Twenty Five Hundred years ago Buddhism was concerned

was saying that the biggest problem here is the craving.

Sure that yeah we know that we want to try and do something

about global warming, we want to have peace on earth,

we want couples being able to live happily together

we want to have people sharing the resources  
of our planet

but something called craving gets in the way.

And this is our problem.

However, that craving doesn't mean no desires

this is going to be may be the central point of this talk today.

This is if the desire is ok but we are desiring the  
wrong things life.

We are desiring the material things rather than the  
spiritual things.

Measuring people by possessions rather than by  
qualities such as compassion, virtue and peace.

We are actually having goals in our lives, you know which  
allows to pay off our mortgages but we never have  
enough time to ourselves and to our loved ones.

So the heart of this talk to day is

Well we have to have desires that's part  
of being a human being

as part of having a mind, some of those desires are  
very worthwhile

but what type of desires do we have in our lives?

Being a monk I am in privileged position

simply because you do have acquaintances across the spectrum

from very poor people to very wealthy people,  
from Presidents to Prisoners

from multimillionaires to people on the dole

and when you actually meet all these types of people

you can actually see that it's not really their

economic circumstances which determines their happiness

This is one of the first insights I got when I was

relatively wealthy westerner. I say this even when I was a student

with very little money and holes in my jeans, I had holes in my jeans because I couldn't afford better ones.

not because of the fashion statement. I was ahead of my time.

These days people buy jeans straight from the shop with pre-made holes.

But mine were real.

But then going to a place like North East Thailand

in the villages a long way away from anywhere

there there were some system farmers who just had very spare cash and would live on a barter economy

just growing rice or whatever they could catch

specially fish in the rainy season and building their houses with whatever can be found in the forest

or in the fields. And you saw there that some of

those people were just so poor compared to the poor student I thought I was

I was actually very wealthy compared to them.

But one of the things which I did notice living in that village.

yeah sure many of those poor people were happier than the

people I knew sort of from the great university like Cambridge

I also saw some miserable people in that village.

When I saw those miserable people in that village

I wanted to find out why some people were miserable

other people were happy when they both had very few things.

and I found out that basically it worked out like this

Every house had a water buffalo which they used to plough the fields.

and the dung from the water buffalo would be the fertilizer for their fields

The buffalo would plough their fields and do all sorts of tasks

like pulling the cart and that was a very important part of their house

But I noticed the farmers who had say one water buffalo

and happy with one water buffalo seem to be the ones always smiling

But the farmer who had one water buffalo but wanted two

that was the farmer who was unhappy.

who didn't seem to have so much time and so much joy in their lives

Seemed to me that happiness was not so much how much you have

but how much you want. And that started to make me think

the basic question in life; how much do you really need to be happy in life?

Does it really mean the more you have, the happier you are

I think that's the greatest myth of our modern existence.

thinking that more we have the more pleasure and happiness

and the freedom and power we can exert.

But every one of you are old enough to know by now

that the promise of freedom and happiness when you

gain wealth is a very false promise. Those people who have

experienced the gain of wealth, people whose business goes well

people who win the lottery or inherit coming to a great deal of money  
very often realizes it spoils their lives.

A classic story is few years ago one of the  
people who won a huge lottery in the United States

hundred million dollars or more , his picture was in the newspaper  
being led to jail

He was a very happy man before he won the lottery

and as soon as he won the lottery things started to go wrong in his life

Sure before he won that lottery he didn't have much money

he had enough to enjoy his life, to be able eat and  
have a modest little house and

go out with his friends but as soon as he became  
really really wealthy

all of his friends he could not trust anymore. all were  
asking for loans or bits of money here and there

it was one of the problems with wealth; even though

it promises you so much it tends to limit your enjoyment

of the world rather than facilitate it .

And I have seen this so many times and sometimes wonder

what do you want wealth for? It's much better

to not be wealthy and not be poor but be someone in the middle

That reminded me of one of the books I read as a student

which was a very famous book Plato's Republic

where in the last chapter, this was you know

Greek Philosophy twenty five hundred years ago

in the last chapter where

describing reincarnation, most of the Greeks believed

in reincarnation at that time, it was just common knowledge

So you know reincarnation is not an Asian thing  
it was right there in Europe two thousand or so years ago.  
And in Plato's Republic he was noticing that; in his  
last chapter about reincarnation; that when people chose their  
future lives, this was his way of describing it;  
it is a wonderful metaphor, we chose our wealth in lives.  
the stupid people were the once who chose to be  
rich and powerful in their next life.

Because the rich and powerful has far more suffering  
than the people who are just life in the middle.

So first of all, the Buddhist teachings of the middle way  
just applies to your wealth as well.

Please don't aspire to be too wealthy.

because you will find it gives you more problems in life.

if you just have enough in the middle somewhere,  
middle income, that's good enough.

And indeed that's what Plato said twenty five hundred years ago  
in Greece.

Words confirmed by a famous study which was done in the  
United States twelve months ago where they were trying to find out  
what the maximum happiness was compared to  
peoples' annual income. And it was not that hard  
to gain the information, the data, they had a huge  
sample of people from different levels of income  
and they could gauge their happiness by  
how strong their marriages were,

whether they have had many divorces,  
whether they are depressed, drug dependency,  
alcoholism and all these are very clearly indicators  
that things were going wrong in your life, or  
whether things were going well in your life.

And after done a huge sample that they found out  
that the optimum income, in other words the income which  
would guarantee you the best happiness was about  
fifty thousand dollars US per year. More than that your  
happiness level went down. Less than that you couldn't just  
afford the things which you wanted. So you weren't happy.

So actually the best, as far as happiness was concerned,  
and this was proved in, look at the research yourself,  
a large sample and it is probably similar in Australia,  
similar demography, about fifty thousand US or  
the equivalent over here;

what that would that be about fifty five thousand Australian or something  
was the optimum income; more than that and you have more suffering.

Less than that you have more suffering. And that's actually the  
income to aim for.

So if you are earning more than that the Buddhist Society of WA

can help you (audience laughs) to become happier by allowing

you to give the difference to our Retreat Center, to our Nuns Monastery  
or to this joint

Or even better just to tell your boss fifty five thousand is  
enough for me, I don't want the raise.

(laughs) I want to be happy.

People laugh at that but actually that's evidence based.

And that's dhamma based, that's Buddhist based.

Because sometimes we think the more money, the more happiness  
the truth of the matter is' the opposite.

So when you are having your desires and cravings,  
your aspirations in life

please keep that in mind.

And number two if we don't want the salary what most people  
aspire to in this life

and you work your butts off for this is, is actually to get the  
nice big house in a nice suburb

Now look at Nollamara here, this was actually a bad suburb  
before we came in (audience laugh)

and now we raised the house prices.

So those of you who want to invest in property,  
or got property in some suburb

build a monastery next door, your house prices go up.

No that's not the point (audience laughs),

the point is what I have often seen is that

you can see this huge houses which are built these days

and even a week ago just I went to our local councils at  
Christmas lunch

And it was over in Jarradale because we want to be  
friends with our local councilors

and other sort of people in Serpentine and Jarrahdale,  
went there for PR

And as we were going through Jarrahdale

which is a very pretty little town in the hills there were

big development there, huge houses in the forest

but before I got to this huge mansions I passed these small

the old wooden cottages which used to be in that logging town or timber town in Jarrahdale.

I saw these huge places and thought 'my goodness people have to work so hard to pay for these big mansions'

and I thought 'what they are doing that for?'

Number one if you have a very very big house people say well

I need that for my family. Jee when I grew up we were living on top of one another

I was in the same bedroom with my brother all the time.

Sure we used to fight but we also learned to love one another as well.

You had to because there was no escape in such a small house.

One of the things which you learn living in such close quarters with other members of your family

is how to get on together.

When you live in such a huge place where everyone has their own rooms

actually probably two or three rooms for every person in the family

It means you got too many bog holes too many places you can go instead of fixing up the social problems which you have with your siblings or with your parents or children.

There are many advantages in living in close quarters with one another you tend to get on. And I think that is what the social problems which comes with people living in such huge houses in our modern age.

We don't know how to live with each other.

May be that is the cause of so many divorces or

people changing partners. We haven't earned those skills of cooperation and give and take between one and another

You have to learn that when you live in subscribed quarters.

I remember my father telling me, at least I had my own bed when I grew up,

he shared his bed with about six or seven brothers and even sisters when he grew up.

How can you go to sleep that way in a small bed with four or five or six other brothers in the same bed.

we certainly learn how to cooperation in such a small bed.

But they did have such a great time,

they loved each other very very much

so sometimes though we think that wealth will give us such a huge property

but it comes at a great cost,

one of the biggest costs is how hard you have to work,

how many hours you have to spend to pay for such a big place.

You can only be at a one room at a time, sometimes that we

as an example, as a counter example we have our monasteries

where we live, and I enjoy taking people to see where I live

even years ago when I lived in a bigger place than I live now

there was a big room, may be three meters by two point four

with a walking path in the front. And I still remember about

ten years ago taking a group of women who were visiting

the monastery, it was a local women's group who wanted to

do weird things on an afternoon and had never been to the monastery

and that qualified being weird, and when I took them to see my hut

my room, I always remember one of the girls turning around to me

and saying 'wow if only my house were this small I get all

my house work done in half an hour'. She looked at my

simplicity with a lot of envy which is the other reason  
huge houses takes a lot of maintenance, a lot of work,  
and you haven't got the time; number one you are working so hard  
to pay off the mortgage and number two you have to work so hard  
to maintain the place and keep it clean.

And you never manage to get all the things done.

So isn't it something wrong about that?

So it's great to be able to downsize.

Any of you who come and visit Bodhinyana Monastery

many of you saw this my cave, where I live

it is a small cave. It's not even two and half meters

if it is that circular and about that high.

It is only a little cave were I live.

And that's so easy when I wake up in the morning

it takes me about 30 seconds to make my bed.

I sleep on the floor. It takes about five minutes

to sweep it out. It's just a simple place to stay

it gives me so much time and so much freedom.

This is a example when we have big places

we think that this is going to create happiness

and space, sure it got physical space but

we have no time space left.

And that is one of the great complaints of our

modern age. We are material wealthy but

time poor. So we have desire, we want comfort,

we want well being, we want sort of some happiness  
sometimes are craving and desires are misplaced.  
they haven't got wisdom with it. And a lot of times  
it is because we are sheep, we just follow what  
other people do. one of the great things about  
religion, what they should be doing especially you know in  
parts like Buddhism, is making you question.  
Don't just follow what other people are doing  
like lemmings just going over the cliff of environmental destruction,  
think for yourselves. Question. Don't follow the norm.  
But follow wisdom and common sense instead  
You follow what other people are always up to  
you going to be in lot of trouble  
if you think what most people are doing  
it must be right, I always remember one of my  
favorite quotes from Voltaire  
It was Voltaire who made a quote from mathematics  
he was a mathematician as well, one of his  
famous quotes which I thought was very funny  
but also so true, "The only way to understand the  
mathematical concept of infinity (to really get your head around  
what infinity means)  
is to contemplate the extent of human stupidity."  
Then you know what infinite means.  
So it's a waste of time following other people  
We question and find out for ourselves.

So doesn't matter what other people are saying  
Saying 'oh you should upgrade move to a bigger house,  
it is an investment for the future. May be for your future  
but not for your children's future. And it's not  
a future for your peace and happiness at the time.

How much do you really need?

And it's the same when we want fame or status.

Even when I was a young monk, there was a fellow monk  
his name was Garry, and I remember as a young man  
he grew up in Los Angeles, he met that filmstat  
who was that who played 'dirty harry' what was his name?

Clint Eastwood, he met Clint Eastwood in his early days  
because they went to the same university together  
he told all these stories about being with the rich  
and the famous but he remembered once when that  
Singer Bob Dylan was in Los Angles he found out  
from his friends which hotel he was in and managed  
to use on of his contacts to sneak in the back and spend a  
whole evening and night with Bob Dylan.

This is a famous man, at that time he was multi famous  
and Bob Dylan was saying ... no he was saying to Bob Dylan  
Ah it must be great being famous; Bob Dylan swore  
no its xxxx whatever it is, I can't repeat it here  
its terrible being famous. It's such a pain to be well known.

I am not well known as Bob Dylan, but I think you know

sometimes I have gone to a toilet in Singapore airport  
I have not been able to go to the loo because some one  
in the toilet in the Changi airport stopped me to ask me  
questions on meditation. Sometimes it happens here as well.  
twenty five past seven I am trying to go to the toilet  
before I do the talk here, and someone stops me 'Ajahn Brahm'  
So one of the great things of being 'not famous' is  
you can go to the toilet whenever you want (audience laugh)  
So but do you want to be famous?  
would it be lovely to be famous?  
Why do people go in this TV shows like  
Australian Idle or this other Big publishers  
they wanna be famous, they must see a psychiatrist very quickly  
because no one in their right mind would want to be famous.  
But lot of time people desire that, they want that, they crave that  
And really sort of they are putting all of their energies  
into the wrong place.  
There is a great story which I sort of adapted  
and wrote in that newsletter, a journal for one of the  
Buddhist centres in Sydney and I told that in a  
recent concert in Singapore, its a nice story  
about a monastery somewhere in the world  
and in the middle of the night the Abbot was woken up  
when he heard a noise in the main shrine room  
So he got up and checked, and sure enough there was a  
burglar in the temple. As soon as the burglar saw the Abbot

the burglar was trying to open the donation box

and he told the Abbot just get out of here.

And the Abbot took one look at the burglar

instead of actually stopping the burglar opening the donation box

'here's the key' so the burglar took it and told not to do anything

But the Abbot took one look at the burglar and like many burglars

and this guy was so thin. So the Abbot asked him when was the

last time you ate. Burglar said 'shut up' . When I give talks I

always like to wake people up every now and again (audience laughs).

'Shut up' he said. But the Abbot didn't shut up he said

'look there is some left over food from this mornings meal  
in the cupboard, help yourself.

And the man was hungry. So just looking at the Abbot

and brandishing a knife from the kitchen he said

'don't come near. He quickly sort of stuffed some food

into his mouth and the Abbot said 'don't rush, there is

plenty of time' and the bugler opened the donation box

emptied it, took some more food and ran away

saying don't call the police, Abbot said I wan't

the donations are there for charity, for compassion

you are a poor person just take whatever you want

I will clear with the committee tomorrow

So the next day when the committee heard about this

At least the guy was being kind and they liked

the Abbot for being kind but usually what happens

a few days later that bugler was caught robbing

another house somewhere and was sentenced to jail

The abbot forgot all about that and few years later

The bugler returned with another knife.

He came and said you remember me?

I robbed this temple five years ago, now I have come

to rob again; but the burglar said this time;  
but last time I took the wrong thing

I took the money

Putting down his knife he said now I have come to take

compassion and wisdom, please show me

how you were so kind to me, even though

I was about to kill you and rob your temple.

So the Bugler realizing for the first time

he thought that money was happiness

after those five years realized

that kindness is more important than money

he said the first time he have stolen the wrong thing

now he come to take the right thing and asked the

Abbot to teach him; compassion and Kindness.

I like that story because sometimes

when we want something, we are wanting the wrong thing.

It is ok to want but not the material things in life

the rich people in this world are not the people  
in the big houses

The rich people in this world are the  
people with the big hearts

Those people who are wealthy are not the  
people with big bank balances

Those people who are wealthy are  
the people who have got time for each other.

Isn't that so? It is obviously the quality of life

which is why that the craving which we have

in this world is actually wrongly directed

And that's why it leads to suffering.

And usually you should grow older and older and older in life

while other people start to question more and more

when you experience getting the big house or the wealth

or the fame, so many people say 'so what?'

This is it? This is what I worked so hard for? Where's the pay off?

because such craving; we call it unfaithfully craving

We call it unfaithful because it promises so much

but fails to deliver. But the desire for the beautiful qualities of life

things like peace, time, contentment

kindness, compassion, generosity

those are the real things which is wonderful to crave for

which is great to desire, you are actually desiring

something which is truly worth something in life.

Why? because what does the wealth, the money

the house, the car, what does it really promise you?

It promises freedom and happiness, respect, security

That's sometimes what people think about these days

If I get wealthy then I can be secure and happy for ever after

I still remember the story which I read still as a young man  
May I read all the right stories which is why I became a monk  
instead of seeking fortune in the world  
I sort fortune in my heart.

There was a man who was in the boom years of  
United States in the roaring 20s made enough money  
and managed to cash it in before the depression years  
and being a multimillionaire he decided 'why should I just  
live in the United States'

are there any other places in the world where I can live  
which got a better climate, safer, more happy existence  
so he went to the local public library got out books  
and he used his intelligence to try and find the perfect  
place in the world where he could retire and enjoy his  
remaining years using his great wealth. He could go  
anywhere he wanted with so much money.

So he decided on a tropical island with perfect climate  
it was called Guadalcanal

For those of you who are old enough you know that  
Guadalcanal became famous because it was the site  
of two major battles in the Second World War.

First when it was taken over by the Japanese Imperial Troops  
and then it was actually taken over by the Americans afterwards  
two huge battles. So there was a guy who made his pile,  
and thought I am now gonna retire to Guadalcanal  
thinking of being peaceful for ever after.

What happened? He gets involved in two major wars,

Actually he survived both battles apparently.

Two major battles, he survived both and lived to tell the tale

but it wasn't a peaceful place. So don't know where  
you want to retire

Whether it is the Peppermint Grove or to the Darryl Keys

I don't know what other places you think but who knows

what's going to happen there later on? (audience laughs)

That's the trouble they might have a new airport in peppermint Grove

in next five years; wherever else you live

this is a great uncertainty of life so you cannot trust

such material investments.

sometimes you invest so much in your wife

you take her shopping to Paris

you bring her all the latest fashions

and of course she runs away with your best friend

because he is more wealthy than you

whatever else it is you know what it is like

how can you really have any security in life?

Now look at myself as a monk, I got no money

and I have no health insurance,

I have no superannuation, no pension plans

I am getting old now. And I think wow what am I going to do

next. But you know I don't worry about my future

I got great investments than you have

kamma investments

Because of how much I have served,  
how much I have given over these last years  
I know I don't have to worry about anything  
about my future. Even when I go overseas  
sometimes they ask whether I have any health insurance  
because things happen when you are overseas  
can get into an accident, fall sick or something  
But I say I have health insurance when I go overseas  
there are enough people who care about me  
when I go to Singapore or Thailand or Sri Lanka  
and I know I would get the best of care if I fall sick  
and same here why? its because I have been kind enough to  
many people that people just want to be kind back  
that is my health insurance, by paying in many many  
installments, kindness and giving to others  
This is what I know will come back to me  
It is basic Buddhist teachings  
If you want security for your future  
make lots of good kamma  
be kind, be generous, be there for others  
and others will be there for you  
which is why the wealthy people  
sometimes gets so lonely  
they wonder, I got all this money but I can't get the best care  
Sure they have invested in the share market

but they have never invested in their kamma market

This is the Wall Street of Australia,  
Dhammaloka Buddhist Center

This is the way you can make great investments

with a guaranteed return, and the Buddhist Kamma stockmarket

never crashes and always there for you

for this life and the next

and that actually, this is not just a joke

this is not an exaggeration, people actually

craving and desiring, they want happiness

they want peace, ask yourself sometime

what do I really want in life?

Sometimes people just say

they want to be cared for.

How do you become 'cared for'

you don't become 'cared for'

because you are rich, you just become exploited or  
become feared

you become 'cared for' when you know how to

care for others. This is again; what kamma is all about

So if you desire, is to care for other people in this world

If that is your craving in life, seeing how much I care for others

Then you are putting the craving in the right place.

The craving to have a more harmonious

peaceful, sharing, kind warm society

Not having big houses, but again by having big hearts

Big hearted communities which really look after  
one another

That's sometimes why in the poorer suburbs

people look after each other much easier

My mother because I came from a poor family  
was always lived in what was called Council Flats

Council Flats were State subsidized housing

Even after my father died we just moved from  
one council flat to another

My poor mother lived in these Council Flats  
for many years. And these big tall tower blocks in London  
were supposed to be a hot bed of crime.

So my little old mother was a prime suspect  
according to the sociologists. But she lived in this  
tower block for many years and I remember when I went  
to visit her and stayed in that tower block for a short while  
I was going to give a talk in the Sri Lankan Vihara in Chiswick  
one day and it was not that far from where my mother lived  
so I wanted to walk. I enjoyed those walks in the streets of London  
especially in my robes. Because I was always a radical  
I wanted to surprise and stagger and confront people with my  
sartorial elegance of brown robes.

But I also enjoyed having fun because people would  
look at me and sometimes not knowing exactly  
what you were dressed in these robes, these are like  
what people used to called bed blankets

sometimes they are cross the other side of the road  
but I'll always take

pleasure in wishing them Good Morning with a smile

to an Englishman when someone actually wishes you  
'Good Morning'

you have to say Good Morning back.

It is psychological torture for them.

Being a sadist I enjoyed that.

But anyhow on this particular occasion when I  
in the elevator when I got to the bottom as the door was  
open I was the only one in the elevator and as the door  
was opened I was confronted by an old lady who was  
covered with blood. It was like scene out of a movie  
I didn't know what had happened to her whether she  
has been attacked, mugged or whatever but she  
actually told me  
that she had fallen down by the flight of steps.  
She must have been about sixty five or seventy  
because she could still stand so immediately I forgot  
about giving a talk at any sort of Vihara it's more  
important I am kind and compassion; I like to  
practice Buddhism rather than teach it. So I forgot  
about the talk and I took this old lady upstairs to  
my mother's apartment where we bathed her wounds  
called the ambulance, she did have a broken leg  
but because of the shock she couldn't feel the pain  
at the time, so we bathed her, comforted her, called the

ambulance but the wonderful thing which happened was that because it was an accident and because I took her into my mother's apartment very quickly, my mother left the door opened and there was a trail of blood which was leading into my mother's apartment and I was so pleased in a matter of five minutes I don't know how many people had come into my mother's apartment to find out what was going on and whether she was alright.

And when they found out the reason why one of the tenants in these apartment blocks had an accident, fallen over and was wounded, it was wonderful to see the community coming together and helping one and another I was bathing the wounds because my mother doesn't like blood someone else was going to her house to actually to turn her oven off because she had something in the oven cooking and somebody was going to ring her daughter somewhere else and everybody was working together so well

I thought, this is not a hot bed of crime this is a community where people cared about each other.

And because they were all poor, they weren't afraid of one and another. I thought actually one of the reasons why a community was made in this tower block is because of the elevator. Every day people will be stuck together in this very small elevator, not this big elevators you find in these big mansions, a small elevators. Small elevators are great.

You are stuck together going up and down no matter how much of a stiff upper lip, how reserved you are as an English person you see these same people up and down on the lift, after a couple of years you start talking to them. When you start talking to them you get to know them. When you get to know them you become friendly when you become friendly you start caring for each other.

That's one of the lovely things which happens when you live in small places. People get to know each other and care for one another.

And I thought Wow that places is not wealthy as far as material things are concerned. But what a wonderful thing is that you know that somebody would

switch off our oven if you had to go to a hospital unexpectedly, someone would bath your wounds, someone would look after you and care for you and that's called health insurance.

The real one. Because there is always someone to care because you cared for others. That's what people want most of all to be cared for and looked after specially in times of difficulty and stress. So really when we talk about craving; this is really what we should be craving for. We are using our mental energies, using our desires to build up something which is worth while in life. Instead of these false shimmers like big houses, big bank balances, big cars and fancy cloths shee you don't need fancy cloths to get on in life

This is why we wear brown robes, these are far more practical these brown robes like this because whenever I spill a cup of tea I don't need to wash it. The brown goes to brown

most stains are brown stains; that's one of the reasons why we have brown robes because they are easy to look after and this actually seconds as a blanket at night times so this is so practical to have few things and use them well I don't know how many clothes you have specially those poor people who are young and have to wear designer clothes, designer shoes and designer everything. It's great being like a monk which is so simple the same robe we wear day in and day out.

I wear this robe to see the Queen of England, I wear this robe to see the builders at the building site of the retreat center. Isn't that wonderful you don't have to think 'I am seeing the Queen today what shall I wear?'

I am going to see the builder what shall I put on today?

It the same before I saw the Queen I never had a haircut the same old thing or the President of Sri Lanka or other people you go and see. So it's great being simple.

So my craving is to see how simpler I can be in my life materially and how rich I can make my life emotionally carrying and looking after others. And that's precisely what we learn in Buddhism

You don't need that much to be happy

The Secret of Happiness and I am saying this

because someone asked me today

can I talk about 'the Secret'

'The Secret' is a book with a video which has sold a lot of copies and has made the author into a very unhappy rich person. Stupid.

But that's not the secret like willing something and it comes to you.

Because sure there is something to that, if you imagine it you will it long enough eventually it will come

But do you really want that? Is that how you are going to use the power of your mind just to get a car parking space you want in the mall?

It is much better to have the car park space further away then you get some exercise.

And then you don't die of a heart attack when you are forty. So the thing is yes, there is some truth to that but you are wanting the wrong thing. wouldn't it

be wonderful if that book said if you just imagine world peace or you can imagine just poor people in Africa having wells in every village

or you can imagine just the people in Perth having enough water because they don't sprinkle their gardens too often or

you can people being kind to each other.

You can imagine people say in the buses or in the trains giving their seats up to the elderly or sick or pregnant people. It would be wonderful if the different communities whether it is the aboriginal community or the other

ethnic communities can live together in peace and harmony

it would be wonderful you know if we can have love

between our families. Kids looking after one another

looking after their parents. It would be wonderful if

there is no violence in our schools.

Dreaming of things like that I think is far more worth while

than sort of dreaming about material things .

So that sort of secret, that's not the secret to happiness

that's the secret to more headaches and more problems in the

world. So the real secret revealed by the Buddha if you like

it's common knowledge now, its not a secret

we teach it all the time is that if you really want something

in life, if you really aiming for something in life

if you are using craving and the power of your physical body and

mind to do something, to get something, please get the

right things in life. The things which are really worth. You don't

use the power of your mind for second rate sham stuff.

Otherwise you are like the person going to the doggy

brother's car deals and getting an old bomb as a car.

That's what that book reminded me of--people selling

false goods. So if you really want happiness, contentment

kindness compassion generosity that's what makes the world go

around, that's what inspires, brings happiness,

brings peace and brings a world in which you want to live

rather than a world in which we always complain why is it

life this, why is this all happening,  
So use your cravings for the right goals.  
And if you start to use your cravings for the right goals  
for things like peace, harmony for kindness, for generosity  
you will also find that's precisely how one gets  
success in meditation. Why people love to meditate  
why people like to become monks and nuns sometimes  
People often say the happiest times of their lives  
is when they are at peace. And that's actually what we  
say; that peace is golden or silence is golden  
peace of mind is the most valuable commodity in the world  
Isn't that really why we search high and low for a partner  
for a lifestyle so we can have a few moments of peace  
It is really the craving, if you really want to crave the right things,  
you really want to crave for peace, peace in our own hearts  
if you can't find peace in your own hearts, of course you  
can never make peace in the world. All the peace makers  
have a lot of anger inside of them. They also have lot of  
self doubt; because of that they can never make real peace.  
Only a temporary pause or ceasefire in the hostilities  
between mankind or the womankind or the planet  
When we learn how to find a bit of peace in our own hearts  
then we understand what's truly worth craving for  
which is why in that book which I wrote Open the Door of your Heart  
I said one way of making that peace in you own heart

is to say to yourself; whoever I am, whatever I have done,  
the door of my heart is open completely to me.

you make peace with your past

Not by fighting it but by accepting it.

You can't make peace and war at the same time.

Peace means accepting, embracing, being one with something  
which is another word for unconditional love. Acceptance  
embracing. So when you embrace the moment you embrace yourself  
you embrace the people you have to live with  
only then you can find peace. This is precisely what one does in  
meditation. Like meditation is almost like a training ground  
like a gym where one learns the strengths of character  
so that one can go and attain those skills out into the world  
and really make something of this world instead of  
making problems. So learning how to make peace in ones own  
meditation, sitting here for half an hour, a short time ago  
did you make peace or did you make war? Did you try and  
fight all the defilements, the wondering mind, the itchy head,  
the aches and pains; did you try and fight past and future  
or did you learn how to embrace them and make peace with them.

When you realize what craving does, it makes war

When you understand that peace, kindness, gentleness

gives you the highest happiness then only do you understand

how to make peace with yourself and be truly

free , be rich because the highest wealth even in our English Language

is called 'to want for nothing'. To want for nothing.  
How much do you need

before you can want for nothing? You need nothing at all.

You have enough right now. A moment of contentment  
a moment of accepting yourself, a situation, your partner, your life  
in this moment is a moment of great peace. Once you understand that  
peace in the heart you understand what enlightenment is.

What the aspiration of Buddhism is. Why we meditate, why we  
keep precepts, why we come here to listen to talks like this  
because every now and again you get a taste of freedom  
a taste of peace, Beautiful silence in the heart  
where you want for nothing. When you want for nothing is the most  
beautiful feeling in the world.

completely content, at peace and happy with this moment.

And as a result of that you know what compassion is  
and no one not even monks sit in meditation for ever  
half a hour, a hour two or three hours on retreat  
and of course then you come and take that peace and put it  
there in the world. So your craving is sometimes to  
make peace in your heart and with your eyes  
you are out of meditation to create the same  
peace in this world using the same way.

To embrace the people you are with. To be kind to them.

To be gentle. To be soft. We call that making good kamma

The generosity the kindness, the compassion

that's really what we should be craving for

And if we can make that in this world, sure we work hard,  
we have our job, we contribute to society but then we  
never have any stress. Our work does ... our vocation becomes our  
vacation as Mark Twain used to say

We enjoy what we are doing, because we are not  
doing this for money, we are not doing this  
to start a big house, we are doing this for peace.

We are doing this for kindness. We are doing this  
to contribute to the happiness of our world.

When the goal becomes well aimed we never get  
the collateral damage, environmental destruction  
broken families, corruption and war.

It's not that craving is wrong, its the craving for the wrong things,  
things which lead to suffering, rather than things

which leads to peace. There is a challenge for you in  
this life. You have desire, you have craving, you have aspirations

What is really worthwhile to aspire for? where do you want to be  
in one, two, three, four, five years time. Where do you want the  
world to be? Really it's up to you to crave for the right things.  
Thank you for listening.

Sadhu Sadhu Sadhu. So is somebody celebrating my talk tonight  
with a firework display? I am very proud of that..

So does anyone got any comments or questions about  
the talk tonight about 'the Secret'