

A vertical rectangular image featuring a serene, misty landscape. In the foreground, a calm lake reflects the surrounding environment. The middle ground is dominated by several sharp, rocky mountain peaks, some of which are partially shrouded in mist. Small, dark evergreen trees are scattered across the rocky terrain. The background shows more distant, hazy mountain ranges under a sky filled with soft, white clouds. The overall color palette is muted, consisting of blues, greys, and earthy tones.

**HEALTH IS THE  
GREATEST  
WEALTH**

**Sayadaw U Jotika**

Dhamma Talk

# Health is the greatest wealth

**Sayadaw U Jotika**  
*Transcribed by Viet Hung*  
*with support of Sonix.ai tool*

# Recorded Audio

Recorded audio can be found here: [https://  
viethungnguyen.com/2023/12/19/dhamma-talk-health-  
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*V. 01.00*

# Health is the greatest wealth

I want to talk about a very universal topic, something that everybody values and everybody wants. Maybe some of you have read in Pali and in translation also: *ārogya paramā lābhā*. In Burma, some people say that as: [arojam paramam labam]. Slightly different in grammar, but the meaning the same thing, *ārogya paramā lābhā*. And it means health is the highest gain. Another way, health is the best wealth, the highest wealth or the best wealth. So what does it mean by health? Take a few moments and think of your answer. How do you understand health? Health of the body. Health of the mind. Both. Health is not an end, but a means to fulfill the purpose of life itself. Health is not an end in itself. It's a mean. When you're healthy, you can do something. So health is not for health's sake. Health is for something. It's not an end in itself, it's a mean. So health is not an end, but a means to fulfill the purpose of life itself. So the purpose of life itself, what is the purpose of life? If we are healthy, then we can fulfill the purpose of life. But what is the purpose of life? We are trying to find that out.

“Health is not the absence of disease.” Another idea, very interesting. Because if we take health as absence of disease, then I want to ask the doctor if he has met anybody who is perfectly healthy, who is totally absent from disease. The Buddha said [in Pali...] [Pali word] means just a brief moment. [Pali word] means even, even for a brief moment, if a person says that “I’m healthy”, he’s nothing else but a fool. Bālya means a fool. Because he is so foolish that he says “I’m healthy”. Bodily, I mean. Because in our body, any moment there is some kind of ailment. Sometimes we are not aware of that. Only when we go to the doctor and check up, we find out that, “Oh my goodness, I have a disease. I didn’t even know that.” Like diabetes, we don’t really know. Hypertension, unless it becomes too extreme, you don’t know, you don’t feel it. So there are many other kinds of ailments in our body.

“Health is an attitude, or orientation.” Health is an attitude, so it becomes mental, not just physical. Nobody is physically perfectly healthy and healthy. Not even the Buddha was perfectly healthy. He had some suffering, some disease. So health is an attitude or orientation. Very interesting. “Health is an attitude or orientation comprising our basic values.” So, this attitude and this orientation comprises our basic values and beliefs. Oh, it’s another (one), belief. It’s also belief about ourselves and the world around us. So you see, it’s very deep, very deep and meaningful now. What is health? Health is an attitude or

orientation comprising our basic values and beliefs about ourselves and the world around us. So if you have any wrong value or wrong attitude about yourself or the world around you, you are unhealthy. Very deep. It is an inner quality that gives rise to particular health practices, but cannot in itself be reduced to those practices. You may be practicing something to make you healthy, like eating healthy food, jogging, running, and doing many other things. It's very important, those things. But that in itself cannot make you a really healthy person. Because you may be mentally sick. So mentally sick... What do we mean by mentally sick? Not only those people in the mental asylums. Excessive greed is sickness. Excessive anger is sickness. Excessive pride also is sickness. So for example, we are working for a living if we think that okay, I'm going to make something, I'm going to sell it. I'm going to make a drink. I'll just add beautiful color, put some saccharine in it and some very sweet smelling, uh, additives also make it look nice and beautiful. And I'll sell it just like Diet Coke. No nutrition. And I think that sort of mentality is sickness.

We eat to nourish our body. Not only that, we eat also to nourish our mind. As you eat your food, nourish your body and at the same time nourish your mind. How do you do that? So Buddha taught monks. And also, I think laypeople also should practice that if you really want to improve the quality of your life. The

Buddha said, "Reflecting wisely, I eat my food." How do you reflect wisely? You think very deeply: Why do I eat? Very deeply. If you reflect wisely and eat your food, it makes you wiser. Just eating your food makes you wiser. And if you eat, eat mindfully too, it makes your mind very calm and peaceful. When you are very angry, don't eat. Your food become poison. So it is very important to eat your food with a calm and peaceful mind. And to respect your food too. This is nourishing. This is medicine in a way. So to eat something or to drink something which does not nourish you is sickness. So these days, uh, this Diet Coke mentality is a sickness. So it can spread to any other aspect of our life too. We are just deceiving ourselves so. It can become, uh, it can spread to our relationship also, just be nice on the on the surface. So you put beautiful color and beautiful words, but no real heart. No heart and your relationship is just like a Diet Coke relationship. And that is sickness. No real loving kindness. No real compassion. No deep understanding. No real appreciation. Just playing the game nicely. Just like Diet Coke relationship. That is sickness. That is making the whole society sick.

So there is no lifestyle, no matter how disciplined or hedonistic, that guarantees freedom from disease and disability or ensures longevity. Nothing really ensures longevity actually, because the Buddha said, "kamma, citta, utu, ahara", your health and your life depends on your kamma also in the past and what you are doing

now also is kamma. everything we do is kamma, either wholesome or unwholesome. For ordinary people, there is no such thing as neutral kamma, only for our arahats, they are neutral. Although they are doing something which looks like a good kamma, wholesome kamma, they don't get any result any more. They don't expect any result any more. So for them it is neutral. But for us, everything we do is good or bad kamma. So, kamma, citta, your mind also affects your body. Every thought, every mood affects your body. So, we have to take care of that too, our mind, keeping it calm and peaceful as much as possible by being mindful. And briefly, kamma, citta, utu, the weather conditions can make you healthy or unhealthy. And what about pollutions? Environment becoming so polluted. Environment, the whole environment is becoming unhealthy. So, we can see that I'm taking care of my health, but I don't care about pollution. You cannot do that. We have to care for the whole world, if we want to be healthy, for the people and for the surrounding, for the land, for the lakes, for the river, for the air. Even noise also is polluting. This is very deep. It is related to many other factors in our life. And what about the entertainment polluting, mental pollution? Too much mental pollution these days. Too much entertainment. Some people do everything right and die young, while others break all the rules and get away with it. There are a lot of people like that. So, we cannot see only one thing. We have to see the whole picture. So, kamma, citta, utu, ahara, food. What we

eat affects our body and affects our mind, both. So, we have to be very careful. On one health book I read, “you are what you eat”. But most people don’t pay enough attention to what they eat. They eat what tastes good, what looks good, and what feels good also. A lot of fat, a lot of sugar, cream, anything.

So, truly to grasp the deepest meaning of health, it is necessary to broaden its definition beyond the physical. It’s really necessary. Actually, it’s very simple. You can understand that. It’s very simple. Health doesn’t only mean body. It also means our mind. It also means our surrounding, our society, the environment, everything. So we cannot just take care of our own body and say that I am healthy. Optimal health requires an integration of physical, mental, spiritual, environmental well-being. So, physical, mental, spiritual, environmental. So people don’t, some people don’t care about spiritual. They think that if they have big degrees and have a big job and earning a lot of money and have a big house, a big car, and that’s enough for them, they are healthy. But they neglect the spiritual part of themselves. Human beings are spiritual. If we neglect that, we become sick. (And) so, the society is sick, actually. Uh, you might have heard about what happened in Southern California, near San Diego. Very sad, very sad. That shows that society is sick. This is just a sign. A sign of a big disease and not an isolated case. This is just a small eruption somewhere, showing that the whole

society is sick. For example, if we work harder to nurture community projects, philanthropic efforts, and our extended families, we might find ourselves less frightened by the specters of illness, disability and old age. Less preoccupied with the individual survival. And our outlook on life would indeed be healthier. So, we cannot expect to be healthy just living alone. We need each other in a group. So, I have read some research work on animals, insects also. So, especially for example termites. If you take a small number of termites, a few, and keep them in a separate place, they die very soon. You give them everything they need, all the food or any kind of moisture. They can eat, but they die. Because without the community, they cannot survive. They need their termite community to survive.

And I think in many ways it's true for human beings too. In one way or another, if we don't care for the community, we become sick and then we die. Sometimes our body might live, but our life is dead already. So, I notice a few people, whose body is still living, but its life is dead already. No meaning anymore. No growth anymore. No joy anymore. No fulfillment anymore. So, without these things, we cannot say that we are healthy or we are living. We are just alive, not living. To be living means to be growing, to be fulfilling. So, the main purpose of life is not just to live a long life, but to learn and grow. Then only we can say that we are living. So, learning about

our body and mind, learning about the society, learning about the environment and helping also to make the whole society healthy.

Health needs to be recognized as an ongoing process of self discovery. It is an ongoing process. We can't say that I am healthy and that's it. Finished. It is an ongoing process. We are always trying to maintain our health or even improving our health by understanding more and more deeply. So real wisdom makes a person very healthy. So in that regard, you can see that practicing mindfulness is a very good way to become healthy. You understand your body and mind. You become very sensitive to it. You understand greed, hatred, pride, envy, jealousy more and more deeply. And so by understanding and being in touch with them, in a way, you are in control. And those negative emotions, negative thoughts, negative desires become weaker and weaker, less and less. And you develop positive qualities too. In the same process, you develop positive qualities. You become more mindful, more clear, more calm, more peaceful, more aware. You see things more clearly and you feel it. You see it what is right and what is wrong, what is beneficial and what is not beneficial. Because you are aware and because you are in touch with both, both energies, negative and positive energies, you see the difference, you see which is nourishing and you see which is making you sick. And naturally, when you are aware, you go to what nourishes you. Because most people are so

unaware, so mindless, and they are conditioned to developing their negative emotions, becoming more and more greedy, more and more jealous. Compete, compete, get better. What for? Not appreciating good qualities anymore.

So many of meditators complain that if you become mindful and you practice meditation and you become content and you try to understand and you forgive, people think that you are a weak person. People don't respect you. So not respecting these good qualities is also a sign that people are sick. Because they are sick, they don't respect good qualities in people. So, mutually, uh, making each other becoming more and more sick, sicker and sicker, making each other more and more greedy, more and more angry, more and more competitive. So, nobody finds any peace anymore. Very difficult situation this is. If it gets worse, I don't know what will happen. It's a big danger. And it can get worse if we don't do anything about it. So each of us, no matter how small, we have to try to make ourselves healthier, by being mindful and also helping each other and appreciating also each other's good qualities. Very important to support each other. We need a support group. This is very, very important: support group. We need a culture.

When I come to the West, I feel something, very different. Because in some places in the world, especially, for example, in some places I live in Burma,

people support spiritual practice. They really value that. Here, also, some people support that and practice it, I understand that. But a lot of people, they don't support that. So it's very difficult for children who grow up in this community to really understand and develop their spiritual aspect, when they are younger. When they are younger, they develop this negative, uh, qualities only: greed, pride, envy, jealousy. And only when it goes to an extreme and it becomes very painful, then they start looking for something else. And some people, even though they look for something better, they couldn't find it because they don't have good teachers, good community. And what happened in Southern California, it proves that people are looking for something better than money and sense pleasure, but they don't have a good guide. So they did something terrible which is very sad, actually.

So, health needs to be recognized as an ongoing process of self discovery, mindfulness. You learn more and more about yourself. So that's where you begin: Learn more about yourself, your body and your mind, how they are related to each other, how everything affects your body and mind. You see something, it affects your mind and body. You hear something, it affects your mind and body. You eat something, it affects your mind and body. Every relationship with each other affects your mind and body. And you have to see whether it is healthy or not.

Manifesting a positive influence on the world around us. So, when a person is healthy, he manifests positive influence on the world around him. So, you have to be very careful and watch how you are affecting other people in every way. Whatever you do, whatever you say, how does that affect the people around you, the surrounding. Even throwing trash is very unhealthy. Because you are polluting the surrounding, making it dirty and bad smelling. So, everything you do affects your surrounding too. So, if you have a positive influence to your surrounding, then that shows that you are healthy. If you have negative influence to your surrounding, then that means that you are very unhealthy. So, it is a means to living a successful and satisfying life. So, health is the mean to live a successful and satisfying life. Very, very deep. If we can become really healthy, then we will become really enlightened. To be enlightened means to be healthy, actually. Think very deeply. Is that true?

The Buddha was a big medicine man. Yes, they said that even in the text. The Buddha was a big medicine man, was a doctor and mental doctor or so. So, wrong view, wrong ideas, wrong ideals, that's mental sickness too. When you get a wrong idea in your head, it's like you are eating poison. When you eat something poisonous, it contaminates your system, it make you sick. The same thing... You hear something poisonous, you see something poisonous, it makes you sick. Watch out what do you see, what do you hear on the

television. It can make you really sick. You don't know (that) it gets deep into your heart, deep into your brain. So, to be successful and satisfying means to develop all your good potentials as best you can. That means successful, not just money and fame. You know, a lot of people, I'm sure you've heard of them... Very rich and very famous and very sick. Can anybody give me an example of somebody like that? Very, very rich and very famous and very sick. I'm sure you know quite a few.

One of the most striking findings of the study is that "material abundance, the alleviation of narcissism with the onslaught of old age and an exercise diet regimen simply are not enough to make people healthy and fulfilled." That is not enough. The key factor seems to be moving beyond purely materialistic and competitive concerns through the discovery of a deeper meaning, deeper meaning of life. Why are we here? Why am I born here? This life? Why have I come to this life? What is my purpose? What do I want to fulfil? So people are misled since they were very young. Since they were three four years old, they were encouraged to compete, compete, compete, be better than somebody else. And so they are. We have gone to a wrong way, wrong path, not to develop their good qualities, but to compete and to be better than somebody else. In what way? So that is why people forget about what they really want to do, what they really need to do. If you can really calm down and

relax and meditate, and when you come, when you come, come to a point where you stop thinking and get really deeply tuned into your heart, you will find what you really want to do. So most of the people are doing things that others want them to do, not what they really want to do, but they have been conditioned since they were so young that they believe that that's what they want to do. They've been fooled. We have been fooled, actually.

So to find out what you really want to do and do it is the purpose of your life. And you can prove that in many ways, when you are doing what you are really real, deep nature yearn to do, just by doing it, you feel very satisfied and happy with your life. No matter how hard you work, you are still very happy. And you don't lose interest. No matter how old you become, you will never give up. So I want to ask you one question. What is the thing that you want to do until you die? Not just for a few months, not just for a few years. Not until you are 60 years old. What is it that you want to do until you die? Until the last moment. And if you can take it seriously and understand it and accept it. If you don't finish that work, what is it that you want to do even in the next life? So, many meditators, they told me that they have found what they want to do, and they will do it until they die. And if they cannot finish it, they will do it next life and next life, no matter how long it takes. So you see how their goal becomes so strong that they will do it, no matter

how long it takes to do it, to finish it. So you have a very clear purpose in your life.

Most people have no purpose. Let's just going here and there. Getting nowhere. Going round and round. Lost. But if you really get deep inside and find out that this is what I want to do, you will really do it even in your next life. You'll think of it if I die next life, I'll be reborn and I will do it again. If you do it again and again, many lives you develop stronger and stronger ability qualities. That's the way we develop pāramī. So, pāramī is a very beautiful and very strong truth idea, reality. We are here to develop our pāramī, not just to make money and enjoy, although that's part of our life, but not the main goal, not the goal of our life. This is just like foundation. You build a foundation, but if you stop there, what's the purpose of foundation? So learning a trade, getting an education, working, making money is important. Because nobody will feed you for life. You have to support yourself. But that's not the main purpose of our life. There must be something more than that.

“The subtle but critical dimensions of psychological and spiritual growth seemingly play a more important role in a healthy life than has previously been estimated.” So before that, people, uh, think that if they have money and all the material needs they have, they'll be happy and healthy. But now the doctors are making a lot of research work and found out that

those who have spiritual growth, psychological growth are healthy. Growth means it's always growing and growing and growing. So psychologically growing, spiritually growing. Most people emphasize more on intellectual knowledge only, more and more knowledge, more and more knowledge. Now they have Internet. I believe people go crazy with this Internet. More knowledge? What for more knowledge? Too much. You cannot handle it anymore. Your system is overloaded now, already. Why do you need so much knowledge? You don't really develop your emotional, spiritual, psychological aspect. So a lot of research work I have been reading psychological, medical, many other research work, I found out that these days people are emotionally not mature, which means they are not in touch with their emotions. They cannot control their emotions. Emotions become too strong and they just follow their emotion and do whatever the emotion demand them to do. And mostly very terrible things to do. So emotionally not mature. So to be in touch with your emotion, to understand negative and positive emotions very deeply and then control it, to a certain extent, negative emotions and develop your positive emotions. So loving kindness is kind of emotion too. Compassion also. So anyway, being in touch with our emotion is very important. So emotionally healthy, psychologically healthy. This is very important.

“Altruistic or self-transcending behavior derived from

an individual's sense of higher purpose or spiritual values is receiving renewed attention from many different quarters of inquiry, ranging from medicine to evolution." Very deep, you see: altruistic, or self-transcending behavior. So to work for the betterment of many people, other people, if possible, the whole world, is very important for our health. So, altruistic or self-transcending behavior, and this altruistic and self transcending behavior is derived from an individual sense of higher purpose and spiritual value. That is the main thing: higher purpose and spiritual value. Do we have higher purpose and special value? I believe you do have, but this is something many people need to know since they are very young, since they are quite young. I notice that people in their teen ages are very spiritual. But most people have no guidance. That's why most people go to drugs. And I've noticed that very sad story when I talk with people who use drugs I found out that they are very spiritual in many ways. So I don't mean I encourage... I don't encourage taking drugs because that is very unhealthy. That makes people become unmindful. So our behavior should be grounded on our higher purpose or spiritual values. And that is what the teaching of the Buddha is actually, to give us a higher purpose, to give us spiritual value.

"Altruism, either defined socially or as defined genetically, is wholly compatible with natural selection and is an important determinant of human behavior."

Very important. So human beings are social beings. We live together, we work together, we support each other. We cannot live alone. We need a community. So here is a Buddhist community, Buddhist society. Very good, very wonderful. We need that. But you have to find out very carefully what is the purpose of this community? What is the purpose of this society? What is this society doing? What is the goal of this society? And if you know that this society is doing something good, then become a member and work for it. Don't just sit back and watch what others are doing. Be a participant. Participate in it. If you want something, you have to make it happen. You have to make it work. So, already the society is doing something really wonderful. I've been here for more than two months. But I think we need more wholehearted participation. We need this, so we have to work for it.

“Altruists are fitter than selfish individuals.” Ah, you want to be happy and healthy? Don't be selfish. Selfishness is sickness. Selfishness is sickness of the mind and it makes the body also sick. Very clear, simple, plain logic. Not hard to understand, actually. Look at people who are very very selfish. They are not really happy. “Altruism will not only survive, but will gradually permeate the entire population.” One might even rename the accompanying altruism. Rename. Note what the new name would be, could be? Enlightened selfishness. Enlightened selfishness –

wonderful world. Because you want to be healthy and happy, you help others to become more healthy and happy. So, you get it back. It's very beautiful, very beautiful. (You) want to be happy, (you) want to be healthy, support other people to be healthy and to be happy.

“Men who did not engage in volunteer work were two and a half times more likely to die from various causes than their peers who did volunteer work.” See two and a half times more likely to die soon. Those who are doing volunteer work, they live longer. I know a lot of people like that too, and you know some famous people who are doing a lot of volunteer work, like one person, Mother Teresa. She's still around. So, this is very important. “Providing helpful services to others provides a strong antidote to stress and depression.” Helping others relieves you from stress and depression. So, a lot of people are very stressful, under tremendous stress and many people are depressed. I hear so much about depression, depression, depression. Why are people so depressed? Because they are sitting alone and thinking of themselves only. How can I be happy? How can I be happy? Why aren't people making me happy? They are thinking that all the time. They don't think that: How can I help other people? How can I help other people happy? If we think more about how to help other people happy or happier, then in the same process, we become happier. So, stress is not just working long

hours. No... a lot of people work for 14 hours, 16 hours a day, but not much stress. If you hate what you do and if you are selfish in doing what you are doing, just expecting money and nothing else, then it makes you feel very stressful. Stress is mental attitude also.

“Individuals with emotional problems often find that helping others with similar difficulties is particularly beneficial and satisfying.” If you have a problem, work and help other people with similar problems. So, this is some idea very interesting. If you want to learn something, teach it to another person, then you learn. Once, since I was very young, I started teaching my friends the same class. I started teaching them to learn. And since very young I found out that if you want to learn something, teach that. Then you really look very deeply. They ask you questions. You have to find out the answer. Work very hard. You have to explain them, give them, uh, examples. And that makes you think more creatively. That brings you all your good qualities out, helps you develop your good qualities. So whenever I have to sit for an exam, a couple of months before that, I'll start negotiating with my friends. Come on, I'll teach you. I didn't really know much, but actually just getting somebody who wants to learn from you gives you a lot of motivation to find out, to find out, to read. Ah, they will ask me questions. I have to find out. You get more interested, more energetic. You have a lot of energy to work. If you just sit and study alone, so boring, you fall asleep.

Not much energy. So this is very interesting psychological theory, a fact actually.

“Self-actualizing people, however successful in whatever field, are far from perfect by their own standards.: So self-actualized means to develop your potentials. So those people who have developed a lot of their potentials, they are not satisfied with their from their own standard. They don't feel satisfied, are far from perfect by their own standards, and they too have many of the same qualities and experiences that you and I do. So a lot of people who become a very developed person, spiritually developed person, who are able to help a lot of other people, are not exceptionally intelligent. No, they are not exceptionally intelligent. A lot of my teachers (are) not exceptionally intelligent. I know many other learned monks who are exceptionally intelligent, but who could not help because they they are not willing to. They don't want to take the trouble. So, a lot of my teachers are willing to help. And because they are willing to help, they work and work and work and they develop their spiritual qualities. So don't think that, oh, those other people who are, uh, helping and becoming leaders, they are very intelligent. That's why they can do that. No, that is not true. They have a big heart. They want to help. Not because they know. They are willing to help. And in that process, they learn and learn and learn. And they make mistakes too. You know, I make mistakes too many times.

Dealing with people, talking with people is very easy to make mistakes. And people push your buttons too. Your buttons pushed, you get very upset. You work with it. Okay, this is my attachment. Because I'm so attached to this and I've been pushed and I'm upset. So, work with it again and again and you become more mature. You can let go and work again. Keep doing, you don't give up.

“They were born and reared under vastly different social and economic circumstances, ranging from inherited wealth to a few dollars and a vision.” Some people are rich, some people are very poor, but they work. “They have suffered setbacks, disappointments and life threatening illnesses.” A lot of the leaders, especially in the spiritual aspect, they don't have really happy life, actually. They have very hard life. They work very hard. So, “... life threatening illnesses and have experienced the joys, triumphs and sense of awe that inspire all of us. They struggled through the same daily woes of living as we all do...” We all have problems. We cannot wait until we have overcome all the problems. “But they struggle through the same daily woes of living as we all do, but do so with more awareness and wisdom than most.” And that's the difference. They have more awareness and wisdom. Because they are more aware, they become wiser. And from very simple experiences, they learn something very deep and meaningful. So when you listen to really wise people teaching, you will hear that they are

teaching something very simple and basic. Nothing extraordinary, so to speak. Just loving kindness, mindfulness, understanding, compassion, forgiveness, simple life. Nothing extraordinary, if you listen to it.

“They are remarkable not because of a special genetic endowment, but by virtue of living life to its full expression.” That’s why they are remarkable. Try your best. You have tremendous, beautiful spiritual qualities. Just try your best. “Despite adversity, they listened to their inner voices and developed the skills to turn their visions into realities.” They have a lot of adversities, setbacks, but they try to calm down, meditate and look deep inside. And deep inside, they got pāramī actually, so to speak, they got pāramī motivate them, do something good, go ahead and do it, keep doing it. So when I was young, a few times I was very depressed. I didn’t want to do anything anymore. But whenever I go and meditate for a while, deep inside me, something is motivating me: Learn, do something good. This is just another, another test, another stage. It will be over. You will learn and grow up and you’ll be happy about it. So all the difficulties and setbacks in our life are a way of testing us and motivating us to work harder, telling you to work hard.

So, “broken bones do heal strongest.” This is a saying most people hear about. Broken bones do heal strongest. And when you have a hard life, if you are

going through a hard time in your life, remind yourself of that. And I have one another quotation, which I've read from a book which gave me a lot of courage to keep going. That is, "That which does not kill me makes me stronger." Just ask yourself. I'm not going to die from it. I'll keep going and that will make me stronger.

"The illness, limitations, suffering and isolation, all the initial and transient aspects of trauma may awaken us to a deeper meaning that is previously buried within all these illness." Some people, they have cancer and they went through very painful emotional periods and some recover from cancer. Very strange, some people spontaneous remission happens, some had surgeries. But anyway, they recovered and they became very spiritual.

I know one man whose name is... I think he's still living. I met him in America. His name is Don Lumley. He suffered from acute leukemia and doctors said that he will not live long. He was very depressed and he said, I don't mind dying, but I don't want to be depressed. You have a cancer. How can you be not depressed? So one friend said, "well, why don't you meditate?" He didn't hear anything about meditation at that time. So his friend said, "why don't you try meditation?" He said, "how do you meditate?" And his friend said, I don't know either. But I've tried a few times and did some retreat. So, I can tell you where to

go. So, he told his friend, Don Lumley, to go to a centre. And in that centre, they still teach meditation, very simple breathing and then body scan or body sweep, going through the whole body, being mindful of sensations. So he went to that center and meditated for a while, and he went around the whole world trying to find a doctor who can cure his leukemia. He even went to Japan, Switzerland, spent all his money, spent all his money, and he became penniless. And his friends supported him just enough to live on.

So, when he came to the monastery where I lived in California, near Santa Cruz, I talked with him because whenever somebody comes to me, I want to know why this person is coming, what is his expectation? So I asked him why he came here. Who told him to come here? How did he find out the place? So, he told me that one of his friends told him about the place. And he came here to meditate and to die peacefully, he said. He wanted to die in a monastery. So he meditated. But I came back, and at that time he had leukemia for six years. But he's still kicking. And at that time also he told me, he said, "if I keep meditating, I hope that I can live a normal span of life. Like 65, 70, 75.", he said. So, even though... And this person also told me he was an engineer making roads, he said, "before I got sick, I never thought of meditation or spirituality, just money. Make money and enjoy." And he said, "I feel very thankful to my sickness now." Another lady I met who had both of her breasts removed from cancer,

and she came wearing a T-shirt. Very plain, you can see that. And she said, "Because of my disease, I found the meaning of my life. And I'm very happy about that." So these people, because of this trauma, they found the meaning of their life. So, everything you go through in your life, painful experiences, has a meaning, has a meaning. Find that meaning. Don't say, "Why me? Why should I suffer?" Just ask, "What is the meaning of this experience? What can I learn from this experience and grow up?" Someday we will die no matter how healthy we are now.

"This new understanding, in turn, can move us to reassess our values." So, this is very important to reassess our values. Our values will change. It will always change. If we are mindful, it will change for better and better, deeper and deeper meaning, better values. So, we cannot live with the same values that we live when we were in our teenage, when we are in our 20s, when we were in our 30s. Our values must change, "to sort out what matters and what does not, to consider the meaning not just for the trauma, but of life itself." What is the meaning of life itself?

"In such experiences can be found the roots of empathy and compassion." Some people become very compassionate after they have suffered a lot. You become very compassionate. They know what it means to suffer. Some people who went through depression, they know what it means to be depressed.

Very terrifying. Very terrifying. So, “in such experiences can be found the roots of empathy and compassion, as well as the foundation for the adult attainment of optimal health. Control is the conviction that we as individuals can affect the growth and destiny of our lives.” So, we don’t have complete control in our life. Nobody has complete control. Nobody has complete freedom. But we have partial control and partial freedom. We have to make use of that partial control and partial freedom. We are conditioned by our past drama. We are conditioned by our society, in which we grew up. We are conditioned by our parents, our teachers, our friends, conditioned by the media also. But if we are aware, if we are mindful, we can see how these things are conditioning us and try to direct our life to whatever purpose, spiritual purpose or goal we set ourselves. We have the direction. We have that control too. That’s the way we develop our good pāramī. So, people who feel that they are not powerless, people who feel that I can do something to improve my mentality, my understanding, mindfulness, clarity, peacefulness. I can do something to make my body even healthy by eating healthy food, not eating too much sugar, too much fat, too much meat, whatever. Not watching too much television. It makes you sick watching television. So, if you are aware you can do something. If you are not aware, then others will influence your life, take over your life.

So, it is a healthy belief that one can effectively manage challenging situations. "I can manage it, I can cope it. I can learn from it. I can overcome it." That is very important to really understand and believe it and do it also. I can improve the situation now, even now. Just by changing my understanding, I can improve it. Just by changing my attitude, just by looking at it from another angle, I can improve myself. Don't get stuck in one point of view. Look around, look around. You can improve your understanding. With this orientation, people rarely feel helpless, hopeless, or isolated. If you have that sort of mentality, sort of attitude, you don't feel hopeless or helpless. And if you have the right attitude toward people, you are not isolated. You can always get advice and help and guidance from many, many people. If you trust people, if you are ready to accept, there are a lot of people ready to give you. If you are suspicious, if you don't trust, then people will go away. They will leave you alone. So it is very important to learn how to accept help. If you are willing to accept, if you trust people, you will get a lot of help.

"Once an individual voluntarily or involuntarily experiences a deep sense of inner strength or personal control, even in the midst of major trauma, that experience becomes the core of a mature sense of personal empowerment and control." So, if you have understood one difficult situation and work with it and overcome that, that gives you tremendous power. And

if you have to face another difficulty, you are ready for it. So, a lot of my students, some quite young in their late 20s, they say that, "Before, I have really faced difficult situation, before I understood difficult situations and work with it and overcome it, I was scared of difficulty." But after facing a few difficulties, with the help of some good friends and good teachers, encouraging, go on, go on, keep doing it. After overcoming a few difficulties, now they say that, "I want to face difficulty. Because I know that then only I learn and grow. Without facing difficulties, I cannot learn, I cannot grow, I cannot develop my courage, my strength." So to develop your courage and strength, you need to face difficulty. You need to deliberately go and face difficulty which is working in a community. Go and work. It's hard work. You'll be tested in many ways, but don't give up. Work.

"As individual who has control is certain, he or she can exert a powerful influence upon the growth and destiny of his or her own life and the circumstances that surround it." So, if you have that sort of control, you have the sense of power. So, you see, an individual who has control is certain. So, you are in a certain way, although limited, you have some control. You can make your life work.

"Recent research shows that this factor of control, empowerment, or self-efficacy may be the ultimate determinant in human health and even aging." Sense

of control is very important. So, we teach about anattā or no self. But that doesn't mean that you cannot do anything. If you prepare the suitable condition, you will get the suitable result. So, anattā doesn't mean that hopeless. Don't do anything. Anattā means if you want something to happen, get the required condition. If you want to grow orange, get orange seed or get an orange twig, put it in the soil and water it. Give some fertilizer, weed it and give it a lot of sunshine. Look after it. It will grow up and it will bear fruit. But if you sit and say that I want an orange, nothing will happen. So, that is anattā. Anattā means if you want something, you cannot just wish for it. You have to work for it. So, to deeply understand anattā is very important. It doesn't mean that you are hopeless.

So, "at the developmental level, the optimally healthy individuals in many studies literally do not recall a sustained period of time in their lives when they were particularly confused, angry, resentful, isolated, or lacking in a strong sense of purpose or an inner strength and conviction." So, all of us have a lot of frustration in our life. The most important thing is not to be stuck in that frustration and depression. All of us go through ups and downs all the time. So, when you are down, find some way to go up again. If you stay down long enough, too long, then it becomes harder and harder for you to go up again. So, those who develop and grow, they have their own downs sometimes, but they are very positive and they have

positive support group also. So, we need a support group. Very important. When we become depressed, it's very hard for us to pull ourselves out of it. We need a good friend to encourage us, to teach us. So, we need a group. This is very important. Be in a group, be in a support group and make a support group of yourself. You have to make a support group. Just don't expect that oh, I'm so happy, I need a support group. It will not come to you. You have to go to it.

“Through their transformed trauma of their childhood or adolescence, these individuals discovered a sense of their true mission.” A sense of their true mission. Yes, that is very, very important. What is your mission? What is your spiritual goal? Mission is your spiritual goal. “Real vocation or destiny usually in the mid to late 20s.” So, a lot of people in their mid to late 20s are looking for something very spiritual. And those people died in Southern California, most of them, I think, I've heard are in their 20s. Some may be older, some younger. But most of them are in their 20s. “Often this discovery was accompanied by a sense of inevitability and a renewed, deeper commitment to the altruistic purpose they had sensed more vaguely as a child or young adult.” So naturally, when we are in our teens, we have spiritual ideals, very beautiful. But some people think, oh, that's just a teenage dreams, unrealistic. No, this is realistic. But they don't have a good guidance. They are misled again (to) the sense pleasures. Naturally, we develop those spiritual

beautiful ideals. We want it. We need it. We know. "Occasionally, the discovery occurred during a period of crisis, or through a powerful but transient period of alienation." Sometimes we become very lonely and very important that loneliness is very useful. You take time and be in touch with yourself again. And develop [can't get the word]. Or sometimes you find out, "What do I do now?" Just take your time and think very gently. "What do I do now?" Be very patient. The answer might come very gently and very slowly. If you are in a hurry, you cannot find it. "Or within a spontaneous internal moment of insight, sometimes in a flash it comes." "Oh, this is what I want to do. This is what I really want to do. I would be really happy if I do this."

So, "sometimes from a negative experience you can become cynical, pessimistic or bitter. But I choose a different path." Sometimes you become cynical and bitter. Very negative. But if you have a good support group, that support group, your teacher, your friends can help you to become positive again. Especially those who have been through the same process, can really help you. Those who were alcoholics, who were they are not anymore, they can help another alcoholic to give up drinking, to help him give up drinking. So, honestly, I don't know how I came out of that traumatic experience [in take] and I do not take credit for it. Sometimes you just work, work, work, and then you're out of it again.

So briefly, things that will help you become healthy body and mind. There are few things we need to do. Do things that bring you a sense of fulfillment, joy, and purpose that validate your worth. See your life as your own creation and strive to make it a positive one. Pay close and loving attention to yourself, nourishing, supporting and encouraging yourself. Release all negative emotions, resentment, envy, fear, sadness, anger. They may come. They will come. But watch them very closely. Understand them. Then overcome. Hold positive images and goals in your mind. Very important. Someday I will be wiser, more peaceful and happy. Someday I will be able to do it, if not now. Try, try. Someday you'll be able to do it.

Love yourself. Metta for yourself is very important. Create loving, honest relationships, allowing for the expression and fulfillment of needs for intimacy and security. Intimacy and security. Very important to understand each other, to support each other, to forgive each other. Try to heal any wounds in the past relationships as with mother, father, friends, children, spouse, with anybody. Try to heal that.

Make a positive contribution to your community through some form of work or service that you value and enjoy. Make a commitment to health and wellbeing and develop a belief in the possibility of total health, mental and physical and environment

also.

Accept yourself and everything in your life as an opportunity for growth and learning. This is the most important point. Everything in your life, accept that as an opportunity for growth and learning. Be grateful. Very important. Those who are healthy are very grateful. And also keep a sense of humor.

I've rushed through the whole thing quickly, looking at the clock. So, think very deeply. It's about you, your health, mental and physical, and the health of the whole world. So, I've come to the conclusion now. We'll pay respect to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. We recite only in Pali because some people find it very difficult... I mean only in English. Some people, it's difficult for them to recite in Pali language.

- I honor the Buddha by the very practice that leads to liberation.
- I honor the Dhamma by the very practice that leads to liberation.
- I honor the Sangha by the very practice that leads to liberation.