

SACRED women's BUSINESS

with
KRIS MCINTYRE

Transcript of Judy Arpana on Life, Death & Pilgrimage

14 April 2015 – Buzz Studios, Byron Bay NSW, Australia

A pilgrimage is a transformational journey. Through the exploration of outer landscapes we uncover deeper inner meanings. Blessings are received and healing takes place. With intention, the outer action of our journey can be filled with inner meaning. On return from pilgrimage life is seen with different eyes. Nothing will ever be quite the same again. With the right attitude any journey to a sacred place becomes a pilgrimage.

Judy Arpana is a Spiritual Care Consultant and Educator specialising in grief and loss counselling. As a student of Buddhism for more than 40 years, she brings enormous compassion and depth of experience from both her study and her palliative care work to support those in the process of dying. With her natural humour and warmth, she allows people to develop a deeper appreciation of life – especially during the most challenging of times. For the past 20 years, Judy has also worked as a tour guide leading pilgrims to India. I caught up with Judy near her home in Northern NSW, Australia to talk about life, death and pilgrimage.

KRIS: Judy, you have been a practicing Buddhist for 40 years, a counsellor for 30 and a tour guide for 20 years – I can't imagine what an interesting journey you've life has been. How did you come to be a student of Buddhism in the first place and how has that influenced the career that you've taken?

JUDY: I first met my first Buddhist teacher Lama Yeshe in 1973 when I was asked to cook at a meditation course in Southern Queensland. When I met him it completely changed my life and while I was just 'the cook' and not attending the teachings it was his very being that changed me and I thought to myself, 'whatever you are teaching I want to learn because I want to be more like you'.

KRIS: It's beautiful where the inspiration comes from. So, that was 40 years ago? And then you became a counsellor after that?

JUDY: Yes, I became interested in Jungian therapy and Lama Yeshe was also quite interested in Jung – he was always looking for ways to be able to relate to Westerners. And as Jung was one of the first transpersonal psychologists, he saw that there was some connection. So I became a counsellor and then I got a job working at the AIDS Council in the late 1980s/ early 1990s. And I realised during my work there that I really didn't have enough wisdom or compassion and I prayed from the bottom of my heart to meet a teacher again who would inspire me. I went into a local bookshop and there was the 'Tibetan Book of Living and Dying'. It had just been published and I went on and met Sogyal Rinpoche and later worked for his organisation – the spiritual care aspect of his organisation, which is called Rigpa. I became an educator with the spiritual care program for many years, which was a great privilege.



KRIS: That book is amazing and has done a lot for me in my life, which we might talk about later. But can you tell us a little bit about your work. I think it's very interesting that as a Buddhist working in the field that you are working in – with grief and loss and dying – because in our culture we don't really feel comfortable with death, or even talk about it that much. Can you just talk about what you do and how your Buddhist philosophy and way of living helps you in that?

JUDY: Ok, I must say that while I've been a Buddhist for 40 years I'm not a particularly good Buddhist. However, I've been inspired by the very practical methods that they use to be able to train our mind and to be able to perceive things differently. So I do various things. I am a grief counsellor and I also run seminars – the most popular one being Facing Death, Embracing Life – and that's for health care professionals, people with life-limiting illness and often, people who have become aware that they need to become more familiar with death and dying and loss. As you said, in our society we don't talk about it. Having the profession that I do I'm very aware of this because people ask me what I do and just by saying the words 'death and dying' can be quite shocking sometimes. You probably notice that we use lots of euphemism to avoid using the words death and dying ...

KRIS: Like life insurance [laughs]

JUDY: [laughs] So I describe my work as 'to normalise death'. Normal as been defined as 'if enough people do it, it's normal' and certainly everybody dies. It's certainly going to touch all of us and we almost have sort of a superstition that if we talk about it, it's going to happen. Well, it is going to happen, but talking about it is going to help us prepare. Nothing can prepare us for the shock of the finality of death. Even when the death is expected, in a way we can be joyful that the person we love is no longer in pain. We may have done lots of preparatory grieving. However, that finality of death always comes as a bit of a shock – even to me. I've been around death a lot and I'm often with people when they take their last breath, but there is something about that finality. And we go often into what I call an altered state of consciousness. It's a bit like birth – at the time of death the curtains between the worlds part and we're allowed into the mystery of birth and death. And while we are in that state, we're not often thinking very clearly and cognitively. So things like filling our forms and doing very mundane tasks associated with death – it's a really good idea if we are prepared beforehand. So whether we are looking after someone who is imminently dying or, as we never know the time of our own death, to prepare our own practical stages and talk about it with our family and friends so that if we die suddenly and unexpectedly, they're not thrown into a terrible dilemma. It's like if you can tell them what sort of funeral you want, where the papers are, all the practical things ... the will. Just some of your wishes so that you have finalised as much as you can, so that the people left behind have some sense of satisfaction in a way of carrying out your wishes.

KRIS: Yeah, that makes sense. And you've been around so many people who are dying, in the process of dying, what are the big challenges that come up for both people dying and the people around them as well?

JUDY: I think it's a paradox. It's the love that they have for each other that causes some distress of leaving. However, I've had so many people who almost their last words look into my eyes and say, 'there's only love'. In Buddhist terms, it's our attachment to the people or the place or the things that cause the difficulty when we have to leave them. There's a Buddhist saying that, 'where we grasp is where we suffer'.



KRIS: Hmm, that's something to ponder isn't it? In those last moments of life, is there a sort of grasping ... what are the sorts of things that come up for people if say, they don't have a spiritual belief to get them to the other side or the people around them are holding on – particularly, you know some of

our medical systems are not necessarily that supportive of allowing people to die peacefully and naturally. Do you have anything to say about that?

JUDY: Well, first of all death is not a failure. We all die. Unfortunately, if you get caught up in the medical system – and often some of our great new oncologists are quite young and have a very strong belief in their treatments – and being able to recognise when it is time for someone to stop having treatment and just be made comfortable so they can connect with their loved ones and die in a peaceful and appropriate way can be a bit of a problem. Its very good to fill out a health care directive saying if you are suddenly rendered unable to communicate that your wishes of what sort of treatment, what sort of lifestyle is acceptable to you, can help you get that sort of death. However, with cancer you are probably not going to be rendered unconscious and unable to speak, but the promise of more treatment is often a very seductive one.

KRIS: Yeah, and also the medical system is ... you know the Hippocratic Oath is to keep people alive – that’s their job, so its where those things butt up against each other. You mentioned “Tibetan Book of Living and Dying’ before and my dad died a couple of years ago and I was, you know I’m not a Buddhist, but in all the ways that I had to go and look for something for me to help me deal with that and fairly intense family dynamics as well, that book had so much wisdom for me. But I remember there was just a couple of sentences about what people who are dying need to know in order to be able to let go of their life and move on peacefully, particularly if they are in a terminal illness where they are being kept alive for a long time and there is a lot of suffering there. It said that people need to know that it’s ok for them to go – and it needs to be a verbal thing as well (he was quite particular about that) – verbally acknowledge that you love them, that it’s ok for them to go and that you are going to be ok when you’re left behind. And I remember talking to my mum about that and she had a great deal of difficulty with it because it wasn’t ok with her. I think sometimes its quite difficult for people to allow the space, or be able to finalise some of that unfinished business, or be able to let go. Do you have any advice for people around that kind of situation – and what is the difficulty for people?

JUDY: I think again its paradoxical. Say with you mum, to be able to say ‘it’s ok to go’, it’s almost a case of fake it until you make it. And in my experience it is often hearing from somebody that ‘we are all going to be ok’ is very reassuring to the dying person. They may be quite ready to go, and willing in a way. However, to hear the words ‘we’ll be ok’ often you can sort of see them let go and often soon after that they’ll take their last breath.

KRIS: Judy, I know a lot of the work you do is in running seminars in grief and loss and you talk about how unacknowledged grief can have an enormous impact on our lives and how we life it. Can you talk about that?

JUDY: Well, grief is a response to loss and we all grieve in our own way. Nobody’s grief looks like your grief and often we are unfamiliar with how our grief feels, looks, smells ... you know, we need to become familiar with what our grief is like. And there are many losses in life that are not to do with death. However, we grieve for those losses. It may be loss of school friends if we move house. I’ve had people at seminars who have had a husband die, and also been divorced, and they say divorce is much greater, harder to deal with and the grief is more overwhelming. So the way we grieve depends a lot on the circumstances around the loss, which is why as we know death is certain, but the time of death is uncertain. We never know when we are going to die. If we can live our life as though ‘today I’m going to die and I have completed as much as I can’, that’s a good outcome. So in my seminars and private counselling work I do various exercises to help us reflect and identify other losses that we’ve had in our life and to recall what that felt like, what impact that had on our lives. And what helped us through those times so that we start to become familiar with our own grief. And I’ve done this experientially – most of my work comes from my own experience. And now I can say to people, ‘I’m grieving,



don't expect me to be like I was last time you saw me'. Because there are certain signs and signals that I get now where I go 'ah-ha, this is grief', even though it may not be connected to a death.

KRIS: Ah, ok. So you've been triggered by something that can bring up a past experience or something unresolved?

JUDY: Yes, something unresolved or something I didn't know I was so attached to and when that leaves suddenly, 'Oh, I do feel the loss of this', and then there are feelings and so forth. When the loss, or say a death is sudden and unexpected, a lot of hormones and endorphins are released into our body and often we will feel full of wisdom and connected to the cosmos and everything is perfect, and our friends will feel really good because we're not messy. Those endorphins will wear off and after a month or six weeks I often say to people, 'even if you can't go to the funeral or go to the person soon after the loss, remember in a month to six weeks the endorphins have worn off and they are beginning to feel the pain of the loss – and that's the time to keep calling'.

KRIS: I've heard that before and I think that is a very good thing to know for people you are trying to support. Also, grief is quite complex isn't it? I've heard that it's five stages that you go through in grief, which are not necessarily logical and it's something like anger, denial ... Can you talk about that.

JUDY: Well, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross originally identified these three stages and then the fifth one being coming to terms with it. And while it was wonderful pioneer work, it was sort of taken up as a formula and so people sort of came and said, 'well in the anger stage now and then they're going to go into bargaining and let's hope they get to acceptance fairly soon', because our messy emotions disturb other people. Elisabeth never meant it to be sequential – you can go in and out of all of those stages in five minutes and not necessarily in sequence. Grief is very complex and it's very unique to each person. And as I said before, depending on the circumstances of the loss, depends on how you react or respond. I think being able to recognize our own grief, be able to recognize it takes much longer – we get a couple of days off work for bereavement and our friends hope we are over it in six weeks.

KRIS: So they feel better ...

JUDY: Of course, you know our sadness awakens their sadness as well. In my training, what I try to emphasize is your authentic presence is the most helpful. There are no words of wisdom that are going to make that better. In fact, there are no words that are going to make it better. However, your presence is immensely helpful – even if it's just making a cup of tea. We can't know what the other person is going through.

KRIS: And it's ok to say you don't know what to say ...

JUDY: Absolutely, it's sort of a relief to hear that rather than people saying platitudes, which just sort of annoy you. I know one of my symptoms of grief is it's like I have no skin, that all my nerve endings are exposed, so I get very irritable very easily and I warn people of that!

KRIS: [laughs] Watch out, I've lost my skin! You've touched on something a little while ago which has reminded me of that Buddhist about, 'every day is a good day to die'. When you say that, people sort of shake their head saying, 'what do you mean by that?' What does Buddhist philosophy mean by that? Is it mean living in the moment or something else?



JUDY: To me, I take that to mean that to be as prepared as we can at any even moment that if we die, we can die without any regrets. To die without any regrets is said to be the mark of a spiritual practitioner. So when something comes up, say and unresolved relationship, if you are ready to be able to deal with that – whether it’s verbally with the person or writing a letter, whatever it is that is obstructing the resolution – to be able to do that as soon as we can, because we never know when we are going to die. And there is a wonderful saying that, ‘if you remember that each day could be your last one day you’ll be right’.

KRIS: That’s also a very good mantra to be a better person, isn’t it?

JUDY: Yes, and one of the things I use is when I find I can obsess or get stressed about really minor things and I ask myself, ‘will this matter at the time of death?’ 98 per cent of the things I’m obsessing or stressing about won’t matter at the time of death and it really helps me to let go.

KRIS: I’ve noticed on your website you have a big statement across the top that says, ‘if you only had three months to live, what would you do?’ I imagine that you have posed that question to a number of people and what are the most common things that people say?

JUDY: Well that’s actually more a rhetorical question to bring up this idea that we are all going to die. Death is certain, the time of death is uncertain. Most people don’t cash in their super and take the trip around the world. Most people just want to resolve any relationship difficulties, put their practical affairs in order and when people are giving a life limiting diagnosis, most people paradoxically say it the best thing that ever happened to them. They start to notice the birds singing and they stop obsessing about the minor things in life and their priorities change. So in many Buddhist practices we do a practice in the morning of reminding ourselves that death is certain and the time of death is uncertain, which helps to reprioritise your whole day. And eventually, even though there are certain resistances thinking about this first thing in the morning, it does have an effect on your life over time.

KRIS: So the ‘to do’ list for today is to have a good life?

JUDY: Yes, and cause no harm.

KRIS: So you just talked about people cashing in on their super and going on an adventure, so let’s talk about yours. Through your Buddhist connection you lead pilgrims to India with your Tibetan friend, who is also a highly regarded Lama. Pilgrimage has been a sacred rite of passage for most followers of major religions – like Christianity, Islam and of, course, Buddhism for centuries. But I like you to talk about what the meaning is for modern people.

JUDY: Most of the people who come with us are not Buddhists – although some times they are and that is fine. But often people say, ‘I’m not a Buddhist, is it ok if I come?’ And my reply is, ‘that’s fantastic!’ They have less expectations and are very open. What I’ve noticed – and I only recently put this together and I’ve been doing it for over 20 years – is that we always have at least one, sometimes more people on our pilgrimage who’ve had someone die in the previous year. Sometimes they bring ashes and we’ll put them in sacred places. We often will go to, for example, His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s monastery where we can offer 108 butter lamps, which is a traditional Tibetan Buddhist practice and then every time we visit lots of monasteries we make light offerings. And in a way, that itself is a wonderful meditation because it takes quite a while to light 108 butter lamps, and Karma Rinpoche says all the appropriate prayers and so forth. So in a way, ... we’re doing the journey, it’s got simple ritual, you don’t have to know Tibetan and you don’t have to be a Buddhist, however lighting the butter lamps and remembering your loved one is a very satisfying thing. And often people are enabled by the person who has died in the sense that they may have been left some money that allows them to



come on the pilgrimage and this seems to be a common thread that happens these days.

KRIS: I've also noticed that people who are left behind also get a second lease on life, particularly if they've been in long marriages where one person has died – like my mum and I've looked at other widows and widowers, where it's almost like they've got an opportunity to live their own adventure again. I don't know if you've seen that sort of thing happen as well – so it seems that on a pilgrimage there's not only an opportunity to let some things go but also some new hope and dreams for the future is that sort of the experience that people go through.

JUDY: Absolutely, and that's beautifully put. Thank you. It's exactly what happens. We start to reframe our life and often being away from home it's easier to look back and see what we can let go of and what's important. And that distance really helps us to revise our life and reframe it and start a new journey.

KRIS: So what happens? ... I want to go on one of these pilgrimages! Where do you go and what's the daily routine on a pilgrimage?

JUDY: The one that we do every year – and then I do a second one to different places – we start off in Delhi, but the real start of the pilgrimage is when we go to Amritsar and visit the Golden Temple, which is the most holy place for Sikhs. It's an extraordinary place and it's imbued with devotion. They feed over 100,000 people every day for nothing. And it's free of any caste or religion – everyone goes in and everyone is fed and everything is free – the labour, the food is donated by Sikhs. And this is a beautiful way to start the pilgrimage. Then we get a taxi to the foothills of the Himalayas to where His Holiness the Dalai Lama lives and we stay there for a few days.

KRIS: In Dharamsala?

JUDY: Yes, it's sort of McLeod Ganj, but Dharamsala is the area and Karma Rinpoche was bought up there so he knows everyone and is highly regarded. So we visit people and have dinner in their houses and his connections and the fact that we have been going and doing this for 20 years has opened many doors. So we often travel to another place called Tso Pema, which is very holy to Buddhists, Sikhs and Hindus. And there are nuns there who have been meditating in caves for 30 years and we have the great privilege of scrambling up the mountain into these little caves where they greet us and we request teachings and they offer very generously what they have learnt – often with a delicious dinner. I try to make it that we have very few one night in one place, so we stay at least two or three nights and sometimes five nights in the one place, so that we start to feel familiar and not too much moving. And we never know what's going to happen – who'll be there, who'll be visiting, who we'll get to meet. It's always a surprise.

KRIS: Beautiful. And that part of the world is just extraordinary anyway. I spent six weeks studying Shiatsu in a tepee just up the hill from McLeod Ganj and there is something that just changes you being in that environment. The Himalaya itself is, you know, it knocks you off your human perch, doesn't it?

JUDY: It certainly does!

KRIS: I heard a beautiful interview with Krista Tippett – have you heard of her? She runs a podcast series out the States called On Being. She's a beautiful interviewer and she was talking to the author, Paulo Coelho, who wrote 'The Alchemist' but he also wrote a book called the 'The Pilgrimage', which was his first book. And he was talking about his experience on the Santiago de Compostella in Spain. He's a Catholic and that pilgrimage, the first one he did had an enormous impact on him personally, he gave up his job and



decided to become a writer, and also spiritually obviously. But one of the things that stood out for me in that interview was when he said he also believes that we have this possibility of doing a pilgrimage every single day. Because [to quote him] “a pilgrimage implies in meeting different people, in talking to strangers, in paying attention to the omens, and basically being open to life ... we have this possibility, this chance of discovering something new every single day. So, the pilgrimage is not just for the privileged one who can go to Spain or France, or India (that’s my bit) and walk this 500 miles, but to people who are open to life’. And his final point was that, ‘A pilgrimage, at the end of the day, is basically getting rid of things that you are using, and trying something new.’ I’m assuming he’s talking about some habits there. What’s your feeling about that – can we bring the attitude of a pilgrim into our daily life?

JUDY: I agree completely with that. It’s about our intention. What our motivation is that changes our perspective. We can develop a day of starting our day where each day is like a pilgrimage. Each new encounter is viewed as a new encounter, and if we see each person as a teacher we will continue to learn and grow. The mind of our knowing is very open and we can have many opportunities to learn about ourselves. If we can approach each moment with an open mind then our whole life is a pilgrimage.

KRIS: Isn’t that true? I’m on a pilgrimage right now. I wanted to go back a little bit to just before we started recording you were talking about your surname, Arpana, and you mentioned that it was gifted to you by Osho. And I’m drawing a thread between you talking with people who are dying and they say that, ‘all there is, is love’. And I know that was a big theme of Osho’s work. How do we live from love in a non-grasping way?

JUDY: I’m just recalling ... going back to an earlier question when we were talking about people dying and what the difficulties are – with the people I’ve been with, what I’ve noticed is that as they become closer to their last breath ... according to Tibetan Buddhism, dying is a process and it can start several days before respiration stops. And it is said that the five elements that we are made up of dissolve into a central channel and the air being the last one that goes, so with our last breath, our energies are centered and will exit hopefully through the crown chakra into the ether which is the fifth element. They also say that there is an inner process that continues, so it’s a very good idea to allow a space around the person who has just taken their last breath to remember that there is a subtle consciousness still present and that it is going through a final process and inner process. I’ve noticed that when people are approaching, have entered the dying process and there are certain signs like the sheets will feel very heavy. Often people die naked because of this feeling of heaviness. When I notice that the dying process has begun I also notice – and the person can still be coming in and out of consciousness during this stage – what I’ve noticed that it’s like the door has opened for them and any grasping or attachment seems to fall away. So even if they don’t have a religious practice or even a set of spiritual beliefs that this experience still seems to take place. And it is out of that place that they seem to look at me and say, ‘it’s all love’. I can recall that feeling and to me, that’s the guide of how we can live from love without attachment.

KRIS: And that goes back to being a pilgrim everyday as well?

JUDY: It does.

KRIS: I imagine it takes a little bit of practice though ...



JUDY: I think a daily reminder really works wonders.

KRIS: But looking at you, I can see it. There’s another thing that you do that I think is really important for people in these crazy lives that we lead which is you work with people on how to avoid burnout. And I think ... that’s

something that I'm constantly at risk of and suspect that many people feel the same way. What advice do you give for recognizing and avoiding burnout and (in your words) learning to be compassionate to yourself to lead a fuller, more authentic life?

JUDY: I heard the Dalai Lama say this, and I don't know if I'm going to quote him correctly, however the meaning is the same that, 'if we are not included in our loving kindness and our compassion, then our practice is incomplete'. And I've noticed, and I did a workshop just before I went to Japan and this came up, there were a few people and I think ... I'm from a Catholic background and I think it's a Christian Judaic upbringing that somehow has made us feel that we are being selfish if we care about ourselves. It's all been directed out to other people. However, for us to be authentic, unless we can show compassion to ourselves, how can we show authentic compassion to others? Until we really know what that feels like deep within our being, it's only show otherwise. It's also said in Buddhism, which I find a very heartening thing to remember, that it is through our own suffering that we develop compassion. So when I'm going through a hard time and I want to be pushing it away and get back to the happy times, the thought that by me going through this will give me greater understanding and greater capacity for compassion for others. I will be less judgemental of people going through what I'm through, I'll have more understanding and this really helps rather than trying to escape our unwanted and difficult emotions. To just be with them knowing that we are going to grow our heart muscles so that our capacity to be with others in pain and difficulty, without trying to change it, but to be an authentic presence and witness in their life is really useful and helpful.

KRIS: And that translates across just being a mum, or a good employee. What are some of the common signs of burnout that may go unrecognized? Because we can all feel tired, but what are some of the things that might not necessarily be a sign that you are about to fall apart?

JUDY: Well I can speak with authority on this one [laughs]. I know everyone's burnout is bad, but mine was the worst! For me, one of the signs and it's the thing I remember the most and said I will never put myself in that situation again is where even when people would invite me to dinner or some nice event, I would see it as a burden. I was so burnout out that, 'why don't you come for dinner' became, 'oh no, now you've got to do something else'. That's how I translated a generous and kind invitation. My perception was so distorted because I was running on empty all the time. So when they talk about compassion fatigue and stuff like that, it was like anything new that came along felt like a burden and I felt overwhelmed by it. I was also using wine straight after work – getting that first glass down to distress and you, know, other unhelpful methods and it took me two years to recover. That's about the same time – and I hate to put numbers on things, but in grief work two years is a given.

KRIS: So what did you do to get yourself through those two years?

JUDY: Well, a lot of inner reflection. I was so dysfunctional that I remember that if I looked into the past I was angry and if I looked into the future I was fearful. Because I was so dysfunctional I didn't know if I'd ever be able to work again. I was so thankful in that moment from my Buddhist teachings – the past was anger, full of sort of heat and the future was fearful, sort of cold and unknowing. However in the present moment, everything was fine. I remember thinking I can't keep dealing with these strong emotions but then I thought, but right now the sun is shining, I've got a roof over my head, I've got my health, my family is healthy, there's enough food in the refrigerator, right in this moment everything's ok. And I was forced to be in the moment because anywhere else was so uncomfortable it was unbearable. That's what helped me the most. It's the only thing that helped me.



KRIS: You talk about mindfulness which is so hot right now as a topic, but a very difficult thing to do. I've had to learn ... through all my meditation and yoga studies, I've learnt it through my dog. I got a puppy last year and if

there's any little creature that's in the moment, it's a puppy. But it's a very difficult thing to navigate through, particularly in the way that we're wired up with constantly having to do things. We're were talking a little bit before we started about silence and the role of silence ... you know I think it's in a healing space. We were starting to talk about what happens in some of your seminars – do you want to pick up on that thread and have a little chat to us about that?

JUDY: OK, one of the things I have learnt through the burnout, actually ... one time I noticed that somewhere I had the thought that if the adrenalin is going I can get things done. So I caught myself one morning creating stressful thoughts to get the adrenalin going so I could keep going. And in that situation, adrenalin is almost poison to your body. It's very useful when it's needed but not every morning to get going. So I changed my methods and now I try to ... I've developed a very quick method of what Sogyal Rinpoche calls 'bringing the mind home'. Just embody being embodied, connected to your breath and allowing the thoughts to settle. What I noticed was that the less stressed I was, the more I achieved. When I was stressed I made mistakes and I'd have to go back and repair the mistakes. I'd make phone calls without tuning in so the person wasn't there and so forth. What I've noticed out of stillness I will know intuitively when to make the phone call. It actually halved the amount of things that I had to do. As I was saying before, during my seminars, because they are interactive, I never know what is going to happen. Often when somebody has revealed something very touching and moving and maybe they've never said it before with a group of people, the sacredness of that moment can only be expressed in silence. We're all touched by others vulnerability. It's a great gift. We are taught that vulnerability is a weakness and I would just like to turn that around and introduce the idea that vulnerability is a strength.

KRIS: That's something that Brene Brown talks about, isn't it? The courage to be vulnerable – it's quite lovely. We're just about to run out of time but is there anything other wisdom for life that you've got from your tradition or your life experience that you think is going to be useful for people?

JUDY: I'm not very good at coming up with advice. [laughs]

KRIS: Maybe that's it – don't give advice!

JUDY: That's it!

KRIS: Actually I did hear a beautiful teacher called Desikachar – a yoga teacher and he's from a long lineage of yoga teachers two things I heard him talk about were: don't have breakfast and read the news because it's just setting you up for a bad day; and never give advice unless it's asked for. It's very hard to practice, but there's some wisdom in that.

JUDY: There certainly is.

KRIS: Well, I'll let this pilgrim get on with the rest of your day. Thank you Judy.

JUDY: Thank you so much.

– ends –



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