

A Conversation on Compassion With Sharon Salzberg

Transcript of Sharon Salzberg on the Transformative Power of Meditation

Charles: So I'm Charles Raison and I'm a psychiatrist and someone who's done scientific studies on meditation now for the better part of a decade. I'm not much of a meditator myself and fortunately today I am sitting with Sharon Salzberg who is one of the country's most beloved meditation teachers, and has really made an amazing specialty of making meditation accessible to folks.

She's the best selling author of books *Real Happiness* and *Lovingkindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness*. Sharon does a remarkable job in teaching concepts and teachings related to meditation in ways to make contemporary Americans living in the society that we do, able to grasp, comprehend and resonate with. She's a co-founder of the Insight Meditation Center in Barre, Massachusetts, which was cofounded by her in 1974 and she's has decades of meditation teaching experience. We're really honored to have her visit the University of Arizona again this year sharing the wisdom and teachings about the relationship of lovingkindness to the spiritual path. So thank you for sitting down and talking with us.

Let me start with the general question...but really it gets to the core of why many of us are interested in meditation for one reason or another, which is the question of how it impacts people's lives-and you've been teaching meditation for years- I know it's kind of a hard question to answer but could you talk a little about how you feel meditation has personally changed or benefitted your life?

Sharon: *Laughs* But it is a little bit hard because I started when I was eighteen so and I'm far, far from 18 at this point! But I will tell you that when I went to India, which is how I learned meditation. I went to college in this program. I was very confused, I was very unhappy, I had had a very

disruptive childhood, lots of loss, separation and conflict. I came from one of those families where so much was going on but nothing was ever really

talked about- like many people's families- and so I really struggled terribly with those feelings inside of me and I felt I needed *something* that would help me look at all those emotions, deal with them in a better way, and be happier person.

There I was, I was eighteen, I was in college and this program opportunity happened where you could create a project and go anywhere in the world and so I thought 'Well I'll go to India and learn how to meditate!' *laughs*

You know it was like 1970, and all of these things were happening! And they said 'Okay, go!' and that's how it actually started and I really do believe I found exactly what I was looking for in meditation. I wasn't interested in something religious or philosophical or based on a belief system. I wanted to know if there were some very practical tools I might use that would help me be happier.

Charles: That's interesting! And what made you... how did you know enough about meditation before you went to know that that's what you were going look for, you know what I mean?

Sharon: That's even funnier because by the time I was 18 I'd skipped a few grades in New York City as one often did in that time, I was a junior in college. So in my sophomore year, I needed a philosophy course- it was one of the requirements and honestly as far as I can remember it was kind of a haphazard thing. I looked at the offerings and I thought 'I'll take that Asian Philosophy course! It's on Tuesday! I need a Tuesday course so let me do that' and that's why I learned about meditation.

Charles: And did you go to India knowing where you were headed? I mean were you sort of scattered about or did you have your mark? Do you know what I mean? Did you go and look around?

Sharon: I went and looked around because I had such a particular range of desires and I didn't want something that was going to demand and you know look to conversion to a belief system and I don't want to reject anything else. I wanted something so practical and pragmatic and useful to me that it actually took a while wandering around. And a lot of it was kind of odd, you know how these things happen it was almost accidental.

It seemed I had been there for months and not been able to find what I wanted and I heard that there was an international yoga conference going to happen in New Delhi so I went to that thinking I'll find a teacher there and that turned out to be an awful experience, and so dispiriting. The low point was when all these swamis and gurus were up on the stage pushing and shoving against each other to be the first to grab the mic and speak and I thought 'Oh no! I will never find it' but as it turned out Dan Goleman who at that time was a graduate student studying meditation, delivered a paper at that yoga conference. And he mentioned he was on his way to an intensive ten day meditation retreat-no frills, no intense cultural overlay. Just kind of the straight stuff and I thought 'that's it!' and it was it.

Charles: Interesting! Did you just follow him to the 10-day retreat?

Sharon: Yeah!

Charles: So tell me a little bit about who you found, and what happened?

Sharon: Well, what I really found...it was like an immersion course in meditation and the idea was really that meditation is like a skills training. First of all a skills training for concentration. Most of us are fairly scattered, distracted if not in every arena of life, at least in some, and you don't need to be an experienced meditator to know that. You just sit down to think something through and you're gone. Our minds jump to the past and we go over and over and over some situation which we now can't rectify, or our minds jump to the future and we create a scenario that has not happened and may never happen and we're filled with anxiety about that so we're all over the place.

The theory behind concentration is that we can learn to gather that very scattered and distracted attention and energy and settle. Be much more centered. So that was the basis of the training and building on that it's a skills training in mindfulness and really being able to take that greater presence and balance and apply it to looking at emotions, and the body, in relationship and everything, really.

So much more open awareness and building on *that* it's also considered a training in qualities of loving kindness and compassion.

Charles: Yeah, yeah. We'll come back to that, because that's an interesting question about how mindfulness and love and compassion hook up with each

other. So, did you know toward the end of the retreat that you had found a path that was going to shape your life this way?

Sharon: I felt like I knew the first moment I heard the teacher give the instructions, I thought 'oh, right'. I mean I had no idea it would do this you know? That I would teach, or that I would start a center or write books or anything...

Charles: But you had an immediate sense that had this pragmatic element...that it would sort of organize, calm the mind...

Sharon: Yeah, yeah.

Charles: And that was not something, you know... because one of the interesting things now is meditation in various forms is sort of watered-down and floating around everywhere in our culture, and I guess in 1970, it wasn't really so much the case was it?

Sharon: No! *Laughs*

Charles: I mean I think it is likely because the folks like you that do so much contribute to it floating around.

Sharon: Yes, I think that's true - and that didn't happen because I had that intention, you know that I have a master plan. You know it just happened as a consequence of the tremendous benefit I and my colleagues received ourselves and so coming back as teachers we just we just began teaching but I don't think honestly... I'm trying to look back... I don't think I would have gone to India if I didn't have to. You know if all of these methods and techniques were available-at least available in New York or Buffalo, which is where I went to college, or anywhere, I wouldn't have gone there.

Charles: But people weren't really talking about training attention. I mean these are ideas that we sort of take for granted, many of us. They have infiltrated the culture... people study this, but I guess you know, all those many years ago, these were really shocking, amazing, radical ideas.

Sharon: Oh yeah, even in 1974 when I came back...I went to India, came back to finish school, and went back to India, and I finally came back in 1974. I'd be at a party or some social situation and people said 'what do you do?' and I had come back with an insistence from my own teachers that I teach so I'd say 'I teach meditation' and then they would kind of go 'Ooh,

that's weird!' or sometimes they would say 'Oh did you meet the Beatles?' and I was like 'no, they went when I was still in high school'. *Laughs*

And nowadays even in sort of odd situations like coming back into the country Customs and Immigration they'll say 'what do you do?' and I say 'I teach meditation'. The single most common response I hear is, 'I'm so stressed out. I could really use some of that'. Although my favorite response is, 'my partner should really meet you!'

Charles and Sharon: *Laughs*

Sharon: I also hear um. 'I just tried that once and I failed at it' and that really concerns me. People say 'I failed because I couldn't stop thinking' or 'I couldn't make my mind blank' and I realize how many ideas are just are floating out there about what we should be experiencing and how we'd all benefit I think from just some clarity.

Charles: Absolutely. So let's talk about that for a second because you know...so, so you know I'm not a very serious meditator, I make no bones about it, sadly for me. But I mean, I'm a fairly serious researcher of meditation right?

One of the things that struck me is meditation has become one of these things that just sounds good to many people. We do studies and people want to come and get all excited and then they sit down and do the meditation and is there is for many people, I think, a disillusionment. And then we get a fair – and we're not the only ones- we get a fairly very high dropout rate because it turns out to be...work.

So, I mean I think that's exactly right. You know, the attempt might be...my experience is, the intent to be mindful is, a barrier. If you have as your goal...you're right because it there's paradoxical nature to it. It's the attempt, it's the failure in many ways that is sort of the teacher.

Sharon: Yeah, yeah absolutely.

Charles: What is one of the things if people knew about it, might not toss in the towel so quick?

Sharon: That's a great question. I think there are many things like that, and one is, actually, failure's kind of the point because in some concentration training we know that it's not gonna be 800 breaths before your mind



wanders. You know that if the breath is the object that you're trying to settle attention on it's gonna be one or two... maybe four if you have a really good run you know? But it's not gonna be a thousand and now that's understood, and that's not a problem because we say that the most powerful point of the whole training is a moment when you realize your attention *has* wandered, already gone, you've already gotten lost in some way. Or you've fallen asleep or something.

And then comes that moment when you think 'Oh it's been quite some time since I last I felt a breath!' That's considered THE critical moment because first of all, we practice letting go of whatever is taking us away...thought, fantasy, sensation, whatever it is, we practice letting go.

One of my own teachers called it exercising the 'letting go' muscle. And then we practice beginning again without chastising ourselves and blaming ourselves and going on a rant and feeling like a failure. that's one of the kind of secret developments of loving kindness and compassion right there. We practiced beginning again, being kind to ourselves and if you have to do that seventy billion times in the twenty minute session that's not considered a problem. That's the actual training - but that is so unbelievable to us.

Charles: Yes. it is. Although it's odd, I've never thought this before, but you've just described in many ways, a little analogy for what people with substance abuse problems have to deal with. Many of the conditions in life are exactly that, right? You fall off the wagon, you've lost your, you know you lost concentration and then the question...it seems that this is what separates people do well and those who do poorly is those who have recognized that they've fallen off the wagon or whatever their particular wagon is, and then are able without particular catastrophizing, or just saying 'Well I've been doing this and I'll just go all the way down to the bottom'

Sharon: That's right.

Charles: So that's the same...there's something about that willingness to start over.

Sharon: Yeah absolutely. It's really, really crucial and that's a beautiful elaboration of that into life. Because it does come into life and we don't practice meditation so that it's a twenty minute period to become a great

meditator. We practice to help us in life and that's one of the ways it really does.

I also I just think real clarity about what to expect and what not to expect. Because I don't think most people will trust that information. Probably need to hear it again and again and again and again.

The purpose is not to make your mind blank, not trying to eradicate all thinking. If you have only crummy thoughts and not spiritual and lofty thoughts it's not a problem.

The whole premise certainly of mindfulness is that we are changing our *relationship* to what happening not changing what's happening, you know? We're so content driven in so many ways I think we judge ourselves so mercilessly like, I don't know 'I had a bad thought' 'I had any thoughts' whatever it is and instead to be reminded over and over the focal point is to change that *relationship*. So maybe the thought comes and it doesn't carry away yeah you know you can drop it. Something like that.

Charles: Do you ever find that people get into infinite regresses where they beat themselves up for not changing their relationship? I mean it really is very interesting that that seems to be just a hugely impactful point and that has made its way into some psychotherapeutic things, you know? This is a recognition of one of the things that for many people who struggle with depression, one of the things that will take them down the bad foxhole and lead to relapse is that unlike people that don't have that problem, who have negative thoughts can let them go, is that they get stuck on them.

Sharon: Right right.

Charles: Yeah you know it's exactly that process you're talking about the meditation training that tends to short circuit that. So, talk to me a little bit about how you see the relationship of loving kindness meditation, which you've done such an amazing thing of making accessible for people here in the West – the relationship between that and mindfulness. This is a research questions for us too... for many of us - how they stand in relation each to other?

You said something that's really intriguing right now, that lovingkindness, and being able to have lovingkindness for yourself helps one let go. But tell me more about that, it's such an interesting area.



Sharon: Well I think I think that in the development of concentration where we're constantly letting go and coming back and letting go and coming back, lovingkindness is like the secret ingredient even if it's never given voice because you can't let go and start over without some lovingkindness. We just go down another route you know, blaming ourselves and chastising ourselves and comparing ourselves to other people and that can be a long... that's a long path. Laughs – That's a familiar path!

Yeah, so a lot of iterations of that path and so even if it's not articulated were actually deepening loving kindness for ourselves every time we practice letting go and starting over. But I think of mindfulness training really as kind of uncluttering our attention so that's the normal filters aren't so strong... 'I've gotta get rid that of that thought.' 'I have to hold on to that feeling' or 'This is gonna last forever' or whatever it might seem that tends to come in very strongly and just will distort our relationship to what we're perceiving in the moment.

So we kinda loosen the grip of some of those filters through mindfulness. I think of lovingkindness practice in terms of attention training being more about flexibility. You know, like if we're accustomed to at the end of the day thinking about our day, thinking about ourselves, and all we remember is what we did wrong and the mistakes we made, and the really stupid thing we said at lunch at that meeting. So much so that our whole sense of who we are and all that we will ever be like collapses around that stupid thing we said. Our lovingkindness practice is almost like asking ourselves 'anything else happen to today? Like anything good? and anything good within me?'

So we consciously shift our attention or the way we pay attention to ourselves but you know so many people have the fear that it's kind of phony and make believe, but it's not! It's not like you're saying 'isn't that a brilliant, witty thing I said at lunch in that meeting!' *laughs* Maybe it was really stupid! You know there are consequences for that. But that's not all that we are, ever.

So it's that rigidity of perception like 'I am only an idiot' you know, and 'I always will be', and shifting that and saying 'hey! There's good within me' and 'may I be happy', and then we practice having a greater flexibility of attention in terms of who we pay attention to. What about all those many beings that appear in our lives that are you know... The checkout person in a supermarket or something like that, we look right through. That we objectify

to an extent that they might as well be a piece of furniture. What happens when we look at them instead of look through them? And that's what we do in lovingkindness practice is calling people like that to mind and wishing them well.

So it's not really meant to kind of force us to have a feeling we don't actually have, but to be so flexible with the way we pay attention that it's like we're creating the space for other kinds of connections.

Charles: So talk a little bit if you wouldn't mind about some of the pragmatic side you know that I think many people have a sense when we think of meditation that it is something about things like watching the breath, focusing and becoming sort of more nonjudgmentally aware of one's thoughts, so mindfulness practices. But I think metta and compassion practices are less well understood. So, just a quick primer on how it works?

Sharon: Sure! Instead of centering our attention on the feeling of the breath, we would center our attention on the silent repetition of certain phrases. The phrases are almost like an offering, it's like a gift giving. So the first recipient is ourselves. We offer these phrases to ourselves which means we're paying attention to ourselves in a certain way. And then we offer the phrases to others. There are some common phrases and they need to be really simple because you don't wanna be thinking 'Oh what one should I use for you?' You know, they need to be very general that you can basically use the same phrases you know, in most cases like with a few exceptions. So it could be like 'May I be happy. May I be peaceful' And it's not meant to be in a tone like begging, you know? *Laughs* You know, it's like if I gave a birthday card and it said 'May I have a happy birthday. May I have a great new year'. Something like that and start with ourselves.

And then using the same phrases maybe we visualize is someone who really helped us. Just calling to mind some ways in which they've helped us directly or maybe we've never met them, but somebody really who inspired us and feel really good about them. We offer the phrases to them. And then a friend and then a neutral person...someone like the check out person, dry cleaner is a favorite one. And then maybe someone we have a little bit of difficulty with. Not right away the person who is the most outrageous to even imagine but some would have a little bit of annoyance, or conflict with just to see what happens. You know when we have some difficulty with somebody we tend to go over the list of their faults again and again and

again and again. And there's no room for anything else and so we're just trying to see what happens if we include that - the list of their faults - .but not limits that. You know that awareness of them to that. And so we kinda plan and ultimately all beings everywhere we just have this kind of global offering.

Charles: And when you teach, what time frame you move from the aspirational wish for the self to whoever you most want it...

Sharon: And beyond! You know when I teach it I teach to whatever time frame I have, because my goal teaching is that people leave with enough confidence and clarity if they want to continue they can continue.

Charles: So you teach them the practices in the time you have, you know and have them try out...

Sharon: Yeah. It's unlikely say we have a weekend, that you will *resolve* everything with yourself in the weekend, you know, but you have the tools.

Charles: And what do you find when people do the aspirational practices and wishes for people that they really struggle with? You must get best interesting reports about people finding it difficult, or sometimes finding it liberating... How is that?

Sharon: It's difficult for sure and it's a very tender realm when you don't wanna force anything...but it's also, I don't know, I think usually if there's a shift it's in the field of compassion. You get a sense of poignancy about person – like, look at their choices. And given that we all want to be happy, given that were all so vulnerable to loss and change we actually share so much. And it's a little bit like one of those feelings where maybe you have a friend or family member who says they're really lonely, but they're so off-putting...the way they talk to people, the way they treat people, and you look at them sometimes and you're like, 'no wonder no one wants to get near you!' But sometimes that realization shifts and you think 'oh man, look how you've blown it!' you know, like, 'you you are really lonely but it could be different but it's not. Your choices are just so bad. And look at the the consequences of that and you don't even see why'. You know so much poignancy of that, and that's a little bit of that feeling I think that starts to emerge.

I've also said that one of the very interesting things which may make it impossible to research- I'm not sure - about the lovingkindness and



compassion practices is that so often the effects are not felt most directly, and certainly not most immediately in the formal practice. You might see a bit more strongly if you run into that cousin at a party and you realize 'oh! you know I'm different.'

Charles: Yeah. this is what some of the kids in college we first studied said. What people would say is exactly that- they would run into the person and it would mess with their mind, you know -they were changed. You said something interesting that I never thought of before I which is you know this is a premise of compassion practice is that this is a long shared destiny, the person in the meditation and the person you're thinking about. Do people ever notice that?...so thinking about somebody who is really causing you trouble... and as you noted, it's pretty easy to see people's shortcomings, and have those feelings towards them.

But, you know, you said that we *all* make these choices that cause us trouble. Is your experience that people get a sense by doing the practice and really contemplate this, that they begin to see that person in a certain way because of the way they are or whatever, maybe they deserve it, they act a certain way, blah, blah, blah, but still...they suffer those consequences and there's a the window. Does ever work backwards for people where they begin to see themselves? You know what I'm saying, sort of in special ways because in particular someone who has upset them that they have negative feelings for? So it really is true in that way that working with the personal conflicts is a powerful teacher.

Sharon: This is very powerful teacher.

Charles: That's one of the concepts that is the most amazing to me about compassion meditation is that particular idea...something that's interesting...what we've done more related to compassion practice in a slightly different sort of ancient tradition, you know. We've done this work with Tibetan Buddhist scholars, especially my friend Geshe Lobsang, and one of the things that's not in traditional Tibetan Buddhist practices is compassion for the self.

Sharon: I know!

Charles: I mean I've seen these transcripts of sort of early, early conversations with the Dalai Lama where he's like 'what do you mean 'low self esteem'?'.

Sharon: Oh yeah! That was me! *Laughs*

Charles: Oh it was you! Can you talk a little bit about that experience? Because it is a very intriguing thing and people say it is unique to the West. I don't know if I believe that, but there is something cultural there...

Sharon: Yeah, yeah. I don't know... it wasn't particularly about low self-esteem. This was in '89 or '90 when I was in Mind & Life conference in

Dharmasala, and I had the opportunity to ask the Dalai Lama a question. So I said 'What do you think of self-hatred?' And he said 'What's that?' *Laughs* It was really interesting because there were philosophers and scholars and psychologists in the room and everyone like jumped in! And he was like, 'Huh?' and then he said, 'Is this some kind of nervous disorder?' *Laughs*

It was very funny. It was funny because there was just like a complete incomprehension and this is not to deify Asian culture, you know, or Tibetan culture, but I think that rock bottom belief that if we really knew who we were, we'd be a pretty sad story. That's different. You know there's such a potential. Even if you're a mess. Even if you falling apart. Even if you're far, far, far away from being a kind and happy person. You have the potential, and it's believed that potential is never ever destroyed. It may be covered over, it may be hidden from us but it was never ever destroyed. So wherever you are, what ever you've done in your life, you've got that potential and so you can get back to it.

Charles: And it cannot be destroyed...

Sharon: It cannot be destroyed, exactly.

Charles: And there's a sense that one's weaknesses and flaws are not adventitious, but they are nonessential.

Sharon: Yes, they're visiting.

Charles: So, in the Theravada tradition, you know the form of your early training, is that same assumption and so there's the compassion for the self? Is that more -this is just me, my ignorance...My question is, is that more

recognized in the Theravadan context or was that something that you folks elaborated?

Sharon: No, no, it was right there. I mean I brought the practice to the West just as it had been given to me. And it starts with yourself.



Charles: So that's the difference within the different Buddhist schools.

Sharon: Yeah. I mean it's right there and you start with yourself. I went to Burma in nineteen 1985 to do three months of intensive lovingkindness training and I did three weeks of lovingkindness just for myself and a benefactor. You know, by the end of that period... it's a tremendous platform for a greater extension. But you know there's also, as a teacher, I feel great flexibility you know in the West, because in Burma they say you start with yourself because it's easiest and you're trying to build confidence in the techniques. But in the West, not always the easiest by any means! So, I tell people – not because it's second best but because it's the right thing to do if you have great difficulty offering love and kindness to yourself, start with a friend. You know talk to yourself in later do it in the way that is actually gonna work for you.

Charles: So one of the things... so when Geshe Lobsang decided that we needed to include compassion for the self in this program that he developed, he kind of stuck to his traditional guns a little bit in that he framed that aspirational wish to be happy and free of suffering in terms of helping people recognize that if one wants that the best way to achieve that is to change one's attitudes and behaviors and continue moving toward a pathway that is not afflictive. Is this the same in the metta tradition?

Sharon: I think it could be seen that way. I mean, basically I see lovingkindness and compassion practices as a form of generosity. And like any kind of, you know when we use material generosity, just sometimes as an example because it's so much more concrete and it helps us understand you know, how other things are working. So in material generosity there are some ingredients like some source of inner abundance or sufficiency that allows us to give because you could have a huge amount externally but not have a feeling you have nearly enough and so matter how much you've compiled, accumulated it's much harder to give.

So it's that inner sense that lovingkindness is working on. Because if you see this, and this is very important for caregivers, for example. If you feel depleted, you're exhausted, you're overcome and not gonna have a whole lot of juice, you know, for continuing to give. Or serve, or care even, and you know it's like it's too much. And so it's building up that resourcefulness, that resiliency that lovingkindness for oneself is doing. And it works in that

way. I mean, I think what Geshe Lobsang was talking about was something a like further elaboration of that, but I see it just in terms of sheer energy.

Because otherwise it's like you can't go on. So it's not selfish and it's not self-absorbed, and it's not self-preoccupied, it's not a mistake. You know it's really... and I always come back to the example of material giving because it helps me a lot.

Charles: Right, and you have to have something to give. You have to be actually willing to give it, and people would be more likely to give if they've got something to give. And if people feel there is an excess, they're more likely to give too.

It's kind of interesting, right? When bad economic times come, you know, donations plummet. You know, a sense of lack is a great way to make people pull everything in, and lock the gates. So in that sense, you know, one of the interesting things about compassion practice is of course is sort of the mystery...although I think we've seen the last ten years, that you know, there's certain ways that people relate powerfully to the emotions of others that increase depression and anxiety through emotional contagion, you know.

So this idea that you're somehow going to become more emotionally connected and vulnerable to suffering of others uh you know some of these people raise half an eyebrow, right, but my understanding is that as with all things human, if you feel that you've got a means to do something about it, you know if you've got a means to cope, if you can be proactive towards it, that's the trick, so you're not getting into despair and giving up. So that is what we talk about is that you've got the resources to help.

Sharon: Yeah and I would say just out of my training you know, that another ingredient in not plunging into despair is equanimity. It's wisdom. It's realizing that you know, I'm going to do everything I can and ultimately this is not my universe to control. I can't be responsible for making it all better. I can contribute, you know, I can participate, I can engage because that's the right thing to do.

But as soon as I feel like I'm in charge, it's over you know because life doesn't seem to behave (sadly!) nicely according to my desires or dictates you know ,so there's gotta be some balance there.

Charles: So that touches upon something...I mean so you know meditation is widely taught in the secular context. You know, folks don't need to become Buddhists to benefit from these practices derived from Buddhist

practice. But something that I've often wondered about is what you're touching on now, which is that it's not a specific theology. That you've said something that is, you know, is an articulation of the proposal about a great deep truth about the universe. Which is suffering is sort of inherent to the realm we find ourselves in and that there are hardcore limits to its perfectibility.

Before we stop, how does that...there is something there that's very deep. Because we don't have that perspective. You can really become distressed, depressed because bad things do happen to people you wish happiness for, and they may well not find it.

Sharon: Yeah sure I think you know I mean I think one of one of the genius organizations our time is AA, and you see it all there. You know, don't be codependent. There's so much wisdom in that perspective.

Charles: Yeah, that's pretty intense.

Sharon: Yeah you know it's sort of like not the language I feel most aligned with you know or way of saying things, but we have a kind of contemporary psychological understanding of not being codependent. Doing everything you can but not feeling overly responsible, you know, and so if we can extend that to the practice of compassion meditation I think it would it would provide a lot of that.

Charles: Yeah, I think that's a very great point. Well Sharon thank you so much for talking with us, as always. Thanks for the teaching.

Sharon: Thank you! Yeah it was fantastic!