

# #49-Dipa Ma's Lighthouse of Love with Amita Schmidt

**Donna Ferris:** [00:00:00] Welcome to Bounce Back Stronger, the podcast that explores ways to find peace and purpose after difficulty. I'm your host, Donna Ferris.

Today, we have author, meditation teacher, and cartoonist Amita Schmidt with us. A little about Amita: Amita is a resident teacher at the Insight Meditation Society, the cofounder of Southwest Sangha, a registered social worker, and a cartoonist. I reached out to Amita after I read her book *Dipa Ma*, which is about a female Buddhist master.

*Dipa Ma* was renowned for teaching meditation amidst the everyday busyness of her simple apartment in Calcutta, her influence can be seen in the teachings of Sharon Salzberg, Joseph Goldstein, Jack Kornfield, and many, many others, all of whom were interviewed for the book.

Amita, thank you for joining us on Bounce Back Stronger. I'm so honored to have you on the podcast.

**Amita Schmidt:** Thank you. I'm honored to be [00:01:00] here.

**Donna Ferris:** So, as I said, I reached out After I read the book, and the reason I read the book is in a podcast that I did with Sharon Salzberg when I asked her about the person that most influenced her of all the people that she met, it was *Dipa Ma*. And that sat with me, and as I went back and edited that podcast, I was like, I gotta find out more about *Dipa Ma*.

I bought the book and read it over a period of time. It was part of my meditation readings, and there was so much wisdom in there. Then I was like, "I have to get the author on the podcast." And so that's how we got here today.

**Amita Schmidt:** Great. That's great. I love to hear that she was the most important influence for Sharon.

Beautiful. And it makes sense.

**Donna Ferris:** Sharon tells the story, that when she was, I guess she was 18 or 19 when she [00:02:00] worked with *Dipa Ma* And she was like, I'm going back

to America. I'm getting my stuff and I'm gonna come back and live in Calcutta. I'm gonna be here with you and Dipa Ma's like, no, you're not you're gonna go back and teach in America She's like, no, I'm not I'm coming back here and they went back and forth a bunch of times and she was right. Sharon came to the states and state and taught and is one of the key teachers in bringing mindfulness and Metta meditation to the states.

**Amita Schmidt:** And in that story, Sharon didn't really feel confident and believe in herself and Dipa Ma kept saying you can do anything.

Don't let your fear that you can't stop you. So that was a very empowering moment as well for Sharon, that sense of don't believe your thoughts that you're not going to be a teacher, that you don't deserve to spread the Dharma and spread your wings.

So she was very empowering to women. Well to everyone really, but [00:03:00] especially to women – they didn't have a lot of role models then. When Sharon was in the Dharma, it was mostly male role models. Mahasi Sayadaw was really prevalent then and it was all about noting, noting, noting, this kind of really dry, Theravadan, precise, and Dipa Ma was just about love and encouragement, big hugs and empowerment. So she really represented a big change in the scene there for Joseph, Sharon, and Jack at the time.

**Donna Ferris:** Yeah. And maybe let's talk about how you found her. Cause I think that's an interesting story. How did you come to write this book and get involved with Insight Meditation.

**Amita Schmidt:** Yes. I had been practicing, I found meditation because of kind of tremendous suffering. Both my parents had severe mental illnesses. My mother died. She tried suicide several times and died by the time I was 16, she was dead. [00:04:00] And my father was very violent. So I just really struggled a lot with suffering and trying to understand what is this suffering and, is there an end to suffering?

I was reading the Buddha's teachings, and he seemed to talk about the end of suffering. So, I got really into Buddhism at 19 and sat my first retreat at 24. Then I sat my first three-month retreat at 29. That was a retreat that Dipa Ma was supposed to teach, but she died that year.

She died in September of 1989. I was 29 then. And so there were just a lot of stories on that retreat about her because everybody's heart was really open,

missing her. So it was just a retreat filled with Dipa Ma. And at the end of the retreat, I went to Joseph, and I said somebody needed to write about her.

And he was like, well, we're all too busy. You know, at that time they were [00:05:00] all writing books and teaching full on at IMS. And so he just was like, you should do it. And I'm like, I've never met her. And he was like, doesn't matter. People write about the Buddha and they never met him. So I was like, well, you got a point there. So I kept asking everyone to make sure there was nobody that wanted to write about her.

That was one of the big teachers, and sure enough, they wanted to pass it on to somebody else who had the time and energy, and I was only 29. So it was like, okay, let's go for it. And I spent 12 years collecting stories going all around the country, phone, I went to India, I went to Myanmar, Burma at that time, I mean, it was amazing, you know, just the sojourns all over the world to meet people.

And I feel so grateful now that I did that. Because Donna, most of those people have [00:06:00] died that were in the book, like 90 percent of them, especially the Indian and Burmese. Myanmar now is not a place you could ever go, you know, and do interviews anymore. I reflect now on how if something is a calling, do it because that window would have closed if I hadn't seized that moment and all those stories.

And so then I just became for 12 years, kind of, it was almost like Dipa Ma was guiding me. She was like, talk to this person, do this, do that, do that. Like the whole way, it was almost like, I don't know, a channeling or something. I'm not really into that, but it was strange. It was like, wow, something greater than me is leading this book.

**Donna Ferris:** And she had that kind of connection. I mean, she had developed that mental - magic is probably not the right word, but a word for it that she was able [00:07:00] to do that. The enlightenment level was there.

**Amita Schmidt:** Yes. Yes. And one of the things that surprised me writing the book was a lot of people talked about how she was still guiding them after her passing, and they still heard her voice. She still appeared to them. She appeared to people that, that never met her. It was a little bit like the stories of saints like Ramana Maharshi or Neem Karli Baba that, people get visitations, you know. And so I was kind of blown away by that because I'm not somebody that kind of believes in that stuff so much.

So it was fascinating to hear all these people talking about her influence even after her death. So I realized there was something powerful there with that.

**Donna Ferris:** And how do you see her influencing Sharon Salzberg, Joseph Goldstein, Jack Kornfeld, and so many others [00:08:00] that were listed in the book.

How does that influence show up?

**Amita Schmidt:** Well, a couple ways. I think she brought that love component. Her influence just was this incredible love. It had the fierceness of the noting. The noting practice was really prevalent then for them. But she just brought this kind of magical love and blessing and it just brought a new factor and the feminine, of course, the feminine quality.

There weren't other female master teachers out of Asia.

**Amita Schmidt:** There just weren't any. Reena Sikar was mentioned to me as like a Burmese teacher, but you know, she didn't have the same stature as Dipa Ma. And so there just weren't any female role models and Michelle McDonald described Dipa Ma as a lighthouse.

And I love that word because she became a [00:09:00] lighthouse of love and loving-kindness as part of the practice and all this heart, in addition to the fierceness and the precision. And then she became a lighthouse for women and for everybody, you know, you don't have to be a monk to wake up.

You can be a woman, you can be older. She was older when she woke up, she woke up in her 40s, and that was just unheard of. A householder in her 40s, a woman, uneducated. It just was unheard of. So she was a lighthouse that showed anybody can find ultimate freedom and peace. She did it, you can.

And she really emphasized that, like, I'm just this ordinary woman, I don't know anything. I'm not intelligent, even though she was and Jack Engler later showed that in some of his testing of her past. So it was an incredible inspiration to the Westerners to see this [00:10:00] tiny little woman with incredible powers and wisdom and love versus these big monastic men who had been in monasteries most of their lives.

And she was a mother and grandmother too, which I think was an inspiration to someone like Jack, who had kids.

**Donna Ferris:** Yeah, and she really fought to get taught, right? She would go with her family to the teachings. And that was an inspiration too, to your point, she had to fight her way through a largely exclusive group.

**Amita Schmidt:** Yes. Yes. When she started practicing, her daughter was only eight years old. Imagine having an eight-year-old kid and trying to go on these long retreats. It was challenging. And the other thing about it was that because she was a woman, she wanted to practice at a very young age.

She was very [00:11:00] spiritual, doing Buddhist chanting, thinking about practice from when she was a little girl. She was constantly discouraged by it, by her family, by her husband. Because that was just the culture, right? Women didn't go and practice alone, you know? So if she had been in a male body, she would have, like, started practice way, way sooner.

It was only after her husband died that then she went to the monastery. So she was really prevented because of being a woman in that cultural milieu. You really saw that detriment, and then she overcame that. But what's cool, Donna, is once she really woke up and it was clear how awake she was actually the monks really embraced her at the center and they asked her to teach and they wanted her to stay there and teach, which was just absolutely unheard of in a totally male dominated monastic [00:12:00] culture.

They wanted her to stay. And the reason she left Myanmar was because there was another one of their coups. And it just was not looking good for Indian foreigners. She was an Indian foreigner. And so she made the decision for her daughter's sake and education that it would be better not to stay in Burma, Myanmar then.

So she left, but the monks were very supportive of her because they recognized the truth of her awakening. So that says a lot too.

**Donna Ferris:** One more story, kind of in that earlier time is she was really ill when she decided to meditate.

She was, quote unquote, dying of a broken heart, right?

**Amita Schmidt:** Yeah, she had heart issues. She had two conditions. She had very high anxiety. She, could have been probably diagnosed with generalized anxiety disorder. She was a very nervous, [00:13:00] anxious person.

Worried about a lot. And then of course, she kind of had body issues that mirror the anxiety. Just a lot of health problems, including heart issues, right? Very nervous disorders and as a result of practice, all of that was completely gone. And her family started to meditate because they're like, "Oh my God, Auntie," you know, she was an aunt, right to these of their sisters and nieces and nephews. And they saw that she all of a sudden had no anxiety and she'd been this nervous wreck with all these health issues and all of a sudden nothing. So they were all like, wow, we want to go practice. So her whole family joined her because they saw these tremendous changes and again, that's an inspiration for all of us. Like, wow, you can have really, strong anxiety and the practice can eliminate it. She was fearless, no [00:14:00] anxiety ever once she had her awakening experience. She had more than one, it seems like.

**Donna Ferris:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Amita Schmidt:** So what a testament to the power of the practice.

I mean, she really was an example of the power of the practice.

**Donna Ferris:** Yeah. And she did it every day. Right? So it's always this idea, if you're, keeping yourself away in a retreat center and you're a monk and you're not really interacting with daily life in any way, it's a lot easier to maintain a practice, possibly, right?

You still have to deal with your brain. I'm not saying that still isn't one of our biggest foes, right? But she was doing it in her everyday life, in the midst of Calcutta, in her apartment, which again is very inspiring. We don't have to have a separate space. We don't have to go into the woods or, although I love that, you know, I'm a big on forest bathing.

However, you don't have to, you can do it anywhere. And I thought that was a really great example too.

**Amita Schmidt:** [00:15:00] Yes, it was. It is. She emphasized both. She said when you feel ready, make time in your life, and go on a retreat. Even a weekend, 10 days, you know, it's important to have that dedicated practice.

But she said the rest of the time, even five minutes a day. She was big on like, hey, you can only do five minutes a day because like you said, she worked with these housewives. And their husbands and their families weren't, allowing them. Often the women ran the family of many of her students, so, they didn't have a lot of free time. And so she was like, let's do five minutes right now. Can you do

five minutes when you're at home? And they were like, yeah, of course. And she was like the five-minute miracle. She was always trying to get people to do five minutes and five minutes more.

And then also this idea of everything you do in your household, do it with mindfulness and then in addition [00:16:00] to that, when you feel kind of ripe and ready - and she'd kind of always notice it with people - she'd be like go on retreat for a few days or a week and then boom. People would have often deep experiences at the right timing with retreats.

So she really did kind of a nice combination of constant mindfulness. Make sure you sit every day and go on retreat when it's feeling like there's momentum.

**Donna Ferris:** So how do you see Deepa Ma's legacy living on today?

**Amita Schmidt:** I think mainly I've noticed her influence because I've been around all her material now for like 30 some years, right? I see she's taking on a little bit of a guru cult status, which is okay. I kind of knew that would happen when I wrote the book. And it's that inspiration when figures get more and more [00:17:00] removed, right?

Because their death was longer and longer ago. They do tend to take on that larger-than-life kind of admiration. But there's nothing wrong with that. I think there's an element of love that I can do it. You can do it. The fierceness, you know, these qualities pop out. About who she was and, we're just left with a few things about her, 30 years later, and that would be the love and the mindfulness and that, hey - this is possible for anyone.

Yeah, don't wait till later. She was a big one. Like, don't wait till later. Don't think that you're gonna have all this endless time

**Donna Ferris:** Yeah, and it's fascinating because the Metta meditation was brought to the U.S. I think through her, [00:18:00] is that correct?

**Amita Schmidt:** I'm not sure that's true.

I mean, Upandita was teaching it to some, but Dipa Ma really embodied it and did it way more and constantly. She was constantly blessing everything, and yeah, she lived Metta and practiced it a lot more than the monasteries. Had at the time more as an adjunct to mindfulness.

What I think is cool and noticed while writing the book that she kind of combined the two at one point, you know. What really struck me was she said mindfulness and love are the same thing. And love and mindfulness are the same thing. Like she said, they were just interchangeable. And that really made me do a double take.

She said that when I'm fully loving, I'm being mindful. And when I'm fully mindful, it's loving. And I remember going, hmm, these could just be combined as one thing. And that kind of opened my mind up [00:19:00] to kind of what she was doing there. Was a little bit of a backdoor showing you that love was always there.

It wasn't just this dry mindfulness where you're, you're the practitioner. It was just this giant kind of love bath. She was always doing love baths with everyone head to toe love baths. And so often when I work with people like clients and stuff, there might be talking. I work in, you know, mental health, and I'll just do a love bath like she would do in my mind's eye.

It's just so much fun.

**Donna Ferris:** Yeah, it's almost a Reiki cleanse too to a certain extent which I'm a big one for that too.

**Amita Schmidt:** It's all a beautiful thing. The Dharma has so many facets to it.

**Donna Ferris:** Yeah. And what [00:20:00] strikes me about the love and mindfulness thing is that if you're fully mindful in the moment, it's hard to be frightened. Whereas the same thing, if you're fully in love in the moment, it's hard to be fearful either. In fact, Most people can't you can't really have both of those emotions at the same time.

So fear is the opposite of love So it doesn't make a lot of sense that if you're fully in the moment really loving the moment that you're in and not dipping ahead or behind. It is similar.

**Amita Schmidt:** I've noticed this with Joseph Goldstein. I've been sitting with Joseph for 40 years, and in the beginning, he was like very geeky, very heady, and over 40 years of practice, he's just gotten so open-hearted and compassionate.

He's way into love. And there was not a modicum of love way in the beginning, in the early eighties. He was just like, did you note it? I [00:21:00] just watched



that development and went, wow, that's cool. The development of practices towards more and more love and. Personally I've just found that we're also finding more and more what the truth is as we practice.

What's true? Our mind states aren't true or, you know, what's illusory? Like the Buddha, you know, what's illusory? Mara, I see you. And I find, and I don't know if this is true for Joseph and Sharon, but loving kindness seems to really underlie the essence of our existence. And that just kind of starts to reveal itself more and more.

So, if that's true, then love is just coming through everything. As we get more aware, we see that. And it's infinite love. It's not just like, oh, I see love and kindness, and I'm in love and kindness. It's like, no, this is infinite, [00:22:00] eternal love coming through everything.

And that's just my observation. Yeah. If we're not in the TV set of our story, our thoughts about politics, our own life, our own suffering. And we look around, we go away from the TV set, and we look around. It's like, "Oh my God, we're in this huge interactive universe." And my teacher jokes, he's like, Mita, who put the right amount of space between everything?

And he's like, it's such a miracle. And I'm like, It's true. Who did put the right amount of space between everything?

**Donna Ferris:** Everything can be viewed as a miracle.

**Amita Schmidt:** Yeah, I think we just start to open up to the magic, as you know, the mystery, the magic, and the wonderment of it all.

And Dipa Ma lived in that. She didn't talk about it a lot. But she just was the embodiment of that constant blessing. She'd [00:23:00] bless all the fish in the aquarium and the plane, airplanes, and cars, and everywhere she went. She just was blessing, blessing, blessing. So that would seem to indicate she was in that kind of constant state of that infinite loving awareness, almost like coming through her like a, I don't know, a receptor or cell tower.

**Donna Ferris:** Yeah. And just for listeners, the Sharon Salzberg episode has a deep discussion of Metta. It is the four phrases that are typically used, but there are many other ways of doing it. May you be happy, may you be healthy, may you be safe, may you ride the waves of your life in peace, that one last one sometimes gets changed, but there's a really deep discussion of that in that episode, but that's what we're talking about to a certain extent.

I'm sure Dipa Ma did some different blessings, but that's the loving-kindness meditation if you're wondering.

**Amita Schmidt:** Yeah, she was really about being the blessing all the time [00:24:00] and I've seen the evolution for me It's like it's not just practicing meta. You are the love right here now. Like you can do a practice of it, but don't forget you are that Metta. You are born of Metta. Don't create a character that then is practicing. be it practicing it

**Donna Ferris:** Yeah, it's the ultimate modeling of it, right? It's really, and I've said this before on another podcast, but we really can't change other people's behavior. All we can do is model the behavior that makes us better. You know, love and happy and hope that other people say, “Hey, I want some of that.” It's like, it's like a net where Harry met Sally, “Can I have some of that?”

**Amita Schmidt:** And you eventually start to see as you move deeper, as you embody this - it's all one thing. [00:25:00] It's all you. Like, it's all one body. It's all one love. It's all one thing. And then you can't help but open your heart, like if your hand was hurting and it's all one body, you'd be like, Oh, right?

**Donna Ferris:** Yeah.

**Amita Schmidt:** And so that loving kindness is just naturally there when the illusion of separation starts to fall away and you see, Oh, it's all one thing. And then the love pours in and that's the beauty of practice. And I think Dipa Ma just knew. She blessed everything. She was just blessing herself all day long as the one.

You know, “Oh, here's a, here's a glass. This is an embodiment of myself as love. Yay. I love it.”

**Donna Ferris:** If you stay resonating at that level, all the blessings come, right? I mean, and not that we do it for that point, but it is a self-fulfilling thing.

**Amita Schmidt:** Yes, and then it shows other people that this is possible in all of us.

We [00:26:00] don't have to be divided. And boy, is that going to be an important theme in the years to come. And right now, nondivision, nonseparation, one love, one body, one being. It's important that people hold that, even if you just have to do it cognitively. My teacher's always like, you

know, just start with the cognition, eventually the somatic and the deeper heart knowing will follow,

**Donna Ferris:** It is even more important to, to be careful of who you are surrounding yourself with.

**Amita Schmidt:** You bet.

**Donna Ferris:** Not in a judgment way, but in an energy and influence way. Be careful of the inputs.

**Amita Schmidt:** For sure, Donna. For sure. Yeah. And Dipa Ma talked about that.

She loved everyone, but she said, I don't spend time gossiping you can know everyone is one thing in love, but we don't like every [00:27:00] food and we don't expect ourselves to like every food.

So you can know everyone's love or God, but that doesn't mean you're gonna eat every food and you're gonna like every food. There's certain people that aren't good for you, like you said, or don't taste good or don't feel good to your energy system. And it's okay to pay attention to that, just like we would foods.

You know, like that doesn't agree with me, and like you said, no judgment. It's just like that food doesn't work for me. And you know, that person who has the program to kill all humans is not someone I want to be around; like you said, it's important to choose wisely, even though I know everybody is ultimately this one truth.

**Donna Ferris:** Yeah. Yeah. One of the things I think about is that we're working so hard on this path to remember love. And it's requires constant awareness. Because we think this way and know this is the best path, but we are still triggered all day with [00:28:00] our things.

And so you want to be aware that to stay on those paths, you do have to do the practices and be aware of the things that take us off that path and keep coming back. And that's a practice. Those are all practices. These are not just things that just happen.

I'm sure even Dipa Ma had her moments. I think it's important to say that and to know that you can do it, but it does take practice.

**Amita Schmidt:** It does. Good point. Yeah, it does take practice. But realize when you get triggered or upset, that's the thought you. The thought Donna, the thought Amita, the thought you gets triggered, upset.

The real you, the infinite awareness you. It's never triggered by anything. And so sometimes I just try to pendulate to that. Yeah, the thought you is upset, triggered, worried about something, but the universal awareness you, is fine, [00:29:00] always fine, deathless, and so occasionally, you know, I think Dipa Ma did this pendulate. But yeah, it's fine to have the triggered thought you, but move to that bigger thing outside your TV set that's never triggered and never will be. And then right there, there it is. There's the love. There's the awareness. That's really helpful. Yeah. I like that a lot. Yeah, and then you don't have to get rid of the thought you. It's just like, oh yeah. I'm upset. But this other me, the universal awareness mind, your universal mind is fine,

**Donna Ferris:** And always there.

**Amita Schmidt:** Yeah. And people don't really have to make that up. When you feel like, okay, what's the non-thought me right now, or what's the awareness me, you can feel that you're not caught in anything. I think if you go to it in the moment, I'm a real big proponent of see it here now.

You can feel like when you just go to your universal awareness that can feel [00:30:00] everything happening. It's okay. It's genuinely okay when you're not, in thought you,

**Donna Ferris:** Yeah. You're safe.

**Amita Schmidt:** Yeah. You're safe. And it can kind of hold everything.

**Donna Ferris:** Yeah. It's a surrendering, right? Too. Because there's a limit to what we can do, we have to believe that, you know, there is a bigger thing going on here. Love is bigger, the universe is bigger, and you know, this too shall work its way through,

**Amita Schmidt:** Yeah, and you know there's a level of impermanence and Dipa Ma was real fierce about looking at impermanence. Oh, this is gonna end. The earth is gonna end. You're gonna end like every single thing you can see, taste, touch smell is on its way out. So even the whole galaxy. So when you really can rest in that - have fun.[00:31:00]

**Donna Ferris:** Exactly. What are you upset about? Let's just enjoy this moment. Yeah, you come back to that.

**Amita Schmidt:** It's kind of funny. What part of impermanence did we forget? That all of this is going to be gone. Every institution, every political system. And again, that doesn't mean you neglect your right action in the here and now.

Right? But when you really hold that, like, nothing's happening, and it's all on its way out, it just becomes funny, whatever you decide to do. It does. It does. It is amusing. Like, this is all good. It's like the giant sand mandala that the Tibetans do. It's like they do it with great perfection and love, knowing they're going to blow it away the minute they finish it.

Well, every day of our life. Is like that.

**Donna Ferris:** Yep. I do this flower mandala thing instead of sand in my retreats, and it's the same thing. "We're just gonna put that in the trash?" I'm like, we can take a picture first, but we're just going to put it in the trash.

We use it as a freeing [00:32:00] thing, too. Here I'm freeing all this emotion that I had around that. But you're absolutely right. You make perfection or whatever that is to you, whatever prettiness it has to be, and then let it go.

**Amita Schmidt:** Well, and then it begs the question, what are you doing here?

What are we really doing here? We're trying to perfect the character, get life to cooperate in a certain way, or is it something else?

**Donna Ferris:** Yeah. And why do we need it to be perfect? We need that acknowledgment. We need that show; here is the thing. Like, what is that? There's a lot of good questions in it.

**Amita Schmidt:** Yeah. We had a really tremendous fire here that became a disaster site overnight where I live on Maui. And a lot of people came in to help with the trauma, these, these brain spotters. And they use this technique, a therapy technique, very effective to help with trauma.

And one of the people that was teaching us, she said, what's your eulogy goal? [00:33:00] If you've passed away, what do you want to be celebrated for? And she was using that to help people with the trauma. And I started to think about, like, that's such a good question.

What does Donna want to be celebrated for? Or Amita? And, I think if you can ask that question. It'll show you what you're meant to do now and now and now because you know if it's hey, I want to be celebrated for being a really wise person or really loving person or someone who brought joy or introspection into people's lives then do that now. Do that now. Do that today. Do that tomorrow even if the world falls apart. That's your job, and I just found it so helpful to know the eulogy goal. And then to be living by that and Dipa Ma's eulogy goal was to embody awakesness like a lighthouse.

And she did that. Now she's remembered as a lighthouse. And [00:34:00] people always tell me she's an inspiration when they read the book. I know that was a goal for her.

**Donna Ferris:** Yeah. Eulogy goals over resume goals is one of my phrases.

**Amita Schmidt:** I love that.

**Donna Ferris:** I'm so glad you brought it up. It's such a great idea. It's a meditation. Imagine yourself at 85. The number for me keeps getting higher as I age. But imagine yourself at 85 and what do you want around you? Who's around you?

What are you doing? And all of those things to make that happen have to happen now, right? You have to take care of yourself. You have to build your strong relationships. You have to keep your mind going. It's like all these different things you think about how you want to be. And some of that is what people would say about you then.

Because, you know, for most of us, that would be close to our death. So, I love that idea too. How do you get there?

**Amita Schmidt:** Right. What would they celebrate about you?

**Donna Ferris:** Yeah.

**Amita Schmidt:** [00:35:00] That's even just a deeper level.

**Donna Ferris:** Yeah.

**Amita Schmidt:** Yeah.

And how great if we're all living each moment what we would be celebrated for. Wow. That would be an enlightened world, wouldn't it?

**Donna Ferris:** We wouldn't have much on the news anymore, I don't think, right?

**Amita Schmidt:** Who wants to be celebrated for being hateful, I mean, maybe a few people, but they'd be few and far between. Yeah.

**Donna Ferris:** What have I missed asking or what would you like to share

**Amita Schmidt:** I would just leave with something Dipa Ma would say, which is, be the blessing, be the love here now, do at least five minutes of meditation a day, keep practicing, don't give up, but be it now, be the blessing, be the love, and then keep doing it now, now, now, and share that with others. She was all about [00:36:00] sharing the love, the calmness, yeah, be the peace.

**Donna Ferris:** Yeah. That's a really important one. And it's hard to do; you have to slow down yourself to be that calm, so you have to do the work for yourself first.

**Amita Schmidt:** Yeah.

Although it's always right here again, don't create a doer of calm, love, or blessing. It's kind of, it's just right here. It's almost like the breath. You don't have to do the breath. You know, just let it arise as you, and it's tricky. It's kind of subtle. We do have to get quiet, like you said, but we can trust that love, blessing, and truth are your natural state.

And it's more like how to let it come up like a well, like an artesian well.

**Donna Ferris:** Yeah, I love that.

**Amita Schmidt:** Yeah. And [00:37:00] then we don't create a doer that's doing it that will eventually have to get out of the way anyway, right? Because that's not true. So it's more like, let's just see what it takes for you to be a vehicle for loving-kindness.

My teacher's always saying, "Buddha now, you're Buddha now, not later."

**Donna Ferris:** I love that. It's just a little turn in the thinking, but it's really so impactful.

**Amita Schmidt:** Yeah. It takes away a you that needs to do something more and that'll happen later.

**Donna Ferris:** Or that it's wrong. I think you hit something, because I definitely feel that one, right?

I'm not enough. I have a lot of that. I'm sure most people do. But that is nice turn, because what it does is it reminds you that it's always there. And the divine, I sometimes call it the divine, the divine is always there. So you can fall back into that.

**Amita Schmidt:** Yeah, it's always here, and it'll help you wake up, and it's really leading us all the time.

**Donna Ferris:** Thank you so, so very [00:38:00] much for making this time for me and the listeners and for the book, which by the way, I have right here,.

It's worth it. The whole book is worth it. That last one chapter that has all the different pieces of wisdom, the stories from all the different people, that's so worth it. It's just such a great book.

**Amita Schmidt:** Thank you. Yeah. Dipa Ma - The Life and Legacy of a Buddhist Master. And I also have a website.

There's no money involved in it. It's just like, I, I wanted a place for pictures of her and some choice, so it's dipama.com pretty easy to remember. And you know, it's just a place you can go and see more pictures and maybe get a few, like, choice teachings and a little bit of a, her story if you don't have to buy the book.

**Donna Ferris:** I'll be going there. I'll try to remember to put that in the links as well. Well, thank you so much.

**Amita Schmidt:** Thank you, Donna. I really love talking to you.

**Donna Ferris:** That's all for today. If you want to learn more about [00:39:00] Amita's book and other offerings, those links will be in the episode notes. Thank you so much for listening. I hope this episode was helpful. If it was, please



subscribe, drop a review, or share it with your friends and family. That's the best way to get it in the hands of those who may benefit.

And if my daughters, Sienna and Sylvia, are listening, I want you to know how proud I am of you and how much I love you. Bye now.