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SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

Good morning everyone. And seeing how this is the second Sunday that I've been speaking here, here at the new center, I thought of continuing a little bit with the idea of giving very basic Buddhist teachings. Last time I spoke two weeks ago was the Four Noble Truths. And today I'd like to speak about karma. And perhaps karma is not talked about as much in western Buddhism, as they would indicate its central place traditionally in Buddhism. But in Asian Buddhism and the teachings of the Buddha, karma played plays a very central role. And to some degree, most of us operate with some appreciation, understanding or as if karma works. We don't we don't think about it in those terms. The Dalai Lama has once said, I think he's basically quoting other people that more important than understanding the great Mahayana philosophy of emptiness is it to understand and appreciate something about the laws of karma how karma works. And the Zen master Dogen talks about the importance of a deep faith in causality and karma. Most simply, I think of karma, the Buddhist teachings of karma as being a teaching, offering us suggesting to us that we can have confidence in our own responsiveness, our own ability to respond and effect the change in our own spiritual life is an important thing to have confidence in and teach him karma is pointing to that that we can we can take some responsiveness and responsibility. We can make some effect or some change In our life, and the Buddha said that if you couldn't do that, if you could not have some human agency some freewill or some choice that could affect your life, then there'd be no spiritual life. If everything was predetermined in various ways it can be predetermined. He said, there would be no spiritual life. So to have faith or some understanding, appreciation of karma, is to have some confidence that we can make a difference, at least in our spiritual life, and our inner life, perhaps, certainly also maybe in the life around us. The Buddha when he taught the teachings of karma, was in part responding to some of the other teachings about karma that existed in India at that time. The word karma simply means action. It means to act or to means action. So there's different teachings that people had about action, the efficacy of acting and Doing and responding. And there was this Indian tradition that everything was ordained by the gods, and that humans had real No, no real ability to institute any change unless they supplicated the gods. And so there was a whole institution of sacrificial sacrificing to the gods. If

you wanted to have a good harvest or a good life, you would make offering sacrificial offerings to the gods and ask them to intervene, and they would change the course of history for you. But on your own, you couldn't do much. There was also teachings of pre determinism, that everything at the beginning of time was predetermined, and whatever is going to happen to you is predetermined and you're just along for the ride. And you might as well just, you know, relax and go along with it. Whatever comes your way. Other people had a teaching that you're past actions had a one to one correspondence to what your current experiences in life so that everything that happens to you today is a result of your past actions your past choices you've made. And you're responsible for everything happens to you now. So it kind of somewhat you that that kind of teaching appears sometimes in New Age areas where if someone gets sick, people will take responsibility for saying, Oh, I caused my sickness. There's a one to one relationship to my actions and intentions in the past my attitudes, I'm, I'm responsible, the fact that I got sick now. The Buddha was very precise and saying that

if that was the case, there'd be no spiritual life. And he said that karma that he was focusing on the laws of karma in Buddhist traditions, is a subcategory of a larger field of causality. The world as a cause is a field of causal cause and effect relationships. And its immense, huge. So, I mean, who knows why the why the electricity surges to pop the, you know, to pop the speakers today? I mean, is it because someone decided to turn on their electric power blower in western Redwood City just at that moment. And you know, who knows, you know, how things you know, the causal chain of cause and effect and how that affects something, anything at all. But in terms of our experiences of pleasantness or unpleasantness, suffering and pain, to some degree, the Buddha said, it's outside of the realm of karma, it just belongs to the realm of cause and effect relationships belongs to environmental conditions. He had a kind of word that implies it in English kind of genetic conditions, kind of biological conditions that both you inherited from your parents and so there's a lot of things which are outside of the realm of your responsiveness of your responsibility. It just comes with being part of the chain field of cause and effect relationships. The point of responsiveness. Also the teaching of karma for the Buddha is a teaching of pointing to the present moment and pointing the present moment. So we understand in the present moment, where our ability to respond resides, where the place of creativity is for our lives. So the teaching of karma is not meant to be some heavy thing about you know, you are what you are now because of what you did in the past or some burden or some predetermined fixed idea. This is the way things have to be. It's really an encouragement for us to look at the place where we can respond. Where's the responsiveness In the present moment, there's an appreciation that all kinds of causes and conditions and also past karma past things we've done and acted on affect the present moment. And in affecting the present moment, it just what the present moment is, in a sense, what the present moment is, for the most part is outside of your control in the present moment. As you arrive in this moment, this moment is what it is, you know the causes and conditions in the past, make this moment what it is. And part of Buddhist practice is to learn to have some equanimity, some spaciousness around how things have come into being at this very moment here. But then appreciating it in this very moment. That's where the possibility of responding arises. We can respond to this present moment in some way and that how we respond consequential it's consequential in the moment. But part of the teaching of karma says consequential into the future. And

that by taking some responsibility for a moment of potential here, we can affect ourselves and the future destiny of ourselves to some degree. I like to think of it as being we tend our lives towards certain directions, by the choices we make right now. The world of cause and effect is so large, that it's hard to know actually protect ourselves and arrange ourselves or control our lives, to guarantee that it has certain outcome. But how we intended now 10s of our life in certain directions. If you live a life of generosity, and kindness, it tends, it tends to be the fact then that the world responds in kind, you tend to receive generosity and kindness in return. If you live a life of hate and lie In animosity, in some to some degree, you tend then to receive that in return. But we can't really control the wider field of cause and effect. So that's why I say we only can contend to create certain consequences, we can't guarantee them. But the law of karma traditionally Buddhism is understood to be a very fixed law, very clear law of cause and effect. And how I understand that to be is that it's within the domain of our own psyche.

That there is a kind of more rigid law of cause and effect. That how what we intend, how we intend our responses to be, how we choose to respond in the present moment, tends to condition our psyche in certain way that our psyche then is habituated conditioned in some way to respond or to have certain experiences into the future. So an example That was very helpful for me. And understanding karma happened some years ago when I was I think I was coming to teach in one of our sitting groups. And I was driving on to AD and I was getting off the off ramp there on page mill. And if you ever taken that off ramp, that exit, you know that you come to a stop sign. And it's a four way stop sign right there. And so I came to my stop sign, and there's a car coming from the left on page mail going west, I guess. And I knew that person had a stop sign also. And so it was a lot of time for that person to kind of see the stop sign stop. And so I thought, well, I'll go ahead because you know, had the right away, I'd stopped and so I went ahead, the person I guess didn't see the stop sign. And we missed each other by an inch, you know, is very close. And I said who that was close. And then I thought, well, that person was at fault. Obviously, that person had, you know, broke the rules that we set up in our society. And, legally, if that we've had an accident, I think that person would have taken full responsibility, or at least the insurance company would at least the judicial system would have said, that person is responsible. But we only missed each other by an inch. And I thought about what are some of the other factors that came into play. And, in fact, to a small degree, not that that particular day wasn't to a great degree, but a small degree. I was rushing. I was impatient. I was kind of pushing a little bit to kind of get someplace to come and get some place I can teach you all to relax.

You know, sometimes I come to teach and really teaching myself because you know, I need this as much as anyone. But Tony always will come in there and kind of doing something right. And, and if we had that accident, legally, the cause and effect responsibility would have been the other driver. From a karmic point of view of Buddhism, the place of karma, the responsibility would have been my own. Or maybe that's the wrong way of saying it. The responsibility but the place it's interesting to study the place it's interesting to take responsibility for to acknowledge you wouldn't want to do this publicly to the other person. You know, a mess up the legal thing but but internally, you want to recognize, oh, that wouldn't have happened probably, if I hadn't had a little extra pushing and impatience in, you

know, intention to kind of rush to get someplace on time. Karma karmically. The interesting place of study is the attitude and the intention by which We're acting in the present moment. And so the mindfulness practice is meant in part, to help us to pay attention to the place of karmic responsiveness responsibility, because that's what's going to affect our spiritual life the most. If that accident that happened. The question is, you know, that moment, the question is, how do I respond to that situation? How would have I responded to this present moment, if I had responded with anger and animosity, I would have tended to a very different cause and effect relationship than if I had responded with patience and generosity or kindness to the situation. If we had had an accident, and I had just kind of completely focused on the other person and blamed the other person and turned a blind eye to my own role in being impatient and pushing it then I would have missed an opportunity have somehow changed myself, or learn from that. So in the future, I don't add this kind of karmic weight to my own life, just making some sense. So how do we respond to what's given to us what arises in the present moment. And that is really the important issue. And all kinds of horrible and beautiful things can happen to us. Some of it seemingly is luck, some amazing confluence of cause and effect relationships. Some of it maybe is because of karmic conditioning from the past. Whether it's really beautiful are really mentioned amazingly suffering, the issue becomes the same is where is the point where's the place of creativity of responsiveness where we then can make a difference for the next moment for the next moment that's coming up for the next day for the next year. If we if I'd had that accident, and if I had responded with kindness To the other person, then then the next moment, or the next few moments or the next minute to the hour, might have been very different than if I had responded with anger. I might have gotten into a fight or whatever. So how do we respond? So the Buddha, in one passage defined karma as intention. The intentionality the volition behind our actions, is what creates his inner realm of cause and effect that's called karma, the inner realm that we can we can somehow change in condition. We set in motion a certain chain of cause and effect through our actions in the present. But then we we don't we don't have to be victims of that. In the inner life, at some point we can use our mindfulness to interrupt that are free ourselves from it. So it's not a predict we're not pre determining that everything has to be a certain way. So some years ago, I went to the woman's federal woman's federal prison in Fullerton, so where it is in the East Bay. And in the woman's federal prison, I wasn't going to teach a one day retreat on mindfulness to these women. And it was a very memorable experience for a number of reasons. One of the primary one was the attitude with which those women came to that retreat. And there was a wide range of attitudes to be seen there. There was one woman who sat down and kind of in front of me, like maybe that far you really close. And

I was just in awe of her because she's she, she had devoted her seven years today in being in prison. doing yoga and meditation spiritual practice. And she showed up as radiance and presence and power, that would have been exceptional in normal life. And then there were other women there, who were sitting kind of, you know, over to the side against the kind of leaning against the wall, you know. And I was told there was basically there because there was a guy in town. And they don't have many of them. And also, because it was just, you know, kind of, apparently a comfortable place to hang out to post as opposed to the other things they could do. And they weren't really there for the practice or

the teachings or anything. And, you know, two people, two groups of people in the same situation. I just imagined a very uncomfortable situation, being in prison, federal prison, but their attitude to how they live that life seems to be very different from each other. Some people just kind of went along and kind of got by and kind of this kind of you know, So one woman, you know, who actually took that time and infused it a very powerful intentionality and attitude. Both people might leave prison at the same time, but they leave very different people, by the conditions that they're setting up by the different attitude and response they're bringing to the same situation. The sometimes two people can enter into the same choices externally. But the inner volition or motivation for with for those choices, makes a world of difference to their future experience. So for example, the example I've given is, if two people started the same business together business partners, and they both decide to you know, they both make the same choices about, you know, on business choices, the external choices, but what motivates them and making those choices one of Simply to make as much money as quickly as possible. And the other is to create a really healthy working environment for those people who are going to work there. The second one wants to create an environment where the creativity and the welfare and the best qualities of community can come out. And, and money is really secondary issues to creating kind of social change through through that business. After five years, the business fails. The person who just wanted money is left with nothing except maybe disappointment, and a sense of failure. The person who was trying to create a healthy business environment might also feel disappointed it didn't work out, but might look back and say for those five years, we had a really great environment we really it was really able to help a lot of people and bring out the best in them and I was like a mentor for a lot of people in this business really fast. The inner life, the personalized kind of community life of these groups or groups of workers that we hired. And so the second person then leaves that, that failed business with some maybe some sense of satisfaction, some joy, or at least something wonderful happened for those five years. The inner intention can make a difference in the long term consequences. So in other in the practice of mindfulness, then one of the things we pay attention to is not simply what's happening in the present moment, but also what is the intention that is present for us as we respond to the life around us? What's the intention with which we drive our car? Most of us maybe don't think about that, you know, driving cars or driving a car. But there's often an intention, of volition and attitude in driving a car. And that's consequential. There's an attitude and the way we speak. All kinds of intentions come into play with how we speak. There's attitudes related to how we eat, even how we walk, or how we sit in the chair. All kinds of actions have volitional intentions behind them. Some of them are not the most obvious ones that we first notice, or someone else might notice, but rather, might be our deeper ones. Maybe some people are fear based. And underneath their choices, they make his desire for self protection. Other people might have a very deep sense of empathy for other people, and around various choices they make. Underneath that is a sense of empathy, being inspired by a sense of care and connectedness with other people.

What is the intention behind our actions and the teachings of the Buddha The intention is what sets up the wiki helps create the karmic cause and effect field that then we reap the results of like intentions is considered a seed. And you plant a certain seed and you get a certain plant and fruit and as a result, you plant the seed of greed, hate and delusion, of lying and stealing and deceit and whatever. And you

create a very different fruit than if you plant the seed of generosity and love and wisdom or kindness and things like that. So one of the things we study in mindfulness, what is the intention behind our actions? What's the quality of that intention is a quality that intention, which then has consequence, both in the moment, but also in Buddhist tradition, they say, down into the future, very traditional Buddhist teachings. They say it actually affects you know, your future rebirth. And the way that one way to understand this is that the choices we make now shapes, the spin or the momentum of our consciousness. And that consciousness which is motivated by grasping, and as many grasping is a kind of a blanket term for many different ways in which we relate to life creates a spin of continuing wanting to grasp in consciousness, like habit formation of grasping, and so that we come into a fresh situation. And the mind just wants to grab some more wants, you know, grasping kind of in any kind of new situation the mind wants to grasp. So, upon death in traditional Buddhist teachings, if the mind is still conditioned by wanting to grasp, or resist or whatever it might be, then it'll grow On to the next life. If there's no tendency to grasp, then the person does not get reborn. And the Buddha didn't want to say what happens to the person instead, you can't be said can't be described can't be talked about. It didn't want to say that the person didn't didn't exist anymore, but didn't want to say that the person does exist. just didn't want to talk about it. So we're left kind of hanging until we find out. But kind of moment to moment I see. See, this is kind of the same thing. That if we enter into a new situation into a new circumstance in our lives, do we enter into it with past conditioning, past momentum to respond in certain predictable ways. To always go into a new situation and we're ready to grasp are ready to resist are ready to judge predisposing ourselves in certain ways. And so that predisposition is part of the realm of karma. And part of mindfulness is to begin to appreciate our predispositions. And then seeing those predispositions and seeing Can we switch those can we choose not to act on them. And fair a good part of mindfulness practice actually entails learning how to undo, not to do because of the tremendous momentum we have of doing doing doing responding a certain way. And part of the power of mindfulness is that RSA this way. So the Buddha emphasized that we have ability to respond. Every moment we have ability, ability to respond. One of the powerful forms of response is to be mindful, and to be mindful is beyond bringing mindfulness to bear in situation is a non responsive approach. So Things to be as they are, while we're carefully mindful of what they are. So there's all this momentum in our life, our past conditioning, our past actions, creates a tremendous momentum. And we have to, in some degree, bear the brunt of that momentum, you can't expect to just sit down in meditation, or go and retreat and just kind of snap your fingers and expect that all of the mentum just kind of falls away. But part of it we have to kind of learn to accept that certain amount of momentum is there. And then part of what mindfulness does, or the response of mindfulness is simply to feel it and be with it. And that feeling and being and being mindful of that momentum is part of the unraveling of it, and freedom from it.

It's interesting that Buddha said that our physical experience, our body is a result of our past karma. And our responsibility is To feel it and be with it. And in the doing that, discover a freedom. So our past catches up to us in the present to somebody with our karmic pasts, or dispositions intentions catches up to us in the present moment. If we're stopped to pay attention to that, if we barrel ahead, driving down to the, you know, page mill, then as if nothing, you know, kind of feel preoccupied about where

you're going, whatever, then we actually continue to wind up the spring of karma. But because of this near accident, I kind of stopped in a sense and then was driving down Paige mill, I reflected became aware of the attitude with which I was driving. It caught up to me because I was mindful. And then I was able to choose something else. And some of the energy and excitement of you know, rushing, persisted in my body But I just had to kind of take its course, I just allowed it to be there. It's very impressive to go and retreat. Those of you have been there know this, the first days of the retreat specially is often an experience of our past catching up to us. You know, it's, you know, it's just you know, sometimes it feels like we hit a wall, because all this intentionality and dispositions and attitudes that kind of were constantly lining up more and more and more, we stopped winding it up, and then we discover how wound up we are. And some people that point decide will forget this. I think I'll go back to life as it was. Which means you go back and wind up some more. And the reason you don't see the suffering of the winding up this is because we're preoccupied with a process of winding preoccupied with it with that forward direction of wanting and grasping and doing often and part of the process of mindful This practice is to stop and let our life catch up to us. Let the momentum of that intentionality is carried in our muscles and our mind and our brain. To catch up to us, we see it so that it has a chance to unwind. When we stop winding up the spring in feel it with mindfulness with awareness, the spring will begin to unwind. Sometimes I've had the sense that when I sit to meditate, it's like pulling the plug in the bathtub, and in its own way, the water just drains away. Unless of course, I react to what comes up, you know, to the water.

The role of mindfulness practice is to help place us The juncture of the present to help us see where our ability to respond resides. Without seeing where our ability to respond resides, there is no ability to respond. And then we are in a sense, carried along by fate to carry too carried along by all kinds of conditions, conditions that can feel like fate or destiny or determinism, or the gods whatever. But part of mindfulness to help put us in the place of responsiveness and then to learn to begin take responsibility for that place. And by taking responsibility for our ability to respond in the present moment, we change the course of our life. We change the course of our spiritual life, it's possible to move our life in the direction of increased certainly freedom but also to move in the direction of greater happiness. Goodness, love, peace. So that's enough for me. Now I'm gonna give you a chance to respond. Yes.

In Buddhist in the Buddhist world, we tend not to use the word reincarnation. I think the reason for that is that reincarnation implies that there's something that enters into a new body reincarnates rebirth apparently, Buddhists say doesn't have the same implication so we use the word rebirth. I don't really know so much about I don't know about this, you know from firsthand how this works. And, and if I'm going to talk about you know, how rebirth works and all that. It's really textbook responses, you know, things I've learned and I Try to study this thing, the how this stuff works well and, and, you know, I haven't I've never felt that it really I never felt like I got a really good answer. You know how it works, you can kind of believe some people into it or feel that you know, this is intuitively right this teaching and some people say they have experiences of their past lives and so they know from their own experience how this works. But the, you know, best kind of analogy that I have for understanding

rebirth in traditional Buddhist sense, is the analogy of a wave traveling across the Pacific from Japan to California. You can see from a distance you see the wave, so that's the way you can follow the wave, trace it and you know, it's the same way of going all the way across. But if you look really carefully, there is no water molecules moving across the Pacific. It's the same water molecules just simply moving up and down, and they knock the one next to it and that goes up and down. And so there's no thing being moved across the Pacific incense, it's just energy might say, or it's like sit like a wave in a football stadium. You know, there's no people moving down the seats, there's no hands moving down seats, but it looks like movement because there are coordinating how they wave their hands. So when rebirth happens, there's no thing which gets reborn. But there is momentum that set in motion. And somehow the consciousness that the intention, intention intentionality of your responses in the present conditions, that your consciousness and as you die, that consciousness has a certain spin on it, spin of grasping for example. And that then will bump into another consciousness and add that spin to the next consciousness and so there is an A From one lifetime to the next, exactly what that effect will be. There's no kind of predetermined way of knowing absolutely, that this is the way things are going to be. It tends to certain results. This respond to your question to some extent, why did you ask the question

affect future lives? And that's one reason I was having so much pain was that I must have tortured someone in my past.

And I thought about that ever since, like five years ago.

First Yeah.

There's always the western.

Yeah, right. Yeah. So my, my reading of the Buddha is he didn't want it to be that way. And he said it's very, he said, especially explicitly, it's very hard to understand is impossible to understand how karma really works. And if you try to understand it, you'll head will explode and seven pieces. What and, and he, the certainly in the teachings of the Buddha he recognized that it can be that kind of effect from one lifetime to the next. But to understand for sure that that's the case. And to assume that there's a necessary correlate that every time every time you have someone has a physical ailment But has to be because of some kind of thing they did in the past that he didn't want to he didn't want to go that far. That sometimes that's the case. But you know, not always so I had for a while kind of this problem with my wrists because you know, doing my dissertation was on the computer a lot and so why don't I have that thing in my wrist? Well the simple reason is because I rested my my wrists, you know, against the keyboard there and pressed against it. But so maybe that's part of what working in the computer entails is doing that but I think you don't have to do that. If I pay attention very carefully and very honestly to the intentionality with the attitude presupposition behind it. Probably there were times where I felt really burdened, oppressed, which is an attitude I took on. And so I was kind of like leaning

in. One more word, you know, one more footnote. And, and part of the reason for the karmic reason why I had to problem my wrist was Because I was allowing myself be carried along by this sense of burden. So I was leaning in, right? So there you can see there's a cause and effect relationship. But I've had other kind of situations where I can't for the life of me figure out where my intentionality is part of it. It might be might be past lifetimes. But I think for the teachings of the Buddha, generally, I think the way he's teaching is that it's not so interesting to know that you know, it's that's so interesting that even that relevant to know whether you're responsible, not responsible from the past. The present moment is what it is and how you respond to the present moment, which is important. It doesn't, you know, sit you know, that's my take on it. So whether you tortured someone or not

So I think are the teachings of karma as being a kind of an optimistic one that is meant to not to make us victims of our past and not to make us oppressed by a sense of blame. You know that, you know, I did it to myself and therefore I'm terrible. The Buddha said something like judging others is not for your own benefit. And probably we shouldn't here in America, we should say, judging yourself is not to your own benefit.

And sometimes the you know the difference we can make. But how we respond in the present can seem inconsequential in and of itself. But as with enough drops, the bathtub is filled with enough small little moments of intentionality, we make a difference in the long term. And it might take 10 years to make a difference or 20 years or in traditional language maybe it takes a few lifetimes but we can make a difference.

More responses, objections, testimonials. Yes question.

Trying to stop this winding up.

Several agents, none of sitting still

connected to

being able to get a better relationship. The President

it can be, of course sitting still can be done out of great fear and kind of hiding Kind of bracing ourselves against life. So sitting still in and of itself, but then metaphoric, or the kind of kind of metaphoric use of the word sitting still is that sitting in such a way that we allow things to be as they are without acting on anything, except knowing carefully for what it is, allows this karmic stream to unwind and to clarify itself. So, it means sitting still is very powerful, but you can sit still by doing by by sitting still doesn't have to necessarily mean sitting still. From answering but you want to say ask some more

interesting relationship, what we do

when we come in here, and then Talk, always trying to put those pieces together. It's trying to understand what I'm doing for those that time beforehand, and then trying to relate that to what you're saying. So I'm sitting, I'm sitting and I'm listening, just I'm trying to stand the connection.

I love it. So when I sat here, during the sitting part to this to this, this morning, one of the things that I became aware of was momentum of my own clinging I could feel it around my eyes. And I think just simply driving down here and kind of being involved in life. There was kind of attitude with this kind of forward kind of kind of forward kind of doing things and getting things done. They had kind of a little bit grasping quality that affected my muscles and my body. And, and what's interesting when I first sat down to meditate, I'm happy to be here. I was getting quiet and calm. And it wasn't that that level of tension. My body wasn't obvious. But then after I sacrificed 10 minutes and kind of the surface kind of kind of settling and then this deeper kind of tension became so manifest. And part of the sitting process was just noticing that and noticing how that as I said, it's began to continue to unwind and relax my eyes and my, my cheeks and my shoulders kind of that layer kind of on the ground itself. I also as I was sitting here, notice at some point that I had to suppose to give a talk in a few minutes. And so and so then a little piece little of concern or,

or maybe

a little worried about, okay, we better have some to say arrows. And so I noticed that and I said, you know, this, I don't want to live my life that way. This I don't, I'm gonna choose not to follow through on that kind of concern about I'm sitting because that's not for my betterment and it's probably not for your betterment. If I kind of am Worrying ahead of time. So I could see I have a moment of choice here. And the choice was I'm not going to follow that one. And in fact, often, you know, sitting is we often find a sitting place where I'm gonna choose not to follow that, that train of thought or that kind of attitude, that response or perhaps simply seeing it clearly. Seeing very, very clearly Oh, that's what's going on. That's enough to kind of step outside of that. That involvement of it, and then with time, it kind of dissipates by itself. So there's, there's this emphasis and response responsiveness, I think comes into play moment by moment and sitting practice, and it makes a difference. So I studied also, yes.

Experience, the connection between my intentions and my own ongoing

Right. And that for me, that's enough. I don't need to, I never felt the need to, to adopt or didn't Buddhist teachings of rebirth and basically an agnostic about it and some some some Buddhist teachers would be horrified that there's this Buddhist teacher out there isn't agnostic about it. Really really because some Buddhist teachers feels that you can't you can't just Buddhism doesn't make sense without the belief in rebirth. And maybe that's the case but I am who I am. Yeah.

Brain and we all concluded 100 was there

and we will lose that

belief in

rebirth. Next slide. skillful to believe that it is, it's good to do that.

Today Pascal's Wager about God, it was called Pascal's Wager. There was a similar teachings in the suttas where the Buddha said that you have nothing to lose and believing in rebirth. Because if you believe in it, believe in karma, I believe that what you do here can beneficially affect your future rebirth, then it's your good actions that beneficially effects your rebirth. So if you believe in it, then you do good things, you live a good life. And that's good. And if we birth doesn't exist, the Buddha said, then you get all these benefits in this lifetime anyway. So you might as well You know, live as if it's true, because because you're not you know, karmically you're not going to go wrong then Pascal's Wager in Buddhist language. So last one, then we'll stop. Yes.

It reminds me of a quote I really liked in the New Testament about, I think that the people around you that you love will be more tolerant of you. If they think your intentions are good. These die every night. Some family members who drive me crazy sometimes I think we all do, but I know they love me and every tangent really affects how I react to something that might otherwise be crazy. And there's a beautiful quote from the New Testament that Jesus said about your neck.

Because she was very close to him. Everyone said, Well, she's a sinner. How can you associate with who said much has been forgiven because she has learned much

What I said last Sunday I said there was a guy who once told me that if I had if I hadn't been so sincere what he would have punched me out

so thank you