

2002-06-16: Effort

Fri, 6/26 5:45PM • 42:48

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

effort, practice, people, arisen, feeling, mind, strive, energy, joy, states, retreat, buddha, words, thinking, notice, suddenly, talk, helpful, engaged, sitting

SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

Though I just finished participating or leading a two week retreat at Jikoji, which is a little rustic Zen center we have up on, we don't have but we we rent up on skyline Boulevard on long Ridge Preserve. And it was a lovely experience. There were 18 practitioners there for 18 days for 14 days of silence, practicing quite intensely, of great seriousness and courage and, and I went home every day, come to the retreat, because I live on skyline. So we've come to the retreat around 9:30 every day, and it was always really kind of feeling off powerhouse. So there's something tremendously powerful about the stillness of people sitting, sitting together, meditating in silence. The Silence of your off people often say that silence can be stronger when there's a group of people sitting together in silence than if you're in a room alone. There's some kind of power of presence that that's available there. They put in tremendous effort. And it seemed very significant for the people to participate in the retreat. And I'm still very much inspired by that event and moved by the efforts everyone made. And so I gave a talk most days. And one of the content one of the threads running through some of the talks was I give it I talked about the seven factors of awakening, which are one important list. There's many lists in Buddhism, it's one of the important lists, because these are understood to be the seven factors conditions within us. They get strengthened, developed as we become freer as we become more awakened through this kind of practice. And these are mindfulness, investigation, effort, joy, tranquility, concentration, and equanimity. So I kind of every day I gave a talk and I didn't give in give the talks in sequence, because I tried to match the particular The talk of the day to match where people were at in the practice. So I kind of jumped around depending most needed one day, one day with equanimity was needed, or tranquility or different things. So and so at some point, I gave it, I covered the topic of effort. And next day someone came in to interview and he said yesterday's talk was on effort, but you barely touched on the subject, your talk, you can just skim right by at the end. I didn't say much about it. And, you know, you gave him a nice talk about something else. But you know, what about the effort part? And so it was somewhat conscious that I hadn't given a lot of emphasis on effort, partly because there was a lot of effort being given on the retreats. People are really putting the hearts into the practice. And I didn't want to mess with that because if you have people Suddenly kind of thing, I'll

have to rev up. And you get too excited in practice or strain too much that, you know, doesn't practice on their work very well. And, and another hand if they feel, you know, Gil says you need this much effort and I'm making, you know, 10 times that. So I think I'll back off. And so suddenly I show up the next day and everyone's you know, kind of like, down to the pond kind of just floating around in the pond, you know, because they're doing less effort, because I didn't want to mess with it, because things were going fine. But I also remembered that when this person told me about my shortcoming that I had, some years ago, I gave a series of talks here in Palo Alto, on the Eightfold Path, which is also very central teaching in Buddhism. And the Eightfold Path are the kind of Central elements kind of the broader elements of certain factors awakening and the kind of the inner qualities spiritual qualities, get that get developed. The seven the Eightfold Path, those eight aspects of practice that person can engage in. So there's right view, having the right understanding and what you're doing the right intention, having the right intention for doing that. Right. Action, right speech, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. So I was going to do a whole series of talks on these eight, and the Four Noble Truths. It's part of it, like 12 talks was gonna give, and I pretty intentionally didn't give a talk on effort. I skipped over it. So here I was busted twice, you know? What about the effort part? And why? Why, you know, it's very important teaching and Buddhism, you know, right effort. I chose to not not give that talk. I just kind of, you know, conveniently skipped over it. And someone asked me about it later, but like, I don't know what I said in reply, but

so, so Thinking about what this man said on the retreat to me, I'm thinking, well, maybe it's time to give a talk on effort. Or at least to confess my, you know my shortcoming. And to partly to kind of reflect why is it that I didn't want to talk much about effort? What's going on there? And so I don't have a lot to say, by the topic.

And I haven't formulated you know, carefully planned talk, but I wanted to do this talk to be an attempt my attempt to try to explore this topic a little bit with you and maybe come out a little bit with the reason why I've been shy to talk about it.

I should say that the idea of effort or engagement or being engaged in the practice, endeavoring, persistence, is something that I've really loved in my own practice. I am not shy from making the effort. In fact making effort, certain kind of effort has been part of the delight teams we really engaged in what you love doing, it's a delight to have that opportunity is really a great thing. And so I've had lots of opportunities to really engage myself in the dummer practice, and done it as wholeheartedly as I possibly could. And it's, you know, it just brings me joy, both to have done it in the time. And it brings me joy to think think that there are times when I'm really able to give everything I have to justice doing this dumber practice. So the idea of applying effort is something I find great delight in. I think I'm reluctant to to talk a lot about effort. One is maybe not a very, you know, noble idea that I have. But one is that, well, I'm actually a little bit shy, too. You might not believe this, but I'm shy to impose ideas on people what you should do. And I want to like give people a kind of wide pasture and leave people alone kind of the teachings They're the practices are there. And people in their own way will step

forward and practice them and be engaged in them. And I'd rather not be in the position of kind of telling people what they should do. I'm happy to tell explain what the practices are and where the teachings are. But then it's up to individuals to kind of take the initiative. And to talk about effort, maybe I felt shy about talking about the right effort, because the implication in my mind might have been, oh, this is the effort you should make. And so the effort, the effort, both the kind of effort and the quality of effort you make, is really something it's individual. And so I wanted to leave it in that domain. Also, it is a little bit trickier, as I said earlier about effort, because some people will strive too much and the effort gets in the way some people don't strive enough. And so there's complacency. There's this beautiful there's a couple of beautiful passages in the sutras most famous is the one about the tuning of the lute. And there was a monk who had been a lute player before he was a monk and he was trying to practice and He wasn't making much progress in his meditation. And he came to the Buddha and said, you know, what do I do? And the Buddha said, Oh, remember when you were playing the lute? Now if you had to tune your your strings on your glute, and you if you tighten them too hard, too tight, what happens? And here Well, you don't have beautiful music, and what happens if they're too loose? Oh, same thing. The same way, you have to be very careful and not be too, you know, too uptight, too tight, not too tight, like too much effort. And you don't want to be too slack in the effort either. You don't have just the right amount. There's another discourse with the Buddha says, someone comes to the Buddha and said, How did you make effort? How did you proceed and your spiritual path? And the Buddha replies, how did you how did you cross the flood, the flood of suffering and craving and hate and fear? How do you cross over beyond it and the Buddha said, Not striving, not pushing ahead and not holding back. not doubting, did I make progress that I crossed the flood. And again, this balance between pushing ahead striving and not holding back not dallying? Not hesitating, are, you know, there's a balance we have to find. And what I found over my years of practice is that I'm often swinging like a pendulum across the midpoint exact midpoint of the, you know, balanced effort. And part of practice and healthy part of practice is to pay attention to the effort that's required. And to adjust it as we go along. Oh, that's a little bit too much, that's a little bit too little, and being too complacent and pushing too hard here and find that balanced effort which is which doesn't cause any tension, at the same time, is enough effort to make a difference in our lives. And there has to be some effort. And other reasons I've been reluctant to talk about effort is that I have A strong background in Zen practice. And also a little bit in Theravada practice where there's been emphasis on effortless effort. And to make effort was in Zen sometimes even though Zen was known as being you made tremendous amount of self effort exams, a technical Japanese word called, called G, Ricky. And it's mean self effort making effort yourself. And there was also kind of a feeling and then you don't want to make you're not goal oriented in Zen. It's just about about waking up to the present moment as it is and not trying to get to some other present moment, some distant, you know, perfect state, rather just waking up to what's actually here. And so to make efforts lends itself to you making effort to attain something

doesn't have to be that it could be the effort to really wake up to the present, but it lends itself to Oh, make an effort to get someplace. And so there's a reluctance to talk about efforts. Even though in Zen practice, a lot of effort was put out. So the idea of the effortless effort, you know, you're supposed to

be effortless. Once you're enlightened, you're not supposed to make any effort. You're supposed to be the natural state of grace and things just pour forth from you. And so people then will think, well, if that's true for enlightened person, it must be true for me. And I should be effortless also. And let's go hang out in the pond. Yes, look at him. And so, the so there's a kind of juxtaposition between sometimes a reluctance to talk about effort, on the other hand, a tremendous love for effort and really making a strong level of endeavoring exertion. In the Pali suttas in the discourses of the Buddha, there's just like an English there's a lot of different words used that are kind of like energy, effort, endeavor, exertion, diligence, persistence, there's a whole bunch of words. And in fact, these words if you read something like the Dhammapada these words are really in the forefront. There's expectations Buddha wasn't shy, but using these Words at all. And he was, you know, put it out there like this is what you have to do usually words like ardency should be ardent zeal, zeal, full effort, exert yourself. And there's a lot of a lot of words like that. So you find the suit, there's no shyness about that. I think here in the West, there's been a reluctance to talk about that kind of language. Again, because partly because Americans like to strive a lot. American teachers have seen that an Asian teachers were just amazed by the neurotic level of striving among Westerners that came to Asia. And sometimes the West Asian teacher who said, Boy, if our Asian students practice as hard as the Americans, they'd all be enlightened. But we were practicing as hard as Americans but we weren't getting and they're, they're kind of pushing and striving and kind of trying to gritting our teeth and making this kind of grim effort. You know, So this you know, again, so let's back off. And here you find in the West, one of the strong, both Zen and Vipassana kind of American versions of it, a strong emphasis in the language of acceptance. It's a matter of really radical acceptance of the present moment and, and just being with what is and, and except it kind of, for some people acceptance and effort and energy, don't, don't fit harmoniously together in the same mouth. It could doesn't have to be exclusive exclude each other. But it's a little bit you know, if you're trying to get people to relax and not strive so much not feel so bad about themselves. You don't want to say you know, strive and make effort. Just relax, take it easy, because some it's been a lot of people a lot of people need my teacher in Burma. He didn't do this to me, but he did it to one woman who was practicing when I was there. He said to her, you know, strive, you know, really make an effort. And don't come back and see me for an interview until you've made progress and it just tidy up enough. You know, trying to make this kind of striving for North make progress for the teacher, it just you know, she she actually had a psychotic break from that it was very sad because he didn't understand how to work with her. And so here in the West, you know, we have a little bit more familiarity with Western psyches. And we know we can't really you know, crack the whip and say, you know, drive on you know, and push this is the day for enlightenment stay up until the you know, two o'clock in the morning or don't go to sleep tonight and just go for it. You know, I'll show up at the retreat the next day and the all these people kind of feeling so sorry for themselves and, you know, feeling I didn't met them intimate personal failure. I tried and nothing happened and it's hopeless for me and I should try Sufi dancing.

So some of the reasons I think about some of the reluctance to talk about it is now being reluctant talked about it. Of course, we're doing everyone disfavor the service also might be a great service and might be necessary kind of skillful means, but also as a disservice in the sense that for some people,

it's really appropriate and inspiring to hear about effort and engagement and persistence and, and really throwing oneself into it. And by not talking about that they might think, Oh, I'm not supposed to, but that's not the possibility. So effort is required, actually effort. There's no human life without effort. It's kind of built into being human beings, we make all kinds of efforts. And so effort is not a foreign thing to being a human being. And Christopher TechSmith says, human, we shouldn't be called human beings, because we've forgotten about the being part. We should be called human beings, busy beings. Because we're always so busy, you know, and he also has the word human, or Homo shoppi sharpens most consumers, but the Beingness but effort is always part of human life. And the question is not whether we should make effort or not. The emphasis should not be where the question is not whether we should make effort or not. The question is, where do you want your effort to go? What do you want your effort to be about? Now, when you sit down to meditate, it's very interesting. What happens, because especially for the uninitiated, the you sit down to meditate, you close your eyes, and you try to study the mind on the breath, or you try to do nothing you try to be and not make it do anything particular or just get to be concentrated, be mindful. And pretty quickly, you realize that there's a tremendous amount of energy to do everything else under the sun, that the mind is racing off to, you know, thinking about fantasies or thinking about the conversations you've had and thinking about better rejoinders you could have had and, you know, a lot of effort and thinking about the better answer you could have had, or, you know, as always efforts suddenly goes into cleaning the garage, you sitting here peacefully, and you say, Oh, the garage, it's Sunday. And, you know, I could do that instead. And I've moved these boxes around and probably. And there's effort goes in that line or suddenly have a sexual fantasy. And not only is your mental effort, but suddenly you feel this arising of kind of kind of physical energy to and suddenly, you're kind of Sleepy until that's, and suddenly, you know, the energy's there. Wow, heat. And what do you think if suddenly you remember, you know, what your coworker said to you at work recently, and it was not a very kind thing. And suddenly, you know, you're, again, kind of feeling not your kind of being kind of complacent and kind of easygoing and you have this memory and suddenly a lot of energy there to think and criticize and, you know, it's hard to contain yourself because the energies so effort is often there. You By itself, right effort is defined by in Buddhism by the understanding and the purpose for the effort that you're engaging, or it's how taking the effort is there the vitality, the energy of your life and directing it in ways that are skillful and useful for your life and for the life of others. So making effort is not so much an issue of making something which didn't exist before. It's more like the redirecting the effort that we already have, for more skillful purposes. So making effort in certain direction. The definition of right effort in the Eightfold Path, and the Pali word is by Yama not viriya. By Yama and the right effort there is defined as conjoining your effort with particular views and purposes in mind. So it's a particular kind of kind of channeling. It's for a particular purpose. And the classic definition is can be summed up in four words. It's four different practices. It's guarding, abandoning, cultivating, or develop, cultivating, encouraging, abandoning, developing, and sustaining something like that. So I'll explain. The first one is protecting yourself from the arising of unskillful states of mind that have not yet arisen.

So guarding yourself, making the effort to protect your quality of your mind, your heart, your mind is a real The precious commodity, it's a really precious precious thing that we have. And how do we in this

precious life that we have? It's very short. What do we do with our mind and our hearts? And what is what kind of quality we want to maintain? It's very easy to be unguarded, and then to have all kinds of inner forces and other forces that affect the quality of our mind. Buddhism says you should protect the quality of your mind, it's an important resource. So how do you protect the quality of your mind? I mean, you might want to avoid those kind of activities that cause you to have it unskillful unhealthy states of mind. So for example, if you know that every time you drive on one on one at five o'clock in the afternoon, you tend to get kind of angry and irritated. It might be valuable for you to avoid one on one at five o'clock, take a little bit longer route that doesn't involve stopping traffic, if it's so backed up. That would be called a skillful thing to do. You're doing that you're making effort to avoid the arising of something unhealthy. And so you can probably go your own way and kind of reflect on the ways in which you probably already do this. And ways you can do with more. Some people find that it's very helpful to spend time with certain kinds of people, certain kinds of people. After you spend time with them, you don't you know, you feel unskillful states of mind arise unhealthy, unhealthy states of mind, certain activities, certain ways of being all kinds of things. I find that I watch very little television. But when I do watch television, I find that for me, that it actually affects the state of my mind. And I don't actually don't feel good after I watch it for a while. And even though the kind of enjoyment in the short term in the long term, it doesn't seem to, you know, it says it tends to kind of produce not necessarily unhealthy states of mind, but kind of a kind of feeling is going to be kind of off so the first effort is the effort to avoid the arising of unskillful states of mind, which have not yet arisen. So it takes a certain amount of self awareness to know what that is. The second right effort is to abandon those unskillful states of mind that have arisen. So you're stuck in rush hour traffic on one on one. You get off the freeway first and you get you know, you get off freeway we're full and go out to the day lands and sit looking at the you know, just you know, go for a walk or until the traffic dies down. You know, whatever it takes, you know, but when you notice, you have to have that kind of mindfulness to notice that or unskillful unhelpful states of mind. Now, it's very important to notice here that the word kusala, translated as skillful or wholesome unskillful unwholesome are kind of very different language are good and bad. Isn't that you should avoid bad states of mind. We'd rather you avoid that which is unskillful that which is unhelpful for you. It's a very much more friendly kind of attitude to notice what is helpful and unhelpful, and avoid what is unhelpful and do what's helpful. So when you notice that unhelpful states of mind have arisen, unhelpful behavior has you unhelpful behavior, unskillful behavior, it doesn't help you or anybody else, then make the effort to abandon them. Whatever it takes, mindfulness practice, antidote practice like loving kindness, going for a walk, taking a nap, do whatever leaving a situation whatever it takes, remember is healthy and helpful way of approaching it. The third, right effort is to cultivate or arouse about skillful states helpful states which have not yet arisen. So you're going about your life and you notice that you know There's not much generosity, generosity is a nice state of mind to have. So it would be nice to kind of arouse that. Let's see what I can do to develop a little more generosity, maybe I can develop more generosity by just kind of being a little more considerate and reflective about the people I encounter. And kind of notice the kind of the good qualities are notice the heartfulness and notice the capacity for joy and happiness. Notice something about people rather than, you know, I don't like the color of their socks. You know, some kind of judgments we have dinner or something let's cultivates kind of appreciation of people. And they

make an effort at this. And then in making effort and appreciating people, they make an effort to cultivate some generosity towards people. So that's, you know, generosity is considered very helpful to state of mind to

have loving kindness is considered a very helpful state. To have love kindness, friendliness, compassion is helpful to have. Joy is considered very helpful status to have. It's you're encouraged Buddhism to be joyful. And that seemed, might seem kind of obvious. That's a whole topic in itself, but you're encouraged to be joyful. I've had a number of situations where people come for interviews and retreat. And they have had backgrounds in particular kind of religious traditions, where they were told it was basically it was not okay to feel joy, and sinful or something. And it's, it's kind of normal, kind of somewhat common when you sit and meditate, especially on retreat, to have joy bubbling up, and they felt something was wrong, and they come to interview to confess. And sometimes it's joy is kind of physical joy, sensual joy that rises through meditation, even worse. And I would say I would use all my authority in my role, whatever I could as a meditation teacher and whatever projection they had on me and I would say it's okay to experience joy. I thought that was okay. You said my role. Okay, you see the transference and everything. So to recognize what are helpful states of mind skillful states of mind, and to see what you can do to cultivate it. The fourth right effort is the effort to sustain, maintain, nourish the skillful states of mind that have already arisen. So again, it takes some mindfulness to recognize, oh, Joy is there. Remember, I just told sort of told sometimes, but it's a story about how easy it is to lose our helpful states or healthy states of mind. There was a, I was on retreat teaching retreat once and there was a woman on the retreat I known for some time, who struggled mightily and a lot a lot of suffering and inner conflict, outer conflict and I never don't really be happy or really be calm. You know, she was making a really good effort and trying to be mindful and the inner conflict was so strong. And one day, we had an interview right after, or the morning sits, and I sat and she sat in the hall with everyone else. And I went, I said, I had very good sitting, I was very calm, very peaceful, myself, went to the interview room, I sat in the chair, moment later, she came in, and somehow she'd had a very good sitting. And she was remarkably calm and peaceful and at ease, and it's one of those kind of interviews where a person comes in, and you don't feel like you want to talk. You're just like, what do you talk about? You sit there and you sit in this kind of feeling of peace and ease and everything's okay in the universe. And when we give, you know, what is it to say? And so we sat there together and kind of just enjoying this kind of, you know, both of us kind of reflecting it back to each other, perhaps, being somewhat in the same state. And, and then she said, You know, I'm feeling really peaceful and nice right now. It's really great. And then she said, Oh, but yesterday, I was feeling horrible and terrible and, and then she started, she proceeded to tell me about yesterday. And it was so sad to watch this person kind of pulled herself out of the peace or pulled and kind of dragged out from inside of her, her horrible conflicts and completely obliterated the peaceful state she was in. It would have been nice if she could have kept it going, you know, a few more minutes you didn't have to talk about yesterday. You know, but so when is it we have joy? When do we have peace? When do we have delight? When do we have love? When do we have some ease in our life? And how easy is it that we kind of lose it that we give it up? I've seen it myself. How easy for men are phenomenal, easy it is. I've seen in such simple things as coming home or meditating in the morning or do something

where I feel basically a peace and ease myself. And then I noticed that I haven't check email for a while.

And you know, pretty soon checking email and an email is one of those things that it's kind of like television. It doesn't lend itself to me to great states of mind. And in fact that kind of, you know, it can actually, you know, I do it for a while and then Oh, wait a minute, I was feeling kind of good. And now I feel a little bit you know, or you feel so, you know, and so video if you know, noticing when we have healthy states of mind and then protecting them or nourishing them, supporting them, appreciating them, simply appreciating them, strengthens them. Now, these four practices right efforts are fraught with danger. Danger is measuring yourself. You're identifying yourself measuring your self worth, by the absence and presence of these states of mind. I must, must be a personal failure that I'm feeling angry. And Buddhists are supposed to avoid angry states and have just joyful states. And I've been given this practice and I can't do it. I just feel angry and they're from a terrible Buddhist and I think I will come this morning to Sunday morning sittings, because I don't want to have to be around people with notice that I'm being a bad Buddhist. And, you know, there's all these are, you know, or I have to have joy in order to be good Buddhists, you know, are and so that it's fraught with danger of expectation and judgment. And then as soon as you get involved in it and get lost in that world and comparative thinking and saying, Well, I'm going to be more joyful than her and how could she be so joyful? She should, you know, I know better. You know, she I know a little bit about her background, and you know, this is not right. And anyway, I've known you know, a lot. There's A lot of problems involved with the problems shouldn't mean that we ignore these wonderful practices is wonderful efforts to make these kinds of efforts. So, in the Eightfold Path, that's what right effort involves, the classic definition of it is these four practices, these four efforts making these efforts. There's a whole other class of effort. And that is the effort of putting energy exertion, vitality into what we do. Now, it could be as simple as showing up, it said that 90% of Buddhist practice 99% of Bruce practice is showing up in order to that means you have to understand what's showing up means just showing up to the moment not just showing up for the sitting group. You could show up here, you know, Sunday morning at nine o'clock and then be gone for the next hour. Right You know, but you probably know that a little bit a little bit you know, you know, You sit here you have a great aspiration. And you're thinking about what happened yesterday. And you realize, you know, after that when the bell rings, how long you've been gone and some kind of thought to show up can also mean to show up moment by moment to this moment, to make the effort to show up. It's actually significant to make the effort to show up at a sitting group will show up to your morning meditation and have tremendous respect. Tremendous appreciation, and are for the people who have a regular daily sitting practice and simply show up for it. Just to set it and forget it. Let's not even look at how good they're sitting is. Just simply make the effort to do that every day. I think it's a phenomenal thing. Who people who show up at a sitting group week after week, make that effort when there's you know, so many other things you can do in life. There's television programs, which people have to miss. I think it's really impressive to me, that that make that effort to show up. Then once you make the effort to show up on Your cushion, then you make the effort to show up in the moment, the effort to make show up in your body to be present here. That's a really significant effort to make. And once you show up to make the effort to be here, then there's all kinds of

other efforts you can make. You can notice, for example, you showing up and you notice your mind is off thinking about judging someone that, you know, am I really going to spend my life effort, pour my effort that I tality of my life into judging my neighbors? Is that really useful? I've done it enough for 10 years. And you know, I'm really good at it. If I if I not, don't do it for the next 40 minutes of my sitting, I don't think you know, much is gonna get lost, you know, so let's not judge these 40 minutes. Let's make an effort to let go of those thoughts. Let's make the effort not to fuel them, not to engage with them, not to connect with them, not to continue them.

And that's a really fantastic effort to make to notice the directions of your mind. Say with all kinds of thoughts, I don't have to be engaged and I don't have to do. Well, there's another kind of effort which simply you notice your thinking, say, I think I let go that I just softly let go. I don't have to think I don't to be engaged in these trains of thought I know I'll think about something else in a second. But I'm gonna let go into the efforts will that go is one of the really beautiful efforts human beings can make. Like go Let go, let go. Not to let go because we're indifferent to the world, but to let go so that the mind can begin experiencing its freedom. Because the mind which is obsessed, the mind which has evolved compulsive thinking, is not free. The heart which has compulsive feelings is not free. And so every moment we let go, we can let go into our freedom was an expression of freedom. At the retreat, I talked about how it's nice to think of nice to see that the means and the goal are reflected in each other The goal of Buddhist practice is to be liberated in the means is to practice liberation to practice freedom. If you want to become peaceful, you practice being peaceful. If you want to be a kind person, you practice being kind. If you want to be free, you practice living your freedom, you practice being free, there's, it's very helpful to see that the goal and the means are somehow found in each other. So we don't think that huffing and puffing with a metaphor means that has nothing to do with a goal that's in the future. The taste to the taste of the goal is found in a moment of practice. The flavor of freedom. So the left goes a lot has a lot to do with that. Let go Let go Let go. You don't have to you can do it in appropriately. Of course, when I was about 20, I was hitchhiking around America with a girlfriend visiting commune hopping and I had the gotten this idea that you know, nothing mattered just like oh, just kind of. Yeah, you know, it's always kind of expression from this. Anyways, it was nothing matters you know, it's all fine it's all okay. It's all cool. Everything's won and she lost her flashlight one day and my attitude to her losing your flashlight was not well, let's go look for it, you know, it's cool. It's like and she I think appropriately got irritated with me because we need to look for at least there's a time for letting go and a time for let go of it after you look forward. You don't find it then you let go of it. That doesn't mean you don't look

the greater the effort. We make that weight of the healthy fruit would make, the greater the fruits of the practice we get in return. Effort becomes a strength that we carry with us. In fact that the ability to make effort gets self reinforced, it's kind of like if you go for a run, you start running as a regular practice. Initially you start running, maybe you don't have much kind of real psychic effort, energy just kind of make a do make make a go for it and you your body screams and protest. But then as you continue over the weeks in the minds at some point, there's kind of like his, his energy, strength of energy becomes available to you, it becomes almost like second nature like the groove begins

happening. effort is something energy and effort is something that can be aroused and developed. So becomes almost second nature, rather than something that you have to kind of strain to cause to around arise. It's really beautiful to have this kind of strength. The Buddha like in this country Strength of effort or energy is to have an old dilapidated house which is about to fall down. And to have a strength of energy available to you. It's like bringing in a really strong pillar to prop up the house supports you know this you know our life so what do we do with this effort? This energy this life force that we have in our life? How do we it's something will be done to some it'll it'll go some direction no matter what. It'll go somewhere. Who's gonna choose where it goes? Are you going to be is going to be taken hostage hijacked by your greed or your hate or by consumerism or consumer culture? Or are you going to actually take some responsibility, some some choice about where your life what your life force is about. And this is the encouragement of the Buddha is that you actually takes charge in a certain sense of this very precious thing you've been given, which is your life force, your life vitality, which everyone who's alive has, it's not a matter of this, you have to do something new to make it happen. But as you apply it in the right direction, it becomes a strength that you begin carrying with you. The last thing I'll say is that, in the discourses of the Buddha, they described one of the proximate causes for the arising of right effort and energy. And the proximate cause is a sense of urgency. Sometimes translated sense of urgency, I call it a passion for practice, but maybe doesn't really, it's not a very accurate translation. For the bias, perhaps, the word is some vague and it's the kind of feeling you have that if you have like a brush with death or if you encounter somebody You know, you've been around someone who just died was really important for you. Or your international crisis. The kind of suddenly arising Oh, this life is really precious. This is really important. I take things seriously I have to be alert here after you know, I don't want to be complacent. I don't want to go back to business as usual and continuing watching whatever you're watching on television, you know, it still kind of caught rise rousing kind of a rousing I'm kind of an emotion and feeling and energy. That can be with it is fraught with fear, but can be, it can be without fear, or aversion can be very, very helpful and healthy. And that emotion that arousing and energy a sense of urgency or sense of preciousness or sense of now is important is called some vague on Buddhism. And to cultivate that sun Vega is one way to arouse healthy energy, just less one, you know, energy when you have sexual fantasy arise. So there can be healthy energy, when you realize how precious life is. And, and so you know, I am going to die. What am I going to do with this little life is left. It's really precious. So effort I think is one of the most precious things we have going. Our ability to make effort, the energy, vitality, our ability to be persistent over time. Right effort, their effort, their practice, always bears fruit. No moment of practice is ever wasted. And the more you, you commit yourself to showing up, the greater the fruits will be in your life. And so, it's your choice about where you put your effort. It's your choice, how many moments a day you decide to commit to showing up,

but I hope that you want to show up All the time. You don't show up to what's real. You miss it. You know, what's the alternative? So may you all make your best efforts to show up and, and learn and doing that, to find that midpoint, that balance point that you'll swing back and forth over over and over again, where you're neither striving in a tense way, or being complacent and holding yourself back and you find the appropriate way to find your way. Thank you