

2002-08-26: Eightfold Path

Sat, 6/27 8:44AM • 43:52

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

path, four noble truths, people, eightfold path, life, buddhism, meditation, intention, livelihood, mind, sit, buddha, mindfulness, cultivate, meditation practice, zen, buddhist path, attachment, heart, important

SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

My first teacher simplistically, somewhat said that Buddhism is about sitting, sitting in meditation. And Gandhi's contribution to Buddhism is that it matters where you sit. And the implication being that for political action for social justice for all kinds, you know, that it depends where you sit, you know, who said certain places maybe doesn't have any impact. But if you sit on the train tracks or if you sit different locations, you know, like, like people did in Lawrence Livermore Livermore labs, but there's a very, very different impact. So where you sit is important. So the San Francisco Zen Center in my practice from early years, was in the kind of the haight lower haight area haight Fillmore area in San Francisco and, and it was a fairly dangerous neighborhood to live in through our house projects nearby. A lot of drug dealing and prostitution, a lot of shooting and stabbing and bugging and cars broke being broken into and fires and it was exciting neighborhood to be in. That's where we sat and we had this meditation hall that was on the corner of the building. And in one corner of the building was the alley. We didn't want to go in was dark. And then Laguna street in the other side. And it was quite something to sit in that zendo because some of the hot day especially the windows are open or even if windows were closed, you could hear what was going on, on the other side of the wall and the alley. And, you know, we'd hear people being mugged we hear carp glass blasting broken. We hear you know, the fire trucks would come come up where the police would have their action or they'd be you know, and in many of the situations where the practice was to sit in the middle of it It was very important The idea was you sat, where not where the action was, but you you sat in the midst of the world, but you didn't remove yourself off in some quiet you know, isolated place for your own private meditation but your meditation practice existed in the middle of life as it really is. And there was we didn't just sit there peacefully when people were being mugged. Though if someone was, you know, was expression, if the prostitute was doing a trick and inside of the wall, then we just don't we just sat. But the so if somebody was econ for help was obvious someone was in distress, then it was quite impressive to see all these other students you know, sitting quietly meditation, just the first instance of that will clear that someone needed help. They would leap off their cushions and you know, Zen style,

dash out the doors and to see if that could help and Remember once I was I was Zen priest there, the shaved head and we're black robes. And there's one of these incidences and everybody's ran running out and, and they were, I don't know, 2030 people running down page streets because woman had had her purse stolen. And the mugger went that way. She was there kind of yelling for help. And so she went down there. So 2030 people went down. And for some reason I was I was kind of back with a crowd. And I figured, you know, there was too many people running, you know, it didn't make sense for me to run also. So I stayed behind with one or two other people and I kind of sort of walking down the streets slowly kind of just happened just cuz go up against the series kind of area where the Zen Hospice is, and this guy jumps out of the bushes. And he goes up against the wall and says, something like, holding the purse and said something like, you know, he was obviously very afraid of me because I'm not I don't think of myself as intimidating person, but he, for all he could have a shaved head and black robes I looked like Kung Fu. So I had him cornered and, and so he started walking kind of like, like this kind of along the side of the garage side of the building. And it was smaller than small crowd of us, Graham, who, you know, had a half circle around him until they came to the corner of the building. And then of course, there was no half circle anymore, right? There's a part of the circle was missing Sydney dashed off, leaving the person behind. So anyway, so the ringing reminded me that of all that then

and, and in some ways, I like this neighborhood a lot because it's a neighborhood where there's a certain amount of action, activity and you really feel like you're part of the urban environment and the spiritual practice. into the midst of it. And I would imagine some of you think, well, it'd be better if we could be off someplace very quiet and serene. And there's a place was obviously meditative is if someplace serene was more meditative. Right. I like it. I think it's appropriate. I think it's healthy for us to kind of be in the midst of the city as it is. And those of you who have come here Thursday and Friday morning, know that there's a great, also very exciting here should come sometime if you haven't, if you don't mind being disturbed. Thursday, Friday mornings, between about nine and 11 or so. There's anti abortion protests on the street here because of Planned Parenthood across the street. And, and I've been perplexed about how to respond to the anti abortion protests. And I feel that I'm still kind of considering it. But I feel like what one of the things we bring to this conflict between Planned Parenthood and anti abortion protesters is when it's kind of I don't know if they notice But we kind of bring our presence. Like we're here. This is where we are. We're in the kind of, I feel like we're in the middle of them and we sit kind of, in a meditative way in meditation. Yeah. So a you don't take sides. With us you bring presence within some trust that presence will make a big difference in the situation. When again, when I was at San Francisco Zen Center, there were all these Design Center was very much involved in local neighborhood and helping people. And there were these landlords of apartment buildings that that were taking advantage of their tenants and very shoddy kind of dangerous buildings. And so Zen center was helping these tenants in various ways. But Zen center very clearly didn't want to do anything. That was political, that was actually in opposition with alienated the landlords, because it felt as as a Zen temple. It should as a meditation center. It should be a place where Anybody felt welcome to come into the doors to meditate. And if they got involved in the politics, then the landlord's wouldn't want to come. And they probably needed more than anybody. So we sit

here with our doors open and meditate. And then so this leads up to the announcement. My announcement from that is that September 11, we're going to have our meeting here Wednesday evening. And there'll be 730 to nine and, and just sitting and reflection to temporary 11. I'm not sure what we do. So it wasn't as I wasn't sure what we would do last year when we had our meetings right after September 11. I still don't know what we will do when we gather on September 11. But it felt to me like for some of us will be very important and poignant to sit together that evening and then have some way of reflecting on that. event or ourselves, in the midst of it all. So if you'd like to come that's September 11. So what's been on my mind to talk about for about a week or so is the Buddhist eightfold path. Partly I was thinking about it because I finished this retreat, we could go Sunday. And during the retreat, there were a lot of people who were relatively new to meditation. And some of them for example, very interesting. They go into the retreat, kind of very challenged and wondering why they're there. And somewhere near the halfway point of the retreat, they start asking questions like, this is really great, but how can I apply my daily life? How can I make this relevant in my life? How can I bring presence mindfulness, compassion, This level of kind of presence to rest of my life where life is so busy and we get entangled so easily. So the end of the retreat, the three teachers teaching and we talked we gave a little teaching on the Eightfold Path. And Buddhism, as you probably many of you probably know, a number of Asian cultures emphasize the importance of a path. In Japan, you have the way the thing called the Tao. dough, which is the way like Aikido or

Judo chado the way of tea and a dough is a, it comes from the Chinese a Dao, Dao, it's kind of a path or a way that you enter into and it's not just an ism, but it's a way of life. It's something you engage and put your whole body into. Excuse me, if I go on any other tangent, there's there's also the Way of archery. And koban Chino, the local Zen teacher who died a few weeks ago was had studied this way of archery. And he went went once went to a salon to do a demonstration of this way. And he got himself dressed in the Zen archery robes and had his bow and arrow and was was you know, there was a big crowd of people watching and he was there in the big lawn so if some of you've been there you know, it's big lawn can overlook overlooking the cliffs of the Pacific and, and he entered into kind of meditative process of preparing his arrow and his bow and getting himself psyched and ready as a whole like ritual. I imagine people watching it kind of almost got concentrated just watching this process. This guy very meticulously and very centering himself and getting ready and, and you know, it wasn't just a matter of putting the arrow in the bow and shooting it. It was like maybe maybe half an hour. Process maybe more. And finally, you know, you put the arrow in the bow very meditative very carefully and with great concentration in great stillness, cut ready to, you know, you know, fire that bow and aim really carefully and Just wait Just wait right the moment I imagine people are breathless, nobody's You know, they're present and finally to the right moment, he let go the arrow anyway right directly into the goals It was me which was the Pacific Ocean.

So in India they have the idea of a way, Buddhism is a Pali word is magga. Sanskrit is Margo. And in India, there was many ways, many, many paths and it's useful to think of that when You think of word because we think of the word Buddhism as being an ism, a belief system, a philosophy perhaps. And it's better not better think of it as a way of life, it's a way of living, it's a way that you enter into, it's a

path. And many people will sit you know, at the edge of the of the path watching and looking at looking down the road, and that's leads a great place. And then they read another map and see why it really does be a great place. This is inspiring and then they go buy another map. Now this is really great. This path goes a really beautiful place and then they buy another map. And some people have, you know, lots and lots of these maps in their bookcases. But they never actually put their feet onto the path. And I think of a path is something that we enter into with our ideally, we follow it for the full way with our whole life. And it's something we walk along. So walking implies bring our body along, we did a commitment involved. There's a there's Kind of, you know, nothing, you kind of bring everything you have to the path, whatever the path is that you choose to follow. And you bring your heart, your hearts fatness and you bring your soul your emotional life you bring your, certainly your intelligence and your mind, you bring your body, you bring your essentially bring your community in a sense that you include your relationship to other people as part of the path. And the path the image I have the path is a path is a clearing in a forest. And for us, it's kind of maybe way overgrown. And if you had to go through a forest and there's no path, you'd have to spend a long time finding your way and you've been longtime clearing the way it's pretty machete perhaps and cutting away the branches and stuff so you can make your way through and but if there's a path there for you, then it's made a lot easier. And you can just even follow that clearing and hope In the forest and make your way to your destination a lot easier. So the Buddha discovered a path. And it's one of these paths to the forest that when it's, you know, it makes it a lot easier to follow your way. Some people feel that they want to make their own way their own path, which is a beautiful concept and we follow my own way. However, the danger of that or the shortcoming of that sometimes is that it's like reinventing the wheel, you have to kind of then find your own way through the forest. And it might take a long way, a long time for you to do what could have been a lot faster if you went on an established path. So the Buddha offered the Eightfold Path was kind of what it's called. And I think of it sometimes as the Eightfold, the Buddha's eight step program and the first thing that you have to admit when you're getting to the set Yes, in fact you're attached. And, and then you can begin. And in the Buddhist analysis of the human mind or human human tendencies, we're all addicts. And so we all kind of need something like attachment anonymous, which is what we offer here. And so he offered these eight different steps or links or aspects of the path. And my understanding of it is it offers an integrated whole. So we don't think of it just something intellectual. We don't think of it just think of the mind we don't think of it as just something of ethics only or only about or we don't think it only about meditation. Some people choose meditation as being what they focus on only sometime people ethics where some people understanding But all those three has to be there together. And that's what the description they pull path is a tie. Those include all those three aspects together as a whole. And so as you listen to these eight different steps you might reflect on your life and what are the different elements of your life that you think that this speaks to, that could be brought more fully into a path into your path of liberation of meditation practice whatever you do here. The first part of the Eightfold Path is right view, and

view are a little bit different than philosophy or belief. View is like a perspective, a right perspective for understanding the life the spiritual life that you want to live. So what's the first what is a useful perspective? There are many pieces effectives sometimes another word is a framework was a useful

framework for understanding our life that makes things easier. And the framework that the Buddha offered was the eighth, the Four Noble Truths. And in fact that the right view is knowing really well. The four noble truths. A child can understand the Four Noble Truths, but it takes it says someone who's fully enlightened, to really realize them fully, to understand the full depth. The and so the Eightfold Path is actually embedded in the four four noble truths. So the Four Noble Truths are the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, the truth of the cessation of suffering, and the truth of the Eightfold Path. Truth here I don't take to mean like a philosophical creed. But again, it's a it's a it's a helpful perspective for Looking at our life, the analogy I've often used is if you go to a doctor, and you have something really terrible that ails you, you really worry about it seems like it's pretty dire situation. And you need help. And the doctor you know, asks you, you know, about your golf score, and you don't play golf and you say, Well, what sport do you play? And you say, Well, I go bowling and they say, wow, you know, what size bowling shoes do you wear? And how heavy a ball do you use? And once you've been here, how's it how's your latest games been? and you know, you only have 15 minutes there Kaiser to get in and out because because that's what its role is. And so so, you know, it's, you know, she's asking doctors asking and asking, you asked me about all these things. And after a while you kind of butt in as a 14 and a half seconds and saying, you know, that those questions don't interests me. What interests me is the fact that I have something wrong with me and I want you to know what's wrong so you can help me so The four noble truths are kind of that perspective on our lives. You don't want to spend a lot of time looking at things which are not important or not useful. You don't wanna spend a lot of time looking at you know, Buddhist philosophy and get a PhD in Buddhism for example. The but you won't you want to look, you know, you'll make a simple and straightforward as possible. And the Buddha suggestion is you start where the suffering is, and you address it, you were very honest about it. Not to be morbid or dire or heavy Bob bought it, but in fact, to study it, to learn from it, and learn how to become lighter. Learn how to let go of the attachments that are holding the fears, the resistance, they get in the way of the hearts shining, getting away of the heart being free. So to be sensitive to our suffering, to be in interested in it, to not deny it or push it away or ignore it or, or hide it, but actually be willing to sit in the middle of it just like we sit in the middle of our neighborhood. So we sit in the middle of our life as it actually is. The second noble truth is that there's a cause to our suffering. And then this analysis of looking at what is that cause and looking at the cause, learning how we can release that cause let go the cause and be free of it. So use the medical analogy. The first noble truth is the illness. The second noble truth is the diagnosis, the cause of the illness. The third noble truth is the prognosis or the possibility of a cure. And the fourth noble truth is the prescription. So we become our own doctors in a sense, the right the right view suggest we become our own doctors suffering cause of suffering and our attachments, happiness, and the conditions for happiness to arise. Another way of saying the Four Noble Truths. So the first part of the Eightfold step is to study, learn, understand, really well the Four Noble Truths, so becomes a readily available perspective for understanding what's happening in the present moment for us,

so we can get right to the heart of things. And when I first got introduced to Buddhism, I thought that the Four Noble Truths are Child's Play, remember, an old girlfriend, girlfriend, I went over to see her for dinner and she asked me, you know, what's, what is what is Buddhism you're involved in? What's what

does it really teach? And I explained to her about teachers about the Four Noble Truths. And I left that dinner party, you know, this is a woman I wanted to impress. And I left the dinner part of the dinner and how can I've been you know, I've been involved Buddhism for some years now and how can I sit something so simplistic You know, the Four Noble Truths you know, Buddhism is great real world religion has must have much greater things to say than this the simple thing. But I've gotten to appreciate this more and more with time. And what happens when place would becomes particularly useful. The Four Noble Truths as a perspective is a framework of our experience is when the meditation gets very subtle when mentation gets very, very deep and very concentrated in the mind actually gets filled with bliss and happiness and well being and very still and great peace. That's sometimes actually one of the most important times to really look at the experience through perspective of the Four Noble Truths. It's a time when we often are blinded by the rapture that might be there, for example of the great peace or the great equanimity, and there might still be some very, very subtle attachment playing itself out. And if you've trained yourself to study your experience from the perspective of the Four Noble Truths, then you wouldn't be you always learn Little bit, whereas that little bit of straining or resistance or pushing or holding on to something a little bit of self identity that is tied up with this experience. So they continue to purify and refine that. So the heart becomes freer and freer. The second of the Eightfold Path is right, usually translated as the right intention. Sometimes it's right thought, I think of it as right alignment. So the Four Noble Truth involves perspective for studying our lives. The right intention involves the motivation that we want to live our life by. and motivation is very, very important. What is the underlying the fundamental intention that you want your life to be about when you get to the end of your life and your deathbed, and what do you want to remember when you look back, you will remember the fact that I finally got my oil changed. You want to I say that because I was struggling the last three weeks, you know, when am I getting back all changed? And I finally got to change this last week. Is that what you want your life to be about? And, you know, all kinds of things we can get caught up in, in our daily life. But is that really what we want our orientation of our life to be about? And so to spend some time reflecting on our intention, and if what we're doing is entering the Buddhist path, what is the intention that can align ourselves with that path? And the Buddha gave three primary definitions of this intention, and embarrassingly enough, I don't remember tonight too. But one of them is the intention to love attention to metta loving kindness. The intention to love to bring kindness or friendliness to the world is one of the primary expressions of this right intention, that easy to love and different people have different abilities to do it and different dispositions dispositions towards it. But to cultivate love and to, you know, to develop it is one of the intentions. The other intention is the intention to let go to simplify life and to let go of things to learn how to let go. And it certainly can mean classically to let go of things, but the things aren't the problem the problem is the way we relate to things. And so the training and letting go is the training to intentionally go is intention not to cling to things and hold on to things letting go of that clinging that holding so

which can be hard to do at times. Man, if it makes sense, tell your story from today but like so. So I think of the second step of a full path and you do it intention Being to take seriously your intention. your intentions are some of the most beautiful parts of our lives and some of the most consequential aspects of our lives. In many ways Buddhism is a religion of intention. intention is so important in

Buddhism, that getting to know our intention and studying something that many people go through their lives and never really looking seriously at their intentions, or the deepest intention of their heart. Buddhism suggest you spend time serious time reflecting deep down into your heart and what is the intention that you want to live your life with. So that's the first two, the next three parts of the Eightfold Path all have to do with ethics. And ethics has to do has a lot to do with how you live your life in relationship to other people. And I love this because the spiritual life is not meant to be done in isolation is not only something self centered and self serving, but it's something we do in our in the field of our connectedness to other people. So the first, this this sort of third step of the Eightfold Path is right? speech. Being careful with our speech, speech is very consequential. It's sometimes said, you can spend years cultivating a really good friend. And you can ruin that friendship in just one sentence. That's how powerful speeches but more deeply for me. Our speech is a doorway into our intentions. If you pay attention for a while to why you say certain things that you say, you probably open up to a whole world of what is it makes you tick? What are your values you have? What is your assumptions about your relationship to other people, the things that you want out of life and expect out of life. often expressed through how we speak. And so it's cultivate mindfulness and follow the path is to turn the attention around to really study how we speak, and to cultivate Right Speech, cultivate speech, which is helpful, not only for others, but also for yourself. If you want to follow a path, it turns out that being careful with your speech, is one of the ways of making progress on that path. Is that important. And some people you know, choose their clothes more carefully than they choose their what they say. So, you know, a lot of people we wouldn't do too much harm to pay a little more attention to their speech, to speak kindly, to speak in a way that speaks the truth, to speak in a way that helps others I read this last last week in a in a sutta. To speak in such a way that it's is conducive to the concentration For others that's conducive to concentration that's conducive to meditative absorption is conducive to meditative, you know, entering into a meditative state. It's beautiful. The next part of the Eightfold Path is right action. And right action is just the right behavior that is usually defined by the five precepts. So it's to avoid things like killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct, and intoxicating the mind. As I say, often the Buddhist path is a path of developing sensitivity, becoming more sensitive, become Earth, letting ourselves become much more sensitive instrument that we can tune in to the world around us and to ourselves and what's really going on the best of our ability and to do unethical things, is to do things in insensitive manner. The assumption being that In order to hurt, hurt someone intentionally, there has to be some insensitivity to that person as a human being. And so to develop sensitivity, you tried to develop sensitivity to insensitive things, they just don't they don't work together. One of the things that helps in developing the path then is cultivating right Action. Action which defined is not breaking the precepts. I found in my own life, that my action also speech and action are much more gross than the activity of the mind. And meditation, in a sense, mindfulness works in a sense with the mind.

And it's kind of like the advanced practice, and it's a lot easier to begin with a coarser activity. And so speech and action are coarser than activities of the mind. So learn to pay attention there. cultivate mindfulness and develop mindfulness in these areas. Greatest foundation helpful foundation within developing mindfulness for the most subtle aspects of our life. The next part of the Eightfold Path is

right livelihood. So to recap what we've done so far this right view, right intention, right? speech, right action, and now it's right livelihood. And right livelihood is just how you where you get your livelihood from, what supports your life. It doesn't necessarily necessarily necessarily mean what you do for work, make money. But you know, what were your livelihood. The Buddha, you know, I wasn't surprised when I saw this when I was introduced to Buddhism, that you know, that had any bearing at all on the path. But this is such an important element of our life. We spent so many hours of our lives many hours of the day majority of our time for many of us engaged in livelihood and so is our livelihood conducive and supportive and harmony in harmony with a spiritual path? If it's not, then you know, it's not gonna you know, if it's not in harmony, then it's gonna be hard to make any progress along the path. Like if good now almost mythical story that I've told I tell so often have the lawyer who came and said, I'm, you know, I'm interested in a very interested in practicing meditation and in following the Buddhist path, and but in my law firm, I'm expected to lie. And now how can I do both? And the way Yes, it was really expecting us to tell him and we had to tell him, you know, the unfortunate news that you can't do both, but the two just don't jive. So the Buddha then listed, so I take this right livelihood to be another opportunity to look at our intentions and to look at how our actions affect the world around This is how, you know, we spend the majority of our working time. Is it a way that is in harmony with not causing harm in the world, maybe creating benefit to the world around us? Then we have sitting here in the hall today, three of my son's preschool teachers, who are my heroes. And I feel like they're the like, it's like, probably the, the greatest definition of right livelihood, like one of the most greatest things around and they had my son's graduation today. And I just, you know, I didn't express it so well but I just kind of, I was like really moved. I mean, it's just like these people you trust your two year old to write and they take take this two year old in and they make this two year old kind of person. And then today, one of the joke that it was a money back guarantee. So we'll see. But so right livelihood. And then. So these first five then become the foundation for the last three. And, and I think of it as a pyramid or a triangle with the first five being the base of the pyramid, and now we're getting up to the top of the pyramid, and they create the strong, stable foundation. If you turn the pyramid upside down, so it's standing on its head, it's gonna be quite wobbly. Turns out that the last pinnacle of the very top of the pin of the pyramid is meditation concentration in mindfulness. And many people enter the Buddhist path through a meditation practice. And sooner or later, you'll learn that that's a very wobbly place to begin, unless you kind of spread read out the foundation. And that's what the first five elements are about. So, the last three are right, at right effort, right? mindfulness and right concentration. Right effort means simply means being willing to make the effort to be interested in making the effort not just being personally reads the menu in the restaurant, but actually tastes the food and also it just reads maps but actually sets themselves on the path. But it also means the definition of right effort is to start. The classic definition involves beginning to pay attention to the quality

of your mind. What's the quality of your mind like, is the quality of the mind helpful? wholesome, skillful, was the quality of your mind and your actions unhelpful, unwholesome unskillful. So this is much more subtle now than simply paying attention to your right action, right speech, but it's looking behind those things at the quality of the mind that does it the quality of the heart and being interested

and then beginning to align that heart to that mind with those the quality of mind that aspect of the mind, that direction of the mind that is skillful and helpful for a spiritual life. So you know, you can watch your thoughts, you can watch your intentions, you can watch your feelings that arise. And you can look at them and say, What is this really helpful or not? And we don't want to deny or repress anything in unhealthy ways, which a lot of us know about. But often it can be very easy to let go of a certain train of thought a certain motivation, a certain quality of mind is not helpful. And try to, you know, pick up one that's helpful. Or if you have one, it's helpful to support it and nourish it and appreciate it. Sometimes it can be easy, and sometimes it's very hard to do this. And so when we have a meditation practice of mindfulness practice, you know, the Eightfold Path, the whole package to help us along the way. It's a gradual path. And then you don't expect it to do it automatically. Just fresh off, you know, the first step on the path. But as you walk along the path, slowly, slowly, you'll find your way. One of those that one of the things you'll start learning is how to pay attention to the quality of your mind. Then there's a right concentration and right mindfulness. And this involves the meditation practice. And this is, you know, the pinnacle of the pyramid, and the most subtle aspect of Buddhist spirituality. Because now we're looking at the subtlety of the movements of the heart. The movements of the mind, we're looking at cultivating the mind's ability to bring presence to our experience, the mind's ability to, to be present to see and notice in a nonreactive way, what's happening in the present moment. The untrained mind is often very reactive. Having preferences likes and dislikes for and against things, wanting, not wanting, and to cultivate the phenomenal, jewel, phenomenal treasure of unreactive awareness. All of us have the ability to be present this luminous way that it's not for guests anything which is simply holds the experience as it is. And that's a training in mindfulness. The concentration practice is a training that supports the mindfulness. So that luminous awareness can be held very, very steady. It's like a flame. The flame is is. Mindfulness is like the flame. Because there's a lot of wind, the flame blows around a lot and flickers and maybe blows out. And the concentration is what helps make that flame be unwavering, so it doesn't blow out and doesn't flicker. And those two together, they're very can ask for great concentration and great mindfulness then helps the mind free and the heart to free itself of the shackles free itself from what restricts it, but gets in the way of the heart shining of the heart, being free, being loving, being compassionate in a world that needs so much compassion. But the goal is not to be loving. The goal is not to be compassionate, it's part of the path to do those things are very important. But the goal is to cultivate this open heartedness. So this equanimity and peace of the heart to it its ultimate capacity to do that. And that's where the Four Noble Truths are. perspective becomes very important. As I said earlier, we're going to keep looking, keep refining, keep, keep ferreting out the subtlest attachments that the mind still holding on to. So eventually the consciousness can release itself. And it's one of the miraculous things. Because it's as if it's almost as if consciousness itself is a kind of an attachment. In consciousness releases itself. When Consciousness is released, who's there to experience What's there? It's kind of like, you know, if you try to touch your elbow,

the ultimate liberation in Buddhism is this release of consciousness. Which, what? It's kind of like it can't be talked about, because it's not an object of consciousness because there's no consciousness there to experience it. However, Buddhism doesn't want to say this. Consciousness. It kind of wants to

say there's consciousness without an object. What's that? So, very simply, it's freedom or liberation, the experience of the sheer hearts release the release of the heart. It's the hearts greatest wish to be released, of anything that holds it down. So the Eightfold Path is that path that we can take that leads eventually to that release of the heart. You know and Buddhists. When express their devotion, and their deep intention to follow the path, they take what's called refuge, often, locally in English we say taking refuge taking refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. But then, literal Pali is nothing It doesn't mean to take which is a very American. I'm gonna take it But it's, it literally means I go for refuge. To the Buddha I go actually the word is walk in Pali I, I walk for refuge. So something you bring walking means you bring your whole being into that activity. So the Eightfold Path, teaching a full path is a reminder of the possibility to potentially have of bringing an integrated being or integrating our full being as part of the path. And you might sit and think about this next time you sit down to meditate. Is there some way just enough meditation session that you can integrate and include your whole being, as something engaged in the practice of meditation, not just something on the mind, not just something of the heart, but something of your body, something of your heart, something of your mind, something of the unconditioned, something of freedom. mean everything you have into that practice, if you do that, you'll find yourself in the present moment. You won't have to struggle to be in the present, you'll find you find yourself there. If you bring everything you you are into that moment of practice. So thank you. This is actually I think the first time I've ever done his talk on the Eightfold Path here, who our group and all these 12 years I've been teaching us. I was intimidated by the list of eight things to go through. So now I've done it. So thank you all very much, and may whatever path is your path, open freely and broadly becomes an easy walk. Thank you.