

2003-08-07: Ethics

Sat, 7/11 10:06AM • 54:06

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, killed, harm, feel, buddhism, precepts, ethics, meditate, compassionate, life, rule, mindfulness, compassion, impulse, person, ethical, cultivate, meditation, trainings, integrity

SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

In the old days in China, when they were in time of the great time of China, the Zen tradition in China, there was a Zen master, whose name was tree nest, Master, the tree nest Master, because he liked to meditate up in trees. So he had this name. And one day the governor of the province came to see him. And he came by or something. And he said, looked up at him in a tree and said, you know, it's really dangerous up there.

And the Zen masters looked down at the governor and said, it's a lot more dangerous, where you are in your position. And he said, No, I don't think so. That's the case. You're up here, the ones up in the tree. And then the Master said, Well, in that case, You don't really know your you don't really know your mind and hearts very well do you? And then the governor said, you know, what's the essential teachings of the Buddha?

And the Zen master said, to avoid doing evil, to cultivate the practices of the good and to purify the mind. This is a very ancient little teaching that goes back to the very beginning of Buddhism. And the governor said, even an eight year old child knows that and then that said, Master said Even though an eight year old child might know it, an 80 year old person might not live it. And that's the end of the story. And so there's a few things here. One is, where's the real danger? And the Zen master is trying to say that the real danger resides inside of yourself is the real danger here. If we succumb to hate, we succumb to greed, or if we let fear, get the upper hand and we act out paranoid ways that are not very helpful therapy, anybody including myself, that that we provide ourselves, our greatest danger we are we ourselves are, in some ways, our greatest threat or our greatest threat to the well being of our heart or Well, you know, what's going on our sense of wholeness within our within ourselves a sense of being wholehearted or and One of the teachings of Buddhism is that our hearts this wonderful kind of sense of integrity or wholeness or deep sensitivity that can reside within us is only really harmed by ourselves. There might be causes and conditions around around us which are some are atrocious, you know, terrible things that happen. But that if we succumb to hate or we succumb to greed or to

fear, all these different kinds of forces within us, and we start indulging them and acting on them or living by them, that we are then of causing harm to ourselves. So there's a one famous teachings of the Buddha says, if you get angry, you're doing your enemy's work for you're pleasing your enemy. You're doing you're doing a harm to yourself that your enemy could never do to you. Implying that you know any mikrotik angry at you and do all kinds of terrible things to you. But enemy really wants to hurt you. And when you get angry, then you're doing something inside of yourself that's causing you pain and suffering. And that pain and suffering of being angry is kind of doing your enemy a favor. So again, just pointing this out, there's a way in which some way I'm not going to argue here is universal. It's all you know, it's all the ways we suffer come from how we really, you know, our own own way to treat each other ourselves. But one of the important aspects of Buddhism is his way of becoming a caretaker of our own heart or our own mind, our own inner life, and recognizing the ways in which we harm in ourselves, and the way that we can benefit it and support it and nourish it.

And one of the very foundational teachings of Buddhism, for this purpose is that of ethics, of morality of virtue. And we And in the Buddhist tradition, tremendous emphasis on the importance of living an ethical life. And they're still teaching that the Zen master gave the governor in the central teachings of the Buddha, to avoid evil to cultivate good, to practice good, and to purify the mind. That's kind of ethical teaching to avoid evil and do good. And then to purify the mind. It's very central to Buddhism. And the word for this virtue or the word for morality in Buddhism, the Pali word is sila. And sila sometimes has been etymologically connected to the word Abed or Foundation, a foundation stone for house or something, and it's a real foundation for our lives. The Buddha said once that if you harm other people intentionally if you go about intentionally through cruelty or ill will, harming other people, you're destroying your own foundation. The foundation you know, that supports you and nourishes you that supports this inner kind of life. And traditionally, in Buddhism, the teachings on ethics and morality are supposed to be taught first. And as I was coming down here today, I was reflecting how for many years in Palo Alto, I taught the introductory course in meditation on Thursday evenings, we just interrupt the regular Thursday evenings kind of sitting group, and then do a five week introductory course. And always the first week I start with meditation on the breath, introduction, maybe many of you taken the course that I've taught. But they always do many, many years. The week before I taught the intro class. I'll give a talk on ethics on the precepts. And in my mind, like I told people were there, but my mind the five week class was really a six week class, and it started that day and we you know, we advertised you Like, you know, Introduction to ethics, you know, that people aren't, you know, be so interested in that, that people want and there are cultural societies they want the benefits of mindfulness and meditation. What many Koreans find to do that? What many people find after practicing meditation for some time is that there's a kind of sense of inner and this is my own language, I mean, everybody will have their own words ways to describe this inner sense, but interchange whatever, some inner sense of integrity, that we, we touch, we feel, we encounter some sense of wholeness, some sense of well being some sense of compassion or love or goodness or something that we touch inside of ourselves. And we touch inside of that ourselves, then it becomes begins to become quite obvious. How living in unethical ways becomes a way of harming ourselves. And the little thought experiment which I often give is imagine yourself going off into a wonderful hike

and a wonderful you know, maybe weekend afternoon and it's a beautiful day just the right temperature and comfortable and beautiful sunshine and blue sky. springtime and the grass green and beautiful wild flowers you go hiking and you come to a wonderful place to stop for lunch and you have just the right amount of food for lunch not too much. You lay down under this beautiful oak tree and it just so peaceful so delightful and just feel so self satisfied and content. You even maybe get a wonderful little nap, you know short nap and you wake up so refreshed and so cleanse in the sense maybe and your friend who's talking next to you kind of wakes up the same time and you turn to your friend and said you know you know her jerk You or you lie to your friend. Or you, you know, you see your friend you know, still taking a nap. And you see that your friend, you know, has this beautiful thermos to take the thermos is stuck stuck in the bottom of your backpack and friend will never see that you know where it's gone. And you know, in that kind of thought experiment, imagine how you feel a sense of well being a piece and maybe a hope that it feels like real. It feels like you know it a little bit grading perhaps it would feel a little bit like it's against a spirit of how you're feeling. It's like a you know, it's like hope that's what you felt somehow kind of personal violence to yourself in that piece that you're feeling to, to cause harm to someone else.

Then if you kind of forget that that thought experiment and imagine yourself going down the freeway at five o'clock in the afternoon, you're late for a very important appointment. It's rush hour traffic, it's gridlock you can actually standing still in the freeway when you're finally able to move a little bit. Someone cuts you off, and your air conditioning doesn't work so your windows are down and all sauce are going into your car. It's just you know, you're feeling you have a headache. And then one more person cuts you off, and how easy it is to kind of get angry how easy it is to flip them off, or how easy it is to honk your horn some very aggressive way or how easy it is to kind of turn they're trying to get in and you kind of force yourself forward, I'm not gonna let that person in at all, you know, who's that person and in a state who are already agitated and quite, you know, harried and upset and frustrated, it can be quite easy to do something that's unethical. And not to feel the cost of it not to feel the effect it has. Is that the kind of thought experiment work for you? is I can make sense the difference. Yeah. Works. Some of you it doesn't work. People it doesn't work, you know, admit it, say it because I say this a lot. So no one ever gives me any feedback. So I should ask for it someday. This is this is kind of thought experiment. That works. As a Teaching thing and but I think that as people meditate there tends to be kind of inner integrity or some sense of within ourselves. That translates then to want to sort of live in a more ethical life. Ethical life then becomes an expression of how we want to live, we want to safeguard want to protect this inner sense of well being or integrity we have it traditionally in Buddhism, because of the intimate connection with ethics and our inner sense of well being. The instructions are you start with your ethics before you meditate, you try to clean up your ethical house, you try to live in a way that doesn't cause harm. And as you do that, you get a number of benefits. One benefit is that you're not doing anything intentionally through your, your, your behavior or through your speech is causing harm to others. And into not doing causing harm. You have nothing to regret in terms of hurting someone. You don't you're not acting on those impulses and acting on it actually acting on the impulses of causing harm is like you know, it's like making the whole wound much stronger and more deeper. So if you start living an ethical life, that part of your life becomes kind of

quieter and more peaceful and more at ease and, and it you know, you're not struggling so much with it, you know, doubts about what should I do in this situation, you've kind of taken a commitment, you know, I'm not, I'm going to live an ethical life, I'm not going to lie, I'm not going to steal, I'm not going to kill I'm not going to involve in sexual misconduct, that harms other people, I'm not going to indulge in toxic ins that can cause a whole slew of problems once we get drunk. And you know, you really have some person has some real confidence that this is how they're going to live their life. And there can be for some people, a tremendous sense of feeling safe feeling, some sense of well being and knowing not going to cross those kinds of lines because they made some kind of commitment as we start living this way of not to make crossing a line being and being unethical. This in return, supports the cultivation of his inner sense of well being his inner integrity. The outer integrity supports the inner integrity. So that's kind of like just you know, that's one benefit. The second benefit is it as we start being interested in living ethical life. And for laborers, it's, it's often defined as being guided by the five precepts, the five training rules, the five trainings, maybe it's the best translation in English, the five trainings and the five trainings are not to kill, not to conduct intentionally cause harm, not to steal not not to take what is not given. Not to lie, not to be involved in sexual misconduct, which most people in we understand is not not mean that user sexual in ways that can cause harm to others. And then not to indulge in intoxicants. So these are called training, the five trainings. And in using the word trainings it a little bit a lot of people like to see the difference between the idea of commandments. There's some absolute moral rule that is, is, is being given from above and if thou shalt and if you transgressive, you've done a sin. It's a training that Buddhists take on to help them be more mindful more attentive to what's happening to give a maybe an example from the time I was a monk, there are all these rules monks have done the five precepts they have 227 foot by

and a lot of them are very simple things like things like you know, what kind of dwelling you can live in. You know, what can I you know, and what kind of shoes you can wear and, and how you eat your food. Like for example, There are all these rules about how you eat your food. You have a big bowl and eating this bowl and, and you suppose you can basically mix everything together the desserts and the salads and everything, just eat it off, you know, without any preference for, you know, whatever. And there's certain ways of eating. And then one of the rules is, and you're not supposed to look into your fellow amongst ball to see how he or she's eating. Because you can imagine, you know, the judgments that can go on how could you know, but yes, so it's beautiful rule. You know, the principle was pretty great. You know, you're supposed to follow this rule, but don't judge other people, whether it's following it or not. Isn't that great? So there's a lot of rules for the monastics and so when I was a monk, there were simple rules like you weren't actually allowed to pick anything up. It was not your own, unless in some ways it was offered to you or told you it's okay for you. Yeah, look at this, you know, whatever. And so you come into someone's house, and you see something nice on the table. Like maybe it's a one of these are they called coffee table books is a conversation on books, these books are full of pictures and you know, people. And, you know, it's there for people to look at, right? And you feel the impulse to pick it up and look at it. So it's pretty fascinating what's there. And but you have this rule, that you're not allowed to pick something up as a monk, unless it's been super clearly offered to you to hold. That's not a, you know, an ethical rule, per se, but it's a training rule. Because it

knowing that you can pick it up, you feel the impulse to pick it up and say, Oh, I get to be mindful of what I'm doing. So having this rule sets up, sets a barrier in a sense of sets of limiters, it's like a mindfulness bell. Oh, I have to be mindful of myself and my conduct and behavior when it comes over. coffee tables when I come into these situations where I might pick something up.

I was really surprised when I became a monk, how wonderful it was to live under these rules. Because how mindful it made me be. I went in to and 27 you know, rules, there are so many different situations where I'll come into where somehow they will apply. And I had to be attend to I'd be alert. And I wasn't oppressed by it, or one more rule, I think, but I've actually felt more liberated by it, oh, to be present and awake and really noticing what's going on. And then I noticed, for example, for example, if I was gonna pick up something like this book, I would notice the impulse to pick it up. And I'd refrain for a number of benefits. One benefit is there's a lot of strength, a lot of freedom that can come when we have cultivated ability to restrain ourselves peacefully, to feel an impulse not to go I can do that i can i can just let go restrain myself. I know some people equate restraint with being suppressed and kind of being oppressed. If that's the case, then maybe shouldn't restrain unless you cause some harm to someone. But the spirit in Buddhism is there's a way in which restraining ourselves provides freedom to ease. If we're not, if we're acting on impulse and on compulsion, then we're not free. So if we have a compulsion to shop, the American ideal would be find a shopping center and freely shop. That's what American Freedom is about shop teardrop. And I'm free to shop. The Buddhist freedom would be free yourself from the compulsion to shop. You might still shop if you need to shop for good reasons, but that could drive the compulsion. So the mindfulness the road You know of you know, picking up something, teachers is kind of restraint, it also becomes an opportunity, it also becomes a mirror for me to see myself at that moment. And it might be that there's some impulses which are not so pure, some impulses that are not so helpful, healthy, going into play in a situation. And by having some boundary that I can't cross in a sense, it becomes a mirror for me to see all that's what's going on in me. That's what's happening. So, I mean, maybe, you know, you know, coffee books are not so interesting, but they say that maybe they have some, you know, great Buddhist book on a table, a coffee table. I've never seen this book by a teacher that I greatly admire. I've never seen this book and and, and so I go to reach for for it. But I know as a monk, I can't actually do it. I'm not allowed to pick it up. Unless I said you look at you please look at it and I'm not allowed To, to hint, either that's also out. So you have to really, you know, and so there's a mirror, you know what, why did I want to pick it up? And perhaps, you know, 10% of that impulse to pick it up. Part of it is, that's what I want. I want this great Buddhist books to tell me how to get rid of my greed. You know, this, you know, this impulse, you know, I see that impulse. And it's great. To see it. It's great to be aware of it is and hopefully as you develop your mindfulness practice, you'll discover this great delight you can have in noticing what's happening. It might take a little while as you kind of struggle and for a while, the old habits kick in and you judge yourself, Oh, I can't believe I'm doing that again. Oh, gee, I'm such a greedy person. But after a while when mindful is really strong. There's A wonderful flavor of it was, Oh, it's kind of exactly freeing in the moment of being mindful. So part of the idea of the precepts is to learn restraint, which is freeing. And the other part of it is to learn mindfulness, awareness of what's going on deeper levels, which is also free. The third benefit that I mentioned tonight, is the benefit, that living ethically is

a gift we do for others. So one of the greatest gifts you can give someone else is the gift of fearlessness. They don't have to fear you that you know, you're not adding fear to the world. They can trust you, they feel safe around you. They can put their coffee table books down, they know they're going to be there when you when they come back. You know, it's okay. You lock it up for something that you show up, or some equivalent to that. I remember when I was in Thailand. I lost my wallet at the entrance of the monastery gate. And this was a part of Thailand. That was kind of the Wild West. I was talking And most of the men in that part of Southern Thailand had guns, a lot of violence and a lot of stuff goes on there.

And, and so you know, but it wasn't, you know, the gate to the entry and entryway to the monastery. And I'll never see that again. And not only was the abbot holding and waiting to give it to me, but everything, all the money and everything was in there, everything was in there, the monitor was a safe place. So living ethically is a gift to others. And part of the impulse to live ethically for some people is out of the impulse to be compassionate. and compassion is one of these wonderful qualities that seems to grow. As we cultivate mindfulness as we get more subtle and more ease with ourselves less in conflict with ourselves and more attentive in a deeper way. That compassion is like, it's as if compassion is an innate quality of the heart. If we just get out of the way It will radiate for if you're, if you start having a little inklings of compassion, I think it becomes more and more interesting to try and live ethically, not just ethically in the moment, but but you know, to anticipate situations where you might not be so mindful. And we might do something uncompassionate maybe you know, in that rush hour traffic, you can be compassionate up in the meadow after a beautiful hike. It's easy. You can love all humanity, but can be compassionate and then rush hour traffic situations where you're really tested, and where you might do something unethical. So part of the dedication to the precepts in Buddhism is not just a you know, feel like compassion is good when it happens. But when you start feeling compassionate, to kind of imagine to the future in a sense, imagine situations where you need protective protection from where you need preparation for so that you know that you can continue offering the gift of fearlessness of safe Do you know coming from compassionate place? So for laypeople in Buddhism, there are these five trainings

And some Buddhists, some lay Buddhists will cultivate these will work with these explore these for quite a long time before they learn meditation practice. I remember the I felt when I met this friend of mine, when I was a student at Stanford.

She was a Chinese. I guess she was Chinese American now, but she grew up in China and Taiwan, and Thailand and some in Japan and mostly grew up abroad. But it come to America to go to college and come settled here.

And she was quite a devout Buddhist and she was actually studying with me My department is studying really poor studies at University of Stanford. And she was also studying Buddhist studies that she'd made that kind of thing in life to Buddhist studies. But all Buddhism was her kind of thing. So this

person was quite serious about it. And so I asked her one day you meditate? And she said, No, not yet.

I'm preparing myself for that. So that I'm worthy of it. I'm preparing myself so that I'm worthy, it learned to meditate or to meditate. And I was kind of amazed. I never heard, you know, I spent most of my time you know, practicing here in the West, mostly among people who were kind of what can be called convert Buddhists, who had not you know, growing up as Buddhists, and the idea that you would put off your meditation because you are preparing yourself for it. purifying your conduct and your behavior and working on your precepts and your ethical life. My generation, no kind of people coming out of the 60s kind of, you know, ethics was kind of like, you know, that wasn't so interesting. And, you know, we were, you know, we were really going for the, the real stuff, the important stuff, the transformational stuff, you know, that's which was, you know, better than acid, you know. And, you know, So I was, you know, I was ready to bow to this beautiful woman, I thought was so beautiful. And I'm not necessarily recommending you spend years working on your ethics, and he was very ethical person. It wasn't like she was an ethical person. But she was aware of the subtleties of these things, the subtle, subtle ways in which we take what's not given the subtle ways in which we might cause harm and do these things.

So I think we want to stop meditating. But I think it's very valuable to start seeing the interconnectedness between virtue and mindfulness, and how the two really support themselves. We support each other. If you start trying to train yourselves by the five precepts, that training itself will strengthen your mindfulness because you have to be mindful in order to kind of live by them will also strengthen your inner sense of well being in integrity for most of us. Some people who are kind of guilt bound will often or you know, feel so sun worthy to begin with, which many people have in our culture feel that any emphasis on ethics and precepts can kind of sink them because they can't live up to that. And so maybe it's better not to start with ethics then. But generally, it's considered to be you know, very helpful to to work with them together. Now, not to kill, it's beautiful, you go to retreat centers, And, and people have been meditating for some time, they're very quiet and they've taken precepts at the beginning of the retreat. And, and then some insect flies into the meditation hall. And, and you see these people, you know, they they're supposed to be silent when they go over there. Like this, you know, they're the most cherished pet, you know, where they take a piece of paper and they're very carefully, you know, very mindful and very carefully in carrying it outside this little insect and they open the door and, you know, it's, you know, they don't not only not only not, you know, not trying to kill the insects, but if you only the insects going to die if it stays inside this kind of environment, you know, there's nothing in here for it to eat. So, let's, you know, I'll take it outside where it belongs.

It might seem Like maybe a petty thing or to not kill insects or take, you know, take them take the insects and take them out of your house rather than to kill them. But when the sensitivity is deep enough, when the sense of inner integrity is deep, it being settled on oneself is deep enough, being at peace with himself is deep enough. Not only is it feel better, but actually I believe there's a kind of a delight or joy that comes with that kind of compassionate activity. So not just simply avoiding causing

harm, but the opposite expression of that is to do that which is compassionate. In any situation, each of the precepts is not just in each precept, even though stated in the negative, not to kill, not to steal, not to lie and so forth. The understanding and the Buddhist tradition is that the negative implies cultivating the positive. So not killing implies the cultivation of compassion. Not stealing implies the cultivation of generosity. Now lying and implies the cultivation of honesty. Not misusing sexuality implies. I'm not sure what restraint, treating each other with integrity and compassion and not involved in toxicants. The opposite of that is clarity of mind, cultivating a clarity of mind and valuing that.

One of the surprises I had when I went to Asia, Southeast Asia, was to meet Buddhist there who felt joy in their ethical conduct. And this was a foreign idea to me, in America kind of growing up, I hadn't thought about much. But if someone had to, you know, was being super ethical, they were kind of had to kind of we had kind of a drug. To return for them, they're kind of goody goody, you know, it's kind of like when you didn't quite somehow. And so then it is someone would feel joy was a kind of, you know, foreign ideas and delight. And that it's it's kind of a protection in a way of it's an offering, it's a gift. So what is the quality of mind? What's the quality of the heart? Where everything I'm saying tonight resonates because deeply inspiring, kind of feels right. I know there are qualities of mind and heart where just seems ridiculous. Or just seems maybe kind of, you know, why bother or, you know, I'm already ethical. And once you give me this talk about ethics for you know, all kinds of things that come up, but I suspect that in everybody's heart, there is some place where it feels really right. To be ethical. To be compassionate to live this way. Is a place that you want to nourish, is that a place that you want to feed and develop, or you want to kind of overlook it or feel like it has no real value. What has value is competition, you know, and you know, cutthroat competition, your ambition getting someplace, getting things in life, you know, you know, I can, you know, rather than cultivating my that, that place within me, I could you know, go home and watch television. You know, there's a lot of interesting things on television. Nice imagine. I don't know, I don't watch. But you know, and so you know, how many times have the person choose to watch television, over doing something that's as beautiful as cultivating their compassion? Which which which is more valuable, which is what you know, what among all the choices we do, what we do, what does it feel there's a develop inside of us. So last thing I'll say about the emphasis on ethics or virtue or integrity, that's part of the Buddhist tradition is that is not meant is a kind of self righteous kind of approach. It's not meant to be kind of a kind of be moralistic in some ways. It's not meant to mean any kind of way be oppressive, or a burden. It's really supposed to speak to that part of our life. That part of ethics, where it's a liberating movement towards joy and compassion, something that we delight in. If you don't feel that the light, don't feel that joy, you have one or two choices, if you want to, you know, explore this world of ethics and the trainings or the precepts. If you don't feel the joy in it, one choice you have is to chuck it in go back to the way you were. The other choice you have is to study Why is it you don't feel joy? What gets in the way of that? There's something else that's happening instead, and really bring your mindfulness really clearly and see what's going on here? Am I lazy? Am I? Is it too painful to do this because I tend to be self judgmental in the process, is it? I'm worried about what my friends think, you know, if I start carrying the insects out of my house, my friends are gonna think I'm Cuckoo. You know

what, you know what is going on there with you. And that's, you know, a mindfulness practice to explore that.

Exploring these five trainings, being guided by them, being trained by the five trainings, is really in the first instructions for a beginner in and wants to learn mindfulness meditation. And you just got it. So what do you think? What's your what's your what's your reactions to this talk? What's your thoughts about it? What's your questions?

Yes, what would be the Buddhist attitude towards

having stolen watts

or flyer watts or God forbid, killed was

the

there's a variety of things that Buddhist resources might point to. One is that rather than feeling guilty about something, the point would be to be forward looking. And not not done, not linger in the past in order to feel guilty and bad. But look into the future about how you can do better in the future. How you can avoid doing those things in the future, how you can maybe be compassionate and be helpful in society rather than, you know, something like that. There was a I know somebody might some of you might have read it to her on Palo Alto but there was this young 17 year old boy who was killed in a car accident about two weeks ago Saturday I think and his best friend was driving the car they were apparently speeding phenomenal speed going up into the mountains I think and maybe he was in past he was passing someone maybe passing in a curve or something and they ran into a truck and they drive driver survived amazingly and when in a hospital little bit but basically will be fine. And his best friend who was sitting next to him in the passenger seat died.

And

at the mature he was a funeral but one of the first things that the Father of the day boy said was, as I was told was, there's no blame here as an amazing thing, first thing because he's taking care of other people taking care himself, everyone, there's no blame there. You can imagine how that father would feel, you know, and, you know, Stein was killed and basically by somebody there's no blame here. And the next thing he said was, next thing. Next thing said what what part of what I was told he did was, he set up a fund, kind of like a scholarship fund or something a little Foundation, I guess, to have money in it to in his in his son's name, to offer people scholarships. I don't know exactly where it was.

And then he made

I don't know who all the people are who became the board of that foundation. But the boy who was driving was made was put on the board. And I know this is one of the one of our Sunday members daughter was these two boys best friend, she's supposed to be in the car. But something happened, she couldn't be there. And they have two best friends with these two boys. And she was distraught. And he put her on the board too. And so here, part of this legacy of this guy is that, you know, they're not simply feeling their grief, but they're also you know, thinking about how they can continue the spirit of this boy who died into the future I can take as goodness in a sense and do goodness do good into the future for it. So, to be forward looking in some way depending on what the person is done, we have to we have to very honest and look, you know, are those forces within us still there? Before still lie or steal or kill, I'm still in there are we likely to do it again. And then the Buddhist approach would be, try to work on those forces within us. either try to uproot them or try to develop yourself such a way that they no longer have any force over you. Another thing a person might do is depending on the magnitude of what happened, it might be necessary it might be necessary to make some kind of amends. One of the most powerful one a very powerful thing to do is active confession. And it could be to go some someone who feels a confident, you know, confidential conflict confessor, some say, you know, I need to tell someone about this because, like, unless I tell someone about it, I'm gonna hold it inside of myself. And I want someone else to be the witness that I know that I did this. I know that it's wrong. And I'm committing myself not to do it anymore. And sometimes that kind of confession really necessary in order to kind of kind of ritual turning the corner. Sometimes it's necessary to go back and apologize to someone. I've known many people who started a meditation practice and memories of 20 years ago, what they said to someone comes up they haven't thought about it. Yours. And there's a feeling that in order for the spiritual life to deepen any further, the person has to go somehow back to that person and apologize. And to call him up and you know, call him in, remember me know? Well, I want to anyway, that's okay. I want to apologize for what I said once. And if it's the fact that you, you know, if someone's killed, then the amends, you know, might take much more serious forms. It might be that if a person isn't you know, I don't know, you know, it might take you know, might mean going to jail willingly go to jail for what I need to do or something and not for other people sake, but because it really was necessary in order to somehow do something for myself do to write What's there to make amends. I was very touched many years ago when I saw the movie Gandhi and I don't know if this is a true story in the movie, but in a lot of the movie was was based on truth. Near the end of his life after, I guess after the independence of India, there's these Muslim Hindu riots going on. And it's very difficult time for India. And Muslims are killing Hindus, Hindus are killing killing Muslims. And Gandhi goes off someplace where a lot of this writing is happening, try to stop it and encounters a I forget exactly what it is, but I think he encounters a Muslim who comes to him for counsel. The Muslim says something like, I've killed I've killed someone. I've killed him. I killed in the rioting, whatever I killed him, a Hindu child or I killed someone. And you know, what should I do? And Gandhi says, find an orphaned Hindu child and raise him as a Hindu. And, you know, he's, you know, the shock and dismay in this Muslim space, you know, just because of the, what that means. But the Gandhi, I guess, my understanding of that Gandhi had some sense in order for this man to be healed from what he'd done. He had to atone for, he had to make amends in some way that was very powerful. And the only way he could do that was to raise someone about one way I met

only way but was to do something like to raise someone else in that religion, that he'd killed people and make them personally good Hindu or understand. So that idea, you know, sometimes you have to make amends to what we've done. There's a whole series of things, you know, answers to your question depending on the magnitude of it.

If you know if we finally realize if it's been 30 years ago, that we did something horrible, and you realize that your hearts completely transformed and changed in that time. Then there's a different responses needed. Different thing that happens perhaps It just makes sense. I'm saying it's a satisfying answer. So is the notion of confession in Buddhism? It occurs in Buddhism. I'm well, juries have a procedure. There is for the monastics. The monastics have a particular day they go to another monastic and a humble and disobey a party or Okay, homie humba Hey, hey, elder, I, I would like to confess my transgressions and then there's a whole way in which they do that. For laypeople, there's no there's no particular procedure that's been laid down. But there is there is the understanding that acknowledging one's transgressions to someone that you respect and really making clear to that person I've done this, I don't believe in this. And I'm now committing myself not to do this, again, that little state that that little thing is something which is, you know, understood to be very, very important and effective. And it's not codified any that, you know, way. It's, it's kind of it's like in the wisdom tradition and you can pick that up if you'd like, and you don't find Buddhist saying you should do this, but it's there. And then you define the person to do it and do it for and if you've killed someone, especially if it's recently, you know, then there's all these issues of confidentiality, confidentiality, and, and you know, it gets a little more complicated in our society. But if it's, you know, it was long time ago, I met someone. I met a few people in my life, who came to me and told me that killed someone. And most people, there were soldiers, one of the worst has to do with World War Two. So we didn't take the time they told me was long, long after one was a soldier and one He was a person who went through concentration camps in Indonesia. Japanese cars Japanese captured the Dutch and, and put them in concentration camps. And when he was released, and he was treated awfully, and many people were, there was one one particular prison guard.

And

it was awful torture or whatever. And when the war was over, and all the Japanese were being sent back to Japan, him and his buddies went and found that guy and killed him in cold blood. And I don't know I'm telling you this, but I know it was so long ago. And I didn't know what to say. I mean, he wasn't coming to me as a Buddhist teacher. He was actually a kind of acquaintance of fam distant family friend. People. I know He was telling me his story. And I was you know, what do you say someone who said that killed someone. I just am continuous story as it developed so long ago, but you know, it didn't it didn't sit right with me that he's just told it matter of factly and then moved on with the rest of the story, even though so long ago and even though he thinks he very much at that point feel feels like he had just cause it was really necessary.

Yes, a few things. One is I appreciate the idea of restraining yourself as a way of differential so that we don't have to have every night.

Two things one is I

get angry fast, especially when somebody is in my face. And I just had an example recently a little car but somebody had this drive and she got out of the car and opened the door and hit the guy's car near us. You noticed that opening the door and he was furious. Just furious and like a 32nd furious, but I feel like I've done all this work. And I it's still boring the buttons push and you know, it's something that will be yell at me here. Now after I've meditated. I'm fine. Really cool. But when I'm when I'm teaching, but when I'm surprised by I might as well be two years old and, uh huh. Smash the guy's face.

Energy just is there. Regardless of

Has it improved over the years you've meditated or no difference?

aging,

the aging

I think that there's a

it's one thing to meditate. It's another thing, a whole other thing actually much more difficult and maybe the more important part of all this spiritual life is to take what you feel in meditation, the sense of calm or the sense of integrity or sense of being mindful and sensitive and attentive and to try to To live that way in daily life, and some people kind of are quite dedicated to meditation but since they get up, they forget about the whole stuff and just go off and do their life and get very busy very quickly. But what does it take to be settled in yourself so that so that when you go into any kind of situation, you're not surprised by anything. When I remember when I was a Zen student we would sit you know, Zen for many hours. And, and one of the Zen teachers had a customer going around, and sometimes would come in, adjust your posture. You come up from behind you in very gently he was very, very gentle. He feels compassion. just very gently lays Hands on your back first gonna warn you there and then kind of make little adjustments your posture, sit up straight, so you sit up straighter. And

and he would.

It was very interesting that when I was present, really present and settled on myself He could come up, I had no idea who was coming up sneaking up on me. And I feel that hand, and I would just feel soft, like the hand was going into coffee. If I was lost in my thoughts, and he came up and touched me,

then it'd be startled. So one of the things to study, one is what does it take to be more settled and deeper way into your life? And do you want to? Is there enough? Is it high enough priority or value for you? to really take what it have that being settled or being at peace throughout your day that you might have in meditation? If you're relying on Moses, that you do meditate and somehow that has affect the rest of your day, then that's great. But if you really want to take the spiritual discipline to heart in a very deep way, it has to be more than that. You have to go and you know, start meditating daily life in a sense. And then to study for example, what is it that they worlds experience is hidden inside of you. If you come along such a situation and something happens, something happens

you're only going to react if that strikes something here in you. If it doesn't strike anything, it says it goes right by. And that's maybe after you meditate, maybe you're that way. What is it that it strikes? And there's a very important investigation to be done to explore what is it that's there before you get angry? That is already some some something some a wall or something, you know, a book button or a trigger, we say, what is it? And you really spend a lot of careful time discovering what that is, it's before you get angry. And then begin take some responsibility for that and work on it and see, you know, what can you do about that? So that to settle it or to do so it doesn't get in the way speaking to you. Yes, I'm

very willing to try. I spoke to somebody who was a monk in Plum Village. And

he said he felt there was no way to lead a normal life, nine to five kind of job or whatever, something like that. And for him to keep his heart open, and that's why he went to Plum Village. And I was really struck by the pacing of our lives here, you know, going driving somewhere tired and cranky, it's too hot. There's too much traffic.

So, so shows us true so sometimes we have to make behavioral change. Some people think they can just kind of live their life and then add this wonderful thing to make everything. Sometimes we have to have behavioral change in order to be sane enough to get enough exercise nor to be you know, if you don't get enough exercise, it's easy to be triggered by all kinds of thinks it's all kinds of things. So some behavioral change is really necessary, so unreasonable not you know. And it has a lot to do with, what your highest intentions are for your deepest intentions. And then it's one thing to know what they are. And then then as logically also, with the, the, the, the, the strength of that intention, the strength of motivation to live by that a lot of people have deep intentions, lofty intentions, but there's no strength behind it, they really gonna live by an act by it. If a person's intentions are strong, really want to act on it. I think any, almost any situation or a life 95 job that can be done.

Good luck. I wish you well, really. So, let's take the last two minutes and just sit quietly and compose yourself before you get in your cars. So thank you very much and wish you a wonderful week.