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SPEAKERS

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So, what's on my mind to talk about today is karma. And karma is in many ways an interesting topic. And it lends itself to a wide range of associations. The word karma has come to the west, from other places besides Buddhist uses of the word from Hindu uses of various kinds, and other places. And so now enter the English language and we say, it's pretty common people talk about karma, in some ways, kind of colloquially, you know, you had good parking karma and you don't have it and I understand the concept. It is very central. Buddhism and it's also in its essence. Something you probably already have faith in or confidence in are believers and you already understand it's pretty much a simple straightforward idea at its heart. So much so that one person recently I was talking to said, Oh, he doesn't really think about karma doesn't not really important part of his practice. These are the passionate teacher. And however, I think it's already kind of deeply part of how he sees the world. He just doesn't think about it in along those those along those lines. To give you some sense of how important the idea of karma is in Buddhism, the Dalai Lama once said, and other teachers have said the same thing. But in his case, he was talking about emptiness. Maybe he was going to give a talk about the Mahayana philosophy of emptiness And this in Mahayana Buddhism is one of the ultimate teachings. One of the great most profound teachings is teachings on emptiness. And people strive for years to really grapple understand and be transformed through the, the understanding or perception or experience of emptiness. And the Dalai Lama said, more important than understanding emptiness is to understand. Karma says more so, it's more important in Part of the reason for that is karma is basically a doctrine of cause and effect. And if you don't really understand cause and effect, but you understand emptiness, it can lend itself to being antinomian. It can lend, lend itself to you feeling anything goes you don't have to pay attention to cause and effect you don't have to be moral or be ethical Anyway, you can just do whatever you want. So he said it's more important to understand karma than it is to understand emptiness. Another place where you see the sensuality of the notion of karma is in the experience of the Buddha's awakening his enlightenment experience with the night of his enlightenment. We don't have a lot of descriptions of what the experience of the Buddha's enlightenment was like. In fact, most of us wouldn't, don't take some don't say, well, there's not an

experience I recognize there maybe as kind of being enlightenment in terms of white light or great bliss or explosion of something or other whatever, you know, great, mythic ideas, we have enlightenment. Now his enlightenment perhaps is understood in mythic terms, mythic story, it's hard to know whether to take this as a myth or as being real. But in the night of his enlightenment, the Knights was divided into three parts, three watches of the night, and the first watch of the night he perceived his past lives. And it said that he was able to perceive his past lives. thousand 10,000 10,000 hundred thousand, you know, lifetimes back and you could see where he was born, what village he was born in his name, who his parents was what he did. And he saw his endless stream of rebirths that he's been part of. And it's a kind of mythic almost always described because it's so huge the scope of what he perceives. Then the second watch of the night, he has a different perception. And this time he perceives how beings he's kind of kinda like you surveys the world, and how beings are reborn, based on their karma. And those beings who get those beings who do make good karma for themselves, get reborn in good states of rebirth, like get reborn in heavenly realms, and those beings who have have bad karma for themselves get reborn in bad states, for example, in Buddhist hills. And just to say that the Buddhist ideas of Hell's in heaven, which is a traditional part of, not just Buddhism, but also kind of in the Indian kind of cosmology, is that people's time in these places is always temporary. As we're cycling through different, all the different realms we can get reborn. So the first watch of the night he saw kind of rebirth and rebirth is really for him as you know, maybe a reality or mythic reality. So see the endless stream of birth and death. And then a second watch of the night, he saw the conditions that influence how a person is reborn, that they're reborn based on their karma. good karma, good birth, bad karma, bad birth to be very simplistic. The third watch of the night and this is where the first two watches was not particularly Buddhist. Inside it's understood to be many people had this insight, but it's the third the insight or the transformation that happened in the fourth watch of the night, which is really described as enlightenment. But it's built on the first two. And he says in the third one, he says that he understood what he perceived as he experienced the destruction. The word is quite powerful the word that's used, but destruction of those forces that kept him being reborn. And those forces are called the US of us. And the US of us is a very powerful word. It means it refers partly to before Buddhists picked it up to an intoxicating liquid from certain kind of tree that grew in India. It also refers to the kind of pus you know, if you cut yourself have pus oozing out, that's a sub apparently. So it's, so I like to try to translate as the toxins or the intoxicants. Sometimes it's translated into English is that as the as the outflows or the what's more common one? Huh? Okay, so and then enter the destruction of these forces of greed, of hate of attachment, the key to being clinging to life lifetime after lifetime forces for getting reborn. And so there's a kind of a sequence here, where he understood about the chain of causality down through millennia. He understood the factors that affect the kind of rebirth we have. And then he understood how to step off that chain. So karma there, the understanding of karma was part of that experience of his enlightenment and it was enlightenment. Seeing it deeply The word karma literally means action. And it's a very apparently you know, it's a very common kind of word in Sanskrit and Pali in Pali the words pronounced Kama and some of us know the word we have probably in some ways use the word car. Similar the it comes from the root query, okay our kind of query and ended appears in the words Sanskrit. They send in Sanskrit means with. And crit is same route as karma. And it means to construct or to make. And Sanskrit is a constructed language. It's a

language that we've made happen constructed. It's like church Latin that's kind of been made. And, or the word Karuna is usually translated into English as compassion, but it has the same root query which means to act and in dictionary defines one of the definitions of Karuna is holy action. So, we have the idea of karma as being action. In India, in ancient India, modern India, there are many different and probably in the modern West also there are many, there are many different theories about action. Is action is action have results in the future. Can you act in certain ways to create an effect tomorrow? Or is life predetermined? And action has no influence at all. It's all been set in stone long before you're born. And you're just kind of going through your motions you think you're in control. But what's gonna happen to you this afternoon was preordained and, and use go along with what's happening so your actions have no bearing what you do, you know, you can't really do anything to change that. That's there was one theory of action in ancient India. And there were various forms. The idea is that when you were born you were born with it originally way back at the beginning of the cosmos, first you know rebirth first birth, you were born with a certain store of karma. And if you did nothing, you could kind of unwind that spring, you could kind of empty that. And if you can empty it all from you, then you could become enlightened, you can become free, liberated. And so like the Jain religion will have this belief, you couldn't really do anything except do nothing. And so ultimately, the goal and Jainism you starve yourself to death as you do nothing. Because you don't want to add to that karma at all. You don't tighten the spring anymore. The Buddha belongs to a school or a trend of thought in ancient India, where they wanted to say that action is consequential that what you do how you act has consequences. And that's kind of, for most of us operate that way, don't we? You know, even that somehow, you know, if you don't stop for the red light, there's a lot of traffic, a lot of traffic going the other direction, there'll be consequences. And so we take that into account as we go along. Now there's a huge field of cause and effect that we live in. And karma, as Buddhist spiritual concept is a subset of the field of cause and effect. What that means is that everything that happens to you, according to the Buddha is not happening to you because of your past karma, because of your past actions and deeds. Though some people sometimes are Think that way and oppressed by that kind of idea, Oh, I got sick because it's my karma that gets sick. And there's kind of fatalism into kind of kind of assuming that everything happens to you is kind of because of your karma in the past. Everything that happens is because of cause and effect. There's a causal Nexus we live in, but that causal ocean we live in is much bigger than that particular one of karma. So if the Buddha said for example, that some things happen to you because of biological reasons, which are not karmic, and he went through kind of ancient Indian medical kind of causes, some something's happened to you because of bile. I guess in ancient in Indian medicine, bile is a cause of illness. Another one is phlegm. And another one is the winds. The winds are a little bit imbalanced. Another thing that can cause distress or problems or whatever, is if you get attacked and the Buddha was I'm going to say that every time you get attacked, you know, if you're walking down the street and someone jumps you in the alley, that's not necessarily because of your bad karma. It just you were in the wrong place at the wrong time. It might be part of your current your karmic stream, but it doesn't have to be. natural disaster happens. That's not necessarily an attribute that your karma just, you know, that's just what's happening and somehow you were there. This the subcategory of cause and effect that the Buddha attributed to karma is that chain of cause and effect that is said in emotion, by your intentions, by your intending things, and the

Buddha compared or equated karma with intention. And, and it's been pointed out in various points in human history, different religious people have picked up on the tremendous importance of intention or inner life and how we intend. Whether inner life is intended by Good, good or bad, and it's not just simply a matter of appeasing the gods, which it was an ancient Vedic India, you know, your good and bad happened because you appease the gods you've made sacrifices and to the gods and you ask them, please, you know, make my crops grow and so it's not just a matter of you know. So, rather than looking externally to cause and effect, do the turning around looking actually what happened inside of you your intentions, the quality of your intentions has a bearing in this chain in this big field of cause and effect. And so, so, what is where is where do we see intention having an effect how does that work? intention currently can be seen in the present moment. If I sit here and sit decide that I I don't know that I would like to do some really kinda really wonderful and generous for all of you here would be really great if I could just kind of do something great. And just that intention, if I don't get mixed up with something self conscious and wondering if you really like it and all these things, in and of itself that intention can in the present moment can make me feel good. I feel kind of relaxed, I feel happy because of it. If I suddenly decide to get angry with all of you, I get kind of contracted. And that contraction is called Instant Karma. As we do certain things, there are consequences for doing it. And that's called Instant consequences, Instant Karma. But also as we do things, there are we set up a kind of momentum, or that continues through time. So for example, if maybe being angry just once, doesn't do much, but if I make if I start being angry, and repeat Then I'm setting up momentum within me of tension have a tendency a predisposition to get angry. One of the exercises I like doing is when I drive on the freeway as I track my emotions and my subtle emotions, because I see you know, very subtly that I'm driving along and someone cuts me off and I get a little bit angry. And then someone drives by who's really attractive and I feel you know, that's nice. And then someone comes in tailgates me and I get irritated and someone drives by in this great beautiful car and I feel a certain way and someone's driving really slow in front of me and I feel a certain way and, and you know, it's kind of kaleidoscope of kind of, you know, very, very, very subtle kind of going through and police car pulls up behind me and I feel certain things And you know, and so it's kind of fun to track at all. But one of the interesting things is that if I'm going, you know, for half an hour on the freeway, if I'm not paying attention, some of that's probably going on anyway, subconsciously, or kind of nutso, that subconsciously. But if there's a particular kind of emphasis in how I'm reacting, if I'm always reacting kind of irritated way with the other cars, each little moment of irritation is nothing. But after the end of the half an hour, I might arrive in my destination, stressed and tense, because of the accumulation of those little moments of intending little moments of reacting to how it is. So we set up we set up momentum in our body through how our body is body gets more more relaxed, or more more tense. There's holding patterns we hold in their body, there's deep knots, if people who you know are Who have some deep either a single incident or chronic kind of approach of being afraid about something, you know, their shoulders get chronically tight or they held and not some deep in their body. And it said that part of what happens in Vipassana practice is slowly as the unraveling of these knots of this, people say, as the car might have stored in our body, these reactions and intending in ways that somehow in momentum, it's stored somehow in our body. And so that could have karmic effects on our illness, for example, some illness could be seen as a result of the way we live their lives. And if we

go around intending and living lives of being angry or generous, it probably has some effect on how we carry our body and their stress level in our body. And we know that stress has a big impact on our health. So it's not the only impact on our health, but it's certainly it can be one. There's also traces in our memory, and it's not so effective. common for people who meditate to especially early in a person's meditative practice, to have memory surface that they hadn't haven't thought about for 20 years. Wow, I said that to that person 20 years ago. That's terrible. And, and then feel great regret for perhaps, oh, wow, how could I have done that? And they call up the person and say, remember me? No, I want to, I want to apologize. And that's nice. But sometimes, you know, it's really surprising, what gets stored somehow in the psyche. And might we appear when the psyche gets relaxed enough, but not distracted enough for the conditions kind of kind of a deepening within us. So there seems to be some kind of Causeway for the, for a chain of cause defects motion by our intention. In classic Buddhism, that Causeway is sometimes described as a Causeway of merit. So if you do a lot of good karma, you create merit. And if you create a lot of bad karma, you're creating demerit, or Yeah, I'll guess the best thing to say for now. And but how does merit happen? Is there a big scorecard up up there that is keeping track and, and someone tallies it up at the end? And, you know, ways out, you know, the good and the bad and decides, you know, what's gonna happen? I don't think that Buddha had that kind of notion, but at the core idea of karma and merit and lens has it lends itself to kind of supernatural or metaphysical kind of view, you know, an extreme form and there are Buddhists to actually go around with merit books and you do certain meritorious things you go to temple make offerings, and you ask the abbot to put us you know, stamp or writing you know, in your book What you've done, and then and then you have this book, you know, in the then because you can't rely on the record keeper up there, So you have your own kind of book. And then when you die, it's buried with you or burned with you or something, you take it along with you. So you have for you to still, you know, document. So, you know, I don't know about those kinds of things, you know, seems a little odd to me. But, merit is kind of the, you know, a classically, in one place, the Buddha says, merit is happiness. So, if you do things if that bring greater happiness and sense of well being to yourself, that in itself is the merit, which is setting up the conditions for greater happiness greater well being in the future. The Buddha also said that if you want to try to understand To really understand the full scope of karma, this chain of cause and effect that set in motion by our intending your head will explode. I think I think what I understand from this, it's not a threat, don't think about it. But it's but rather it just too hard. It just, you know, it just too difficult to figure out how all this stuff works. It's kind of like if you put a pebble into in throw one pebble into a pond, and you see your beautiful ripples going out. And then you throw another pebble pebble in, and you see two then the same time two pebbles in and you see the ripples and then they meet each other and they form other ripples. And that's kind of you could track that. But then you know, you take a handful of thousands of you know, pebbles and you have 1000 people doing it all at once and they all throw it into the pond at the same time. You can't really track the ripples anymore and how they bump into each other and affect each other and you probably head will explode if you try to, you know, graph it all out and understand. So we live in this very complex world and we don't just simply have one intention. But we have, you know, many intentions through the day and through life, and they, you know, bump into each other and affect each other in all kinds of ways. And so it's really hard to know the full scope of the ways that things work. The Buddha

said that if you primarily live a good life and you have one little transgression, you yell at your spouse, or whatever. It doesn't really have to be they're gonna have a big impact on your karma. However, if you primarily believe the bad life, then yelling at your spouse will actually have a big impact. It's almost as if the current you know, it's almost as if the karmic consequences are different, depending on the container you put that in. So the Buddha is talking about this, the Buddha said, if you take a teaspoon of salt and put it in the Ganges River, which I guess was, you know, fresh water, it does not really going to taste change the taste of the Ganges River. But if you put a teaspoon of salt in a small cup of water, that cup of water becomes undrinkable. So if you don't have a lot of good in your life, then you know you do a little bit a little bit salt in there a little bit, that action is not really going to have much impact. But if you're already, you know, have really tight and constricted it's gonna have a big impact on your karmic stream what's going to happen so in terms of thinking about karma, the way it plays out in, in Buddhist spiritual life, is that it's the teaching of karma is pointing us to the present moment, the importance of paying attention to the present moment. So in other words, a Buddhist teaching and say, present moment is very important place to be, and to pay attention. Because it's in the present moment that you make your choices. Choice only happens in the present. And so, the emphasis in mindfulness, this part of it is to be attentive enough to track the choices you make, or the choices you have to make. And then to pay attention to what you're intending in making that choice. What's the flavor of that intention? If you go, if you want to go and feed the homeless, it could seem on the surfaces being a wonderful intention. But if you pay careful attention to why I'm making the choice to feed the homeless, you might find that you're doing it because you want to look really good for your neighbors. If you can look like say, Mother Teresa, then your neighbors are probably like you more. Now that's not a particularly wholesome or skillful or useful intention to have to build up your ego out of being generous. Say that, that you know a deer comes into your yard and the neighbor's dog you know wants to chase it. And so you throw it you throw a stone at the deer it can seem someone watches you throwing stones idea they can boy that's a bad person is portal deer, Bambi. But if you but if they realize that your intention is really to help the deer then that's actually a good intention. So part of mindfulness is to look what is it why what am intending and doing this thing. The bigger the choice, the more important it is ask yourself, what's the intention here? Why don't want to do it. And because intention is consequential. If you do good acts, but the intention is selfish, ultimately at the source, you're then reinforcing a tendency to be selfish. You're setting you're creating these momentum within us this disposition. And somehow there's a chain of cause and effect within us. Maybe it's unseen. It's hard to know where all this goes, how it moves through time, which is creating the tendencies who could be having bad karma in the future. Being said, being selfish, creates bad karma. How does that bad karma manifest itself in 20 years? I'm not sure. Maybe it's hard to know how it's gonna manifest itself. Maybe it manifests itself as being really lonely. I have no People who've been so self obsessed for so long, they wake up one morning and realize, wow, I'm really alone. I really mean, I know people, but I didn't really know them. I never took the time to get to know them because I was always trying to get to know myself or try to get them to know me, or whatever. So to pay attention to our intention, how this, the idea of rebirth is tied into karma. In the midst of the Buddhist enlightenment. I don't know how important that is in terms of the belief or the confidence in karma. The Buddha said that it's right view. It's appropriate, it's necessary to have confidence in

karma. Without any confidence in karma. You can't really follow the Buddhist path. So that can seem like a kind of very strong statement. It is a strong statement, but it's kind of a very, I think, a very straightforward thing, if you don't have some confidence in the efficacy of your actions, some confidence in the value of you're doing and acting. Why would you do anything? If you want to learn a musical instrument, you have to have confidence that practicing that instrument is going to bear fruit. And you're going to be able to learn that skill through time that it's efficacious to practice. It's very simple, right? If you want to learn any skill, you have to believe you have to have confidence. If you don't have any confidence in your ability to change and develop something over time. Why would you do it? So the teaching of karma is what have confidence in karma is to have confidence that how you act now has consequences in the future. And there are some consequences that are more desirable than others and then knowing that they're more desirable consequences in others. Confidence if you act one way, you're more likely to have those beneficial consequences into the future. Without the stronger person's confidence is in their ability to to initiate change. They're more motivated, and more confident they'll be in their spiritual practice. If they have no confidence, there'll be no confidence in spiritual practice, why bother? So it's a very simple idea of karma at its heart. And this is where I think a lot of you probably all of you have that level of confidence to some degree. That you know, your actions do have an effect Do you do things because, you know, it's gonna have an effect. So the teaching of karma also then implies that you're you have some understanding of what is beneficial for yourself and what is not beneficial. And that you, you, you're interested in changing your karmic stream, in the direction of what is more beneficial for you. Rather than just being a victim of just circumstances and letting things just unfold where they are, you actually take responsibility for this karmic stream. So what happens to you? What's happening to you in the moment when it arrives here in this particular situation, situation you've been born into, is just there because of causes and conditions, some of it because of your karma, perhaps some of it because of your bio, or whatever. And but the key thing for a Buddha spiritual life is then once something is Hear, how do you respond to it? How do you act on it? And that is a whole. That's really kind of the thrust of important part of Buddhism is how do you respond to what's given to you in life. If you respond in a kind of victim mentality or poor me, that's creating certain karma that sets into motion a certain kind of cause and effect. If you respond to it, oh, I'll do the best I can with this. And not to wallow in it or whoever do you create a different stream a different kind of momentum? It's not a karma is not a moralistic teaching. It's more about taking, having some understanding of a stream of cause and effect and be concerned about what's beneficial and what's not. Someone told me recently, that nature is based on cause and effect Certain theistic religions have the idea of reward and punishment. So they have karma is more in this nature side of things has to do with cause and effect, not about punishment and reward. So what's the what's the chain of cause and effect you're setting in motion which means I lost my train of thought. I think that was what are lost my train of thought by going into that tangent. Please. In a sense, morality or see what is a strong foundation to operate from? Yeah Right, so he said he wants to ask about morality or ethics, in that it seems that living an ethical life does have a big impact on your ethics. So I think yes, living ethically does have a big impact on this chain of cause and effect statement emotion. But the chain of karma is much larger than ethics. And it is just it's not a matter of reward and punishment, it's a matter of we know what we're setting into motion and causing the

consequence of cause and effect. Oh, this is what I was gonna say. No, I think we're back on track is back to the Buddha, that the Buddha was critical of some of the ancient Indian ideas of the people status as a human being was something that they were Born with so you had the notion of the of the romantic romanichal class, the Brahmins and they're born in people born as being Brahmins were born as being what used to be called Untouchables. And, and, and then society would treat them that way or the Brahmins would hold themselves kind of, you know, superior to everybody else. And, and, and the Buddha would said, Oh, a person is not superior from other people, because of how they were born. And some people have said, this is kind of an anti racism racist kind of teaching the Buddha because the Brahmins tended to be a wider class and India, then other Indians, wider, lighter skinned and people are not born superior. But the people that are superior, you know, are noble or worthy or whatever, based on Their actions based on how they respond to what's given. So if we respond in generous and wise and compassionate ways, that's what makes a person a noble person who were the person. That's what makes a person a Brahmin not how they're born. So the emphasis here is, again, is to going back and how is it we're, we're responding to what's given to us. And there are tragic ways of being tragic ways, tragic things that happen to human beings. The teaching of karma is not a teaching to oppress us, because what's happened to us, but rather is an encouragement. As difficult as teachings might sound, given what's happening to us, to take responsibility for how we respond to that, and the measure of who we are as a human being has to do with how we respond to what's given to us, not what has happened to us. And we always have the opportunity To make to respond in new ways, the Buddha said, if What if karma was an absolute law, that if what you did today will directly affect what happens tomorrow, you give you have no space for the spiritual life, you have no no place for discovering, discovering freedom. But because you can have an impact and influence on this karmic stream, because there's kind of incense free choice Free Will in Buddhism, you can actually change that karmic stream for the better, or you can change in such a way that you can step off it and become free. So, you take responsibility for how we act in the world for how we respond to be concerned about the consequences And to realize that there there are beneficial consequences and not so beneficial harmful ones, to have some sense of where we're going, going towards what's useful for us is part of Buddhist spiritual life. And not just to leave it to chance not to step outside and just play. It's all been predetermined. But to actually get involved, so that we can become freer in this life that we're living. That I think is why the Buddha emphasized karma and why Buddhism emphasizes the importance of karma. So I hope that was clear enough. Didn't matter too much. We have a few minutes if you have any more questions like to ask Yes. To collect Collective karma collective karma? Yeah. So but it is it is it. So you should we have to be very careful not to use the word karma too easily. Because if karma is a subset of the field of cause and effect, and there are other causes besides karmic ones, then we don't want to say that everything that happens is because of people's karma. So, you know what, why did that happen to the Tibetans is because of their karma now, people are people who say that, but I don't know if we have to say that. And the teaching of the teaching a Buddhist teaching of karma is not a teaching that tries to help us understand why something is happening now. But rather teaching it says Now, given that it's happened, how do you respond? And it could you could say the karma of the Tibetans is men of all these years of centuries of practice is manifested in the story of the of the monk who was imprisoned for 20 years and tortured.

And when he was released, the Dalai Lama asked him, was he ever in danger? And he said, Yes, I was in danger. And I thought, Oh, he meant danger of losing his life perhaps. And the monk said, I was in danger of losing my compassion for the Chinese. Now, there has to be a lot of good karma, set in motion for a person to maintain that equanimity and dedication to compassion, even under that kind of circumstance. And that's where we falsified the karma. more clearly. So he wasn't beings, even the terrible things were happening to him. He wasn't being submerged. by himself. He wasn't himself succumbing to hate and anger and despair and despair because of what was happening. Yes. So the question is, if I is this teaching of karma is not about whether or not you're angry, but rather whether you act on the anger, right? Unfortunately, yes, in some ways that's true. But unfortunately, I think it's very hard to see a very sharp line between the arising of anger and an intention to act on it because anger itself is a kind of intention. So it might feel like anger is just kind of coming. But get once anger has arisen. And the teaching the karma says, given that what there isn't and how do you respond to the rising of anger, and if you can just leave it alone, that's very wise. If you could compost it into loving kindness, that's very wise. But if you take it up and act with it, then you're furthering your karma, and probably creating a lot stronger karmic momentum than you were if it just simply arose in past. So anchor if you watch it carefully, because it does smell like it just happens to be washed off to some other than you're just irritated. If you watch carefully, if you choose to respond it could be so If you watch anger carefully, it could be arising for other conditions. I mean, it's possible that that I'll give you an example that I've been told I shouldn't do any more because it's so silly. But it's hard to come up with examples is, is to say that that you know, I'm really a macho kind of guy. And, and it's really important that you all know that I'm kind of macho and so the way I prove it to all of you is I drive this really hot car and I like to park it right outside there. So you know, and I like to stand out there so you kind of dangling dangling keys you really see you know, what a great guy I am because that's the proof right? And then, and then the car, someone damages the car a little bit. And I take to the shop it's my karma and And they give me a replacement car to drive for a few days. And it's an old little beat up little kind of Volkswagen bug. And I'd have to park it in front of us, you know. And so at some point in this chain, I'm having the accident and begin being given the Volkswagen, I get angry. It's an unfortunate circumstance to have been had be angry. And however, we did have an accident. But my anger is stimulated, not by this unfortunate thing of the accident. It's stimulated by the fact this is putting a big dent in my ego. In my ego, something I'm holding is already intention to create a certain kind of self. That's already creating karma. And in that it's creating karma. One manifestation of that karma is that I'm predisposing myself that if there's an accident that that I'm going to then get tied to an upset which creates further karma if I act on the anger is that yes. Let's go back to the job. Yeah. Something that came up from us to be a vast difference in intensity to try to deter or control a dog as opposed to letting you do oh you mean it because you're frightening the deer. Well, I think the way I believe I don't know I if I try too hard, my head will explode. But I believe the way this kind of this logic works is that the if we're if we're focusing on are on the karmic stream, the karmic stream is affected by our intention. If our intention is good, we might still be confused. But what's wise is to do out in the world, we might still cause harm in the world. We might regret that harm, we might have to go to jail because of that all kinds of things might happen because of our stupidity. But our karma hasn't been affected negatively. Because the intention was good to begin with. So the intention might have been

that in the moment, the best I could think of was what I really want to try to help compassionately this dear, best I could think of was to throw a rock in its direction. And, and so that's really where the force of the momentum is, isn't that good intention. The fact that there was a frightened has a cause and effect. They're set in motion certain cause and effect, but it's not seen as karmic might come back to the person who realized later Oh, I frightened that dear. I regret that. Now, regret isn't is maybe a different belongs to a different category of cause and effect than that one that has to do with karma. Does that make sense? Going to the dog is kind of had a more positive connotation on the deer that I wouldn't want to try to control or forcefully control the dog doing. So what I imagine is that if a person had the wherewithal to realize they want to try to help the deer deer go away, but they want to do it in such a way that doesn't frighten the deer. That maybe because there's more, there's more good karma kind of phenomena going on more good intentions happening there. That that would set in motion a stronger flow of good karmic momentum. Then if you simply picked up the first stone you could find and through it enterprise or whatever? Is that so what how do you explain things that happened to you to children where they seem to be born certain ways or have certain things happen to them that they don't have to have a chance to have karma and baby, suddenly, something happens. That's tragic or whatever. Myself I tend to shy away from the kind of analysis that goes past lives. And in fact, I tend to shy away from any kind of I tend to shy away from using the teaching of karma too much as want to try to explain why some happen, sometimes reviewing Why is useful, because we can learn from that. If I drive my half an hour on the freeway and rice arrive someplace tense, reviewing, oh, I've been irritated by every driver on the freeway. And realizing that cause and effect you learn from, you know, your experience that way, which is good. So some reviewing can be very helpful. But I shy away from kind of making kind of, you know, some from you know, especially past live kind of explanations of you know, this is why past life experiences of why this is what's happened now, I'm pretty content to the teachings of karma, focus on the importance of us looking, how do we respond given what's happened. So we're not using karma to explain everything that occurs. We're using this understanding of action to emphasize where we can make the biggest difference in the present. Some people want karma to be a theory of justice that schmuck is going to get Dude rewards you know, he, he such a terrible guy. They're always different terrible things and, and, you know, he made a fortune, you know, you know, and he's just living this great hedonistic lifestyle and, look, he's dying. He's dying. He's 92 years old and he's dying, his smooth dying asleep. They take it all with them in a sense, you know? How could that be is no justice. I want justice. Well, Justice is in his next lifetime. So we want their theory of justice, but I don't think we need to, I don't think that's really the purpose of this either. That's more kind of like are trying to make order out of it all. It's very simple. This teaching vamp of karma it's like, given what's happening. Can we take some responsibility for how we respond to that, so that we create a better momentum into the future. Now there are Buddhists who will explain that things that happen to people are because of past karma. There are some wonderful and a wonderful but some amazing equations that are made. So, and the Buddha made some of these also you can read in the sutra some of these, you know, that if you kill people, you might get reborn as you know maybe you'll get reborn as a as a and that some little boy finds and the boy loves to pull the legs off the end you know so there's some explanations given like that so it but it wasn't isn't that's not the explanation the Buddha gives but he does give kind of a equation if you do x then the next life will happen. Some other

ones are given. I know I heard one recently that if you speak harshly use harsh speech you'll end up driving on rough roads. And if you want your road your driveway to be smooth, someday you're dry, you know your road in front of your house has a lot of potholes, whatever, then you should cultivate kind smooth speech. And then that sets into motion the karmic motion that someday you'll have. But what happens to children? You know, so I don't know. Maybe it's past karma. Past lifetimes. Maybe it's not maybe it's bio or wins, genetics, who knows? And it breaks my heart. What happens to children and two adults and I'd love to I'd love to understand it. I'd love to have an understanding of the universe but understand why what happens happens. They think what if they're lucky. tremendous pressure for their emotional, physical. They Right. I see so someone has treated someone has horrible experiences as children, and it kind of creates a little bit there. They're how they're how they're disposed to live and, and, and because of because of that disposition they create bad karma for themselves and it seems very unfortunate that they should be in essence creating bad karma based on and continuing a cycle of abuse perhaps what happened earlier in their lives? Yeah, it's it's it breaks my heart. It's very tragic these things and hopefully some point or other people learned how to take into account in the Pantheon on with this law. Teaching thing in Mahayana Buddhism, they have kind of a pantheon of Bodhisattvas. And what he saw was our or our, there's kind of what's called an in scholarly circles, celestial Bodhisattvas, who are kind of like almost like, you know, function almost like Gods even they're not supposed to be gods and Buddhism. They're kind of like celestial beings. And, and they, some of them are our help, you know, like have a look a test for it goes and helps people who are suffering and, and they represent different archetypes of perhaps, and there's but all of the Bodhisattvas are late people. They're not except for one and one is a monk. It's Japanese is called Jizo, bodhisatta and Sanskrit. Tish kadesh Tisha garba bodhisatta and Jizo is the one is the bodhisatta for children and for people in desperate straits, like homeless and people that really desperate down and out kind of situations. And when I take in what I find interesting about that is that the monastic monk is a very powerful archetype. And it is a certain kind of psyche certain kind of being people. They almost need to have some kind of almost archetype step into their life to really make an impact to really help them and kind of pull them out of the mud that their situation they're in. And, and so sometimes, so sometimes it's you need something like that to really wake someone up east on Dorsey, the great Zen saint in San Francisco, Castro district. Wonderful man. He was down not kind of life and drugs. And he saw a picture of Ramana Maharshi. In a stupor, and that photograph kind of woke them up. So he kind of changed the course of his life and became a Zen student and Zen priest and became a great San teacher in San Francisco from that one, so sometimes you know, and so hopefully, you know, what is it? What is it that awakes any of us up so that we decide that we can live our life differently, that we can make a change, that we could start paying attention and respond differently? What is it that does it for us? So, I hope this is useful. I hope it gives you food for thought and I hope that it encourages you to have confidence in your capacity to make a difference in your own life, and that you really use that capacity in beautiful ways. Thank you