

2004-11-21 The Hindrances: Sloth and Torpor (4 of 6)

Wed, 7/29 1:54PM • 45:48

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

torpor, sloth, people, meditation, energy, effort, aroused, arouse, confidence, hindrances, life, falling, sets, thinking, retreats, person, mind, energized, spiritual, sit

SPEAKERS

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Happy Thanksgiving seems like a wonderful holiday for me in the sense of a time to reflect on on gratitude. Whether you do it alone or with other people or whatever way it's done. I think gratitude is one of the wonderful doors to a spiritual life or to a wise life. But I'm not going to talk about gratitude today. rather talk about something very different. I'm going to talk about sloth.

It's how people feel on Friday. Sloth and torpor and the reason for this topic today is that In the middle of doing a series here on Sundays, on the five hindrances, and the five hindrances are those forces in the psyche, which make it difficult for us to be present, that obscure the light of the mind luminosity of the mind. It's difficult for the mind to function in a natural or in a healthy way, when the hindrances interfere with the healthy functioning of the mind. And these hindrances are these obscurations of the mind are five, at least the Buddha gives actually a seven, but they put into five categories. And there's probably other things also, but these are considered very important for meditators, because as people get more and more still in meditation, these seem to have a stronghold. They can kind of derail the meditation as we go along. But they're also very common daily life. So it's always wonderful to talk about them because they seem relevant for everyone. So the first is clinging to sensual pleasure. This the first The second is being caught up in ill will. The third which is the topic for today is sloth and torpor. The fourth is restlessness and anxiety. And the fifth is usually translated as doubt. We'll leave it for that leave it there for now. So the so the mind can get caught in these forces and get lost in them and get lost in desire and hardly even know your present. You hardly know what's going on. hardly know what's going on subjectively, or with ill will, but also a sloth and torpor.

There's an ancient analogy that likens the mind. to water and that water can be polluted or be disturbed in various ways. And in this particular analogy, the hindrances are likened to mud. And, and when the mode is there, the clarity of the water is absent. So somehow the mud has to settle so we can see clearly into the, into the water into the pond. And, and in this particular analogy I'm thinking about the they have this idea in ancient India, that there exists this magic stone that you can drop into the water and it'll somehow settle all the mud out. And in the mind, the magic stone is confidence. So if there's confidence, confidence is one of the great antidotes are one of the great settlers of the hindrances when there's very strong confidence some I would say fate. Some people maybe even say inspiration, but very strong confidence in what we're doing in, for example, a spiritual life, the purpose of the spiritual life, confidence in ourselves inspired by the possibility So, inherent in the spiritual life, then a person can be quite dynamic and active in engaging in spiritual practice. When the confidence is not strong, then it's very easy for these hindrances to take over. And, you know, it just seems like well, it's

not you know, why would meditation be as important as, you know, going shopping? Or some other thing that people you know, are caught up in or planning revenge.

That's the nurse

I'm not kidding me tell you that meditation is much better

than planning revenge.

And the sort of have confidence to confidence is the magic stone. But how do we get confidence? Confidence is in the teachings of the Buddha. Let me back up a little bit sorry. I think sometimes a common association with Buddhist meditation and Buddhist Buddhists, is they're laid back. They're relaxed. Yeah. Que sera sera, you know, everything's fine. We accept everything. Nothing's gonna bother us. You know? And everything's there. You know, just hang out. And you know, just calmly approach life. Be very calm, relaxed, calm. You know, meditation helps us to calm and be very relaxed, laid back It's great when you read the discourses of the Buddha over and over and over again, you found you find that he emphasizes the importance of diligence, energy ardency engagement in some vigorous way with a spiritual life which sometimes is not the popular image of, you know, Buddhists. But, you know, this engagement is active engagement with with the spiritual life. Remember that the Buddha was a warrior. That's how he was raised. And so perhaps, that's a little bit that warrior spirit was there for him in his engagement in his practice life. How to be present had to be here. The energetic way, the energized way of being present, of course needs to be balanced with other factors. Calm is very important. equanimity is very important. tranquility is important to others. There are factors that are important, but not at the expense of being energized. You know, sometimes the way to get in some situations, the way to get relaxed, unstressed is not to take a nap is not to go just hang out and do nothing. Sometimes the best way to get relaxed is to go for a run, or do some exercise, do something really vigorous, really engage yourself, and you come back from that you feel Oh, wow, I feel really relaxed. You ladies. Sometimes Sometimes it's the wrong thing to do. Sometimes you need to take a nap. But energy is a really important quality of life. Energy is one of the things that helps bring balance into life. In certain kinds of imbalances. sloth and torpor, as a hindrance are those forces in the mind that inhibit our wanting to make energy to have energy available. Sometimes it said sloth and torpor inhibits the questing movement, or the like is a good word I'm trying to avoid using the word striving, which is often the word that's used in the English translations striving, kind of questing or certain kind of strong motivation for engaging in the practice. So often corporate gets in the way, hinders the application of energy applying ourselves. And now there's many kinds of things that can hinder that relate to sloth and torpor. tiredness is one of them. Strictly speaking, tiredness is not sloth and torpor. It said that the enlightened person can be tired, but enlightened person would not have sloth and torpor in her mind. sloth and torpor is a little bit of a psychological Issue, sometimes you can see it as a reaction to things, a complex or in the mind, rather than a physical kind of issue of, there's energy or not energy. And you see it a lot in kids. It's really dramatic and kids. Sure you see it in adults too. But the, you know, my kid can swing from sloth and torpor to being energized in two seconds. And when he's bored, or he doesn't like what's going on or something, it's just like, amazed how drained he is. And you just tell him, you know, we'd like ice cream. And boy, you know, he's like, ready to go. Head for the door shoes are on and he's, you know, the energy is available there. Or perhaps some of you've had the experience of laying in bed in the morning, not wanting to get out of bed. It's kind of like, you know, it's cold winter time. And just so comfortable. You don't have the energy for it. You know, it's so nice. You know? Don't feel the inspiration, enthusiasm, the energy, the confidence, whatever. You just lay there. And then somehow you glance at your clock. And you realize,

in five minutes, you'd be late for work as an half an hour drive, you're not even dressed. And you're out of bed. You know, and suddenly all this energy, there you go, you're off and running. I don't know if that's the best analogy, but the best story example, but, but, you know, certainly suddenly energy can be available very quickly. If we understand the situation differently, or something happens that arouses it. Energy is often available. So but it's hindered or kept back or not tapped into or not utilized. So sloth and torpor is part of these forces of the psyche, which inhibit the application of energy be engaged and being involved with sloth and torpor is really strong. sink into it and get lost to it into it in the mind can feel like mud. mind can feel like glue can hardly apply yourself you can you can make it very difficult to make effort, even psychological psychic effort, like pay attention. This becomes really strong on people on on retreats. meditation retreats is a kind of way of there's a way sometimes where things get exaggerated on retreats in ways we don't really experience in daily life. And sometimes on retreats, the mind can feel so dull and so heavy and so lethargic. So if nothing is possible, you can't it's like lifting 200 pound weights just trying to get the mind to pay attention to the breath. And or sometimes, the mind just keeps shutting down just shutting down, you get lost in thoughts, three inner fantasies and just doesn't want to make any effort to do anything except be lost in its own slothful fantasies. Sometimes you see meditators who probably somebody who's seen v do this sitting up here, kind of nodding off. You know? And it's not always a symptom of sloth and torpor, but certainly can be. And, you know, falling asleep, just so hard to wake up and pay attention.

So it's interesting to understand some of the causes or some of the reasons why sloth and torpor might be present. I mean, certainly tiredness can contribute to it. And we have a culture which is sleep deprived. It's been said, and I think a lot of people need sleep more than they need meditation. And then you read this great story. So the great Yogi's management two hours of sleep at night, and I'm getting six hours I'm sure I could cut it down to five and add meditation to my life. You know, and sometimes adding limitation to your life is just not you know, if it means getting up early or just being even more deprived. is not the right thing. Sometimes there's tremendous weariness in the body in the muscles that it sets in because some people are chronically aroused, chronically, chronically tense or anxious, chronically excited, sometimes in a very good way. But sometimes it's a kind of chronic chronic excitement in the muscles and tightness in the holding the different muscles are kind of opposing each other the flexors and extensors over there. And, and, you know, after a few months and few years of that kind of excitement in the system arousal system, the muscles just get worn out. It's possible to sit completely still and get exhausted when the muscles are kind of tense all the time. So sometimes there's physical tension that sets in that makes it very difficult for the energy available. We're just deeply deeply wary and tired. Some people are surprised to go on retreats. And to realize how deeply deeply wary they are. It seems like we're tired down into their bones. And sometimes it comes from way people that live their lives. And unless we change how we live our lives, that exhaustion will go deep deep down. And I think sometimes some of the some disappears, physical illnesses that set in. And because of that chronic exhaustion, that chronic tension that people live under.

Sometimes, sloth and torpor sets in, because it involves some kind of resistance to something we really don't want to pay attention. Really don't be here we don't experience what's going on. And it can take the form of boredom. It can take the form of lethargy, can take the form of dullness, many different forms of just kind of, I don't want to pay attention. I don't want to be here. I don't want to be with this experience. And sometimes it sets in as a as a downside of no longer being aroused by desire or, or anger or fear or various ways in which people keep themselves aroused. If the normal arousal systems are not present, then some people feel kind of dullness and the flatness, maybe a little bit uncomfortable and people rather than rather not be they're flat. They used to being pumped up. If you're not pumped up, it's not so comfortable and you fall asleep fall asleep. For some people sloth and torpor is a transition that you have to go through. If you're always aroused, it's an unhealthy way. Then

start from that arousal, maybe sloth and torpor replace it. And it's a transition you to kind of allow yourself to go through that transition, as you kind of unwind kind of like caffeine withdrawal, kind of like led by a few days ago. Just Let's go through it. But sometimes the resistance is just really, really deep. You know, you see babies falling asleep when the overstimulated baby has been having all a nap baby needed and you put it into a big, noisy environment and the baby falls asleep. So you got a protective mechanism assumingly babies have. The only place I see that in adults operating is sometimes no most obviously isn't meditation, where sometimes people start falling asleep meditation, or a really strong sloth and torpor sets in because some deep memories and deep feeling that they don't want to look at or deal with is around is coming up. Not that not that. And so it's you know, sort of protective mechanism for adults, you know, falling asleep, not paying attention. Sometimes sloth and torpor sets in because there's discouragement and we've been trying and trying for While just so discouraging, so discouraging. And we're focusing on the failure of focusing on, you know, unhealthy, unusable thoughts. One of the important lessons I had in the monastery around thoughts was there was one day there was a period of time that I was really sick. And it was a time when everybody was sitting retreat, but I was working in the kitchen. And somehow I decided to keep working in the kitchen. Maybe it was a bad idea, not think about it, but But anyway, you forgive me for that, but I felt like I had to keep working, but I was really sick. And because I was so sick, I had to be very attentive to my thoughts. Because I could see that if I thought certain thoughts, I would get drained, my energy level would drop. If I thought other thoughts, my energy level goes Little bit in order to maintain myself in that six days, but keep it in. I had to track my thoughts so that I wouldn't drain myself. So I could stay there in a productive way working in the kitchen. And I was so sensitive because the consequences are so big I'm so sick. Most people are living so sensitive to the subtle influence or effect that they're thinking has. But thoughts of discouragement thoughts of, of failure thoughts of it's too much thoughts is all kinds of thoughts we have that just kind of kind of drain our energy greater and greater enthusiasm, and trainer confidence. So you don't want to make the effort. Not now I'll give up. sloth and torpor can set in a complacency. And this was a big hindrance for me. During my period of Zen practice, especially where I attained a certain degree of comfort in my meditation, Practice was very comfortable. Just being present was nice. And in that comfort, warm kind of fuzzy, warm, comfortable feeling. I kind of was lulled into not making any more effort. And that's why I spent a lot of time in Zen practice falling asleep. Because it's just, you know, it was just nice was comfortable. It's like nothing, nothing to attain. There was no goal I was told it was great. And so complacency can be a cause for sloth and torpor.

Laziness can be similar to lazy, don't make the effort. I found I found that effort. Often begets effort is a wonderful way that we apply ourselves that there might be resistance initially, but then after a while, if we keep making the effort and doing it, so Next sets in, that is not our will not are not our efforting anymore. It's kind of like if you go, I find if I go for a run, I haven't run for a long time, there's resistance the first hundred yards, or the first longer and at some point something else sets in and becomes easier, the resistance is not there. Same thing in spiritual life and meditation. So they can be resistance that can be hesitation, there can be it can be manual efforts sometimes overcome the inertia that exists in the mind. But at some point to keep making the effort, something else kicks in, and a healthy kind of effort arises. And if you give up when there's a lot of resistance, when it's manual labor and meditation, then you're not going to come to the next level. And even for me, someone who meditated for a long, long time, there are still times where meditation is like manual labor, hard work. And, and when those when that's the case, I have enough wisdom to know that I just have to keep applying myself doing that hard work. So sometimes that sometimes when I sit especially on retreat, I feel it, you know, in my body that my body is, doesn't seem to have is that not only is there no mental effort, but there's no physical energy, somehow that I can't even hold my body upright very easily. Because right now I can hold my body up pretty easily. But there are times when, when just this is just my body wants to collapse and just keep there's no energy to hold it up. And, and what I've learned is that to just keep coming up to a

good posture, and making the effort to have a good straight, upright posture, not get into that, that tiring or draining energy. It just keeps making the effort, keep making the effort, and at some point, something gets aroused inside of me. It's kind of like magic or mystery. I don't know what it is. But sometime something takes over. And the energy kind of a route rises from the inside and there I am. And then it's easy to stay up right. Sometimes it's hard to believe ever Be able to have energy again. And then. But again, confidence is really important to have confidence in the practice confidence in the, in the value of making an effort of applying oneself is really, really important. And sloth and torpor, just to keep trying, keep applying yourself, energize yourself somehow. There's a lot of ways of energizing oneself in this loss of sloth and torpor. in meditation itself sitting in meditation, it can be physical, you're just sitting up straighter and having more physical presence. And it can be mental. We kind of apply ourselves more, to noticing to being present, being more fully engaged with the breath being more fully attentive to what's happening in present moment. So the analogy that I've read recently is two people come to a big feast and one person's approach to this feast is just kind of flip along all the different dishes and kind of look at them look, that's great, that's great, great, and never taste anything. another person's approach is to see the first dish and gorge. And just and one person stays always aroused, excited and nervous, whatever. And this and the second person is just gets so lethargic or quickly because overeating a third person comes along and just very calmly comes over and takes one full bite in the first dish really tastes it and save as savers. It gets to know it really well goes to nest next dish and really gets to know that really well. And at some point stops mindfulness. You know, there's different approaches to how to be mindful, and some people are too casual and quick. Some people kind of linger too much and kind of get weighed down by their experience. But there's an art to learning how to have just the right engagement with what we're paying attention to the breath, feelings, the body sensations as well. wherever it might be. So to somehow adjust the energy level the effort we have in how we know something, knowing is not. There's there's range of energy that's available for how we know something, no one really well. There's another way of having more energy. Another fascinating way working with sloth and torpor is to make sloth and torpor the object of your attention. So rather than resisting it and pushing it away and trying to overcome it by focusing on something else, it's to go and turn the attention and feel what it's like to be slothfull, torporfull you know, and feel the heaviness feel the dullness feel that the, you know, the whole image printed on the cheeks and the shoulders and the eyes, inside the brain. You know, feel what we're actually feel like, feel where we feel weird actually is, and sometimes a careful investigation of it can somehow turn And around and kind of arouse the energy in the effort. Sometimes, having thinking differently can help with sloth and torpor, so watching how we're thinking and adjusting and changing it. And it said that certain kinds of thoughts tend to arouse my energy and are good antidotes to mind. It's filled with sloth and torpor. So, one of the really, one of the classic things to think about, if you're really in the grips of sloth and torpor, you can't make an energy you can't arouse yourself is think about that. And now some people I know death is you know, puts into sleep or just not the right thing. But if you're one of those people who's thinking about your death arouses you guess you know, maybe should do it, bro. Whoa. You do not know when death will visit you. Oh, it could be you know. Now it could be today. Could be tomorrow next week who knows. And that's a classic reflection in Buddhism is to reflect on death. And the uncertainty of when death will come as a way of arousing healthy energy and motivation to engage in spiritual practice. If reflecting on death makes you depressed, then it's not the right practice for you. But if it arouse you that's one way. JACK kornfield tells the story of having sloth and torpor on retreat and his teacher had him go sit at the edge of on the edge of a well so you know if you're having a problem you see now it seems to be sitting really, really tired and slothful and then you're awake for a while. I don't know if you know i don't know if i recommend that. The No one one person I knew had problems falling asleep. And so he wouldn't got some kind of bowl that's gonna fit in top of his head. And it's kind of maybe a soft one or cough, cough, what isn't a good fit, you know, well up here, and then he put all these marbles inside of it. And then so that if you fell asleep in the meditation hall, everyone would know the bowl fell over the all over the floor. And I don't know what the conclusion of that story was.

But here's a story that I like telling because it's kind of it's so when I was at Tassajara, and they had this big Bell, in the meditation hall, and at someone's job, every meditation session to sit in front of that big Bell, there's a small bell next to it also. And would you sit in front of the big toe, and then the end of the meditation session, you bring a small bell to signal the end of the city. So that was my job for a while. And, and sitting there meditating. And there's a big Bell right in front of me. And if you call us if you fall asleep, forehead, you know, whenever it gets this bell and everyone everybody knew gilla fall asleep because that was not the bell is supposed to ring right now. The small bell, not the big deal. And I was a little bit proud of it enough for that, but a little bit a little bit proud. Maybe it's kind of vanity, or maybe it's, I shouldn't admit my foibles here, but but, you know, so because that one meditation session I did again and I was kind of happy with it was kind of relaxed. The fact that I just blown it in the monastery and everybody knew I'd built it hadn't hadn't gotten me started self conscious that I was, you know, so aroused. I wouldn't do it again.

Find out the grab for small things. sloth and torpor and then there's practical things to do. Some people like to do walking meditation is sloth and torpor is really a big issue is it's hard to have, you know, a lot of thoughts when you're walking, see, walk vigorously, have a physical energy to help carry you and get you going. My teacher in Burma he power walked when he would walk in meditation, you know, literally, and he had this broom specially built next to his little house was kind of like, you know, see, and it was a room built for walking meditation. And it was about this wide. It's like a hallway but didn't go anywhere, you know, just went along the side of the house and he would come back and forth.

Sometimes doing things like washing the hands and face and the neck and the feet with cold water can help become do that before you sit and sometimes it helps to get things going. Sometimes approximating with the eyes open, because usually we meditate with our eyes closed can help some people. Seemingly he could help him sitting in front of strong light sources. So close in front of a bright window or have a light, have it on either the eyes closed, the light comes in, can keep kind of things more, more clarity, they're more alertness. I've heard of the advice I've never done it, of visualizing or imagining like light. Like feeling the mind with white light when you sit is a way of overcoming sloth and torpor.

But remember that the magic stone for the hindrances is confidence. So perhaps when when sloth and torpor is most strong, that what needs to be done is reflection on what brings you confidence where you have confidence, or your lack of confidence and work with Can you have confidence in. And some people, for example, you know, a lot of people, I think, are spiritually starved. And so, sometimes it's really helpful to feed a little bit when it comes to this, you know, sometimes in the Bay Area, we have a spiritual feast. So you don't want to gorge. But you don't want to kind of be too, you know, flighty either. You really want to engage and take it in. And sometimes sloth and torpor is really supported by arousing our inspiration or spiritual inspiration or faith or confidence. And that's part of the value of sitting with other people to be inspired by the possibility of practice. So that's about all I can think about saying let's lock the torpor for today. What do you think? Do you have any questions or comments or do you want to do testimonials around sloth and torpor? Anyway, that's helpful. Yes. Oh yes, it would be good to pass it on. We'll get another mic someday so we won't have to pass it so far. It's almost here.

The two stories you told him

in the in the two stories you told about falling into the well and humiliating yourself with hitting the bell. Seems those are both about fear. Do you have any ways to arouse yourself in the areas of, say, desire

or using desire as an arousal.

Next, you're clearly touching into the, to these aversive feelings on the others. Do you have any going the other direction?

Well, I think that being inspired by the by spiritual possibility, his, his, his spiritual desire can be very healthy. And so you see what's really possible and inspired him you see someone and you meditate with someone, like when I was just story comes to mind when I was in Burma, seeing the 500 women meditators meditating with such dignity and stillness was so inspiring for me, said, Yeah, I can do that too. I can sit that way. It's like, I can do that. And so that feeling of I can do it. And I want to do it can be very healthy and spiritual life, and that can certainly overcome sloth and torpor to spiritual desire. possible to get aroused by other kinds of desire. And I don't know, you know, like I've never done that too, intentionally as a technique to overcome sloth and torpor, but maybe you can have some wonderful sexual fantasy and you you set a timer. I'm only going to do this for three minutes. And when I get the charge, I'm going to let go of it and just sit and meditate. So, you know, does that work? Maybe then used to work with another does they have energy but you haven't you have another hindrance to deal with? But but it was a good question. But what why don't you answer the question? Do you have any experience without using desire?

I was really asking it from the standpoint that I've been very much lately. Thinking about teaching on how each of the things that we do reconditions the reader Birth of that same thing again. Yes. And so to the extent that we use these devices we should be wise and choosing

right. So that

we don't which await our minds in those directions that are not so wise.

Yeah, I think it's good. Now their reflection on death may certainly can arouse fear and unhealthy way on useful way. By reflection on death can also be very arousing and healthy way. And it often is for people I mean, some people in life encounter sickness, old age and death in some very dramatic way. And it really gives them a really, I would say, kind of healthy energy to see but the important have to apply myself I'm not gonna waste time and for some people, maybe it's not healthy.

In that monasteries, they use classically, nutritionally, they use what's called the stick. It's called the cue soko and someone will monitor who's called the monitor will walk around the hall carrying the stick. And it's like a long sword. And if you're falling asleep, whack and just knowing that person is coming around, you know, stay awake. And, and most Zen centers that I know in America have stopped using the stick. But in Japan, when I was there, and they certainly use it there, and for what for in Japan, you would just be given it, you know, whatever. hit you. But within America that you have also the option of asking for it. And I often asked for it, and I found it very useful and helpful to be, it's kind of like almost like, you know, some kind of, you get stuck between a shoulder blade and in the spine. And, and if it's done well, it has a zing to it, but doesn't really hurt. And it's actually quite quite energizing and which was really wonderful.

And, and you know, and so with this, this person be walking around, and I wasn't afraid of the person particularly, but somehow there was a feeling of being accountable. This person was watching in there, and I felt like I wanted to where they felt healthy emotionally, Okay, I'm gonna be more attentive here, be present more, and wake up and when this monitor wasn't there, you know, it wasn't quite this, you know, when apply myself as much we're not going to adopt that here. Yes.

The cue socks It was also good if you were stuck in any state. If you were restless, I found and I asked for it and it would change that. I noticed that Central Los Angeles the monitors would make sure you were awake. They put so you falling asleep they scream.

I thought the news the pulling of the year, and I have been wondering, that's how the Buddha got his long ears. pinching your years of pulling the IRS to get energy.

I found for myself to wake up at a same time every morning reduces sloth and torpor a lot. I have a regular pattern where I become awake. And then the other thing I've noticed about myself is that if I'm in meetings that I'm really not, it could be a seminar, it could be anything. I'll nod off and I think that's psychological. I don't think it's because I'm in another meeting where I'm energized or something I have no problem. But sometimes it's just not there.

Some people are aroused when they're getting praised. And some people are aroused, energized when they're being criticized. But when what's happening and what's being said, has no bearing at all on their ego. They'll get bored and some people you know, their energy depends on how much their ego is being attacked or supported, and if nothing has nothing, no relationship to their ego or their sense of self, and sometimes it's quite ugly that phenomenon. Some people will turn away that I've had not pay attention to people for whom there's no benefit for their ego. But people who, you know, there's egotistical benefit or egotistical danger. They're aroused around those people. Yes.

I'm wondering if you can comment on torpor and the frozen, being frozen. Yeah. Because if there's fear, that can arouse torpor, then there's in confidence is the antidote then when there's the sensation of actually being frozen does that into torpor. You know, how does how do you see that?

I don't know.

What comes to mind is that is that fear is usually categorized as a form of aversion. And if that in any fears really strong it could be certainly frozen quality to it in perfect fear can certainly but you know, fears be frozen the frozen seems to me to be a very energized state even though you know, you know, it's like everything's all the energies flowing into just being locked up. But it isn't like you're relaxed, takes it to a high energized state. So I don't know if that qualifies a sloth and torpor. I don't know. I just see that they can both start a process. Yes, yes. All five of the hindrances can stop the process can stop our presence.

It could be in the last one.

I wonder if are going with intention, clear intention about maybe with clarity or being awake or building confidence or going with clear intention every time. Do you think that would be good? Oh yeah, I think if there's clarity about what we're doing is just understood. No, I think it's good. I think there's clarity but what if there's clarity about what we're doing? It's easier to make the effort. And sometimes sloth and torpor or laziness or lack of application arises because people aren't sure what they're doing, or what they're doing, how they're doing, what the purposes of what they're Doing and so, sometimes greater clarity of purpose needs to be aroused or understood. And, and so to spiritual life on retreat, for example, maybe you need to go to a teacher and talk about it, you know, what do I really what am I really doing here? Why am I here and get that really clear. Some people just have a general kind of general vague idea that's good for them to meditate. You know, and but, you know, then they're not

gonna really apply themselves so well. So have real clarity of purpose is really helpful. The other thing that's

and width is one of the little secrets or treasures of of meditative life is that this applies particularly on retreats but also in daily life, is that the practice unfolds best through the continuity of our best efforts. And the quality of effort goes up and down. Over the day and over, you know, the weeks and months whenever everything is impermanent, everything rises and passes our effort and our energy level goes up and down also. And so we have to be gracious with the ups and downs as they go through our days and months. But But regardless of how much effort and energy is available, if we give it the best energy that's available it's that's what bears fruit over time. So there are a time when you're tired. Energy is not gonna look so good. But it's the best you know, it's the best you can have available. When you're really rested and energized. It's, you know, it's really, you know, dynamite your effort. And that's the best effort. I spent. I suffered a lot a lot on my retreats my by being self critical about my degree of my effort. At times when I was tired, thinking it was a personal failing that I was tired, and I didn't have a good effort there. And eventually what I learned was that it didn't really matter whether I was tired or not. In the long term, what mattered was, I just gave it the best effort that I had. So it wouldn't give up when I was tired. And I wouldn't be rate myself and I was tired, I would just do the best I could, given what I had available. So the continuity of our best effort, there's fruit over time. So, in other words, when sloth and torpor visits you, don't give up. Just keep practicing, do the best you can. So thank you.