

2004-12-05 The Hindrances: Doubt (6 of 6)

Wed, 7/29 1:55PM • 50:34

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

doubt, mindfulness, people, practice, discursive, mind, clarity, teacher, understand, pulled, hindrances, teaching, sitting, thinking, buddhism, important, question, moment, thought, attention

SPEAKERS

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So this Sunday is the last Sunday for covering the series of topics on the, what's called the five hindrances. And trying to introduce the hindrances Today, I'd like to try to make an analogy for you. I used to live up on skyline Boulevard and up in the foothills up here in the coastal range. And when I come down to town, I'd come down to Woodside road, you get kind of a beautiful view at times from there. And authentic oftentimes, the view would be somewhat like today, and you couldn't really see that far off in the distance. It was either smoggy or hazy or cloudy or foggy or something. And but every once in a while, maybe after a rainy day in a windy day. There'll be a spectacular view of the mountains that hills in the East Bay, see right across the bay. And usually it was kind of a shock to see them really that over there. You know, I didn't, you know, good we could spend many, you know, months time not realizing those hills are over there and when it's really clear they can seem really close by even if you'd like it almost part of our environment part of our ecology here. And it's been quite quite exquisite. I had a clarity in the atmosphere of the laws of sea across and see the day a little bit. And so you should enjoy that periodically. And then imagine that you have one of these beautiful days maybe you're driving down from the mountains up there and you see across the bay to the East Bay hills. And it just really exquisite every once in a while. Every few years even be a little bit patches of snow. You could see the distance. I'm not Hamilton and it's really great. And then the mind starts they About could be really great if I could go up to the Sierras this winter. How am I going to manage to that to be great? I wonder where I could stay. I wonder how what kind of skis I could borrow. I wonder how. And pretty soon the mind is in its story of design of thinking about what it wants. And as the mind gets pulled into the stories of desire, it loses touch with a beautiful view that's there because their minds been pulled in on itself. Or you see the beautiful view you're enjoying it. And you've realized the reason why you usually don't see across the day is the smog all those people who drive those cars How could those people know you're driving a car but you know how those people how could they be driving a car and we got to do something with these cars and they use so much gas and the poor people in Fresno they get our smog and this is really you know, and we get pulled into a story of aversion. And it might be some very good discernment going on. But we get pulled into this world of our thoughts our story making. And that view, a crystal clear view, no recedes from attention from presence from being there for it. Or perhaps you just really lethargic, really bored, lethargic, lazy. No wonder she's coming down that mountain, you see the beautiful view, that's nice. It's nice, you know, and the mind just kind of shuts down. You know, it's kind of like a nothing's really important. I don't really have energy for anything, and you hardly even pay attention to it because the mind again, sinks into itself sinks into kind of lack of energy. Or, or you're coming down the hill, you see the beautiful view, that's great. And then the mind doesn't know where to put the pay attention to should I pay attention to the over there, but I need to pay attention to the road. Driving, and but which road and you know, and should I look at my rearview mirror? And I don't even know where I'm going yet if I'm going down the hill, should I go shopping? Or should I go? Exercise should What should I do and the mind is kind of restless and jumping around one, you know, looking

here and looking at that and there's a car going by and there's a beautiful oak tree, just the mind just doesn't settle anywhere. And it can't enjoy the beautiful view because the mind is restless jumps around too much. And then kind of similar restlessness perhaps but a different animal is perhaps coming down that mountain road there is doubt and or indecision or wavering or hesitation and you come down the hill and you're not sure you want to go down the hill.

Or you know, is this really the right thing to do? You know, and you feel hesitation you kind of go into this world of doubt and kind of rumination you know, what's the right thing to do? Should I get back up? Should I put down Should I move to Wyoming, what should I do? Yeah, you know, and so the mind gets lost in another story, and no longer sees the pristine view of these hills and the clarity of the atmosphere. And so these are kind of stories of the five hindrances desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness, agitation, and then doubt and the ways in which we lose a lot we get pulled into another world that's not so productive or useful kind of drains us or disconnects us of something very important. And in particular, in a tradition of Buddhism, mindfulness, these are things that could disconnect us from the clear a clarity of mind, the capacity for the mind, to be clear, to be present to be here right now. And see things and feel things and be present to see what is happening right here in this room. To be alive and present with some vitality some some clarity about where we are. That's always available here. And the smog, the haze of the mind is not something that's caused by other people, but rather has to do with the how we the mood, the activity, the concerns the preoccupations of the mind. And what we've left when we left have the upper hand in our mind, if we let the story making discursive mind have the upper hand will get pulled into it. And things can get really hazy really quickly really smoggy. If we can not live in the discursive mind and get pulled and sucked into it. Then the clarity of the mind, clarity The heart is much more available right here. And one of the very important aspect of mindfulness practice is it Partha tries to help us to pull out of the discursive, the world of discursive thinking It isn't the thinking is bad or wrong. But discursive thinking can be like quicksand. And you get we get pulled into it and it's very hard to get pulled out. And we're pulled into it there's we lose that clarity that minds capacity to be clear. The minds capacities be free, the minds capacity to be fully here in a way that's stress free. It's very hard to do when the mind gets pulled into the world of story making discursive thoughts. So one of the very liberating and very satisfying things of mindfulness practice is when we can learn to shut off discursive thinking doesn't mean you're thinking stops. But story making and thinking and ruminating about things can come to an end. And you can be present in a much more clarity what's happening right here. So doubt, is one of the fuels catalysts for a lot of discursive thinking, as part of the problem of doubt in practice, is that it can create this film this haze over experience. Because we get lost in these stories around indecision. What should we do when I can't do all these things? The word in Pali for doubt is *bhikkhu* teacher. And it has the connotation of wavering of indecision of being agitated. Some people will translate it as skeptical doubt with the with the idea that not all doubt is a problem that all doubt clouds over the mind some doubt some kind of doubting actually can clarify the mind can help us look more carefully see what's going on here. I'm not sure I understand this. Let's penetrate here. But there's skeptical doubt or there's wavering doubt that caused us to hesitate to hold back to get lost in the world of discursive thoughts and it can be a huge hindrance, it said that doubt as one of the hindrances is the most dangerous of the hindrances, more dangerous than desire, or ill will. And part of the reason it said it's the most dangerous is that doubt is what can cause a person to give up their practice. If you doubt your practice, doubt your ability to practice Delta teaching that, you know, okay, I'll do something else. I'll go to the Sierras. Yeah, I don't have to go sit. And that's, you know, well under not practicing will undercut our ability to be to wisely. Engage with the other hindrances.

Because if you stop practicing, you're not going to pay careful attention to when Zaire arises, or ill will arises and then they get you know, he gets in trouble.

So the analogy of the, you know, the clear atmosphere of seeing across the bay, and using that, but the clarity of the mind, for me points to the idea that mindfulness is something very simple. It's not an elaborate technique, applying a lot of elaborate kind of kind of spiritual technology towards our life. But it's just simply noticing what is happening now. Just simply being present for what's happening now, with some clarity, some immediacy, some directness, and have some doubt about mindfulness, the value and importance of just being mindful here, borders on having some doubt about the value of being present for life in general, because being, you know, mindfulness and being present for life are the same thing. And a lot of us don't spend a lot of time being present for life in some quality weigh. And so, to have read out, you know, the value of just being fully present And you know, so doubt.

So doubt has a function of keeping, keeping us unwilling to apply ourselves. It's one of the one of the big, paralyzing aspects of doubt is we can be sitting here wanting to practice won't be mindful, wanting to engage in practice wanting to go and sit. And we have doubts about whether it's useful or whether we can or whatever. And so we don't want to apply ourselves we want to try. We don't feel that the sitting or the mindfulness has any purpose, any value. So why should I do this? I mean, I'm in Thrall in my desire fantasy. Why should I wake up? Why should I pull myself out of that world of discursive thought? That question why as to do in Buddhist terminology is to do without having some doubt about the value have clarity of being present and independent from that discursive quicksand. There's a lot of times doubt is operating, where we wouldn't think of it as doubt. Where it has the function of, we don't understand we don't understand the value of presence. And so, because we understand the value of its tremendous value of it, we think other things have more value. And so we're willing to kind of go off then into other discursive realms or other activities, that pulls us out of being fully present. So, doubt has a function of keeping us from applying ourselves. It also has the function of keeping us a wavering kind of just, you know, kind of agitated, restless. And doubt can be very convincing. The doubt often has to do with a story we tell ourselves. So doubt is not necessarily some something that is innate in the mind. But involves was telling yourself a story. I can't do this, I'm not good enough to do this, I've doubted my ability. I can't do this particular practice, this practice is only meant for great sages of these to live in the Himalayas. And you know, I can't do it. Or this teaching is not so good Buddhism stuff. You know, these Buddhists, they're always talking about no self. And you know, that doesn't make any sense at all. And so because that doesn't make any sense, the whole thing must not make any sense. And so I have a lot of doubt about whether she even show up. And so there's a story that we're interested in wicked cotton. And so it's very important without to investigate and see, what is the story that's behind the doubt. What is the belief and upon what authority do we have that belief? What are we telling ourselves? And there's two things to be done here. One is to question the story. Question two belief. Is it really valid? And the other is to understand that there's a different way of being alive than being lost and discursive thought. And so sometimes we can resolve our doubts are stories. And sometimes we just pull ourselves out of the quicksand. And by pulling us out of the quicksand, we say, Wow, why was I lost there? What was I doing was I thinking, but as long as we're in the quicksand, it's very hard to even see the path out. And so one of the advantages of someone who does a lot of meditation is over time to learn the skill, learning the ability to pull yourself out of story making. So you can get a whole different vantage point of what's going on. Because you're trying to solve your problems. Always from within the world of discursive thought thinking your way out. There's a lot Things are not going to work by thinking your way out. There's a whole other opportunity available. But you step out of thought, going to take a little switch in the mind that maybe could turn off discursive thinking or use the mindfulness of clear seeing to kind of shift the, the focus of where you're residing out of thought or discursive thinking, to clear seeing in the first category of kind of resolving the issues, looking at what we believe looking at the stories, it can be useful to, it's very useful to do that there is a time and place for that. And so for

example, studying the Dharma more, if you have doubts about the Dharma about the practice, study more, understand what you're doing.

Maybe there's a good reason why you have doubt. Maybe you don't haven't really understood. The basic premise. The idea is the teachings of the Dharma well enough to really want to apply yourself. If you don't haven't understood the instructions for practice well enough. So you have reasons to have doubt. What you know, what should I do here? And how should I do it? And, you know, when should I do it? All kinds of questions. So sometimes doubt is resolved by learning more, or going coming talking to a teacher and exploring with a teacher This is my doubts is what I don't know. Is there something you can help me with? The teacher says, Oh, yeah, it's really easy. You should sit 40 minutes every day. You know, Oh, okay. That's easy. And sometimes in investigating or thinking, it can be helpful to realize that some of the things we're interested in are not very, are not spiritually helpful. Things to think about. It's the Buddha said that one of the primary causes for doubt is thinking about It what he called inappropriate attention or unwise thinking, paying attention to the wrong things. And oddly enough, perhaps for Buddhism is focused so much on not self. One of the things that's considered to be unwise thing to reflect on, is to think too much about yourself, about the nature of yourself, who am I? Who was I in the past? Who will it be in the future? All kinds of thoughts have to do with self that's in the current is sometimes kind of a dead end. It's kind of like in this maze or in the quicksand. And so even the Buddhism has tremendously profound teaching on itself, to be thinking about it too much. Thinking about the self too much, is a dead end. And so it says, Don't you know, it, you will have a lot of doubts. If you try to figure out the metaphysical self, is there self is there no self, don't think about that. The not self teaching in Buddhism is not meant to be something to be understood with your thinking. And you're thinking about it, look out, we might not be able to pull you out of the quicksand. They're not self teaching is it's a, it's a teaching about something you'll see if you can stop seeing things through the filter of your thinking has to do with something you see, not something you believe. So, the Buddha said it's inappropriate to think a lot about self that can be a dead end. So anyway, so certain things that certain kinds of things are not useful. Think about it useful just to drop them. Other things are useful to think about. And one of the things that Buddha said was useful to think about or to address or look at, was to look at, where is the tension? Where is the observation? Where is the stress in the psyche, in the heart and the mind and body right now. And if you can see right now where that is, and then learn the wise way of attending to that stress, then you have the opportunity to look beyond the stress to where that clear view is to learn to let go of that, and that's a lot simpler, then metaphysical questions about self and who am I? Who am I not? Rather, where's the stress? Where's attention, where's the suffering? So there's certain things that can be clarified by studying the Dharma talking to teachers exploring with Dharma friends. And it's useful to resolve doubts. And then there's a whole other area resolving doubts, which happens with applying ourselves more fully in the practice. And one of the things to do with doubts, if you feel adaptive on practice, if you can, don't believe it. Don't let it have the upper hand that keeps you from making the effort to practice it can be there in the background. But go pesky fly. But don't listen to it. Just say okay, I'm going to everyday my commitment is to sit meditate every morning, I'm going to do it, I'm going to do it even though I have some doubts whether this is really the right morning. It's kind of cold, it's cozy in bed. You know, I don't really think that it's gonna have much value. This particular morning, to sit. That kind of train of thought is a movement of doubt. We have some doubt about its value.

One of the ways to deal with doubt is when we see it is to not buy into its messages to its commands, and just kind of go ahead and do it anyway. Apply oneself. Another way of dealing with it is to practice mindfulness Asana to look at it very intently. And to see it for what it is. This is doubt If you can be if your ability to see is stronger than your ability to, if your ability to see is stronger than the doubts ability to see you, then you have the upper hand. But it's voices, the authority of doubt is stronger than the

authority of your observation. You get pulled into the doubt. And that's one of the things we're trying to do in mindfulness is to have a greater power in observation than the power that other things have over us. So that we get pulled into this beautiful state of seeking clarity. So that the you know, the breeze comes through and clears out the fog so we can see the hills the other side, as opposed to kind of living continually in the smog. So we're constantly trying to develop our capacity to be present and to see so becomes a strength of power that we can have with us. And it's really phenomenal. How amazing how strong the ability to see can become. And even in my even myself, practices for a long time, I can see the power of it kind of waned in wax to some degree because it's not it's always a constant. You know, once you have it, you have it, but rather comes and goes to some degree. And I'm still amazed, you know, at times when my clarity is really strong. And I'm also amazed at times when it's not. It comes and goes, but you know, when we've The more you practice, the more becomes kind of second nature and more kinds of muscle that's always there. A resource which is readily available, close it close by.

It said that doubt is also in the arsenal of the ego's attempt to protect itself. That one of the one of the challenges that happens with Claire seeing it as we start seeing more clearly, we tend to see how our self centeredness operates. And there's also a self centeredness as a kind of neurotic tendency has many different manifestations. One of them for example, is trying to build up a sense of self, to show other people to order protect a sense of self, image of ourselves self image, for example. And when there's enough clear seeing, the trap of self image is seen as a trap is seen as something which is not serving oneself. They're not very useful to have. It's not you're not very free. And so when you see the possibility of living without self image or without defending oneself in some neurotic way, we're building up a sense of self neurotic way, then sometimes the mind will send up a lot of doubt, often fueled by fear, Oh, you don't have to do that. It's really important to have a sense of self. That's what the therapists say, strong sense of self. And you're supposed to have a strong sense of self. But, you know, you can if you start pulling up all these good reasons, they're not really good reasons about why you're not supposed to let go of this. And so sometimes doubt is a movement of the ego, egotism, to protect itself from that clarity. That is undefended. That kind of clarity with a clear atmosphere you see clearly right through it. I think so for me, so beautiful. It's kind of like a clear window is something really well cleaned, and you can't see through the window. You don't even know it's there. Sometimes people run into doors. You know, sliding doors because glass doors could they don't seem there. But it's not you know, when you see that they're when mindfulness when presence is, is strong. When the heart is really open, it's kind of like the mind is become so transparent that you don't see it. But the glass is still there, right? The mind is still there, but it's so transparent, you don't see it. But if you don't see it, it doesn't do me any good does it? You can't either you know you. So, when you learn to trust, that kind of transparency, that kind of emptiness, of mind of seeing where it doesn't have to have anything in it is a part of the psyche, that part of awareness that doesn't have to be contracted or related to anything, or concerned about anything preoccupied anything, but just kind of like who we are. As an experience, so who we are experientially, in the moment right now is as empty as empty space, as empty is a clear window, that you can't see the windows even there. That's very frightening. Because all the usual reference points that we have for who we are and what we think we need and what we need to protect ourselves from, is absent in that kind of clarity in that kind of kind of emptiness. So doubt is one of the things that comes up as a as a protection against relaxing into that emptiness into that clarity. Oh, no, this is not safe. I shouldn't do it. I'm not ready. Some other time and be good.

So doubt will visit everyone who practices I think you should take that for granted. It's not a personal failing, that doubt arise arises. But it is something to be recognized and seen clearly for what it is so that it doesn't limit us. And in looking at how it limits us or repeat one thing I said before, and that is doubt doesn't always doesn't always look like some active kind of wondering, is this accurate? Or is this

true or not true or having some formal doubt. But it can simply be the form of not understanding the value that's possible not understanding the tremendous possibility potential that the practice has to offer. So we don't give ourselves as free The over to it as we have a bit as we have the ability to do it. Because you don't we don't understand what's, how powerful it actually is. Do not trust or have confidence in how radically we can be transformed through the practice, because we're in because we don't understand how radically we can we can be transformed. We can be liberated, then we hold back. We don't try. We hold back and then it's easier to get hooked by the other hindrances by desire and ill will, those are really important to do pursue those things.

So the last thing to say about doubt, as a as a spiritual hindrance In the Buddhist path, the fundamental doubt is doubt about what is and is not the path. And it's and it's quite reasonable to have doubt about what is and isn't the path until the person has really tasted the fruit of what the path has to offer. If a person's never practiced or never tasted the fruit to the benefit that can come with a practice, then it makes sense to have doubt because you haven't seen it yet. You don't really know for your for yourself that this leads to certain fruit, certain benefits. And so initially, there has to become some act of faith, I suppose, goodwill, faith But oh this is worthwhile to do. But as a person engages in spiritual practice, it's useful to begin appreciating the benefits that are coming through the practice, the fruits that are coming. So you recognize, oh, these actually, this path is on we're leading the path works. And that's seeing the benefits of the, of the path can happen in one moment of mindfulness. We see it a moment of mindfulness, the mind is not caught. The mind is free. Oh, that's what freedom is like. I know what freedom is like. Even that moment briefly. I think that's the direction the path goes. Remaining caught is not the path. If I continue thinking about or continue the clinging and holding on tight to whatever it isn't holding on tight to the path is not found in cleaning. Some people clinging to Buddhism, cling to Buddhism, there's no Buddhist path there. But if you've tasted the fruit of what it's like to have a mind a heart, which has released itself from holding, then you know the fruit, and you know what the path is about. And that experience of release, that experience of freedom can happen in small little moments in a day, and it can happen in really big ways, very dramatically. So they really get your attention, some, you know, like, you'll never be the same again. But to begin seeing the benefits, and I think, for people who practice mindfulness, one of the things I'm very keen on trying to get across is that a moment of mindfulness is a moment of freedom, or a moment of mindfulness is valuable in and of itself. A moment of mindfulness is valuable in and of itself. I've known people who practice mindfulness, and they're measuring the success of their mindfulness or the purpose of the mindfulness. But what it was going to do in the future, if I get really practice a lot, they're going retreats a lot. If I, you know, do a lot, a lot, a lot is mindfulness. Then eventually, I'll have so much concentration, such strong mindfulness eventually. Something wonderful happen. And I've known people who've had that approach. And I've gotten bitter. That practice and practice on retreats. I didn't submit her says, If sitting was the point, chickens would be enlightened.

And, and so a lot of people got actually bitter because they've kind of had this kind of thinking they're always putting something in the future the benefit looking waiting for something to happen. And they never learned how to appreciate the value of each moment of mindfulness. This moment right here, paying attention, noticing what's happening here. It takes a while to really learn that it's not so obvious initially, perhaps, but each moment. And there can be greater benefits down the line. By practicing and going retreats and practicing regularly, building, concentration, buildings, power of mindfulness, there are things benefits, they're quite different. That can happen down the line, or both are true. But if you understand the value of moment by moment, then you're never going to be bitter. Because, you know, I never attained some great enlightenment. I'm not the next Buddha. But I had a good time along the way. Each moment was good. Each moment, if you really understand the value of one moment of

mindfulness, perhaps you'll not be pleased. By doubt, are sucked into it. So those are my thoughts. We have a couple of minutes. If any of you would like to express any doubts this would be a good time.

Thank you, Betsy. Thanks, Gil. I'm one of those people that wakes up in the morning and thinks that it'd be really nice to stay in bed instead of meditate for 30 or 40 minutes. And so if I'm, if I'm thinking that every moment is a moment of mindfulness and that has value just in itself, I would think that if I just laid in bed, and you know, notice how comfortable The bed is. Did I wouldn't need to sit for the 40 minutes. Great. To me, it's kind of helpful to think that I'm trying to get somewhere, otherwise I just stay in bed. I say that's a very nice, I think the, the, the, I think that's why it's useful to have both understandings together, understanding the value of mindfulness in the moment, and also understanding of some processing goal that's into the future, the benefits we're going to have. I've known lots of Buddhists and I saw in Japan a lot, where they have certain kind of philosophy that lead to that kind of rationalization. Everything I do is practice. So I don't have to really practice. I don't have to sit I don't do anything. And, and, you know, everything is practice, but, but, you know, if you're sitting, you're sitting around kind of drinking your sock, you're picking your nose. You know, it's, you know, I'm sure it could be great practice, but you know, if it's rationalized by saying everything's practice therefore I'm not going to really so one of the things to do is present situation to situation like yours is to do a trial and error approach, experiment a little bit, take a three month period and be totally dedicated for three months to get up and sit every morning no matter what just do. It's kind of like your unless your house is burning or something you know, you get up and sit and then after three months stop and then take a few weeks and just stay in bed, linger just stay in bed until 11 you know. Make sure you have your make sure you have your your espresso coffee machine next to your bed with a timer it goes on at 1030 which is right there. You pull it out, you know and have a dog and get the paper and you have to get out of bed and you know, just Just do it. Do it. really well for a few weeks, and then and then compare, which overall which helps you the best in your life. And my guess is the sitting in the morning getting up and really sitting on a regular basis. If you do long enough, like three months, you realize actually in the bigger picture is actually much healthier and better brings you more happiness and well being. Then what happens if you're lingering bed, lingering in bed provides comfort and happiness in the moment, but not in some bigger picture for our lives. And that's a sense that's that first hindrance of desire or attachment to sensual desire attachment to comfort, which is such a big hindrance to to discovering this greater benefit. To make sense, it's kinda right there good. Let me know. Next Wait, wait for the mic. If you don't mind. Please.

You seem to be emphasizing practicing in the morning and that just doesn't seem to suit me so well I kind of want to have practice like do it in the evening. Would you talk about that a little bit? I think I think that different people have different styles or different things that works for their system. And I think I think most people find is works best to sit first thing in the morning or early in the morning. You know, some point when before the busyness of the day has kicked in. But there are some people who think that doesn't work. Sitting in the evening is fine. I think the regularity is important. Sitting the evening which works for your schedule who you are your psyche or there's an advantage of sitting in the evening. The when I do both, I find it's nice to do both. But the advantage of sitting in the evening or late afternoon is it actually helps sometimes can help process what happened during the day. And then you go to sleep Sleep doesn't have to process it. speak more deeply.

We have two mics now. Teaching definitely be accepted comments because of the person who's sharing the Dharma that I pick up on some mixed motives and that person I think I do or judgmental in some way. It's not the right chemistry or something. And then I have doubts about teaching. Yeah. So doubt about the teaching because of the nature of the person who's giving the teaching. So what you're saying is about right response. And so that's an interesting thing. So sometimes it's Completing,

collecting erotic to doubt the teacher. You know, it's nothing, nothing to do with a teacher at all, just all this projection that goes on that can happen. And sometimes it's completely accurate. Is that guy, you know the gal talking about hypocritical and I mean, I don't know enough Buddhist teachers who've gone to their students and said it was very important you don't sleep around. Absolutely not sleep around. They were sleeping around. You know, what's that about? You know, do you listen to that kind of advice for someone? So I think it's important to trust a little bit yourself. I remember hearing a tape some years ago of a spiritual teacher, it wasn't really a Buddhist one. And he kind of he kind of kind of coat kind of it was a Hold very strong, very strong cold. And someone gave me his tape to listen to his talk. And I got almost nauseous listening to it. I feel so terrible. And part of the reason was that some of the things he said seems so Munich glitter, so horrible to have someone say, and other things I could he said I can imagine myself saying, and that's what made me nauseous. Was was Oh, no, I listened to it. I don't think I ever want to teach again. No. And so there, you know, there can be a lot of good mixed in, you know, what can be. I think it's always good to have some, there's a healthy kind of doubt of any teacher, even the best teacher, I think, you know, I think there's there's a very, I think it's very respectful of a teacher. To be questioning the teacher teacher says, and not take what the teacher says as being the truth, but rather kind of engaging and questioning in your own mind. Is this really accurate? Do I understand that there's a way to doing that, which is not skeptical doubt, which is not a hindrance, I think it's actually a respectful thing to do, to question. And if you do that kind of questioning, and you can go to the teacher and the teacher can be part of that questioning, then maybe you're in a safe place. Even the teacher is a little bit off. Because the teachers in process also the teacher is willing to be in process. But if you have questions about the teaching community teacher, and the teacher is not willing to engage you, then maybe it's not it's not a safe place to be. So So, you know, go talk to the teacher and say, you know, I have these doubts, doubts about you. If you don't say you have doubts, you can't tell a teacher you have doubts, but a teacher, I would say it's not a safe teacher to be with. And it's good to test it. It's also good to test teachers. People don't test me here very much. Maybe because I haven't told you you're supposed to. But just to kind of poke a little bit and see, you know, see when the teacher kind of You know, see when the teacher kind of fails. And, and, and then there's a phenomena of seeing that teachers have shortcomings. And, and realizing that in spite of those shortcomings that teacher has some good teach. Teach means is there some usefulness there? And so okay, well, I'll go and tune into or use adopt what is useful here? and what doesn't seem to be useful here because of these shortcomings. I think I'll let go. And I think that, you know, my assumption is, you know, pretty much all teachers have some kind of shortcoming. And so there has to be some wisdom about how to relate to those shortcomings. And, you know, those shortcomings enough for us to kind of run out the door screaming or as a shortcoming, something that we can just kind of say well Hopefully he she's working on that. And I just, you know, when they gave advice about parenting,

I won't listen to that. Because he didn't seem to know what he's talking about. But you know, maybe know some of the things. The when I remember when I went when I was meant to stay with my first stem teacher when I first got there to the place, I immediately got the sense that I couldn't approve this person's lifestyle. Somehow their lifestyle teacher was leading I couldn't approve them. But I thought, oh, but I but I think I can learn Zen from this person. And because I made that distinction. I don't know. I don't know if it was a wise distinction to have made. I'm not saying was a wise, wise distinction to have made. Maybe I should have made that distinction. That way a person conducts their lives needs to have some harmony with what the teachings are about. But I made that distinction. And because I made a distinction that protected me to some degree when the teacher had a great big scandal, because I already knew I couldn't quite trust the teacher in certain areas, or in other years I could. So that's, that's my thoughts right now. It's a great question. It's a huge paragraph. Good question. Hey, weren't listening.

Last one. The last one. Reason I do that I often do that as the last one. And mostly the reason I do that maybe I don't have to But sometimes we're running late. I think people can kind of restless. They have their total. This is the last one, they can relax and Oh yes, it's under, it's under control. I said, Listen, you know, there's one more thing and then I can go I'm not, you know, in four separate person asking the last question. Again, you can't win. One of the things that you said is hopefully you'll remove all discursive thought there'll be this place where you won't have that. And for me, one of the questions that comes up around the hindrances is, if I'm paying attention, I noticed some form of hindrance in almost every moment that I'm experiencing. I can experience so I'm liking this I'm not liking that. I'm kind of feeling some doubt here. You know. And what you said today for me, really brings up a lot of my own self doubt, doubt right now, I'm experienced that in my life right now. I haven't been sitting as often every day. Having doubt, you know, and questioning whether I should be introduced teaching introduction, because, you know, I'm not sending as much, you know, so I feel like oh, well, therefore, I'm not worthy. I don't have anything to share. And I can notice myself pulling back, withdrawing. And so one of the things that comes through why you said that as well, yeah, you know, it's, it's sort of goes to this young lady's point, too, you know, it's like, a Dharma teacher will come there Buddhist monk, and they'll talk about, you know, they're practicing. And I compare myself as a household with that, and I think, Oh, you know, that's not gonna happen. And so, the, I think, what I'm really enjoying what you're saying today, Gil is like, just keep remembering to notice that keep coming back to what's happening. Okay. Yeah, I'm really having some doubt here. I'm really questioning myself. Does that mean I should stop, you know, or should I, you know, do something else or should I just sort of continue You forward, continue forward, keep sitting. Okay, start over five minutes 10 to 15 minutes, whatever, you know and see what the fruit of that is. So, you know, every time regardless of the teacher, there's something there for me, right? If I pay attention to it, and I'm honest with myself. So thanks for that. Thank you. A couple of things. I feel like saying in response, one is that I think it's easy for some people to have kind of a I know what the right word is here moralistic idea about what it means to be sitting every day that you're supposed to be sitting every day and you're bright, you're really good Buddhist, if you're sitting every day, and if you're not, you know, and if you're not sitting every day, you're not really doing it right and whatever. I know some teachers who don't sit every day, you know, there's other there's various ways in which the path can unfold. In developer people, what's required is honesty about how our path is unfolding developing. But if you're if you have a lot of doubts about the value of mindfulness, then probably you shouldn't be teaching people on mindfulness. Because then I am probably in your voice interviews kind of the way you say it, it's not going to really be very convincing. You know, people don't understand the real value. So if you have doubt about the mindfulness practice, then don't. But if you but if you're a lot of faith and confidence in it, just like for some reason, you're not getting on the cushion. We're not doing it. But your confidence is there, because you've tasted the fruit in the past, then we can look, you know, I wouldn't be moralistic about it. I would then look honestly at your life and the phase of your life, what you're doing and what needs to happen right now. And, and be very careful in the moment, not to be caught by that though. Which is what you said.

Well, it's 11 o'clock and you seem kind of attentive usually by 11 o'clock people that kind of like this a topic, touch the cord. Yeah. So. So anyway, I have doubts about stopping.

So it is. So anyway, thank you very much