

2006-09-04 The Eightfold Path: The Way of Harmlessness

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SPEAKERS

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What I like to talk about this evening is the Eightfold Path. And part of the reason for doing this is that on the monthly Friday, what we call Dharma practice days. Over the next 10 months or so, we're gonna go over the Eightfold Path. And it happens to be the first step of the Eightfold Path is right view. So this coming Friday, that's the topic we'll take. And this evening, I'm like just wanting to do kind of a broad introduction to the Eightfold Path. In preparation for that, probably many of you will come because it's Friday in your work or something. But then so so talk about the introduction today, within as we go through the year. Very quickly, I will give talks here Monday night on the different steps they thought that so those of you who don't come to their practice day I'd be interested in coming to that. Come here. So, the Eightfold Path is the classic and most common way that the Buddha described the spiritual life that he was teaching the spiritual path, the spiritual discipline that he was teaching. And he had, you know, he taught for 45 years, and he was a very creative teacher. And so he had other ways of talking about practice than that. But he kept coming back over and over again to this eightfold path is very first it was recorded as being his first sermon that he gave. He talked about the Eightfold Path. And just before he died, the last person he gave teachings to he also talked about the Eightfold Path. And in the middle, he talked about infopath he was really central. So And it's important to look at the Eightfold Path. If you're interested in expanding your practice, beyond simple meditation practice, in a meditation practice that we do here with IMC is a wonderful practice the mindfulness practice. And it's very happily can be practice independent of Buddhism. And I'm very happy that people practice it independent of Buddhism. There's no need to be a Buddhist. And has, there's a lot of benefits from it. Not the least of which, but this that's very popular these days. It's a kind of a form of stress reduction. And it's good for your health, and all kinds of recently I read a study on meditation, and it was it was it was a kind of literature review of the interface between meditation and psychotherapy, or psychology. And they say that among Kind of therapeutic interventions. More research has been done on meditation than any other psychological intervention. So there apparently, and there's been over 400

studies, kind of, you know, academic studies on meditation, and some of those has been influenced meditation has on health. And there's been over and over again, all kinds of evidence that meditation helps help. So if you will practice it for health reasons, for distressing reasons, people practice it for psychological reasons to help them with their psychology with their anxiety or some issue they have. And all of these are wonderful. The Buddha was not teaching, merely stress reduction. And he was not just simply teaching how to overcome our psychological hang ups and difficulties. Unless you understand that everyone has a psychological hang up and Buddhist point of view, everyone has a DD you know, you sit down to meditate and, you know, the evidence Attention Deficit here. And or the other thing is everyone is in the Buddhist point of view everyone's an addict and addiction you know, it's the drive for desire and wanting is what is sometimes what propels the wandering mind. And so if any of you noticed your mind was wandering during this last sitting, then it was under the influence of desire, you could extend a little bit and say to the demise, addicted to its thoughts with the ideas that are there. So the Buddha was more than in teaching how to overcome psychological, you know, you know, problems we have more than just kind of bringing us to normal kind of status quo kind of psychological health. But the Buddha saw what he had to teach as being a radically transformative path. And he was looking for a very radical transformation of the people he was teaching towards teaching to. And, and you probably can't underscore enough, the radicalness of the transformation, the total otherness of that transformation, if you realize how much the human beings are driven by greed, by desire, or by ill will and hate, and how much our minds are somehow triggered by these factors and over and over again, in the subtle ways of daily life and also the groceries you read about in the newspaper. You realize, you know, how prevalent desire and ill will are in the human parts. And the Buddha was talking about a radical change Transformation of that, to uproot those forces of desire or greed or clinging, and Ill will, so that clinging or craving, or ill will or hatred has no place in the heart, the heart is purified and freed of that. And what the human condition is like, when it's freed of greed and hate, and, and also that we talk about confusion or delusion is you know, you could call it kind of like a experience of grace. It's not a Buddhist term grace, but it's really a wonderful experience of peace, of well being of happiness, of sense of coming home a sense of rightness, a sense of Buddhism, we talked about the liberation by radical liberation. So when the Buddha talks about his path, what he had to teach was, he was actually focusing on radical transformation of the human being There were people who listened to him, who were very deeply inspired by this, so deeply inspired, they decided to, to devote their life to this possibility of transformation. And so they left the they left their life as they knew it. They left the profession. Some of them left their families, for better or worse. But they left their life that lay low, it's called the lay life and became monastics became monks and nuns, to devote themselves supposedly hundred percent to this life of transformation. So they could really attain or realize this possibility of purification or liberation. So he was talking about something very profound and very powerful. And the most common way he talked about that to do that was the Eightfold Path that was the integrated approach. So whether your person is a lay person or a monastic, the Eightfold Path is meant to describe a way in which we include all Have ourselves in this path of liberation, if that's what you want, if you want to kind of, you know, follow that possibility of transformation, and you want to make it the central thing of your life. And so that, then, you know, the question is, well, how can I make? Make it central? How can I integrate or encompass or include all

me in this task? You know, here's the weekend Buddhist, which is quite wonderful. But, you know, that's only, you know, two sevenths of your week. And then what we know if you do seven days a week, you know, this is what really what your life is centered on. as some people say. You could very, very wisely and very appropriately and nicely, ask the question, How can I include Buddhism or Buddhist practice into my life? That's a nice question. People ask me that, you know, or you could ask how do I include my life into my Buddhist practice. And the second question, how do I include my life, my life into Buddhist practice means that Buddhist practice is kind of like the foremost thing that your life is about is oriented. It's organized around that. That's what your life is about. And then the question is, how is it your daily life, your relationships, your work, kind of plays into that thing. So both are wonderful options. But, but there is a possibility of this choosing to make, you know, something like the path of liberation, the central thing your life is about. And then the question is, what keeps you from doing that if you're inspired by it? And it's an interesting question, people have fear. People feel that's not appropriate, or people feel I don't want to give up these other things that I love to do. They're very important for me. And so I need to kind of do some of that Buddhist stuff, but I can't do all of it. I have to kind of, so there's a negotiation or consideration or questioning what's the balance that we have. And But anyway, the Eightfold Path is a way of attempting to integrate our whole life, all aspects of who we are into the path. So I know for those of you who've never heard this before, I haven't told you what the Eightfold Path is yet. So just bear with me. The so there are many ways of understanding the present moment, in the present moment now is one of the central things that people associated with meditation practice are going to be in the present moment, wake up in the present moment. Discover the beauty, the richness, the freedom is possible in the present moment. And a lot of training is about coming into the present moment coming into the present moment. And a lot of the trainings that because the mind often doesn't want to stay there, wanders away, so you have to come back in with time you could cultivate the capacity to stay present. In this academic article on psychology and meditation, it quoted William James who's kind of like the father of American psychology. And he said that some some too badly misquote him, I can't remember it right now. But something like one of the greatest, one of the greatest factors are most important factors for creating psychological health is the capacity for attention. Unfortunately, he said, we have no way of developing and developing and strengthening our capacity for attention. So he was writing 100 years ago. And, and so, I think there are Western disciplines that for centuries have been teaching, dropping of attention. It's not a unique thing to Buddhism. But I think nowadays in the modern West, it's there's people are very familiar with our capacity, develop. Moment attention. So we have, you know, certainly Buddhist meditation, we have all kinds of meditation and all kinds of techniques. So as a ways of cultivating, increasing our capacity, stay present, stay here. this present moment is very important. And there's many ways of analyzing the present moment to what is in the present moment which present moments like, and for this purposes of this talk, I'd like to say that the present moment comprises of two things. It's not supposed to be, you know, all encompassing, you know, final word in the present moment, two things. There's the present moment of what is what actually is going on in the present moment. And there's a potential that's found in the present moment, the potential for how the present moment can move into and develop into the future, which direction if you go like the present moment, is what it is, but it also is a gate or a fork in the road towards many different possibilities. And you can take many different

routes many different directions from this present moment here. If you're sitting in traffic, and it's bumper to bumper traffic, and that's the present moment. And you could either take the route of impatience and irritation, or you could take them the route of relaxation and peace are many other routes as well. Or distraction, you can turn off the radio, turn on your cell phone. There's many different routes you could take from that present moment being in traffic. And the different routes you take are consequential. If you take the route the irritation and impatience, then your tension is going to build up you're probably reinforce your irritation you probably arrived where you're going to get to a little more upset than you were when you left. If you take the route of cultivating peace and relaxation that goes different direction if you cultivate the path of distraction, distracting yourself from what's going on, then you're cultivating a different direction for your psyche, for your mind for your being. So the present moment is what it is. And then there's a potential, all the different possible directions, you can go with the present moment. There's many different directions you can go. So Buddhist practice involves a deeper understanding of the present moment, connecting to it being present for it. And having a vision. Being a visionary, about what's possible, what route you can take, seeing the present moment, and seeing it being the sense of the potential, the possibility inherent in that present moment of where you can go, what can happen next. And that can be in the short term, you can see that this moment right here. You feel yourself tends to shoulders a tight and your great visionary capacity teaches you tells you that it is possible To relax the shoulders. If you have a vision, oh, I can have vision, I can have visual, I can imagine my shoulders being relaxed. And so you let go. Or it can be some more long term vision, where you realize that, you know, I could relax my shoulders in the moment. But what I'm also doing by relaxing my shoulders is I'm cultivating attention and building up the strength of attention, and the strength of letting go. And the building of momentum is strengthen that can help me down the line to really deal with some of the deepest ways in which the mind is clutched, gripped, held, braced. So Buddhist practice requires a vision, or imagination. And, in a sense, we're all meant to be visionaries. Now, some of us are visionaries per excellence and that's the problem. You know, What present moment. I'm too busy, you know, imagining the futures are planning, you know, the future planning, planning, planning, some people sit down to meditate and only notice that they plan you know, the visionary capacity has gone haywire. So you have to be a little bit you know, so but the idea is to have both, and then to do it in a healthy way, that some sense of vision is important. So, when the Buddha taught the Eightfold Path, it begins with having a vision, and he called this right view. And that right view of the of the all the eight steps need for path. The right view is perhaps the most important because it's the right view, which shows you or tells you informs you how the other seven steps are to be done. The right understanding The right vision of what you're doing. So, the eight steps are right view. right intention or disposition. Right. Speech, right action, right livelihood, right. effort, right. Mindfulness and right concentration and the word right turns some people off you know it's this can be oppressive. Like right right have to get it right. The word summer can also mean proper sorts right in the sense of the right tool. If you want to, if you want to slice your bread, the right tool is a bread knife. Not a, not a you know, certainly not a spoon. You know, or a doll knife or something you're eating either you know, you Want to get the right tool? We used to say that expression English the right tool and the proper tool. So there's this, you know, there's a right way or proper way to practice having vision and intention, having speech and action in the world, having

livelihood, having effort, having mind, mindfulness and having concentration. And there's also can be improper ways of doing that could likely call the wrong, wrong view, wrong intention. So this differentiation, you know, to the present moment is the present moment and there's a there's a fork or a gate to all kinds of different directions in our life. And we could take something taking responsibility for what direction may go, or we could not. And if we don't, then chances are we're just led around by our noses by our own way. And desires and fears and hatreds, or the things that the world around us wants us to behave, how the world around us wants us to behave. There are people in America who are paid a lot of money, and lots of money to influence what you do. And they're really good at it. Otherwise, they won't get paid so much. They win elections. You know, they get us to buy things, we don't need all kinds of stuff. So who is in charge of your mind? Are you or is Madison Avenue? You were the politicians. You know what it Who is it though your neighbors or your friends or your spouse or who is it that's in charge? And that's, I think, a very important question. Whereas one of the big shocks to me when I was doing Living in a Buddhist monastery was to realize how much I was driven by wanting to be liked. And, you know, some degree, it's okay to want to be like, but you can be neurotic about it. And I noticed I only noticed it because it was so painful to be constantly driven and constantly trying to maneuver doing this social gymnastics to get people to like me. And when I do it living that way, is you're giving up giving up my freedom. I was letting other people and since I was handing my responsibility myself to other people, I was letting them be the arbitrators of my well being by what they thought of me. So it's not taking responsibility here. So this idea of right is important because right Right vision, right view is dependent on having vision of a goal or direction of a possibility. And it's not a right tool unless you know what the job is you're trying to do. So what is the job we're trying to do? In the footpath, what's the job the Buddha wants us to do. So we know what the right tool is, if only So, what the Buddha was the what the Buddha was trying to teach. He tried to explain in a variety of different ways, his goal but he over and over again. Try to say it as simply as he possibly could. In sometimes in the simplicity of it, people It's too simplistic. But the simplest way he talked about the goal of this spiritual life as he was teaching it, is to become free of suffering. to liberate ourselves from the forces of suffering. So right, is that which liberates us from suffering that which moves us in a direction becoming free of suffering. There's another way of saying this, which he also talked about, which I think maybe is a little more profound, or more encompassing or provocative, and that is that the path is the path of becoming harmless. Not causing harm, either to both to ourselves and to others. And the goal of liberation is the goal of becoming a harmless person. A person who doesn't cause harm to oneself or to others. So, that kind of wording points to the idea that we have some responsibility. It's about changing us in some way, so that we don't act from hatred or cruelty or ignorance, or do some kind of way desire, you know, that somehow interferes with the happiness of self or other. If you start paying attention to yourself, you'll start noticing that certain tendencies of the mind certain habits, a certain intention, certain actions that we live by, cause us we harm ourselves in the process of doing that. So if, if you are again, example in the freeway, and you're in traffic, and you notice yourself starting to get irritated and impatient, and then someone cuts you off and your anger goes up even more so yelling at the Doing things with your fingers and all kinds of you know things that if you didn't stop and look at yourself you'll notice that you're hurting yourself in that process. You're harming yourself. You're getting stressed you're getting contracted and tense times

tight. You know you're getting hot. Some ways you're hurting or if you notice yourself sometimes when you're in the grip of desire I took my son to eight year old son to a ballgame today minor league ball games bargain said Jose and you know, they don't have a lot of concession stands and minor a level baseball. But is he just wanted, wanted wanted. Can we have this kind of that kind of how can I this and I looked at him and This can't be pleasant for him. You know there's pain there. Just the one thing is painful. So the goal is a goal to become homeless, yourself and to others. So the path so what's the path to becoming harmless? The path is the means is found in the goal or the goal is reflected in the means. So, if the goal is to be harmless, then the means has to be steps towards harmlessness or expressions of harmlessness themselves. So, it will I'll explain that a little bit more in a couple of minutes. But the so if what you want to do is to become a person who is harmless. And it's a great thing to do because if you can stop causing suffering to yourself, you will experience unimaginable peace, happiness will be. It's awesome to compare the human capacity for peace and well being and compassion and love. It's just that Buddhist tradition calls it boundless. If we could stop harming ourselves, stop standing in the way of that hindering possibility. So if that's what you want to do, then the Buddha said, this is the path you can follow. These are the these are the things you can do to go in that direction. If you have other things you want to do with your life, then maybe there are different paths to take from the present moment. different choices you can make. But if you want to work, what you want to do is go towards this harmlessness so this piece, this freedom from suffering, these are the steps to take. So the first one is a right view, having the right vision, the right understanding the right orientation, the right way of finding the path. And there's two primary things that would have said about right view. One is that right view, entails an understanding of what he called karma. Another way of saying this, is entails understanding, that in appreciation, that in the world of suffering, and freedom from suffering, is our contribution to suffering and the fruit of suffering, that we want to understand the effects want to do is follow the path to freedom to become harmless. Don't waste your time. Or I say be careful what I say here. Don't get lost or distracted by assigning blame to other people. If you're suffering, don't get distracted by saying, Oh, they did it. My parents, my spouse, my kids, by government, you know, they did it. All the people can have a role in your suffering. And people do horrible things to each other. But you're not going to find the path to freedom, the kind of path the inner transformation how you're going to become a harmless person, a peaceful person. By being distracted and blame game. What you need to do is turn Stand Your contribution, how you what you're doing? And maybe you want to do it privately, sometimes, because you don't want necessarily, you know, if someone is causing you harm, you still have to take care of that and do something about it. But in your path, the path, the path to freedom is found in what is my contribution here? What am I doing here? And I think this is a sign of spiritual maturity is being interested in what is my contribution here. The Great story, I think, some years ago, I was involved with a central scrubbing center to draw up its ethical guidelines for its community. And it was for it was a contentious process. I mean, I got involved kind of after the worst of it. I was kind of the peacemaker in the whole process, but they came up with this. This this document It was very contentious in the community. And people on the board xcenter stood up and yelled at each other support each other over a document about, you know, ethical guidelines in the community, you know, how did you And anyway, so I was I was called in to kind of help with this process and write up a new document that worked for the community. And we spent a

couple of years kind of going over this new document very carefully, line by line, column by column, make sure that you know the work. And there was a little committee of us working on it. And one meeting there was friction between me and another member of the committee, we had different opinions maybe about where that comma went or you know, the wording particular wording or something. And we were kind of like at odds a little bit about it, and it felt a little bit tense But we didn't, you know, we kind of end meeting ended. And it was a week before our next meeting. And when we saw each other the next meeting before the next meeting, you know, both of us rushed up to the other one said, I wanted to apologize for my contribution to our attention last week. Isn't that great? You know, I did No, I do it. And so sometimes people do this to a fault to give you a cheat if you only take risk. But but that's it, there's default a tendency in Buddhism is to take responsibility. So karma teaching of karma is to look at what is my contribution here, because your contribution to your suffering is consequential or your actions are consequential make a difference. So what is it that you do? So that's one understanding of right view. So understanding that it important to look at how much you contribute both to your, to your well being your happiness and to your suffering. The second aspect of right view is understanding how important it is to look at suffering to understand suffering. The bumper sticker for Buddhists is I stopped for suffering. Not that we're you know, this is a kind of a depressing religion. But it's kinda like a religion or religious path which is offered as medicine for particular illness, illnesses caused the call the short suffering, and if you have an illness, you want the doctor to understand your illness. Well, very good diagnosis. So, we think in Buddhism, the right view if you want what your interests are free of suffering, the Buddha said you need to study your suffering. If you're suffering, if you don't suffer, then there's no need for the path. Don't bother. But if you happen to be one of these people who sometimes occasionally odd moments suffer, then you want to understand that suffering, you will look at it, you will study it, you want to delve into it. And for some people, this is a counterintuitive thing to do. Some people want to just run away from the suffering, ignore it, that they attention to it, hide from it, blame others, stop and look at it. Okay, what is this really, it's a very mature thing to do. Okay, I'm suffering to admit it, stop for it, look at it, what is this? And then you want to look at the causes of it? Which what we're saying in the Buddhist way. So what is your my contribution to the suffering? I'm suffering. What am I doing to contribute to this? There have been astounding examples in our world of people who've been victims. are the most horrific things people can do to each other. And in the context of that horror, that terror, have maintained their dignity and generosity of spirit have refused to succumb to hate, or despair or discouragement, and kind of stayed there with great openness and generosity of heart, and some of these people have transformed our world because of it because of that capacity. So, what is you know, what is what are we contributing to this? So the example I gave yesterday and maybe this is a terrible because it's a trite example, after evoking these great peacemakers. But I was driving a few days ago was driving down the street here from my house. And I got in my car and it was my car heated up in the sun. It was really hot. The steering was hot, you know? I was driving down and I noticed that I was kind of felt oppressed. And this is dragging us back. And then a moment or two later, I thought, you know, I had this kind of sense of heat before in a sauna. And I said no. And as far as I can tell, I spent a moment checking it out. And so I'm using my memory. And yeah, I can notice it's actually very similar, very close to Asana. And Asana, I really had a good time. So now I'm suffering that I wasn't. The conditions

are the same. You know, the heat is the same kind of conditions are the same. I'm the variable. What am I doing that's different, given the heat is the same, and has to do with my interpretation and my reaction to the situation. That was my contribution. And I saw that and then I was able to kind of be much more relaxed. By being in the heat, I didn't feel so oppressed by who's hot. And I released a certain kind of suffering around that my contribution to it. So we stop for suffering and we look at the causes of it. And the shorthand in Buddhism for the cause of suffering is craving and clinging. But that takes, you know, infinite variety of forms. So we stop and look what is suffering here? What's the craving here? What's the claim here? What's driven this? What's the compulsion that's operating? And then this episode, people involved in visionary capacity is to have some have some sense of the possibility of becoming free of that clinging. The clinging is not part of the hardware. It's the software of the mind. So you don't have to be stuck with clinging, it can be loosened up and let go of. So some sense of the possibility of what Buddhism is called a cessation of suffering, to see the possibility of a sense of it or a case it can cancel it with Xperia experience within the past, we it's possible to let go of this and the suffering. So we're still intimate involves a kind of vision of the possibility and then realizing that it's possible and the more deeply reflective we can be perhaps, or you know, there's ways and get a sense of how how thoroughly completely we can let go of clinging let go of suffering. So, this is something I want to do. Realizing that it can be a monumental task, big task, then we need to find many tools, many approaches to do that work. And so we need these tools then is called the Eightfold Path, the tools. So the right view is the first of the Eightfold Path and part of right view is beginning to understand our experience from from the perspective of the Four Noble Truths. Four Noble Truths is where each went through suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path. Make sense. So if you want to, if you want to do is find the path to liberation, you want to make it a habit to look at your experience, and then use those four questions or reflections for understanding your present moment experience. Whereas the suffering here What's my contribution to the suffering? Do you have a vision of Do you have a vision of the cessation of that suffering, craving? And then what are the what's the path? If I can't let go of it right away? Then what are the elements that need to be come into play so that I can walk this path to freedom? So that's the first one like you. The second one, is it right intention, maybe better translates right disposition. And one of the key ones of this is becoming intention or disposition of harmlessness. These are what I thought the goal was to become harmless. And I'm totally harmless at the beginning. If you're going to set out, to engage in Buddhist practice means to set out in a certain direction. Here to do something and make a decision. This is what I'm going to do. I'm going to engage in something here. Nothing else I'm gonna get up every morning and meditate or can we do something we go in a certain direction? As you set out in that direction, make a choice that intentionality then you want to try to do that look at your disposition. Look at the attitude you have. And can you try to develop an attitude of harmlessness as you do that, this is really empowering. but not the least of which because many people that I meet here in the West are so easily self critical. And so sometimes they kind of engage in a Buddhist path in a way that's guaranteed for them to suffer even more. Which is not the point of it right? to strive to, you know, compete with others who see you can be the best Buddhist in the block, you can get the most concentrate most concentration or this and that. But you do think so the harmless condors likely can be very serious to be engaged in Buddhist practice. But you know, it can be a little serious thing a

person does it, you can also hold it lightly. It ease with it, anything harmless. And then the next part that requires some understanding that the path towards freedom is a path that let's go over releases us from the forces of greed and the forces of lol Primary forces that keep us spinning in the worlds of suffering, greed, desire, lust of various forms, and then Ill will, hatred, aversion. So there has to be a disposition or an intentionality, to begin turning away from greed, lust towards the opposite of that, which sometimes is said to be the absence of greed, the absence of love, sometimes said to be things like anyway, generosity or peace and then turn away from ill will or aversion, the best you can to begin letting up on that, not acting on not giving into it. And the opposite of that sometimes said to be loving kindness or compassion. So is there ways as you begin to Engage. So this is what I want to do. I see there's a path here I see their suffering, I see this possibility of freeing myself from the suffering. This is what I want to do. There's an ability and dignity and doing this doing this. I have to look at my contribution at this to kind of engage in some, somehow engage myself, change myself in some way, do something here. As I set forth to do something, can I do it as harmlessly as possible at this moment, I'm not going to do it that begins when I begin turning away or letting go of participation in the movements of greed, and Ill will follow then the next three steps with a full path or have to do with our action or behavior. And I love it because this has to do with our relationship with other people. And it's so important as we engage in the path of liberation, to include other people As part of the field, overdoing This is not a solitary individual thing we sit by yourself in a corner and meditate and become happy. But our relationship to other people is the intimate and an important part of this process of transformation. And in the idea of becoming a harmless person, to become harmless toward yourself and to others. So we want to live a life where our life is harmless in relationship to other people. So we want to practice speech. speech which expresses harmlessness the best we can with speech which is true, beneficial, timely, kind. So we have looked at our speech and start taking responsibility for how we speak, so there's no harm in the way we speak. And same thing with our action. There has to be some desire, some wish to transformers, our actions or actions are no longer harmful for us, Or for others. And so the precepts one of the primary examples of this, so practicing not killing, not stealing, not harming through our sexuality, not lying and abusing our minds through intoxicants. And there's no such thing as likely that's not exactly a moralistic thing that this is precepts in Buddhism, the precepts of how not to harm so if what you want to do is become harmless that's what you have to do be harmless. You know, you can't kind of keep going around farming. Yeah, you know, I'm on the Buddhist path it's okay to harm because I know I'm on the path and you know in the Buddhist you know, path will eventually reach this magic Nirvana and, and then Nirvana will fix everything for me. So it's fine to steal and lie and we'll all these things until that magic moment comes a big bang experience of enlightenment happens and, you know, then I'll be good. Then I'll be virtuous? Very well it was it was it the great Augustine, you said, Give me celibacy, but not not yet. So it's a very simple thing. The principle is at least you know, if what you want to do become harmless, then lead a harmless life or start cultivating it. It's not a black and white thing you know, but start moving in that direction. And then same thing with your livelihood. Have a livelihood that expresses non harm non harming as well. So these are has to do with our behavior. And it can be said that is easier to be mindful and aware of our behavior than it is to be mindful and aware and responsible for the workings of our minds. What our mind thinks and wants to know that so it kind of starts And then the last three

steps the full path has to do with what we're doing with our mind or hearts cultivating, developing that the mind heart doesn't have to be left as it is in Buddhism, it's something's developed, cultivated. And these last three steps has to do with developing healthy qualities of mind taking responsibility for the quality of the different aspects of your mind and cultivating healthy qualities. Developing mindfulness and developing concentration. As the mind becomes more mindful and concentrated, he can see more deeply into the into itself into the mind. The sees more deeply can see more deeply into the suffering can see more deeply into the causes of suffering can see deeply into the subliminal aspects. of suffering and the cause of suffering, which is often not seen the surface chatter in the mind, and part of the function of meditation practice is to be able to get down into the subliminal or subconscious level of mental activity. So we can start really seeing what's really going on we understand because office, it's a mystery to some people, why am I suffering? I don't quite understand, I really understood that I was just like, you know, do something better, right? And so meditation is to really look deeply, deeply, deeply. So this is the Eightfold Path can be seen as a spiral. Where as you'll be able to go deeper into the mind see suffering and its causes more deeply. It brings you back to the first step in a full path, right view. And then you continue practicing, and it's a process of purification, process of deepening and deepening and maturing. So the Eightfold Path is a path of Taking responsibility for oneself. It's called sometimes a Noble Eightfold Path. Because it's a ennobling path. It's a path that brings dignity, ability and sacredness to who we are. And I say that in a choice way to who we are, doesn't have to brings the ability and sacredness to us, but we become it. We become noble, we become sacred. In the end for the Eightfold Path, it isn't that the Eightfold Path is something we do with the full realization of harmlessness a piece of liberation. It said we become the full path. The whole path describes who we are not simply what we do. So that's what we'll do over the next year, periodically, here Monday nights, maybe once a month or something, we will do each of these a full pass in more detail and in the spirit of harmlessness I hope that you, those of you who walk a Buddhist path, will walk it likely happily, delightedly with ease and hope the Buddhist path doesn't weigh you down. I hope it does the opposite, enlightens you. So thank you very much.