

# 2007-01-08 Four Noble Truths

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## SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdaal

Good evening everyone. And

Happy New Year. There's something about the transition for me I'd love for you well over the holidays in the new year, that the time away

feels like a long time.

Know, I guess I had been gone for a couple of weeks but it feels like I come back from a long trip or something. So here we are bravely going into 2007. And as a as a support for the path 2007 I'd like to give a talk on the Four Noble Truths. It's my custom to give a talk on the Four Noble Truths as the first talk they bring year. And so do I did yesterday Sunday morning and I'll do today here and I like doing it because It's really good to clinic core teachings of Buddhism, instead of his teachings of the Four Noble Truth, all of Buddhism all the different teachings of Buddhism can be summarized within the Four Noble Truths. And so you hear tonight's talk, then you have it for the year.

There is a

story from the Chinese Buddhist tradition. I think it's probably somewhat true. But it seems to be that this monk was kind of a character, I suppose, or slower than usual, for his time. And that he decided and made a vow to just sit up in a tree. And just, that's what he's going to do. And so he was just living up his tree doing things a tree. And I think the governor of the province came to see him one day And as what are you doing up there? And finally, he said to him, you know, what's the core teachings of Buddhism? And so the tree monk said, gave them a little short description of the Four Noble Truths. And the governor was kind of indignant and said, because he was really important, right? well educated me said, you know, any child knows that a child can understand that teaching. And treatment said, looking down, said to him, I guess, said, a child can understand it, but even a person of ad might not realize it. So there's a big difference between understanding and realizing it. And in fact, these two this teaching, which I'll give you a little bit on the Four Noble Truths are said only to really be understood when you become fully awakened, fully liberated. So until then, you don't They understand it. So since I'm not fully awakened, I'll talk about what I don't know. And they say that in also an exam they say that the Zen masters they have very long eye brows because it's kind of like in Japan it's like the Pinocchio principle you know if they have long nose if you lie lock your eyebrows grow

and and since

it's so just exactly so impossible to teach accurately, you're always off the mark that will make these investors have long eyebrows.

So

here's another story

once upon a time story of

monastery, were at the beginning of every year, the abbot had the custom of going, gathering up all the young monks who are the new monks who enter the monastery or during the last year since the last beginning of the year.

And you get them together and you said, you know, Please pack all your gear or your bags, cuz I'm going to take you on a pilgrimage to the holy sites of the Buddha. So for a Buddhist monk, that's a great thing, because you're going to pilgrimage to the holy sites, going to Mecca, the Buddhist Mecca. And, and so the monks, you know, assumed they were really delighted that they hadn't anticipated they'd have a chance, especially so early in their monastic life, to go off to India, especially with the abbot and get to go on this, you know, tour of the Buddhist holy sites. So they were quite excited and they helped pack the day came to set forth in their pilgrimage and The Avatar the way in the first thing he did was he took them to a hospital. And they spent a time hospital visiting the sick. And the monks a little bit surprised to see the wide range of illnesses that could keep people in hospital. And when they've done that for some hours, then they continued on their pilgrimage, and they went to a

old age home.

And especially the younger monks were amazed how old people could become.

And that was kind of new.

And then after a few hours there, they went for another trip and they went to a hospice. And they were amazed at all the different ways people can die, how people are getting close to death and how they are at the moment of death and how they are after they die seeing the corpse there. And so the monk saw that

and then the habit

Took them back to the monastery

and took them first he took them to the infirmary. And there In fact, was a monk who was quite sick. And when they went to say hello to him, they knew monks were prized. What else? Wonderful sparkle of the light. We're in the eyes of the monk who's in the infirmary who's sick muck.

And then they went to the

to visit the oldest monk in the monastery. Some fella who was 102

and bent over

and they were amazed because not only was he old, but he seemed so happy.

And then they went to the monastery hospital hospice and the fact that there was a period of time there was a monk who was dying there. And so they got to meet this monk were their compatriots in the path. And they found this monk was amazed at how much peace he had. He was completely Aquinas, about his imminent death. And so that was the pilgrimage to the holy sites of Buddhism.

We think of that,

monks were a little bit surprised at first that they're going to India.

But wherever you find in India, is not really the holy sites of Buddhism. They're really the holy sites that really made a difference in the Buddha's life was his encounter with his encounter with sickness, old age and death, and his encounter with renunciant someone who offered an alternative another way of being and this is the teachings of the Buddha were meant to address At the heart, these kinds of issues, the deep existential issues of deep issues of suffering in our life, that are represented by by sickness, old age and death. And so the Four Noble Truths can be applied in many different ways. But if we can treat them quite lightly and just kind of as a form of stress reduction, but that's not what they're meant with. They're meant to be deeply transformative. I believe that most religions, for many people, maybe it was involving religions is their attempt to try to find some way to deal with some of the deeper existential issues they have. One of the deep issues is the issue of death. And so not too few people are interested in religion, providing them with answers to the question of what happens at death, what happens after death. They want to be they want to be reassured that there's an afterlife, they won't be reassured that in the afterlife, that there's something good is gonna happen to them going to heaven And I think there's been today this week's paper I read an article but or it was a magazine article about the phenomenal growth of the Mormon church and across the world, the fastest growing religions in the world in the last hundred years or so.

And listed journalist wrote about it.

So the one of the reasons why it's growing so fast, is that it provides people with a very positive view, but what can be possible after you die? Then after you die, you know, you forget to finish if you baptize all your past relatives, you know, long dead, everybody gets reborn in some wonderful heaven after after they die. And so there's hope for some kind of salvation in the afterlife. And I don't think necessarily it's true for the Mormons, but it's been pointed out by scholars of religion, that the people that often people who are most oppressed who fought You know, very poor, very oppressed in their life, and they don't see any hope any possibility of getting out of their poverty or difficulty in this lifetime, will put their hope in a future lifetime. And so then they really they love religious doctrines and teachings that are pointing to some kind of salvation, that's gonna come in the next lifetime. So there's some kind of said issue of death, issue of sickness, suffering is something all religions are trying to address in some way or other. And like other religions, in that way, Buddhism is also trying to address this. But rather than looking to solution in the afterlife, rather than looking to solution, as something that can be given to us from from God doesn't give it to us, or some belief from outside if they adopt and make this belief myself my own. Buddhism offers a path of practice a path of inner transformation that involves a very radical thing in the world of most religions, I don't know that much. But a lot of religions, I should be careful, I guess what I say to other religions, but I believe it's a pretty radical thing. And what Buddhism offers is that we, we take responsibility for our suffering, we take responsibility for the

transformation or the solution to addressing some of the deepest fundamental existential issues that face a human being the deepest psychological issues, deepest emotional issues that we have, that we take responsibility for that we don't look externally for it. We might look externally for, you know, it's like, like, you know, if you want to drive to Seattle, you have to take responsibility for driving there, you know, sit in your living room and expect to get there, unless you drive I suppose. But you get some help you get a map, and so you find your way. So in the same way, or similar way, the book offers a map, or description or a pointer, and how you can take that this kind of very deep personal responsibility. Some people don't want that. Because that's it's much more comforting to know that someone else can do it for you. Someone else is going to kind of is already provided for you, all you have to do is kind of believe or put your faith in something, and then you're taking care of salvation by grace. And

so in some ways, Buddhism does not very comforting.

And because there's no one to turn to exactly, it's going to do it for us. We have to do it for ourselves. And at least within Buddhist circles, you know, I think of Buddhist practice is a process of growing up. And then each of us who are learning to grow up in a way that we take responsibility for ourselves in some very deep way. So now the Four Noble Truths The Four Noble Truths, the most simple way of being stated, say there's a noble truth of suffering. There's a noble truth of the origin of suffering. There's a noble truth of this cessation. And there's a noble truth of the path. So, suffering, the origin, the cessation, and the path. Sometimes you find in Paragon Buddhism, people will just, you know, rely on those four words describe the Four Noble Truths, suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation, and the path to the first one. Suffering is a teaching that in this life, there is suffering they will encounter. It doesn't say that life is suffering, as some popularizer of Buddhism in the West have claimed, would have never said that because there's no hope, right? Life is suffering that's you know, and the solution is in the afterlife. But what it says there is suffering. That's all very simple statement. But actually it's a little more vivid, more developed than that. It says, There's suffering. But it says there's the noble truth of suffering. And that's a different thing is saying there is suffering just there is a noble truth of suffering. And so what is it that transforms suffering from just ordinary suffering? that pulls us down and drains us? and noble suffering? One of the description, noble supplies that it has respect, it's respect worthy, or dignifying or ennobling or sacred. So something about suffering that make it sacred. And what is that? That's the question here, what is it that connects suffering sacred sacred? This is not a teaching that you should go out and just suffer for, you know, look for your suffering so you can be more sacred What is saying is that when you suffer,

which you might do occasionally,

then there's a way of relating to that suffering.

That can be ennobling, that can be respectful, or can be sacred to everyone. If you're going to suffer, then you can transform it into something sacred, or to say a different way you could transform it into a path of sacred transformation or transformation into a sacred dimension of your mind or your heart. So the noble part implies that there's a possibility and that suffering. The truth part is not a creed. For me confusing people in the West sometimes when they hear that you have a truth. Four Noble Truths. It's something that's meant to be made true. Through your practice.

The map

to Seattle is supposedly True, true map right? But you don't really know the truth of that map unless you drive up there, then you know the truth of the map works. So the Four Noble Truths are meant to be

something to be realized for yourself the pragmatic truths rather than philosophical truths or doctrinal proofs. So there's something we have to kind of engage in to find out for ourselves if they're true, to simply think that their true as a doctrine philosophy, is, you know, that's kind of empty, doesn't have much meaning. We have to kind of enter into them and realize them. So first thing we need to do is to realize suffering. And this is the bad news of Buddhism. Which, you know, half of you probably have ready to go. And then this is the teaching that it's really helpful. If you if what you want is to find this path of responsibility find the path of transformation find the path, as the Buddha was pointing towards liberation. You have to learn to For your suffering, and study it, get to know it. And this is counterintuitive. My friend John Travis was teaching a Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction class at a hospital once. And this retired police officer from Los Angeles was taking the class. And he was in chronic back pain, very, very bad. And the doctors and hospitals have not been able to help them.

So he took this class and mindfulness base dealing with the pain.

And the first thing in the first day, John told him told the class turn your attention and really look and feel that pain.

And the guy was furious at John.

I'm here to get away from it to stop and you're telling me to feel even more. It was really upset. And I don't know how the story ended whether eventually have to end the course whether he got the idea, but it is there's something something can be learned by going into the pain. And feeling the suffering. We learned about the causes of it, we've learned about the conditions that bring it about. If you don't learn the causes and conditions of your suffering, you might be doomed to repeat it might come back and come back and come back. And not a few people I know have stepped out of one, or escape run away from their suffering. Only to only to only to have their mind

excuse me, only to have their mind follow.

Have you noticed that?

So your mind if it has certain habits of behavior, or habits of thinking and habits of relating to what's going on in the world, if you take your mind with you, then you'll be revisited by the same problems. Just a different guys, perhaps. So the idea is the first noble truth is stuff and look at it, get to know it. And one of the things that we're trying to get to know is the origins of it. Are the cause of it, what is it gives rise to it? And, and that's the second noble truth. What is the cause? And the Buddha summed it up at the cause of suffering is he used the word thirst? Can they be synonyms might be craving, grasping, givenness compulsion, the words vividness and compulsion. Interesting because some of you might have noticed that you can't just snap your fingers and put an end to your suffering, sometimes very quickly, maybe sometimes you can, if it's light enough, but sometimes it's a mystery to us. What's going on? Why is this hanging in there? Why am I kind of, you know, hour after hour day after day? Why am I so depressed or so upset? They're so angry or so afraid or what's going on? You know, I know I should just drop it. The Rock You know, what's what's going on. And so without having some sense of What the origin is, it's very hard to let something go and drop it. So the idea is to study it to see what the origins are, oh, lost track. So they give what what keeps it going, is that sense of compulsion? There's a compulsion in the mind. compulsive momentum. that's keeping it locked in keeping it going. We can't just drop that momentum that easily because of the compulsion that's there. So the Buddha used the word thirst. And now it's kind of a tautology, which is a philosophical term for I think it's for a term that defines itself. So, the definition of suffering that the Buddhist Buddhism is trying

to address is that suffering that arises because of your thirsting of your grasping, you're clinging. If you have suffering that doesn't arise out of a grasping version doesn't address it. You're left with it. No, no, sir. physical pain, for example, might have some element that you might not be grasping to it at all. And, but, but you're not grasping it at all. My suggestion to you is to use it, then you'll be peaceful like peace with your physical pain, you won't be bothered by this much. What people don't be bothered with around pain is not the pain, but rather is the relationship to it, all the things that are associated with it. So, the second noble truth is the truth of the origin of it, which is in thirst and craving. There's a very interesting list of three forms of craving, which one to use to define. There's verses describing the first and these are kind of like, I think of them as necessarily representing all forms of sort of craving, but rather they represent some of the deepest seated cravings that are kind of can be in a person's heart or mind that you really hold on in the grip of thirsting and desire of suffering. So the deepest rooted ones, and again, Buddhism, that word root is very important. Because if you want to get rid of a weedy plant, and you pull up, you take off the leaves, the plant might just keep growing. If you take off from the stems, it might keep going. Some ways, in fact, if you cut it off at the ground level, it's about up from the roots. What do you have to do is you have to uproot it, to permit a graduate, uproot the roots and then throw them away, faraway burns them or something. So, there's these roots in our minds, that unless we pull them, pull this up, pull these kind of reads up by the roots that keeps sprouting if you let go of only the surface manifestation, they'll keep reappearing from the roots. So the three roots of this, this thirsting.

The first is called sensual desire.

And it's a little bit surprising for some people perhaps to realize maybe embarrassing or kind of how and maybe Powerful central desire is in the human world. A lot of people cause an experience a lot of suffering, based on essential desire.

JACK Kornfield when he talks about

the third precept, which is not to engage in sexual misconduct, well, that's ask for Show of hands. I want to ask since I want to embarrass you. But he asks Show of hands and say, Who here has not made a fool of themselves through their sexuality? Now I don't have a pencil. I know this, you know, that's not so many people have. What?

I'm under no illusion.

And, but the,

you know, who hasn't caused suffering through their sexuality. And

so that's an example of sexual desire. Sexuality is one kind. There's a central desire of, you know, other kinds of desires for pleasure. Various kinds. There's a kind of confusion of confusion, confusion, of pleasure for happiness that sometimes is involved in addiction, alcohol, and drugs and other things that might happen. So, you know, sexual desire is a very powerful motivator for human beings. And people will do tremendous, sometimes tremendously foolish things and tremendous like painful things, awful things to other human beings in that pursuit for sensual pleasure. The second thirst the Buddha talked about is called the thirst for existence. This is an interesting term. The thirst for existence isn't okay to exist. It's fine to exist. But the creating a claim to exist can cause a lot of problems. It's one of these roots deeply rooted. Buddhist. In Britain we say this trip this includes things like the drive the compulsion, Have any debt to hold on to some identity? You know, I need to be a good father, I need to



be a good Dharma teacher. So I better give a good talk today. So, I guess that's a craving to exist in a certain way in your eyes or in my eyes. And so the craving to exist as habits within identity is an example of the craving for status or status is a craving to exist in a certain way. The craving for accomplishment. The craving for something big something to existence, is a kind of deep seated craving, the craving to have something that will survive your death. Some people like to make something put something in motion, so that they can have somebody continues after they're, they're dead because then somehow, they still exist or somehow something. It can be very powerful drive in people's minds. The drive to procreate to have children is understood to be kind of part of can be a part of this drive this thirst thing For existed to create the existence to make something happen. And now there's nothing wrong with having children. But I think you have to admit that it's not so far from people's psyches, for some people's psyches, the tremendous drive grittiness, thirsty to have children, and you see it most clearly, the people who are frustrated with their attempts to have children. And it's very, very painful for some people to have it to have that. It's not something it's easy to put down. You know, and people go through great struggles, you know, to

have children.

And the interesting thing about all these kinds of thirsting to exist,

is that they're so deeply rooted in us

that they can feel like they're really

essential parts of being a human being,

like in order to be a human being, successful human being that these needs to be fulfilled.

And it's like, you know, just as natural as breathing here, so it's natural to have these very deep drives. This you know, in order to be person, not just be successful for ne person, I have to kind of somehow have these drives to exist in some form or other. And sometimes people are unwilling to drop these claiming these drives because they feel like it's who they are. Or there's a kind of a kind of a blindness it sets in, where the possibility of letting go those

is unacceptable.

Even though lingo that means peace,

there's a kind of holding on and clinging to something that causes a lot of pain, a lot of suffering.

So it's a very interesting kind of attachment.

And the third,

thirst is the thirst for non existence. And this is a form has a takes text example of a version pushing things away. Kind of cutting things down, not wanting something to be there. In terms of identity, some people have a tremendous drive, not to have an entity. You know, not to you know, don't go It just kind of irritates me every time someone tries to build them up or see them a certain way, they kind of knock it down, knock it down, not to be seen in certain way. So people want to become invisible and become

like nobody. Some people, it's also the drive to destroy things. Some people that's there's a tremendous drive are still even, to make things go away or destroy them. In extreme form, it could also be a desire for suicide. The desire for non existence non existent has to be better than what I have now. It's the argument, whatever comes next has to be better than this. In Buddhism, that's there's Buddhism very clearly argues, or believes that that's not the case that suicide is never really a solution to escape that kind of escape. But that drive for non existence can be very, very powerful in people. So we're not just dealing with kind of surface. The Four Noble Truths I mentioned kind of surface you know, I'm attached To ice cream. And, you know, it's

or I'm attached to, you know,

watch my favorite television programs.

We're talking something really deep. And if you have a sense how deep it is in the psyche,

then maybe you could Intuit

what the alternative is.

And the alternative is some very deep, uprooting transformation Revolution, the mind

that leads to a very deep,

abiding sense of peace and well being and happiness. And one of the really remarkable things about the human heart or mind is that it's possible for the human heart and mind to be amazingly happy and peaceful, for no reason.

Isn't that something?

Well, what good is that?

What good is that if it has no reason.

So with the minus individually Kind of kind of centrifugal force outwards or this kind of activity outward outward outward, to get and acquire and fix and build up an entity or protected entity or defend or apologize for our existence and all this movement that is kind of compulsive. And all that can be put down all that can be can sees the technical boost where it sees it there, it can even come to cessation on it.

You can stop clinging.

And that ending of clinging ending of grasping is the good news of Buddha Buddhism, because it's really beautiful. Now, some people might argue that well it's one it's nice if you guys are Buddhist or peaceful. But you know, it's nothing compared to what my religion offers. You know, grand glory you know, in the afterlife union with a great cosmos, whatever. So maybe Buddhists have kind of like, you know, a lesser ultimate goal. Maybe it's not so good compared to what others can offer. But it has the virtue of being something that you can prove



to yourself.

That's pretty good. I think something experiential. Also, once you realize cessation, once you realize this little liberation of freedom, it changes route very much the motivation, so the interest in other kinds of issues. So maybe you can get a sense of this way.

Many people are interested in the meaning of life.

It's a worthwhile pursuit in some ways, what's the meaning of your life? What's the meaning of life? However, from a Buddhist point of view, a more interesting question, then what's the meaning of life? Is the question Why are you asking? What's motivating you to ask that question. And for some people, what's motivating them is fear. For some people, it's motivating, what have a sense of emptiness, hollowness, and fulfillment. For some people, what's motivating them is maybe some kind of desire for existence for becoming

tall, we talked about that.

But if these kinds of desires,

if fear is kind of a form of compulsion, if all the compulsions and driven is

or work through and let go of,

then

then that you know those very motivations for asking the question disappear.

Then, what

would you still ask the question? What's the meaning of life?

Or, you know, what's the significance? What's the significance of asking question or how would you approach that question? If you no longer have a compulsion to find meaning? You could argue, well, if I don't have any meaning, then I'm going to be the only one of these Buddhist blobs I guess sit around, you know, Buddhist couch potatoes. They don't have these Buddhist televisions but they just, this is a beautiful beautiful of being a Buddhist, right? You could just sit around they put a sip right? So, use get rid of the television, you sit in the couch,

look at the wall.

You know, endlessly look at the wall,

couch potatoes,

we're just couch potatoes. There's no meaning right?

That does not doesn't mean that way at all. There can be meaning and there can be tremendous tremendous a motivating meaning to be found in liberated life. But it doesn't have to arrive rise out of a sense of

neediness sense, the emptiness, sense of fear,

a sense of ego.

All the kind of compulsions of the mind have dropped away and what replacing it with is not compulsion but rather response rather than reactivity is a choice of how to respond to the world that we live in. And one of the primary motivators for Buddhist people who become awakened is compassion,

feeling the suffering of the world and wanting to

respond to it.

So because the because liberation, the cessation is not an easy thing to do, because these things are so deeply rooted in our psyche. The fourth noble truth is a truth of the power. To do this, it's called the Eightfold Path, the Noble Eightfold Path. And this is how you could what you can do so you can live your life

to put together the conditions that allows you

to in time,

reach, reach your attention down into the, the foundation of your mind, to do that inner house cleaning used to be done to uproot these very difficult places of cleaning

And one of the things that's beautiful about the full path

is that it's meant to be encompass all of our life. So it's not he is not just to deal with one part of our life, you know, just made it just a meditation part of our life or just, you know,

my, you know, the weekends.

You know, they'll be a weekend Buddhist,

but rather their full life is supposed to be engaged, if if what if what you want is liberation, if you want full liberation for yourself as much as you can, then you want to make that a real priority

is your priority for your life,

then, here's a path that you can embrace or engage in this whole as you can.

And the image of a path

is the image in the old days a path or something

you walked on. So the idea of a path, again, points back to the idea

that we are supposed to walk the path, something that we do,

we're not waiting for someone to do it for us. We're waiting for someone else to kind of, you know, save us but rather, we're going to walk the path. We're going Do the walker so

and so the eightfold path is the path.

The first step of the Eightfold Path is to appreciate how valuable it is to, to enter into the world of suffering when we suffer

through the framework of the Four Noble Truths.

So if you're suffering,

if you appreciate the value that it's helpful, to stop for your suffering, to

learn its origins,

and either get a sense or actually discover the cessation of it, as opposed to suffering and blaming someone else. blaming someone else is a popular pastime

and it's a contagious one.

And sometimes, there's some truth to it, that other people you know, are causing difficulty but if you don't find the path to the by blaming someone else,

you find something, find other things,

sometimes appropriate things.

But you don't find the Buddhist path by blaming someone else for your suffering.

You find the Buddhist path

by studying what you are contributing

to your suffering. And that's the mature adult like thing that Buddhists ask themselves. What am I contributing to this? It doesn't mean we turn a blind eye to the world and the conditions of the world whether people are doing

it's important part of life to understand what goes on around us.

But the Buddhist path is not found so much there. But his path is found by understanding what is my contribution to this. And the amazing thing is that sometimes in the most horrendous situations, they're been shining examples of people taking responsibility for how they are how they carry themselves, and

they've been shining lights for humanity. Beautiful, sad but very beautiful stories of people who spent years in the concentration camps

and

didn't allow that experience to somehow question

the other people who were crushed by it.

It's possible for the human spirit

to to be larger

than

the conditions of the world.

So, the first of the Eightfold Path is that you know, really understanding the Four Noble Truths is formulation.

The second involves

some of these primary maybe beginning rudimentary level, beginning take some responsibility

for the attitude, which would you have

your attitude

you say, he has a bad attitude, he has a good attitude, you know, get your attitude together. So, somehow, even to the degree to which you could appropriately adjust your attitude.

Get it, get it Just a little bit.

So, you know, if you go into a kindergarten class or if you go to a funeral, most people naturally adjust their attitude. They just have a very different attitude at the funeral than they do at Disneyland.

You know, or birthday party for

a six year old.

You know, he kind of you know, it's kind of

different way of being right. So that's a strange if you adjust yourself somewhat.

And so in particular with the Buddhist side is

if what you want to do is find the path of liberation. It helps to have a certain attitude. Like if you study martial arts in Japan, sometimes you have to show that you have an attitude of respect for the teacher

and the practice, otherwise not going to teach you the assumption there is that without the attitude of respect, it's no good teaching you. So you have to come and find that respect in order to learn that that aren't. So the attitude and Buddhism that's helpful are required. Is it attempt to have an attitude of being non harming. So to go about your life not harming others, try having an attitude approach, an orientation, a disposition, that's going to be non harming.

Not easy to do.

But at least you kind of that's kind of where you're leading the meeting that directions I want to live parties or decision. Yes, I'm gonna try to do this.

The other is a decision on attitude. Not to be harsh,

but instead of harsh to be kind

or friendly.

And the third one is attitude of not

blindly indulging

in sensual pleasure,

but rather appreciating a simplicity of being that's not grasped or caught in the vise of sexual desire.

So those three hours twos are considered

really helpful for being on the path.

Then the next three aspects of the Eightfold Path have to do with our behavior and just how we behave in the world. So the first one has to do with our speech. So begin looking at how we speak.

If all you did,

for your spiritual practice,

was to impeccably study,

what motivates you to say what you're saying? You would have a transformative spiritual path. You there's so much about yourself.

If you simply look at that, why do I say what I'm about to say.

So to pay attention to our speech, is important part of the path. The next one is pay attention to our ethics, how we behave in the world, in terms of ethical guidelines, so

not killing, not stealing, no

sexual misconduct, no lying No indulging in intoxicants. And the next one is the  
having a livelihood  
that's in harmony with being in a path to liberation.

And that's mostly as a matter for each person to find out. But most people spend a big chunk of their waking hours with livelihood issues. And is that livelihood in harmony with your attempt to be in a path or not?

And the last three are mostly has to do with meditation,  
eightfold path, right effort,  
right mindfulness and right concentration.

Right mindfulness is cultivating the ability to see very clearly as clearly as you can into our life. The right concentration is the attempt the practice to stabilize the mind, focus the mind enough, still the mind enough so that

the

mindfulness can be most penetrating

Like if you want to look out a window, it's best to click press to clean the window. So the concentration cleans the window the mindfulness sees through.

So that's the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path

gives me not knowing.

I want to, if you allow me

I want to tell you one more story.

And then we can stop.

If my voice holds up

Hmm, so at the same monastery,

where they took the pilgrimage, they had a statue, in addition to the Buddha

that was rumored to

speak



occasionally if you

came with sincerity in front of the Buddha respect and sincerity. And if you had a lot of troubles in your life if you came up with enough sincerity and really still really quiet, in front of the Buddha,

you hear speak

so there was a

person who was in fact,

suffering quite

paid really

big problems, big suffering.

I tried all kinds of solutions,

nothing seemed to work.

So finally came to the monastery for kind of a spiritual solution.

very devout person who often visited the monastery to make donations and help in various ways in the monastery.

But it was really desperate for something for help.

And so the person came up to the statues really still furnish that you're hoping by now you know, heard this rumor BY THE STAFF you're speaking maybe it'll speak to me and tell me what to do. So there was in front of the statue and then after a while there was this little voice came out of the statue.

Hard to hear so as he got closer

and then

here with with the statue said was

why not? seems strange

to say the person listening more carefully and the statue said again, why not? And firstly the person didn't know what to say that person expected some kind of great profound teaching or instructions or guidance.

Why not?

The person started thinking of all the excuses. Why not? I can't give me chastity, but later right. Give me spiritual practice, but later

why not?

I'm not good enough.

Why not? It's too hard. Why not? later?

Why not?

So why not? Why not do it? That's the question.

The story has a very sad ending.

The person

ran out of the monastery never to be seen again.

To be face to face to the question why not? was too threatening to frightening to insurmountable for that person.

I hope it's not for you.

Good luck 2007. Thank you.