

# 2007-05-21 Conflict

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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Good evening, everyone.

There was once a monk in the monastery,

who

seems to get along really well with everyone.

He seemed to be very cute, very quiet.

And whenever there was any kind of trouble, he seemed to always disappear.

And

if you asked him to do something, he'd always be willing to do it.

And

and if there was ever any

difficulty with anyone who's always very differing respectful, anybody came his way. And so he lived very harmoniously in the monastery.

And the abbot noticed this. And so the abbot thought,

is interesting. So he gave him a new job, the monastery and that job was to

Be the produce buyer

to go to town to the produce Stan's post market and buy the vegetables produce for the monastery each week.

And he was given an allowance is how much money you have to buy the chorus the monitor needs for the week. So Monday he would go into the into town. And it turned out that the merchants in the produce market in that town were famous all over the land for their fierce bargaining

or their fierce attempts to kind of jack up the prices as far as they could get away with.

So this monk went to town to buy produce.

And he said you know how much is the potatoes?

They gave a price and he got you know, okay and to give you the money, and then he had no more money to buy anything else

and he came back

To the monastery with

10 pounds of potatoes, whatever. This is what I got with the money

and the habits at all.

And so they had potatoes, Monday night.

And then there was no more produce the rest of the week.

And the monks were all going to complain, of course, but they're all quite hungry into the week.

Next Monday, he went to town again, same allowance, and he realized that that didn't go very far. So he didn't just take the first

offer of potatoes that came his way. But he checked out a few different ones and found it by so much cheaper. And it was able to have enough produce to last through Tuesday.

He realized this is not going so well.

So then he gulped the following week.

And he said, Oh,

that's a bit much for us.

Couldn't you please maybe lower the price?

And the merchants roared back? No, don't you know how much work it takes how much it costs us to buy these from the farmers? We cannot.

Okay.

And our wonderful harmonious monk brought back another 10 pounds

lasted only a day or so.

And, and he was getting more and more hungry, so the other monks, and slowly, he learned that he couldn't be so subservient. He couldn't be so acquiesce yet couldn't be so kind of getting along. But he had to somehow meet those big tough

bargaining merchants at their own game.

And he had to be able to say no bargain back and forth and threaten to walk away, hold his ground.

And bit by bit he learned how to be

conflict.

And, of course, in the bargaining world of the marketplace, that bargaining was the expected language. And, in fact, in some places in the world, if you don't bargain, sometimes it's considerably disrespectful for us given the price leaving it is kind of hard.

And

so, the,

so, he learned how to be in conflict in his relatively safe place then you know, in the produce market.

So, what happens is, I think, maybe all too often in Buddhist circles is Buddhist practitioners in one way or the other, tend to become like that monk.

And there tends to be a little bit conflict diversity or conflict, reluctance. And a little bit of this because in Buddhist circles, the idea is to kind of Be kind, be friendly, kind of blink let go TP speaking calm

Become.

And those kinds of values as important they are as they are, can lend itself to people thinking that you know that they shouldn't be in conflict with this conflict, something wrong. And so if there's conflict, let's just get out of the way or let's kind of okay, whatever you say is fine, and must not cause any problems here.

It's

not healthy to do that.

Part of mature spiritual practice, I believe, is to learn how to be comfortable to be in situations that could be called conflict situations, or the company in a sense of willing to stand in a place of conflict. Maybe you don't feel like you're in conflict with anybody, but they feel like they have conflict with you. And it's a very tense to feel the anger and hostility or the differences of opinion.

I think it's, you know, almost is probably best to take this has built into human life, to assume there's going to be conflict.

And then the question is, how do we

We relate to conflict, and we have a Buddhist community. Sooner or later there's going to be conflict in the Buddhist community, as far as I can tell in all communities. And it's not the health of the community, or health of the Buddhist community that's from any community is not the presence or absence of conflict, but rather, is where the people are willing to meet the conflict in healthy ways. And I've been in Buddhist communities where they were unwilling to meet the conflict in healthy ways. Sometimes by denial, sometimes by power,

you know, power place, sometimes by rationalization, sometimes, a great one is to say, No, there's no problem here. You're the one who has the problem.

And I've seen that in Buddhist communities where it's very easy sometimes for a teacher, like an advocate of a monastery who has certain authority to look down, you know, a new student and so there's not a problem here. You

You have to know it's your problem, you're supposed to go back to the cushion and meditate on this. And I've seen people who've done that, and, and

sometimes for years, because my problem, it's my problem, it's my problem. And turned out it was the athletes problem

that was doing something outrageous. And, in fact, it's kind of putting up this mirror saying, Oh, no, no, you know, I'm the wise person, and you're just a fool. And you need to go back and kind of figure it out on your own. So there's, there's many mechanisms by which in Buddhist communities, people try to avoid conflict. In a community like ours, which are informal, it could be just disappearing. Some people just go away. I'm not going to be there anymore. There's going to be conflict with someone. And the other is to

is to just kind of hide in the back corners and avoid people come in and be very quiet. Talk to them and work with them.

Sometimes, it's by assigning blame, kind of, you know, blame

Other people for all the all the difficulties that exist, you got it, you know, sometimes I get, sometimes I come to work my way, in a sense,

especially see it on retreat where someone is maybe in conflict, or you know, feel some tension around someone else and talking to somebody else. And now they come to me and say, you have to fix that problem. That person is, you know, you can't believe what this person is doing. And sometimes the person is doing something inappropriate.

But sometimes the person's not really doing anything inappropriate, it's kind of hard for me to go tell them to do something different, but, but rather rather the person so the first the first person is uncomfortable around the second person, and because of the discomfort kind of blames them for the problems. So if you've got to go do something about person and fix that person's for me, and so the kind of an A senior people kind of unwilling to look at their part with their contributions to situation.

The noisy meditator meditate

next to you is a classic one. People will come to me say this guy, you know, he has this Velcro jacket in terms of opening, you know, rip it open the middle of a city, and we have please fix this person for me.

Now you're not supposed to have Velcro jackets in the meditation hall. That's, that's true. But

but it doesn't it's not necessarily a spiritual problem.

And so, you know, so generally on retreat, I'll say, tell the person I think once you have, why don't you Why don't you work with a little bit with the sound and all that. And usually what happens after a few days person come back comes back and says, Oh, actually, now that person does it and it doesn't need anything. There's no hooks, no resistance, no, assigning meaning no self righteousness of me that encounters that sound. It just kind of seems to go right through me. And in fact, sometimes people say, oh, that kind of sound, whatever it is. It's just always Velcro but other things.

They say, oh, and now it's my mindfulness bell.

Whenever I hear it reminds me to be mindful, and I'll miss it if it goes away.

So, this idea of kind of, sometimes people are unwilling to look at their own part and they kind of assign blame elsewhere.

Sometimes in spiritual circles people will put their community or the teacher or other people up on a pedestal. And luckily our pedestal he was kind of kind of low. So, you know, I can't I can't fall that far.

But, you know, we've got on a pedestal like, you know, you know, there's always projection that goes on and expect the person to be just completely pure and

perfect in every possible way. And then at some point, there's some kind of something doesn't quite jive and maybe the teacher farts

or, you know, it could be something else. And,

and

I had someone wants to stress with me

Because

I mentioned that I had, I was in conflict with someone else, that no one to the person who supplies in different place, and the person was so distressed that I should be in conflict with anybody. You know, it must must be some personal failing of mine, you know, I'm supposed to be up in the, you know,

like riding on a cloud,

you know, you know, just somehow managed to negotiate life without any kind of problems at all.

So, and so then the result of that kind of projection, that kind of expectation is sometimes tremendous anger. You probably feel like you filled up the people feel let down Oh, what what, you know, it's like a pendulum swings then. And so they're also the source of conflict sometimes.

In our community like here, where there's a lot of all people volunteer.

There's, you know, we have a lot a lot of volunteers help in all kinds of ways, and generally people volunteer because this is valuable to me as important types of

important for them. But as with any community, there can be differences of opinion. There can be ways in which people sometimes make mistakes and overlook each other, sometimes, unintentionally. And sometimes there's intention, intentional movements of ill will, that go on, people say mean things to each other something that can happen in any community can happen here.

And so, my measure of the healthy community is not the presence or absence of conflict, that the presence of absence of difficulties, but rather the willingness to meet those and engage in them in a healthy way, it's the engagement in the mimics health, not the presence or absence of them.

So there has to be a willingness.

There was one Buddhist theory I was involved in, that had trouble with conflict in their clinical community was kind of conflict, diversity, the whole culture of it, and they began after too many years, but then eventually they realized they had this difficulty

and so they invited you

person, a woman who was

a

really good

conflict coach, kind of mediator facilitator and kind of did conflict resolution kind of trainings. And

and she came and she said, Oh conflict, conflict makes me happy.

And some of the people that the place almost fainted.

And it wasn't that dramatic, but they were kind of what they kind of woke them up what makes you happy. We're so afraid of it here.

And, and the reason she saw it, she made her happy, is he she sees that as an opportunity. It's an opportunity not only to kind of, you know, make some resolution. But when there's conflict, there's an opportunity for deeper understanding, deeper understanding and growth within oneself and deeper understanding growth within the community.

And

now, some conflicts that arise are kind of messy to begin with.

Some, you know, after misunderstanding something some are pretty messy to begin with, or that they get into it because people kind of the best, people's best best of who they are, somehow it was on vacation that day.

And so people say things in English, they didn't say or, you know, act the ways they wish they didn't act. And,

and so of course, all these things can happen. And just to underscore what I've said many times now, it's not the presence or absence of conflict or difficulties, or making a fool of yourself, or you know, is, which is a sign of health is the presence or absence of a willingness to meet it and engage in it,

to take the time to stop smoking, and name it. There's conflict here.

The first place where I saw conflict being dealt with in a very healthy way, was a community, a commune, kind of back in the 70s named the farm in Tennessee. There were 800 people who live there. It was run by men are kind of headed by men and Steven Gaskin, who

His three teachers spiritual teachers was his written his Marine Sergeant, I guess their Marine Corps Sergeant that he had trained under Suzuki Roshi, the Zen master in San Francisco, and LSD.

And, and he led a whole group of hippies from Haight Ashbury to Tennessee,

to start this communism.

And when they got to Tennessee, they didn't really work so well anymore to use LSD as a spiritual vehicle. Somehow tell it Tennessee didn't quite,

you know, allow it.

And he spent a year in jail.

So, so they had to find some substitute to LSD. And the substitute they found, they claimed was as effective as LSD

was telling the truth.

He had something

telling the truth. And, and so and so I ended up one January kind of passing through and stopped for a few days and stayed for four months. Because this the truth telling that community just blew me away. And what happened over the years they were there, they develop the capacity to stop intelligence teachers talk to each other about difficulties that arose. And they developed kind of a radar as soon as there was even subtle conflict in the community tensions within the community, they would stop and say, let's talk about this. And of course, if you've ever stopped and talked about tension or problems before, it might take a long time the first time. In fact, that happened there. The first conversation sometimes would take hours until they until they had some resolution.

But as they got better and better at this, sometimes the conflict was handled really quickly. And sometimes I saw actually sometimes it just, someone would smile, and say, Oh, yeah, thank you for the reminder. Yeah, we did it. We did it again. And they kind of knew what to do.

didn't take much once you kind of have worked out the parameters and understanding

and this willingness to stop when there was a feeling of tension or discomfort in the community was really inspiring for me.

And, and after I left there, I tried for a long time to look for another community that had the same degree of honesty, suddenly we're kind of stopping for difficulties and working it out, however long it took.

I had 110 years ago, learn more when I was at sukha Zen center.

For a while

I had conflict with someone at a meeting. We had an ongoing meeting once a week or something. And meetings are some of the most difficult places for me personally. And, you know, in terms of conflict and knowing how to work with it, sometimes meetings, Buddhist teacher meetings, particularly

And

so it's my group, one of my growing areas. And anyway was as these meetings and one meeting

another fellow and I had

some difficulties and tension between us arose conversation. So I went home and reflected. And the first thing I reflected was what was my contribution to that difficulty? And then I saw that actually had spoken ways Maybe they weren't good or hadn't listened properly, or some of what it was, but it was enough so that next week, when before the meeting started, I saw him. I said, Oh, I want to talk to you. I want to talk to you too.

And he said, but he got to the punch before me. And he said, I guess that's the wrong expression, but

for what I'm trying to talk about, but he, he beat me to it, he said,

I want to apologize for you know how I talked last week.

I said, but I was gonna apologize.

And so it was really a really wonderful thing. Both of us have done the reflection and see how both of us contributed to the difficulty. And both of us apologized. And I've seen that apology, even when 99% of the responsibilities, you know, the person has done something wrong, that even if you're done 1% that you can apologize for. Being willing to willing to apologize, can create a very different conversation, where people don't get so defensive, when people can, can soften that will be willing to kind of start saying, oh, okay, well, you see it that way, then let me tell you how my part, you know, when I was responsible for two,



it's certainly possible that if you apologize that people take advantage of you, you know, it kind of just go off. Yeah, you should have done that. leave it at that. But I actually never seen that for myself. I never encountered that. I've seen it if I take responsibility for my contribution. Even if it's very small, then it actually seems to create a better future.

Situation atmosphere for having a serious conversation or what needs to be talked about.

And so this idea of kind of going, going, going away for a while, and reflecting about how it is, for me, is a very important process that I like to do. And I can certainly make mistakes in the moment. But then just then usually I'm quite motivated by mistakes I make, because it kind of hurts. Motivated by that kind of kind of feeling remorse, to reflect and think, what did I do here? What did I say? How did I say it?

How would What did I understand what how old is my projections? Who was my? So all these things I do, that I look at and try to reflect on? And it's I like to I prefer to do that before I go back and engage the person.

I think it's, you know, generally it's not always the right policy, but it's kind of my first thought is how can you know when and how to go back to a personal comfort with

Talk about the conflict, as opposed to let's just kind of, you know, kind of pretend it's not there, hope that it's gonna go away nicely sometime.

Because I really believe that

it's a grow, it's a growth experience to engage in conflict, I feel there's a great opportunity to meet some person in a deeper way. I've been in many situations of conflict, we've taken the time to talk about it, we work things out. And through that process, I felt much deeper connection to the other person than I would otherwise have been people who I didn't like at first, just because you know, did a likeable and whatever, you know, that you know, in my mind, and then had some conflict and then sat down and talked about it, and began understanding who they were in a deeper way and in Qatar really appreciate them a lot from doing that process.

For me, I would like to believe that the process of meditation prepares us

To be in conflict in healthy ways. And not only that, but the process of meditation

teaches us that it's important to be willing

to have to go into conflict. Because in meditation, we're willing to face ourselves, we're always willing to do it within ourselves. People are often in conflict with themselves. Because we're going to sit with our own suffering, we're going to sit and feel what's going on here. to agree to which there's some softening of the hearts and relaxing and letting go, you begin seeing how conflict or tension tension and mcherry and hold is an irritant is it causes me even more suffering, causes problems for us can feel the way we get defensive, we can feel the way in which we get offensive and brain and how just feels off it feels wrong to do it.

Mindfulness makes us very sensitive to these things. And so with a deeper sensitivity, I think there's a hopefully a greater sense or something has to be dealt with here. Running away pretending this out there, doesn't feel right anymore. It feels like maybe kind of shutting down

Kind of a numbing or, you know, it's okay, I'm happy, you know, I'm not uncomfortable this person, but every time I see that I'm not dealing with a conflict, I'm just avoiding the person. But every turn, every time we pass each other by a distance, there's a kind of feeling of, you know, you know, I hope the person doesn't see me or, you know, do something, you know, kind of kind of a little bit disk discomfort.

And my hope is that anyone who does a mindfulness meditation practice becomes intolerant of staying tense. That's my hope

that anybody who does mindfulness practice practices, sooner or later become intolerant of staying tense.

So that if you get tense, that is, oh, this is something to pay attention to. This is something bring your attention to and work with.

And hopefully, if it involves interpersonal issues, the other people are willing to engage you all as well, to be a conversation. Some people sometimes people are not the other person.

And then you have to know how to work with that, maybe then you have to work with it with it in yourself. But if you can't work with it in yourself, okay, but if a person is willing to engage in it, then something hopefully productive can happen. And it's alert, it's a skill, it takes a lot of skill, to know how to work through conflict. And some of the skills learn by trying. So maybe you'll fail a few times. Some of us learned by taking classes and reading books about it and learning some of the basic basic ideas of how to engage in conflict.

But I thought I'd do is read to you

through

this is called the ethical procedures and ethical principles and procedures for grievance and reconciliation at the San Francisco Zen Center.

So they have this beautiful document

that

they felt they had to because of conflict in that community. They felt they had to kind of put something in writing and get, you know collective agreement.

And so the second half of the argument is, is what to do when there's grievances and how to go about for

approach reconciliation.

And it says this.

In Zen center, they follow the Bodhisattva path. So, the Bodhisattva path is our heartfelt response to suffering, turning away, or skimming over suffering through silence, rationalization, assigning blame, minimizing, feeling self deprecating guilt, or not listening deeply, to it, to its causes and conditions are all steps directed away from the Bodhisattva path itself. Furthermore, avoidance is a condition for additional suffering.

Thus, when a conflict grievance dissonance or violation of the precepts arises in our interpersonal relationships, it is essential to attend to it fully. Personally, this involves waking up to our own contribution to this

suffering in these situations through understanding our reactions, emotions and attachments. So first we start with ourselves.

Even if you feel like

you're being attacked, it's always good start with yourself what's going on? deeply, then interpersonally. This involves taking the time to discuss the conflict with the other parties involved in an attempt to clarify the actual causes, conditions, feelings and responses that come together in the situation.

Although no fixed procedures for informal conflict resolution exist, the suggestions and procedures that follow are intended to give all persons involved in dispute, a chance to be fully heard in an environment of respect and kindness that flows from knowing that there's no fundamental difference between us.

stating the actual number one first thing to do is stating the actual and I call this practicing mindfulness out loud

Because mindfulness is not interpreting what your experiences mindfulness is saying, This is what experiences right now.

If you say, you know that,

that,

you know, you really blew it.

That's a general that's how general doesn't really help the conversation. If you say,

you know, when you

when you promised to bring the material to the event, and I was counting on you, and you didn't come with it, I felt hurt.

That's a big difference. You know? So he's just saying, This is what this is what the experience was, and this was my, this is how it was for me to experience it. There's no assigning blame. There's no interpreting it, there's no demand and then it has to be differentiating. This is the experience I had.

And you know, a lot of mindfulness training on the question of, you know, in and of itself outside of conflict is learning

How to separate out the interpretation of an event from the event and how to experience much more directly immediately. So that training of separating out the interpretation from how it's experienced directly

is very, very important skill to have and be able to enter into conflict resolution procedure. This is what I this is what this was my experiences what happened.

Once I was

when I was a graduate student, I was a TA for two professors, two different classes at the same time, same semester, they thought I will share Gil, you know, he'll do half you know, for each, it was a setup for problems, because they each expected me full time or something, you know, and so, they all wanted so much for me.

And then I forget what happened, but why, but for some reason, I got furious with one of the professors, and he happens to be the chair of the department. My department, you know, I was trying to graduate

From and, and he was just I was just, you know, I was really furious of how he always felt really disrespected or discounted in some

way.

And so I knew that I had to say something to him. And I knew somebody I knew I had to I had to do it right away. I didn't go away to clear first.

So it's actually kind of a little bit shaky in talking to him. But I was I had enough sense to just stay and say, This is my say, when this happened, when this event happened, I felt really hurt and felt really angry. I didn't say I'm angry with you. I said, I felt really angry.

And because of that, I think because of the way I said it, I wasn't saying anything about him. He didn't have to get defensive.

And he then kind of entered it, it entered into conversation with me about it, and it resolved itself relatively quickly.

So here in Zen center, they call it stating the actual

IMC we might call practicing mindfulness out loud.

A crucial aspect of conflict conflict resolution. Just as in Buddhist practice itself, is discriminating between our intellect, our interpretations and opinions of an event and how the event was or is personally experienced. In part, this means not making general statements, but rather sticking to the particulars of actual situations and the emotions experienced. It is extremely difficult to have mutual understanding when discussion remains the level of interpretation and generalizations

to being heard. It is important that everyone be given an opportunity to be fully heard. This means that everyone should be given a chance to recount how they remember the history of a conflict, to state their feelings regarding the conflict, and to explain the goals they have for its resolution. such statements should be neither defensive nor critical, since both approaches tend to preclude deeper mutual

Understanding, much conflict arises and is perpetuated through a lack of mutual understanding, taking calm, deliberate and adequate time to listen to each other, yourself and all that is needed in reconciliation to prove reconciliation to begin.

So being heard,

but it doesn't say hear,

be a good listener, the principle is being heard. That means it kind of implies that the other person's listening, but it's a higher order than just the other person listening. It means the person is listening understands you. And you know, they understand. And so sometimes they have this practice process of

explaining back what you heard. And it's really valuable because then

then if you if you misunderstood the person, the person has a chance to correct you.

And if, if they if they understood you, then there's a kind of a relief. Wow. Yeah, they understand me now as they understand where I'm coming from. It has an added value added value, sometimes

If one of the parties repeats back what they hear is sometimes can empathize more deeply than kind of what's going to feel the other person's position at times.

So, giving time to be heard, and I've been on the ethics committee at a number of different communities.

And it can be another party to conflict, but a big part of what people kind of facilitate to help kind of deal with interpersonal conflicts. And I've seen

people come to a community with agreements.

And maybe the person was a little bit

unusual, the person who had agreements

kind of unusual kind of original kind of person.

And so it was kind of easy to want to just dismiss the person.

And I've seen them being dismissed, say, Oh, it's not really

problem or, you know, both, we've dealt with it, you know, or just kind of very simply. And, and I've seen the pain of the person that grievance gets stronger and stronger because they weren't met with

properly they weren't heard. And people thought it was just kind of skip this person out of here somehow. And I've seen even when the person is off the person that agreements occasionally happens,

that somehow they've completely, you know, if someone could sit down with them, and really listen to them, so they feel if they were heard and understood, sometimes the pressure that's in the agreements dissipates. And I've seen situations where other people were dismissive

where I've sat down and met with them, and they really felt heard. And then it didn't feel anymore and need to pursue agreements. Just they were happy. Someone heard them understood their sister situation. And when they didn't, it just kind of like built, built and built for them.

Then there's number three, I've already covered that.

stating what is restating what was heard. To ensure that everyone understands one another It is useful for each party to briefly restate what the other is said highlighting the main points. The other party then says whether the restatement is complete and accurate and if need be makes corrections.

And here comes the religious This is all kind of, you know, there's nothing particularly spiritual here just this is good, good stuff, right.

But here this this next one can be called more and more spiritual. So put on your seat belts

so that you don't kind of bolt for the door right away or

and keep your ears open. You know, some of you might just close your ears as soon as you hear this one.

So number four, is confession.

resolution and reconciliation is greatly facilitated if everyone involved reflects and how they may have contributed to a conflict and then explains this to the other

Party, even when one person is primarily responsible, self reflection, confession and apology on everyone's part can provide a safer, more trusting and understanding environment for everyone to be truthful,

within reason, right? You know, if someone has just physically beat you up, you know, probably doesn't make sense to apologize then or confess them, within reason but, but you might consider that somehow

work, you know, offer kind of, maybe I don't want to call a confession, offering some kind of apology or some kind of recognition of your part.

And then five and six five is facilitation.

So sometimes it's useful to invite one or more neutral witnesses or mediators to take part in a session of conflict resolution. Such a person may simply be a silent witness, providing a sense of calm and

presence or maybe an active mediator who helps ensure that every day each person is given uninterrupted, uninterrupted opportunities to speak

This person might also point out the difference between statements of opinion, interpret, and interpretation and direct statements of how an event or feeling what was or is actually experienced.

And the last one is seeking advice. So if you all those things don't work, then sometimes it's good to get advice to find someone who you trust and you value their wisdom and ask them if, you know, explain your difficulties you have with me.

So like here at IMC

we have a committee that no one knows about hardly. And it's never been used.

It's very convenient when you don't tell anyone.

It's called the ethics and reconciliation Council.

And the acronym is ear to ear council because it's listed service first job is to listen. So if there's conflict in our community, it's a place to go for confidential advice so I can hear you from you know someone you can

Be sounding board for you. And then they might make advices gestures if

he's trying to help you in some way.

And so

ethics and reconciliation council

it's documented online. And Cheryl is one of the people on that committee. Right. So she's right there. So now, you know, so you either want to rush out the door, by the way if it's over, or stay there and wait to live

and know who else Jim Podolski is also on if he's not he's usually here, but not here. And Nick Bennett are the three members of the community are on it. All very good people. And I think really good counsel to give. So I'm not saying this because we currently have any problems that I know of.

In part, I gave this talk today. Because conflict is on my mind because in a different community, I'm part I'm a part of

I feel like I'm in conflict with people there. And so partly this talk was a pep talk to myself.

And so, you know, so don't assume that I have it all made, you know, I know how to do it all. You know, it's a process of learning for me, and, you know, to touch to say, Oh, it's an opportunity to engage in conflict and learn from it

is a painful thing to hear sometimes. And if someone tells me that right now in the conflict, then I feel

Yes, but

but it is. And, and it doesn't make me quite happy yet. But I hope it does, eventually. And,

and so, last thing I want to say is that

my, my real hope for a Buddhist community like ours,

is that we are committed

It never

turns away from anybody, or never closes the door to anybody. So no matter what the conflict is, and what the difficulty is that might arise. This is a place where it's safe to be in conflict. This is a place where it's safe, because no one's going to throw you out. No one's going to, you can't see I can't speak for all the people who come here, right. But as an institution as a group, that's my hope that our group value is that we are never going to turn away from someone that we're in conflict with or difficulty with. And so we have this air council that can help and certainly I'll try to help but in other people, but but if someone has difficulty here within our community,

I hope it's a value of people here a community that will hang in there and try to work it out to try to find common ground, and that it's a safe place to be in conflict. And I think it's one of the contributions we might be able to give our society is to create like a refuge.

The century used to be like, in Europe, that churches were sanctuaries. If you, you know, if you robbed the bank, and you know, you got to the church, then the king couldn't come and get you, as long as you stayed there. And so I don't think we should be that kind of refuge.

But I hope that we're a refuge, where it feels like even though there might be conflict here, that it feels safe to come here and engage in it. And if you can't figure out how to do it on your own, that you

find it there community members here, wise people who will help you.

So we have five minutes before the end. Does anyone want to say yes,

we're trying to form a cohousing community, which means like forming another group and we can anticipate at some point or other, there will be conflicts and sooner rather than later

A very appropriate

timing for to have a talk like this now. Oh, great. So not only us were involved in that, but everybody else as well. Right. Great. So, hopefully there's no problems yet. But it's right. I think when anybody lives together in a cohousing community are kind of living together, you can expect sooner or later type conflict. And so it's nice to have an intentional community like that. It's nice to have ground rules ahead of time to prepare for that rather than assume it's never happened to us we're Buddhists



is actually prepared for lots of ground rules and that's the same true in relationships like with a spouse or for you know, different situations is a time when everything's happy and calm.

Within then it's easy to deny How do we know we don't have any problems. And then when there's tension well, then we can't talk about it because it's tense. And so always wait until things get calm and know that there's no problems.

Whenever you whenever you wait until things are calm and nice. And they say you know I noticed that you every once in a while. We have these blocks

offices difficulties, how about if we kind of plan ahead a little bit and establish some ground rules or some procedures some way to be together? Because to try to do that, in the heat of the moment, might be asking too much. But if you prepare, and it could be as simple as saying, you know, when one of us gets really angry at the other, how about how about we create a five minute rule

that we just kind of say, okay, is doing the five minute rule. No one talks for five minutes. And we just kind of spend time reflect, cool out. And then after those five minutes, let's have a conversation. That could be a ground rule that you're establishing, there are many things that can be done.

Thank you. Someone else? Say something or ask a question.

Like,

I hate conflict. Yes.

I've gotten really good at avoiding it. I feel like sometimes I'm that guy in Toy Story. The dinosaur that goes my kids stay in confrontation because it's

Just so scary and it makes me feel

out of control sometimes. But, you know, if there's anything good about it, it really made it. It makes me more real about myself. It really helps me see myself, contact us. Yes, it really does because I can, you know, get

sort of in a euphoric

state of

spirituality, you know what I mean, where we're conflict less ness gives me an unreal view of myself. And then I get into a situation where it comes up in my anger comes up or my response to something and I just go, Oh, so in that way, it really does deepen my understanding. Great, thank you. And the last thing I'll say, again, it's a plug for regular meditation practice. Regular meditation practice can give you the skills and also the some modicum of calm where it is easy.

To go into conflict resolution, and the first one, I think is what I think is the most important column is important. But, but the skills, the cell in the personal skills is personal understanding, to understand how we react, to begin having a different relationship to our reactivity, to be able to see it arise, to not be in conflict with their own reactivity, to see our anger and not be in conflict with it, and to let it be there to

feel in the body. Learn how to breathe when we're angry. meditation can teach you a lot of skills, and so you bring those skills with you to the situation.

So

yes,

I was. I just wanted to say that I'm retired now, but I've worked in schools and schools always have a conflict resolution

team for kids to solve their problems, which probably never existed when many of us were in school. And I have

often felt so envious, that they have that opportunity because I wish that I had been in school and had been forced to be take a conflict resolution course and learn all the skills that are involved in doing that. And also that therefore, all my peers also had had the same kind of obligatory experience and therefore, when a conflict arises, we both know, here's a conflict, here are some of the things we can do. Here's how to get out of it. And so I'm saying that because

I think it's wonderful that IMC has, has such a committee.

Unfortunately, it isn't us I'm sure there must be some time some conflicts, but it would be nice. I still think in my life, I would love to take some kind of a course in how to deal with conflict when it arises since it does rise. Even for a retired person like myself, it arises You know, there's all kinds of places in which it arises.

And lots of us don't really have a clue you gave a general outline, but, you know, really know in detail. How do you really use in detail on the moment when you're feeling what was just said, Now that just makes my blood boil.

I either have to walk away or I'm going to say something awful or get into a long argument which I want to avoid love, it would be great to have

some opportunity to, you know, really learn and practice skills of dealing with conflict like that maybe the IMC could provide. Maybe, maybe maybe I'll think about it to see what I think you're right. That needs to be great to offer here. It's great. So there's other places that offer it. And it's never too late to learn. I

kind of counseled someone many years ago who was dying.

And

I was gone way for a few weeks, and I kind of thought maybe it was going to die while I was gone.

And I came back and I went to his house and all the curtains were drawn. And I said, oh, they're knocking the door, you know, he couldn't go anywhere because he would kind of, you know, in a bed in the living room

and so I thought so I'm knocking the door there's no answer, and no less than he was really in bed. He was Confederate and he couldn't really get out. He was kind of a little bit delirious when I thought he was gonna die really soon. And so I came back from being gone for a few weeks and then knocked in the door to say, to see if you're still alive and say hello. And no one answered the door. Look, the curtains they were drawn again.

It's too bad I came too late. And, and so I stood there for a little bit longer and suddenly the door opened up, and he was standing there killed, so nice to see you. And I felt like I was looking at a ghost.

And he'd come on in.

And somehow he had kind of reverted to change the medication a little bit he was on and they still dying, but it was revived.

Come in, and then within two minutes of being in his house said, You have to help me with my wife, we're fighting.

You know, here he was, you know, in the last days, weeks of his life, and he has marital conflict. And I can fight it. I didn't I didn't say it out loud.

You know, I because sometimes I don't, you know, I don't have that much of that much life experience. So, that was a new one too. For me. I kind of assumed that close to death, but everyone's forgiven, you know, whatever. But it isn't. And so you never know when you're gonna need your skills.

So it's good to be prepared.

Thank you very much.