

# 2007-07-30 Papancha

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

thinking, mind, thoughts, people, proliferation, stop, meditation, world, happen, imc, simple, notice, meditate, life, meditation practice, meditating, driving, poem, teachers, fact

## SPEAKERS

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This evening I'm going to talk a little bit about a very important concept in our Buddhist tradition, Buddhism in general. It's called in Pali papancha and in Sanskrit prapancha, and to before I tell you what it is, I will maybe give you try to give you an analogy. Imagine there were cars and roads and traffic like there is now and you were a driver and driving these cars around. But there were no stop signs and no traffic lights at all. So driving more interesting because no one would have to stop. No one would have to stop and or everyone else has to stop but you don't have to stop. And so you know, just kind of drive freely. Go along, and it would be quite a mess. But luckily, there are stop signs. And there are traffic lights, which certainly keeps things orderly. But what it requires us to do is we stop to be wait to notice the traffic and when it's our turn we go. So in a similar kind of way if our minds are thinking minds are like the cars, then all too often our minds travel routes that have no stop signs and no traffic lights and, and off they go and it's can be quite a mess. Someone once said that the tyranny of the human mind is a just a traffic jam of discretion. Thought. So sometimes it can be quite. And somebody else said analogy of the mind is kind of like a, like a, you have an off ramp on the freeway, but that often takes you right back on again. So it's possible to get into a lot of trouble with our thinking mind and having a thinking going on and on and on. And if there's no realistic stops, or pauses, to kind of look around, see what the other traffic is notice what's going on, give the opportunity for certain things to move ahead because they have the right of way whenever it's possible to get the mind overheated, or overexcited or anxious, or overly depressed or weighed down by the thoughts that it has. And so traffic, you know, traffic stops are good. And so mindfulness in a sense or meditation can be seen as one of its functions is it's a healthy traffic stop, stop, stop and look at what's going on. And so you're not giving free rein for the mind to do whatever it wants. Now of course reality's often interfering with a free course of the mind. And that's lucky for most of us, because if we gave absolutely free control of our mind to do whatever it wants, most of us would probably start going a little bit crazy. But you know, we have to bump into things doors, be open to notice them, all kinds of things have to happen. And so we have to be interrupted. And so we kind of have to pay a little bit attention to ourselves in our surroundings. But it's possible to live life quite actively also very engaged in many ways. You still let the course of the mind move on and on and on in perpetuity and endless cycles. In fact, what Buddhism says is there suggest is that the our preoccupation with thoughts with thinking is part of the fuel that perpetuates the thinking. So it's kind of like a self perpetuating motion machine. And we look at one for a long time, and there it is, in your own mind. And so we get caught up in our thoughts and we get triggered by our thoughts and we get, make associations with the thoughts. We react to our thoughts with further thoughts more thinking. And this process of thinking is a useful process. If we have the proper way of handling if we have the proper stop signs and stoplights and rearview mirrors and ways of really seeing what's going on. But you know, you can have too much of a good thing. So in other maybe analogy would be you know, you got into a car one day and they wouldn't let you out.

You have to always be driving. And fortunately they have these full service gas stations so you don't have to get out of your car for gas and he's getting you know, and in fact, they have driving bread drive in, you know, restaurants, you can get your food and put it right through your side segment window. And in this as this kind of world, of course, the full service, gas stations also help you with your bathroom. So you don't have to leave your car. If you're always in your car and you know, you're always driving your car and they're going, going going. And you know, after a while, you know, this really great thing the car is not so great anymore. You know, you kind of think to get out. It's hard for people to see how they're often stuck or caught in the elaborations proliferations the mental preoccupations of the mind. And to see that there's an alternative because it's kind of like the supposed to be like the fish that's can't see the water swims in supposedly. So sometimes it's very hard to see the world of thinking that we're living in, partly because there's a there's a gap camouflage, affective thinking sometimes. And that is we're thinking about something. So the mind is concerned with the thing that we're thinking about, not the process of thinking, not the event of thinking. It's so important when we think about and one of the very interesting questions in a mindful life is why does our attention Why does our thinking fixate on particular things? Why do we fall out to certain desires or certain versions? Why do we get preoccupied by certain things? Why do we Why does the mind go down certain channels certain roads in a thought, why did it do that? And part of I think a mindful life is to begin investigating that you know, what, what, what is what are the common routes that I take in my mind? And why do I do that? Why is that so interesting? Why am I Why is the mind so motivated to always be thinking about such a thing? You know, if you have common themes, or if you have never have any common themes at all whatsoever, and your mind is completely just kind of a fog that kind of, you never really quite know what you think. About but we know you're thinking somewhat vaguely, but there's no particular theme. That's very interesting in itself. So that's warrants investigation, what's going on there. And so part of the mindfulness life is looking at what's going on with our thinking, thinking mind. Now, this word papancha, I want to teach you is, means is sometimes translated as proliferation of thinking. Or it also translated sometimes is elaborations of thinking. And it's this proliferating movement of thought, that starts leaving reality into abstractions. So, if I see a bell here, there's a recognition This is about an IMC spell. That's a simple moment of thought, simple thinking. And this has some basis in reality. You know, it's used here at IMC and called the IMC spill, and we're very happy with it. But then approach Separation would be. It makes a really nice sound. It really helped my meditation when they rang it. I think that my meditation at home and be improved a lot. If I had this kind of Bell, I wonder if there's some way that I could borrow it or buy it or steal it. And, you know, after all, you know, these Buddhists are supposed to be quite detached. You know, they're not really so attached to the things, you know, they probably don't care if I, you know, take it, I wouldn't steal it because it can't steal from someone who's detached. And it's, I'm sure it's quite ethical, and, and, you know, and I'm sure I could use it much better than, you know, what happens here and, and so that the mind kind of moves on. But, you know, that's, you know, kind of funny, but then it goes on from there. It's just an Oh, no, I shouldn't be thinking that way. That's not proper. And, and maybe I should need to look at this more carefully. I think therapy is right for me. But therapy, I can't really afford therapy. And because I can't really help No, I just don't have the right job. And, you know, jobs not making enough money. And after all that boss of mine just not treating me well. In fact, my boss never treats me well. And that boss of mine reminds me of my, you know, teacher in high schools who really kind of wasn't my case. And I was not Teacher's pet and all those teachers, most teachers education is really bad in this country. And, and that's just this is just the preface.

You know, and off it goes, right. And it all started because of the bell. Right, that's where it all began. So that's called proliferation of thinking or abstractions. And this is when the traffic's traffic doesn't have any stop signs. And what we can do with mindfulness is we can notice Oh, here goes to mind, you notice that the horse is starting to speed up. And I mean, oh, wait a minute. Do I really want to take that route? I want to travel down that way. Is this really useful for me? And so you can have a little check? Is this

really what I want to do with my mind And I suspect that a lot of people live, they can live a whole lifetime without asking themselves the question, Is this what I should be doing with my mind? With my thinking? So it's possible to check that. And even if you can't stop what you're thinking, sometimes it's very helpful to realize oh, this is what I'm thinking about. To see it Oh, thinking is going on. This is what my mind is concerned about preoccupied about. Can't can be sometimes very helpful to see that. Some people use extreme measures to stop also. So this proliferation has a momentum such as simply empty words, you know, in the sky of the mind that pass through. But there's energy behind thinking there's a lot of thinking, a preoccupation, there's an energy, there's momentum, there's tension, there's emotions connected to it. And that momentum is sometimes you can't just stop it like that. And because of the mental has been set in motion, I've noticed sometimes when I'm really confused involved in some kind of mental process or even something you're involved in cleaning house at home, that after an hour of cleaning house, it's time to stop. There's no momentum decreed. Sometimes an open house needs to be cleaned. Or if I'm thinking about something, you know, I stopped thinking about it. And then my mind still goes there more frequently because of momentum is still there. And so how do you stop the momentum? And I saw a movie many years ago, it was kind of a documentary, short documentary of a man who said about his hobby, what he did was a kind of sport. So they used to race motorcycles. But then I had a family with kids, and it wasn't really appropriate. It's too expensive, took a lot of time. And he was dangerous or something. So it wasn't really appropriate to ride motorcycles anymore, especially motorcycles. So I didn't have much time. So I had to figure out something else. So what he figured out Because what he did was the motorcycle racing helped clear his mind. So that's an expression we use, right when the, when the big too big of a traffic jam in there, we've tried to clear our mind. And so he's got to figure out different clearing than motorcycle racing. And what he's figured out to do was a sport. I know what it's called, maybe some of you know the state. But it's kind of like a hang gliding because parachuting of skyscrapers. And then this documentary showed if you had to sneak onto these construction sites with a building skyscrapers, we can get in, right. And it's open, right? Let's say free. And so he would, he would get in there just before dusk, you know. So it could be very tough, you know, a dawn before the workers got there, and you have a getaway car friends in the streets. And then he would jump. And then at the right moment, he would release the parachute that you glide down to the street and pack it all up and get in the car and run off. And by the time he did all that his mind was clear. So, you know, there are some, you might think that there are more efficient ways of meditating. But meditation is also meant to be a place to kind of notice see this momentum to take stock and understand what's going on, but also to begin clearing the mind. Learning how to have the mind not chase after the thoughts, not react to thoughts, leave the thoughts alone, or drop them, stop them. If you can't stop them and leave them alone. You can't stop them. Don't believe them. You can stop them, don't react to them, just let them be. Many years ago, I was at the Sahara Zen monastery. And one of the teachers there. Described why he got involved in Zen practice sitting on bombs in practice because he was really troubled by it. Thinking and you wanted to kind of somehow come to terms with it. And, and so he did you know, some years of Zen practice and in training and, and what he learned was his thought thinking couldn't stop. But he stopped being bothered by it. And that was a big transformation for him. He no longer was bothered by it. And in fact, that's what Suzuki Roshi, the Zen teacher in terms of his instructions around thinking was, don't be bothered by it. Don't bother it. And don't be bothered, bothered by it. Which is another way of saying don't get caught in this lab. Don't get caught in the stickiness of the thoughts and concerns. Why do we think it's so important to think those of you who think why is it so important? What's great solutions? What great pleasures, what's great protection. Are you going to get from your thinking, why rehearse conversations you've had You know, hundreds of times in your head, rehearsed conversations from the past who spend endless time planning a future you don't know what's going to arrive? Why spend a lot of time and fantasy? All kinds of fantasies mind goes into? Why is it doing it? What's the benefit of all these activities? What benefit Are you getting from it? And one of the things that we're hoping to discover through something like meditation practice is that there's something which is more beneficial for us than staying involved in the world of thinking

the world, the papancha, this proliferation of distractions world making it into it can be more beneficial for us to be involved in something else besides thinking. And this is a difficult lesson for the poor mind to learn the thinking mind to learn. And sometimes the thinking mind will protest because it's all it knows, is it's the world of thinking. That's where it's that's the name of the game for some people. But it can be more beneficial. To engage the mind is something different than thinking. For some minds, it's an inconceivable idea. Because you know, what else? What else is there? I mean, that's just what the mind does it just kind of secretes thoughts all the time. And you know, is there something else to do? But of course there is. In the simple analogy, simple example would be, some people really like to listen to music. And I would argue that be able to listen to music is not dependent on being on thinking about the music. In fact, thinking about the music might prevent you from really kicking in the aesthetic feeling and sense the emotion of listening to the music. Listening to music is not a think thought filled activity. It's a sensory activity. It involves all kinds of capacities besides just hearing, but it's, it doesn't have to involve a lot of thinking. In fact, I remember once I went to a symphony, and I had to spend the first half of the symphony before intermission listen to music with my eyes closed because with my heart Open, I was thinking too much about what I was seeing what they were seeing in the orchestra and everything you know. And I went, it was just detracting from the music. So I closed my eyes, I wouldn't think so much. And then, after half the doctor intermission, I was settled enough, I calmed down enough that my mind didn't think that way anymore. And so I could listen with both eyes open.

So certain aesthetic things don't require a lot of thinking. And so that's one example of something it can be very beneficial, very nice. That doesn't involve thinking. And you can probably think of other things that are the similar. So meditation allows us to start tuning into some peace, some stillness, some capacity for sensory awareness, some sense of inner well being, some sense some other kind of way of connecting to ourselves. That's different than connecting to ourselves or thinking to the world through our thinking.

The opposite of papancha is in Pali is nirpapancha, nir here means, n i r, means without or not. Without papancha, absence of a papancha, absence of this elaboration. And the Buddha craves this absence very highly because you consider it to be a synonym with freedom with liberation. So, to be able to stop the abstractions of the mind, the elaborations of the mind in order to be present for this life in a much more simple direct way. Now, elaborations, papancha, isn't the same thing as a simple thought of recognition, a simple kind of, you know, recognition of what's happening here now, so you don't just stop thinking entirely, but to stop thinking this, you know, endless proliferation, distractions of various important quality. So when you're thinking when you notice yourself thinking is you're thinking about something which is actual here now or is it about something which is here is you know there are now or there and then is it about some other time in place? is some abstraction or is it something here concrete? What would happen to you, if you let go of the abstraction was not really actual, like go the virtual world where the thoughts can take you and begin very simple for your direct experience here now, and is it to your benefit to do that doesn't mean have to do it all the time. You don't have to give up your cars. So, to stop at the stop signs, and sometimes Park and do something else, but, but so sometimes it's beautiful to be involved in the elaborations of the mind the abstractions it's an important part of human Life, but it's also phenomenally beautiful to be able to put it down to stop it and then to connect this life in a much more simple and much more direct way with a simplicity of presence with the simplicity of presence that that you just here we are as you baby something, you know, one of one of the techniques for people who have panic attacks is to ask them to look around the room they're in and say identify Is there any any threat in the room here is a room safe in the therapists office something there's a flower on the table netbook safe and somebody look around and that does two things. One, it's little distracts the person from their the proliferation of thoughts which sometimes triggered the panic, but also it shows them in the concrete actual way. Hear, there is no no danger. And that can

some people can be very helpful to settlement. Because in the concrete world welcome very simple. The concrete immediately world sometimes is not very promising in relationship to the great promise that our abstract desires can have. And that's part of the reason why we want to stay in our thoughts because we have this great goal in the future. But I think one of the hopefully opportunities of meditation practice is to show a, a sense of well being or delight or joy or satisfaction or peace. That is possible when the mind is not driven by its preoccupations. And to discover slowly that that joy can be one of the greatest one of the greatest choice of human life is not gonna look good on your resume. It's not gonna look good in your bank account. It's not gonna look good. You know, in any kind of world, they kind of criteria the fact that you know how to sit still and be happy. In fact, someone told me, I don't know if it's true. A woman who Thailand once said that the Thai government tried to try to make a law preventing Buddhist teachers in Thailand, from teaching giving teachings on contentment. Because if the population is content, then economy is not going to be driven. Grow and you know, industry is not going to develop discontented people to kind of you know, want more Talladega you know, is a Super Bowl is the important time for commercials in America. Good we can buy IMC can buy a commercial 30 seconds. Don't buy anything.

The most valuable thing you can have in life is found by not buying it. Don't buy stuff. You can do it. Of course we have a great, wonderful pastoral scene with a young woman, young man doing nothing, doing nothing. You know, they wouldn't even be seductive, revealing nothing. Anybody might bring some kind of Super Bowl Award for Best commercial. And then there'd be a law, no more commercials like that in United States. Too subversive.

When I was a Zen student, this was one of my favorite poems. It's a poem by Ryōkan. And I read it twice, at once. And then afterwards, I'll tell you a little bit about the context for the for the phone and then read it again. With no mind, blossoms invite the butterfly. With no mind, the butterfly visits the blossoms. When the flower blooms, the butterfly comes, when the butterfly comes, the flower blooms. I do not know others. Others do not know me not knowing each other, we naturally followed away so you might think that a mind that's clear, mind which is not driven or caught in the world of a papancha, maybe it's not a safe mind, maybe it's in mind is not going to get any wonderful things in order to get the wonderful things of life to plan and think and imagine. And all these wonderful things like now this idea of imagining what you wanted what they say, imagining what you want, and you imagined, right, it'll come your way. This book papancha. And so no mind his mind is not caught up in elaborations. And that no mind, in my simple mind, perhaps you don't have to figure out what you're going to say. Next, perhaps you don't have to figure out what you're going to do next. Perhaps there could be a natural thing that comes next. Out of that out of you can trust your innate intelligence to know what to do? Why don't you trust your innate intelligence? Why do you plan and worry And concern, before you do something will happen if you didn't find just let something come out. When I was writing my dissertation, one of the great one of the few wonderful things that happened writing a dissertation was a discovery that I didn't have to know the end of the sentence when I began. And that was really freeing for me. You know, it wasn't so kind of wrapped up in my words and my thoughts and ideas. It was a process of discovery, writing was a process of discovery. I discovered what I thought in a sense in that process. So with no mind, things happen with no mind blossoms invite the butterfly. With no mind butterflies visit the blossom. Not knowing each other, we naturally follow the way. So there's something about the beginner's mind and not knowing mind. Not knowing so much. Clearing the mind and seeing something fresh and new. And that's Seeing it that the old way of knowing. And then this sense not knowing someone else, allowing them to be fresh and new, not someone you've seen every morning for 30 years as if you know who they are. But who is this person? Who's this person today? Don't know the other person who's there. This is the that's the kind of not knowing and not knowing each other, we naturally follow the way that's that's the my commentary and understood that this this poem by Ryōkan

has little story behind it. And that is, it's a love poem. It was written when he was quite old. And we don't know no one really knows exactly what the relationship was. But he had with he had with this young nun who would come visit him in his huts, I guess, or, you know, they had some kind of very close relationship. And so they wrote these poems, friendship, poems or love comes back and forth. And this was his poem to her with no mind, blossoms, and bye To butterfly with no mind, the butterfly visits the blossoms. When the flower blooms, the butterfly comes, when the butterfly comes, the flower blooms. I do not know others, others did not know me not knowing each other, we naturally follow the way. That's an interesting way of being in relationship. So, I have elaborated and abstracted and proliferated enough this evening. So now it's your turn to do likewise. Or say ask questions or anything you'd like. Please Like,

if you if you're sitting in meditation and your mind is just going haywire, you know, bombarded with thoughts, and maybe it's causing some anxiety, should you meditate through it? Or should you actually stop?

I think that it's hard to answer that question is simple you know the one answer

because

and you know, the answer, your your answer is found through trial and error, hopefully. So you have a trial and error, you kind of experiment to see what works and what doesn't work. Sometimes one of the best things you can do when your mind is bulbar with thoughts and you're very anxious to sit and meditate, and to learn the skills and the ability, learn the ability to be present for all the energy or the just, you know, all the stuff going on, and learn how to step away from this little bit so it doesn't get fueled, and then let it kind of settle by itself in its own way. meditation can be a great help for some people, sometimes however, anxious thinking, and if you pay attention to it, it makes us more anxious. And so it can become indicated because you can kind of spin out even more and more and more. And so maybe then it's not useful to meditate, if that's, that's the result of trying to meditate. So, if it's not working, it's getting worse because of the, you know, when you sit and meditate, then you can do, you know, one thing you could do is come and talk to a teacher, and maybe there's some techniques or some way of meditating that can be helpful. The other thing is, maybe that's not the time to meditate. Maybe there's other things that are more useful for you. It could be going for a run will clear your mind more, or taking a long shower or, you know, talking, talking with a friend, you know, to write other things that might settle it. So you have to kind of be able to use it through trial and error and through the intelligence you have tried to have a sense, you know, what's the right strategy here? given what's going on, in different days, there might be different strategies. And what's what's important about trial and error is we learn by error as much as we do by success. And I think that a hallmark of this practice of mindfulness is has that quality of trial and error. We're learning through through engaging, and trying to learn how to do something that didn't quite work for the child different way or something like that. Makes sense. And if you're unsure in this circumstance, then don't meditate. You know, if it's getting worse, you know, just then do something else that you might know might be helpful.

You gave a very good analogy on this traffic. There was a time when there were no lights, there were no stop signs. And so the traffic mode. I used to live in Africa where there was not nothing like stoplight nothing like stop sign is still we were able to drive because the life was simple. Do you think the simplicity has to do a lot with this proliferation of thoughts?

simplicity?

If we are simple, we'll never mind have lots and lots of prolific word you use.

Papancha. alliteration. pranpancha. Yeah, yeah, When shall I can pronounce that better?

Do you think the simplicity can reduce the agony of

I think a lot of people find that a simpler lifestyle reduces the anxiety, the proliferation, the fastest of their mind, their life, what's going on, they're thinking. And I know some people have chosen to move to environments where things are slower because of that. And there's a kind of way in which is contagious in this environment. There's so much going on so many things to do. And people feel like they have to always be busy and doing and filling. And, and so yes, it can be very helpful to go and live in places from Things are really simple and quiet. But it's no guarantee. You might be lucky and you might bring everything with you. And see, like, I've gone to really simple places like Buddhist monasteries. And I've been with a lot of other people who've gone to Buddhist monasteries. And it's amazing how much people bring with them. How much people bring with them. So they think they're leaving behind, you know, they're suffering behind all the difficulties, and it comes along with them. But that's an environment because it's simpler environment. It allows people to see it much more clearly. So I remember the Buddha had all these teachings about a puncture puncture. In a time in a culture 2500 years ago, when there was no cars. Things were a lot simpler, it's still easily possible. In fact, the Buddha he gave this elaboration is proliferation of abstract thinking. as being one of the sources, one of the causes and the chain of causes that leads to violence. And that was 2500 years ago.

Thank you very much. One of the things I've always had great difficulty with is actually in the process of mindfulness watching my thoughts, by definition, my my thoughts for me are always they've always already come and gone and they're already past tense. And I you know, I've been hearing there by the time I realized that that I have been thinking and I have trouble. You know, the analogy of sort of watching, watching clouds go via is in the analogy of understood of watching thoughts, and I don't know how to do that to stay present to watch.

So you're not even having the experience of thoughts passing through

Can't do it in the present tense it's really difficult it's always after the fact

it's interesting phenomena so it might be interesting for you somehow to explore that yourself it's kind of get it get a sense of the overall ecology of what's happening when you start looking at thoughts there could be a very subtle or version or fear connected to it where you'd rather not look at it it's kind of kind of turning away letting go to easily kind of just kind of pushing away there could be a way in which you're shutting down part of yourself you're a little bit nama shutting down you know, I don't know managers making up things here but could be could be some interesting phenomena to look at. And maybe the most interesting time to look at it is when you find yourself relatively to normal times calm. And then when you're calm, bring something up to think about. Just intentionally start thinking about something and get it get a feel what it looks like with a feel like I think what I'm intentionally thinking about something, and you know, it could be that you remember write a poem or a song, and just recite the poem to yourself in your thoughts, thinking that loud and just watch the process of what happens when you just kind of recite that in your mind or thinking about something. Think about, you know, what you want to do on Sunday. You know, plan something, you know, or think about something that frightens you, really concerns you. And from that calm vantage point, if you intentionally think maybe

then you have a different religion and get a handle on it. Because if you try to use your mind, if you try to meditate or normally try to look at your thoughts, there's intentionality kind of falls away too easily, and sort of thought thinking falls away, maybe. So that's why I recommend look at it and study it. And in the corners of that ecology, ecological system of thinking, you might look and see how much clarity or lack of clarity is there in the mind when you're trying to you know, overall just feel foggy, the mind if you're clear, is there any kind of emotions connected in the corners of this ecosystem that seem connected to this very subtle and maybe influences it? What's the energy level like in your system? Is it energizes or not? What do you think about thoughts? You think thoughts or words or thoughts for you more images. And so you're trying to connect to words. But really your mind is more image way of thinking, then maybe you're missing your mind because your mind thinks more images. There's a lot of possibilities. So hopefully, these this list of things I've said, helps you with your investigation.

When I say an abstraction I, one of the things I remember from graduate school is that when Our teachers taught Freud and she said that he thought there was a primary language and the secondary language and the primary line, which was our dream language and our storytelling going on inside and in his theory was that it happened all the time. And then secondary language was discursive thinking was more identified with their ego. And I, you know, I'm only thinking of it now, because I never noticed it ever till I started meditating. But when I meditate, I have a lot of discursive thinking. And I, you know, I let go of it over and over, and I often happens in my 45 minutes said that there's a point at which I noticed,

I feel that this language that she uses

really helps other that suddenly, images start popping up from somewhere deep and I don't feel identified with them, and they're the same kind of thoughts, but you know, they're from deeper down, I guess, I would say. They're like the Images and they're kind of nonsensical, but, but I'm less, they're less sticky and I let go of them easier and but I'm much more relaxed when they start coming up in a deeper place of relaxation. But, you know, I just let go of them and return to the breath as well. But for me I notice this distinction between between different kinds of thoughts.

Yes, that's right. And then it's kind of like the surface chatter of the mind. The surface chatter in the mind can settle down and we get relaxed enough, then other processes that aren't so discursive begin to operating. And it's not uncommon for people talking about dreamlike experiences in meditation. Images sometimes happen. And it's kind of like the boundaries between the subconscious and the conscious kind of begin softening some and other things have a chance and people report having getting really creative. Once once the discursive thinking chatter quiets down, you get kind of calm, people have access to creative ways of thinking, more intuitive ways of being in the world. Feeling things. And there's a lot of things that deeper kind of ways of processing that can be have a chance, it doesn't have a chance when we're always filling the space with papancha. And now when you're meditating, it's a good sign to have these things happen. You can congratulate yourself it says, you know, things are going well. And yet Generally, the advice in meditation practice is, don't get interested in all the images that might arise. Just like earlier on you were letting go thoughts. And now let go of those as well to go into it. It's like a really good process has gotten you that far. And don't interrupt the process in order to enjoy this. Just trust the process and go further and even still. So maybe one more you Andre has been trying so maybe you can have a mic up front here.

So I'm curious If it's helpful to engage in very, very focused thinking, that really requires a lot of discipline, like something intellectually demanding

Sudoku,

crossword puzzles, something a little bit more, hopefully more meaning

but some kind of a task, I really was thinking more like an intense sutta study or, or even just literature but that really engages the mind that has some value to itself. It's not just entertaining yourself, but something that is really that challenges you and that some words can come out of out of it. For him That in itself, because it engages the mind so intensely, that the mind one develops discipline and two can then actually Relax better when you're meditating? Oh,

yes,

maybe this last layer, but I think that intense thinking about something can be very useful because sometimes the intensity of it and the absorption and some kind of question or investigation, mental investigation can allow some deeper again, processing or consideration or intuition around that issue, to operate a candidate if you just kind of lightly lightly thinking about it. And so I've seen many times in my life, that I believe it's only by my intense thinking about something that I've been able to see, understand it in a new way have new understanding new decisions about something. But what's what's fascinating for me is that the most important decisions in my life that I made in this way, the thinking didn't give me thinking didn't lead me to the solution. What happened was the thinking gave the mind the focus, the energy, the context, the condition for which something deeper To shift, and then there was a deeper knowing Oh, that's what I should do. But like, I didn't know that and but, but, but that shift required the thinking as a preliminary,

it's because you engage the mind is it's like an anchor. It's like anchoring on the breath, the mind you, you, you give it a structure,

maybe maybe well, maybe maybe a little, maybe a little bit. But I think anytime the mind is really focused on one thing, different creative functions of the mind come into operation when they do mind scattered jumping all over. So it doesn't matter what you're doing. I think some degree of focus provides the mind with a different kind of way of operating. But also it's I think that

in mind, the mind processes things when you're not paying attention. So you know, so, you know, when I was a kid The first time I noticed This was an agreement skiing's some years when I was growing up, and I noticed that I was a better skier at the beginning of the ski season, that had been at the end of the ski season before, the day before. So in other words, during a period of a summer, I didn't ski during that period actually improve my skiing, even though even the ski so there's a way in which that that my mind stop processing. And so people who have intense problems are trying to solve and then they find the problem is not solved when the thinking it's all going out biking. You know, they're not thinking about it in some so somehow the mind still processing but the intensity and the focus and somehow allows the mind to do its work in a deeper way than if you just kind of lightly or casually or Hmm, think about it. And think anything, you know, intense thinking is a great thing, or you know, really focused thinking about something it's, it's a wonderful important can be an important part of human life. All this talk today about you know, you know, clearing the mind being present for the actual actual, is a very important process, very important for the process of liberation, freedom. And but if you only stayed with a clear mind all the time that didn't have any thoughts and it just kind of you wouldn't really be free to be free is to have flexibility to have the mind move back and forth between different modes of operation and operate in the mode it's appropriate to given time. And so there are times when it's appropriate to engage quite intensely with the world of thought. And potentially the freedom to drop in as long as

appropriate. And then it's appropriate to be empty. It's not appropriate to the empty Don't be empty. So that's flexibility. So sometimes with Buddhism, also there's a, you mentioned reading sutras or sometimes I engage myself on some topic, some texts, for example, and it's they intense involvement, their texts that kind of allows me to Kind of mind or explore, kind of fill out the riches of what's going on there. And other times that the riches of the riches of life are found by not thinking. And just, you know, it's it's so it's so delicious. And if I had to choose between the riches that come from thinking and the riches that come from not thinking, if I had to choose between one or the other, I would choose not thinking or not thinking No, no, no, and then understood liberation stuff. But so far I haven't chosen. I go freely back and forth, depending what's needed. So anyway, so I hope that was helpful. I hope I didn't stir up your thinking even more. And I hope it was a little pep talk to encourage you to at least look at what's going on in your thinking and consider maybe there's an alternative and maybe you can have more stuff science in your mind. Thank you