

2009-04-12 Discerning Our Stories

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SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

Perhaps because today's Easter I'm thinking about how important stories are for human beings. And some people from scholars have commented that religions are characterized by their stories. different religions have more than their doctors. And that different religions offer different stories and, or emphasize different stories as being central to the tradition. And then people somehow join in that story. They see themselves in the story. They participate in the story in some way. And stories are really important for people. So much so that perhaps people shouldn't be called homosapiens But should we call the homeless dorian's subtext Something like that. The so much of people's happiness and suffering is contingent upon the stories that they tell themselves and other people tell and how we're involved in the story making mind story making activities we do. And so Buddhism has its own stories. Christianity has stories Judaism has stories all religions have stories. And some stories that you know, people live by our religious come from the religion. Some stories have to do with the personal history and experiences, their family history, their ethnic history. And some of them place the characters place you person in very small story, some place them into a story and some people love getting a new story and finding a news story can give a lot of meaning to a person's life, or losing a story that one had for many years, no longer be able to participate in it, participate in that story can really be debilitating for people and lead to a lot of depression despair. So, I wrote a story.

There was once a monk who was known for his his relaxed and trusting nature. Whatever was happening, the monk would smile. If circumstances were challenging, he would say, if we can accept how things are and keep a positive attitude, everything we need will unfold on its own. Once when the monk was on a month long retreat in hermitage, deep in the forest He witnessed a remarkable interaction between a deer and a tiger. The deer injured, came stumbling into the clearing in front of the Hermitage. Sometime later a tiger wandered into the clearing and saw the wounded deer. The monk held his breath, convinced to the tiger would surely kill and eat the deer. The deer too was clearly worried. But as it could no longer walk, the deer surrendered itself to its fate, lying very still in the grass. To the monk surprise, the tiger spent the next few days standing guard over the deer until a deer was well enough to wonder. standing guard over the over the deer. At times, other tigers and wolves would wander into the clearing smelling the wounded deer. Each time the guarding Tiger would roar and Breaking Away the predators. And then eventually, the deer was well enough to wander off again on its own. The monk was elated at this site, as it seemed to validate his idea that if only we could accept fully enough, the boundless goodness of the universe will take care of us. A few days later, lightning struck a neighboring hermitage, a few hundred feet away. At first the roof smoldered and smoked. The monk accepted this. The roof then caught on fire. The monk accepted this. Then the rest of the heart started burning. The monk accepted this too. Soon the entire hermitage was gone, and the nun who lived there was slightly injured from attempting to battle the flames. When the abbot came to investigate the fire, he asked the monk why he didn't go to help put out the fire, and replied the monk told the story of the

Tiger In the deer, and how it had taught them the importance of surrendering and accepting things in the way the deer had done. You fool, fellow the abbot. Certainly there are times when you should be like the deer. But if you are to be a true monk, you should also know when to be like a tiger. With that the abbot sent the monk attacking. Don't come back until you know how to be a tiger. Only when you accept this part of yourself, can you understand what it means to accept things as they are?

That's a nice story. I think. So are you a deer? Are you a tiger? And what is your life call call on you to be and Are there times when you are called on to be like the wounded deer and just to lay still and let something take care of you. The universe, nature, your friends, your family, or the times when your situation calls on you to be a tiger and to be ferocious. When we tell ourselves stories about Buddhism, Buddha stories, different Buddhist cultures will tell different Buddhist stories. And here in the West, in the circles that I travel in, I would say that we tend to tell their stories. And other Buddhist cultures sometimes will tend to tell more of the Tiger stories. I don't know if one is more right than the other. But we need to learn both. And so for example, in the story of the Buddha's enlightenment, the story we tell ourselves so the Enlightenment story is a story that made it very meaningful for people and people get galvanized there. lives to change their whole lives because of the story of this man getting enlightened. So we tell the story. And one of the most common stories that my myself and maybe some of my colleague teachers use in this third story of the Buddha's enlightenment is the story of our two teachers two stories. One is the story. Whereas 3536 year old man, his quest for enlightenment, the Buddha remembered an event when he was six years old, when he was sitting underneath a rose apple tree, and was left alone in the shade of a nice spring day in India and India. And somehow, spontaneously on his own, settled into a deep state of meditation that brought him a lot of joy. That kind of kind of settling in leaving leaving yourself alone just being and feeling his joy bubble up, was a clue that as a 35 year old person he had Then thought, Oh, this is the way forward maybe to get enlightened. I've tried everything else. Let me try this path also, this kind of deep settled meditation. That's one story that's told. It's a little more of a like deer like story just sit there and be present in something happens. And then the other stories often told is a story of, of Mara coming that God of distraction and temptation coming to try to distract the Buddha from getting enlightened. And the Buddha then very gently puts his hand down and touches over his right knee and touches the earth, and calls upon the earth to be as witness the earth then has an earthquake and chases away, Mara. So it also suggests this idea of our connection to nature, the earth the earth supports us. We call it something outside of ourselves for support, and then something beautiful happens and takes care of us. Jason's Way Mara, perhaps also a deer like story. Other one of the stories which is seldom told about his enlightenment here in myself and my colleagues, I think, is the story that part of the Lightman story where the Buddha sits down the night of his awakening and makes a vow that he's not going to get up until he gets enlightened. Even something like exactly a quote, but even if his his flesh falls off his bones, he's gonna sit there that takes that's like a tiger. That's like boring. Like, I'm gonna sit here no matter what, I'm going to face everything. And I'm going to you know, just, you know, have that kind of strength and power to just not move. So we don't tell ourselves that story too often here in the West. You know, that kind of striving is gives us a headache. But other people use that story. It's very meaningful for them. To tell us, tell us tell us their stories. And so again, some Buddhist people talk a lot about loving kindness, importance of that, perhaps that's more like a deer maybe I don't know. And other Buddhist practitioners emphasizes, emphasize strength power.

Many people here in the West are a little bit apprehensive around power. I think it was Nelson Mandela. Mandela said, something like people are most afraid of their own strength. And I've met plenty of people who are very afraid of their own strength, afraid of hurting people afraid of the effect, they'll have afraid of success even sometimes, because if they're succeed in something, then their whole world has

to shift and change. And they'd rather keep the status quo, even though it might be uncomfortable status quo.

So

So when do we Like a tiger? And when do we act like the wounded deer? When do we act ferociously? When do we call upon power and strength? And when do we call upon capacity to accept to let go and just be nothing to fear not to do let things happen on their own. It takes a lot of wisdom to know the difference, that that difference is very important to discern. Sometimes, the life around us requires or calls upon us to act with great ferocity, great power, strength, sometimes there's social injustice, that requires us to stand up and say no, to do something, and hopefully do it with great strength and power. Not just say, Oh, you know, it's okay. It's not a good idea, but I'll I'll be okay with that. I'll learn to accept it. You know, my Buddhism is about being accepting things, but letting go and sometimes letting go is not what's called Upon

here's a story from the Sufi tradition, past the seeker, as he prayed, came the crippled and the beggar and the beaten. And seeing them the holy person, the Holy One, went down into deep prayer and cried, great God. How is it that a loving creator can see such things and yet do nothing about them? And out of the long silence, God replied, I did do something about them. I made you. So when do we have to act? Go forward and do something. We see things in our society around us, in our family, or in ourselves. And when do we face ourselves and what's called upon us To be strong and ferocious, and I think sometimes the you watch your wandering mind the way in sometimes the places a story is your mind lives in store your minds mix up by itself and about the world around it are not worth having. And so sometimes what's required is not accepting the current of the current story we're in. But it's to say, No, no, I'm not going to live by that story anymore. I'm not going to let my mind wander off down that track anymore. I'm not going to see myself as a victim anymore. That's a story. I'm a victim. I'm not going to see myself as someone who needs to be wealthy or needs to be beautiful or needs to be, you know, have a lot of friends or need to do a lot of things. I read an interesting manuscript last week. As Mirko Nestor, is taught here, sometimes she has written right in the book now about Mahindra Ninja was a ninja. He was a passionate teacher in India, who was the primary teacher for Joseph Goldstein and, and others. And so she wrote a biography of him. And she quotes him. I think she's quoting him or maybe she's writing herself. I think she's quoting him about

the different stories. I don't know if it's true, the different between India and America, but someone's anyway, this is a statement someone makes having to do with sexuality, sex. Then India, apparently, I don't know some Indians. As they get older, and their sex drive drops, they feel like it's a blessing from God. Well, I'm relieved of that. Here in the West, the sex drive drops and we get Viagra. You know it's seen as a problem is seen as you know we're supposed to have a strong sex drive and kind of be actively involved and all that something that's some people have that story you know and having a sex drive drop is not a good story. And so you know two different stories which story is right? What about dropping both stories and just letting you who you are be as it is.

So

to live in stories and to be strong to people are standing on the edge of a beautiful pool. Though the drop into the pool is maybe six 710 feet both of them are afraid to jump because it's a bit far. One of them both are equally afraid. One of them Besides, this is the time to do be possible mindfulness goes in closes his eyes because it looks feels the fear realizes that connected to all kinds of childhood issues thinks well I should probably go to psychoanalysis goes off and does 10 years of analysis eventually

comes back to the edge of the pool and is able to having dealt with all that fear and childhood issues jumping the other person standing there an equal amount of fear but she just kind of rallies little bit jumps in.

When when is it called for for us to go in and deal with and resolve and work with inner issues? And when is what's called for is an act of determination of resolve strength, and just kind of jump in just kind of say no We're just going to say yes, or to act and not deal with all this stuff inside. When is it that jumping into the pool? calling on our strength and jumping in and kind of pushing through the fear resolves the fear? Maybe better than the 10 years of, you know, inner inquiry. And when is it when jumping into the pool? And overriding the fear is the wrong thing to do? Because maybe we do need to look at that stuff and see what's going on there. When is it? So partly what I'm raising here today is the question the issue of discernment, the issue of being able to look at our lives and see that there are different choices and options into what is called for here. And in the spirit, in very sweeping ways, is what's called for perhaps something and more in the in the category of acceptance of allowing, being And when is it more in the category of action of doing something of saying no or instituting change being ferocious? When is it appropriate to be ferocious? I say this today partly where that in many Buddhist circles I've been in the story that people often live by, is one of gentleness and kindness. And so power and ferocity often doesn't get a very important place. But, you know, is there a time for that, as well. So Buddhism, as with all religions, perhaps, tell us all kinds of stories. And what's the nature of those stories? And how do we relate to those stories, where we find our own practice our own way of going forward? And how do we then begin looking and inquiring deeply into the story making quality of our own life or online And I would suggest that it's well worth all of you. Looking at how your mind operates, your thinking, your thinking, your imaging your visions, your what you visualize in your head and see to what degree you're living in stories. And how the stories affect your mood, affect what you do in your life. And are those stories really serve as the stories stories that serve you the best? Are there other stories you could hold? So then I'll offer you

a story not sure

So what I'll offer you is not a story exactly but a kind of a story. we tell ourselves a story that there comes a point where the stories and part of the what can happen in meditation and other places as well is that it's possible to look clearly enough at the mind and settle it. Still it enough so that some of the more subtle and tenacious and more significant stories that we base our life on are begin to be seen. And it's possible to see not so much a story. It is possible to see the story making mind the mind that tells a story. The activity to tell stories And it's possible to put that to rest. To stop telling stories. Stories of yes stories of no stories, acceptance, stories of non acceptance, stories of being something stories of being nobody. Stories of being not self or being a self story, success or failure. That that story making mind stops. And freedom in Buddhism

is freedom from story. To the degree to which Buddhism is lots of stories, then freedom needs to make you free of Buddhism as well. Of all the stories we say. And so we're left without a story but our Really left without a story. I think that once we've put down the story that our hands are empty, then we have the freedom to choose the stories that we want to live our life by much more. If you're always holding on to a story tight, then you have just one tool to get through your life. But if you learn to let it let go of story, and learn, it's okay to let go learn freedom, then we go back into the world, and then you have much more capacity to pick up the appropriate story. For the for the situation you find yourself in to be ferocious. When the situation requires you'd be ferocious. To be kind and gentle when that's what's required to be the tiger or to be the deer or the elephant or the ants. I'll tell you stories. And I'll tell you

one more story. And then we'll take some questions in the orgasm discussion. It's a nice sequitur except I just elephant Nan came up

some of you have heard this story. A fly lands on the back of an ant. It's a big deal for the ant. It's relatively heavy. You know, it has to carry this big thing around, try Shake, shake it off. It struggles to can't get into its little ant hole anymore because this fly is locked on top. It's a big, big deal for the other fly, same size, flies around and lands on an elephant. The elephant doesn't even notice. It doesn't change anything. The Elephant can do doesn't not a burden for the elephant at all. So two stories. So how are you going to be as you go through your life? Are you going to be an ANT? Are you going to be an elephant? All kinds of things all kinds of flies are gonna land on your, on your on your back. All kinds of all kinds of problems, you can have all kinds of problems. And as you have problems, you're gonna face them like an ant, or face them like an elephant. A tiger or a deer. Good luck.

So, now it's your turn to tell stories or to ask questions or make comments or protest.

I had a question a couple of minutes. years ago, I learned that I guess Zen Buddhists in Japan have a history or at least some history of,

you know, war, you know, active participation in war and and

I couldn't quite fit that in and still can't,

you know, fit that into my guest story about Buddhism and, you know, kindness and whatnot. And I wonder if you could comment on that a little bit.

I don't know if I've qualified to comment on it. I mean, I've been disturbed by those stories as well. There's a book about it called Zen at war, by this name, by the way, it's called Zenit war. It makes everything the second book now sequel, because over the history, and a lot of it is connected to Japanese nationalism. The Buddhism in Japan, this basically from the beginning, was very much connected to the state to kind of state religion was sponsored initially by the state and back in the fifth sixth century or something, and down to the centuries was very connected. And, and, and there was a period of variety of times when Buddhism could only survive by being really in Japan by being a pawn or whatever in the, in the politics of the time, you're the Emperor. And so, with the Meiji Restoration, when Japan was open to the world, the boom Buddhism was had a tremendous lost a lot of its power and strength and wealth and a lot of things. And, and, and nationalism became more more important. And so a lot of things came together, where the connection between Buddhism and nationalism and the state and the way in which Buddhism is not here to question the state, but support the state became, came to the forefront. And with that came various teachings from different Buddhist teachers, that the North big shoot good Buddhist, you should really support the state and the enterprise in the state the welfare of the state, Buddhist date was, you know, partly the welfare of you knows what's the responsibility of the Buddhist to kind of follow through on that. And Japan isn't the only country that's had something like that just the most dramatic. I think most Buddhist countries in Asia have had events where monks have been involved in fighting wars or supporting them or justifying them. Sometimes you find in western literature, the idea that no Buddha wars ever been fought the name of Buddhism, as you defined it, they say it's like there's been other religions where war has been fought in the name of religion. There might be some truth to it, but it's not completely true. And you do find Buddhist justification for war and Buddhists who've gone to war and Buddhists to fight each other. Whether it's a religious war or not, I don't know. Maybe it's never religious or anywhere, but so did Buddhist principles, were they kind of abandoned in Japan or in other countries where this has happened? The you know,

some some of these situations, I would think, yes, the basic Buddhist principles have been forgotten. It also depends, you know, there might be different forms of Buddhism. There's a, there's a book, a college textbook on Buddhism, called the Buddhist religions and plural. So that's an interesting idea. When I go back and look at the teachings of the Buddha, it seems like he was very close to being a pacifist to being emphasizing non violence. And I say very close, because it seemed like he didn't actually Want to spend? He didn't actually comment too much about what the rulers should be should or shouldn't do. He kind of left to kind of remove themselves a little bit from that world of so they know they do what they do. Maybe it was would have been deadly for the Buddha protested with the kings of his time did. So he just didn't get involved. But certainly and for the monastics they're supposed to be 99% non violent. And the 1% is that monastics are allowed to strike out with their arms in self defense. So if someone comes with a knife to stab you, you're allowed to strike away the knife, so you're not supposed to sit there passively. And so how what and what that means that's striking away you know, how people are interpreted that down through the ages is open question. So I guess in your point, your question or your should be britrail raise up is a quite worthwhile one to raise into the great Which today's talk was encouraging you all to be Tiger sometimes there to be ferocious even. How do we do that wisely and ethically in a way that really works for you know, for a Buddhist practitioner, and so there's depending on circumstances there's different answers to that. But hopefully, all of you will be ferocious in saying no to you yourself acting unethically

when you have the impulse to kill someone, or to lie or to steel, that you feel the impulse to act, you'll say

you'll roar No.

Is that okay? Answer. I'm just kind of meandered a little bit but it deserves a bit much better answer than I gave you. But that's the what you got today. Yes,

I really Like the homos story is, and as a tiger, I'd like to I'm noticing two things. One, that in all the stories about the strength and the weakness or the protectiveness of the vulnerability, the being that whether it's the aunt or the wounded deer has to be in somehow weaker. And I think that I'd like to rewrite a story where the vault the vulnerability is a position of strength, beautiful, that the deer doesn't have to be wounded in the clearing for the tiger to protect it. And the deer can have its own strength without being incapacitated, otherwise you can't choose to surrender.

Beautiful Tiger

happens at the Southeast Asian countries that have Theravada Buddhism seem To have more exploitation of children and women and I'm struck by that and I'm wondering if the countries are acting like these countries are acting more like the deer

So you mean like in Thailand there's a huge sex trade and Cambodia little bit then some having children, two children some

the

enough I have qualified or know enough to give you a good answer to this and The

and I don't know you know if it's more than some other countries or other places other cultures certainly given given the chance other Buddhist in other parts of Asia did terrible things to women and children

during World War Two for example so it's not unique and there's something about the Buddhism of Thailand for example that lends itself to some of the sex trade there what goes on I don't know what the answer to that is the

please come kill he's coming back to my mind is When I was in Thailand, I asked an Abbot there who does *dabai*. about all the Buddhist monks that had been killed in Cambodia, because I was there in mid 80s, just a few years before that there have been hundreds of thousands of monks killed in Cambodia. And the reply I got disturbed me the reply was, oh, that happened because the monks in Cambodia, got involved in politics. And that and the abbot said, attitude was amongst, you know, Buddhist monks to just not be completely apolitical, not involved at all, and then they'd be safe, he wouldn't get killed. And I don't know if you know that his observation was true, but it just disturbed me that he would have this message and you should be a political not involved at all. There must be some other way. And so I wonder some I've wondered, some times whether there is from that story, whether there are times and terabyte countries, where there is a kind of message of, of renunciation world, world Theravada Buddhism of, of of otherworldliness kind of not being connected involved in the world so much, and being somehow removed and separate, and, and so not not getting engaged in some of the concerns of the society and protesting things. And I know sometimes when monks and Theravada countries have gotten political, there's sometimes been criticized, the monks don't do that you shouldn't do that. But then we have examples like in Burma, where the monks did get involved was a year year ago, just less than a year ago, right. And some of some monks got very much involved. And, and so they got pretty, you know, some of them are killed and put in prisons and some of them are now live in exile. So you find it you find examples of the whole range. And in in countries like Thailand to you find monks and nuns who are very much involved in trying to stop the sex trade or stop exploiting children and variety of other things. And you find others who just other monks or nuns who have no connection to that world at all. So people tell themselves stories. And so the question is, do we tell ourselves stories that keeps us excessively passive? Or do we tell ourselves stories that gets us involved or gets us kind of preoccupied in unhealthy ways with what goes on in the world? What's the right balance, however, where did we find ourselves in this in with tera, vaada Buddhism Interesting, it's an interesting religion when when most of them are talking too much. I just try to find myself with a question. The about 15, maybe 15 1617 years ago, I was at a teacher meeting of Vipassana teachers in America in the West. I think they might have been around 30 of them there. And someone asked how many of you think of yourselves as Theravada Buddhists, so be positive that came out of Theravada Buddhism, so how many consumers of Theravada Buddhist, and I think they were at the most three people raise their hand. That was quite significant. Here are people who are bringing Theravada Buddhism to the west, in a sense, we pass that tradition, and they don't want to be labeled themselves as being part of that tradition. And later I went to a spirit rock teacher meeting all the teachers and I lobbied a little bit for spirit spirit rock to consider itself at terabyte and center. And, and no one came along to support my idea but but one person, one person really in a woman I think significant pushback very strongly said no way because there's so much misogyny in Paragon countries and it's sometimes you can see it's very dramatic sometimes the way that women are treated and like nuns are treated like third class citizens, not even a second class citizens third class citizens and in some in Thailand sometimes. And so you know, there's all this ends also, there's sometimes teachings in Theravada Buddhism they come across as being very world negating

And so they didn't wanna be part of that world negating kind of misogynists kind of hierarchical kind of thing that they saw. And my argument for coming, a tear about having been labeled Theravada. This name is that yes, the all those things do exist within Theravada. But we don't have to define Theravada by how some people hold live, live the Theravada teachings. But I heard it's very important, not to very important filter is very important for Buddhism as it develops here in the West, to have a reference

point. And because what's happening here in the West and all Buddhist traditions that I've seen, is that Buddhism is being adapted and changed very quickly, and being influenced by Western culture and norms and ideas and good. As teachers like myself, I stand up here and said, This is what Buddhism is. And people who don't know it, well that's must be what it is. And not realizing how much it's been shifted and changed and adapted is in the process of being going through it coming into a new culture. So nothing wrong with Buddhism changing and being adapted, but it's very important I feel to have a reference point to measure and see that change, so we can be accountable by it. So I think it's very important to call ourselves Theravada. I couldn't care less so much. I mean, it's not that important, what we call ourselves, but if we call ourselves Theravada that's where it came out of, then we're accountable to the Theravada. And people say, Hey, wait a minute. You're not doing it the way the Theravada says you supposed to do it, and then develop the reason for that is we do it because of this. Or, you know, so the idea of being accountable and someone saying, you know, and having some reference point from which to be accountable, I think makes us much more honest, as we do our changes in what we do. So that was the reason I wanted us to be Theravada. And also, I felt Well, you know, there are certainly ways in which Theravada Buddhism and all forms of Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, as well, as was talked about today are off the mark, you know, come somehow do two things, it seems a little bit off to us at least, rather than rejecting it, we could also just recreate it, we could also redefine it, we could be rather than rejecting something we can be part of the process of changing it. And so I thought it was healthier and more meaningful, all around to, to not throw out the label and the idea of the concept institution of Theravada Buddhism, but to maintain it, but to maintain it not to be a slave to it, but to be to engage with it creatively and freely and wisely. Now be accountable to it. And to grow beyond it and develop to help its evolution development as it as it goes on develops into new new culture. So

I appreciate all these questions very much. And but you know, should we go on it's something you can leave it's time to our contract with you is over the story we have that you're supposed to stay until 1045 is over.

So I have a question relating to the more the Zen tradition and Cohen practice. In a sense, I think a con is suspending a story or letting a story the ambiguity or the possible other answers to be implicit in in holding the story and not rushing prematurely to an answer, just letting the process of struggling with story to be more important and I saw I was curious about how story is, is the relationship between cones and stories in the Buddhist tradition?

I'm not sure that question but there's a place for stories end and that doesn't mean that we stop the story making activity. And so I think that being able to, to engage in stories and question them and analyze them and find ourselves in them in different ways is a healthy part have personal growth and societal growth and variety of things. And there's many ways of engaging your story. And even with koan, the koan traditions there are different ways of engaging a koan, different Buddhist teachers different different Zen traditions have different ways of working with Collins. suspending belief. I don't know exactly what that is, but certainly suspending our first interpretations and being able to kind of find different interpretations, different ways of responding different ways our body can be engaged in the process of, of participating in participating in a koan. The koan tradition I studied with, studied in it was very, very much an embodied process of engaging the koan. It was much less less intellect was less intellectual and more physical Last one here.

I'd like to speak to fierceness. I think I've been really lucky to have some very fierce Buddhist teachers. And even though, you know, well, in the Zen tradition, for example, you know, the strictness of the practice can seem very, very foreign. But also it's saying, this is a big deal. You know, kind of here and

practicing and doing this work is important, and it's difficult, and you have to be fierce. So that it's not just wishy washy, you know, but I love each other without doing the work and being serious about coming in being dedicated to the practice. The other part of it about stories I've also learned along the way, like so move all the time, that every time I come to another place, I don't have a choice between what stories I tell people. I mean, everyone does, I guess but it's been very stuck to me because I'm always sort of presenting myself and now it seems it's putting away stories is worthy isn't nice.

And the Zen master Dogen has a teaching or something like for the self to advance his delusion. For for all things to come forth and define the self is awakening. There's some more or less right that somebody who has better quote members are better to, for the self to advance to take our story of who we are, and move forward into the world and insist insist in our story in our way. This is the true way is still But to allow the world to come forth and tell you the story of who you are. That's awakening. This is for Dogen. So I don't want to push the story too much. But But you know, who tells the story? And who do we allow to tell the story? What stories do we participate in? And what stories do we hold on to tight? And what stories do we allow to come so you could come to IMC and not have a story at all? And, and some of us very quickly will hand you a story. And, you know, you could think you freed yourself with stories but your karma right now currently is that we will hand us the Volunteer Coordinator story because your karma has created that. And so then you participate in math, you tell the story changes. Thank you.