

2010-02-21 Forgiveness

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SPEAKERS

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What I'd like to discuss today is the topic of forgiveness. And it is a quite a beautiful topic. It's quite beautiful when people are able to profoundly forgive their beautiful examples that we practically come across people who've been the victims of terrible things, who are able to forgive the person who's caused so much harm. And sometimes I've quite moved almost to tears to kind of encounter some of these stories and situations. And until recently, it seemed to have been the domain of religion primarily to really emphasize or discuss the topic of forgiveness. Now, in more recent times, there's like Fred Luskin at Stanford is doing research on the topic and it's becoming more prominent on a spilling outside of religious worlds. Which is a good thing.

And, and what prompted it, to give this topic today is I've been asked to come participate in a small panel, lunchtime panel at a local high school to talk about forgiveness. And but it's not just forgiveness in general. But the students there have been reading a book called the sunflower, which is written by a man named Simon bison tile washing tile was Adele. And Simon was vice in town. So we've been told, we've been told he is a very moving book that he wrote a bit. Half the book is his experiences in Nazi concentration camps as a Jew. And this story, His story is describing describing the difficult was for him to be in there and from day to day I expected to die was very challenging and people were dying all around him for being killed for all kinds of things, extremely petty reasons and for no reason at all almost. And he was sent on a work, detail of duty to a outside of camps to a hospital, a German SS hospital and to kind of help with cleaning instincts there. And while he was there, a nurse came over to him and said, Please come with me. And whenever someone says to these to these Jewish concentration, prisoners Come with me It's not often you don't ever know what's up. But he went into the hospital with her. And she brought him to the room of a man who was dying SS officer who was dying and left him alone as the officer. And the officer asked him to come to us the assignment to kind of sit on his bed close to him because he couldn't speak. He was all bandaged up, couldn't see his face. And he was dying, maybe his last days of his life. And the SS officer started telling his story of kind of growing up, becoming part of the Hitler Youth Movement becoming an SS soldier going off to Poland, fighting the Russians. And Simon couldn't quite understand why this was being explained to him, told him and he wasn't comfortable being there. And, and then, it comes comes to the gruesome story of how this officer had been involved with the slaughter of a couple of hundred Jews in some gruesome circumstance and he Was wracked with guilt for this, what he had done, and he before he died, he wanted to be forgiven. And he felt the only people he had to find a Jew represented, I guess, the Jewish people, people who had been killed. If he could maybe make a confession, maybe he could receive His forgiveness for this. Quite a powerful thing. Simon In response, walks out of the room, doesn't forgive him just walks out. And I think the next day he comes to be sent back to the hospital. I think it's the next day and finds out the man had died over the night. And this apparently trouble assignments fair amount, wondering what he did the right thing, what should he have done? And so he

talked to people about it, but more significantly, he wrote it up. About I think about 8090 pages story. And then he sent it, his essay to mostly religious leaders, just religious people, ministers and different type people, and to ask them to write what they would have done, what their take on this one is. And the book came out, I think first time in the 1970s. And then it came out again in the early 1990s. With some change some new additions. Dalai Lama has a piece by that time and Matthieu Ricard is included in it. Some Buddhists, and it's very interesting to read different texts. Some people say very adamantly, that, of course you should forgive. So it comes like a duty to forgive. And other say, No, he had no duty, no requirement to forgive, in fact, doesn't make any sense to forgive. He can't represent the Jewish people. Does it make sense for him to do that? And so so there's a lot of discussion about this. And this is what the high school students are reading.

And this is what I've been asked. And I talked to the some of the students earlier in the year they came here. So I guess because they kind of know me, they wanted me to come as guests represent Buddhism, and a panel of other people, right? Some, some Christians and Jews gonna be there, yes or no. Or you don't know yet. So I don't know what I'm going to. And so that's some Tuesday. And so it's in my mind, and I think on the mic impression, I guess it's a panel, you know, so I probably have like five or 10 minutes to say something. And so I thought, well, maybe I'll warm up tonight today. And here, I can say more. And then perhaps once I've heard what I had to say, maybe I can take one and condense it. If you know and hopefully it's a significant topic for you, I think it's a significant topic because how we respond to hurt to harm being done to us to others, the harm that we've done to others, how the whole what the what our relationship to all this is a very profound human question. And I think everyone has been hurt. Everyone has caused harm some people in smaller kind of ways, some people in catastrophic ways that, you know, it's amazing. But I feel a little bit, you know, uncomfortable about this topic of the book in particular. And I bring it up, because it is in some ways I was born nine years after World War Two, but I was born in Europe, and I know a lot of people who are deeply affected by World War Two and a my And most particular The reason it seems precious to me and I feel most like Who am I to talk about this topic is my parents in law both went through the concentration camps. And my father in law, he's still alive. And he was 16 when camps were open, he was released. And so who am I to? You know? Do you know? To talk about it, you know, he should talk about it. So I called him up this morning and asked him about this book. He knew about the book. Before I tell you some of the things he said and then I'll talk a little bit about Buddhists kind of take on all this. tell you a little bit his story. He was a he is a Dutch Jew. And I found out today, I didn't know that Early in the war after the Germans took over Holland, his father was arrested for a relatively small thing, but the small thing was the Germans wanted him to do something. And he said, No, that doesn't make any sense. And it was just a conversation. So that was six weeks in jail. And without any no knowledge whether he ever be released, and his best friend was also taken into prison the same time he never came out. died there. And but he was released early on and, and but at some point, they were all arrested him and his parents who's the only only child and they were sent to a camp. And they were a little unusual and that they were on a list of special people, special Jews who could be used for exchange for German prisoners of war, if that camera came up as an issue. So they were given slightly preferential treatment mean slight was, you know, they weren't killed. And at some point this is where the story or you started recently is that his parents showed up on a list of people who were going to be exchanged. And so they were going to get passage to Palestine. But the son was not, not on the list. My father in law was not on the list. And the parents refused to go. And so my father in law's 16 year old went to the officers and argued that this was a mistake, and that he should be allowed to go to, and they didn't listen to him. And his parents then died. And he survived. It's quite something. And for 50 years or so, until recently about last year, He carried with him in his mind the idea if only argued better when they had, you know, and then luckily for him, someone wrote a story book about a particular group of Jews going to that particular camp. So he's not, you know, and from that book, he read this last year, he said, If realized, I

couldn't have argued, wouldn't make any difference what I said. And that freedom from that idea that I could have done something.

And my mother in law, she was in the same camp, they kind of knew each other before the war and also a little bit in the camps in the same camp. And there's a lot of people that in their circle, who went through the camps and they still connected to each other, very fresh and there's something about that particular incident. At times, it should never be forgotten. I feel it's important to bring up. But what do we do about it? I know it is. So who am I to talk about forgiveness around this? So I asked my father in law. And he said some interesting things today. He said he didn't think it made so much sense to forgive. He thought that forgiveness was kind of a Christian thing. And it's very important for Christians for a variety of reasons, partly because of the relationship to a forgiving God. But he felt it was very important to find peace of mind. And he felt, and so how do you find that? How do you? How does the victim find peace or something like that? And some of the same things that have to happen for forgiveness have to be that have to happen to find some peace. Every Because a lot of the some of the reason why forgiveness is necessary for the people who've been harmed is that if anger or resentment is being held, then it hurts it's you know, continues the pain to hold on or continue with a pit they represent and to the hurt that the anger. So what releases the anger, what releases the resentment. And for some people, the movement of forgiveness is what allows that to happen. But maybe there's other ways of releasing anger and resentment besides forgiveness. He also said that, you know, for assignment in the situation of the war to the prisoner, it didn't make any sense to forgive while you're still while you're still being the victim. You know, it's one thing to forgive after you're no longer being you know, in danger. So, you know, how do you find peace was a very important point for me. issue for him. And the second was a kind of a mixed thing he said, about blame about notice, I've actually set a number of complicated what he said. And I don't know if I can represent him. But partly he said, You don't you want to let go of blaming people. So perhaps letting go of resentment, and not blaming someone is very closely akin to forgiveness. But also, same time, you don't want to pardon people to the responsibility of what they've done, as well. And so, and he said, He's at least getting a bit sensitive, I think for him because after the war, he found that a lot of people in Holland, a lot of Dutch people who, you know, non Jews who said, you know, we were innocent. We didn't know we were innocent or innocent. And then it took years and decades for it slowly to come out. That People were so innocent. And in fact, what he said today is that 50% of the Jews who were hiding and hiding in Holland, during World War Two, were turned into the Nazis, by the Dutch, and often for very simple for just a little bit of money for reward, because they were afraid their jobs were at stake their lives were at stake something so how innocent were they? He also recognized very much how difficult the time was and how people everyone was scared and everyone was, you know, trying to cope with often saving their own lives. And so, so, have some greater understanding of the scope then what really happened there, I think makes it easier for him not then to assign blame and not hold blame for someone without the same time abdicating them a responsibility.

So what is it like to not have have anger towards someone who's hurt you? What does it take? And what does it take not to limit them or, or by holding them in a position of blame from you. And this gets closer I think to a Buddhist approach to forgiveness. Forgiveness is not a big thing in Buddhism, you find some discussion of forgiveness or words that seem to be like forgiveness, and Buddhism. One of the words in Theravada Buddhism that is sometimes translated as forgiveness is the word of Baya, which means to be fearless. Or another way of the better understanding is, is to offer fearlessness to someone else. They have nothing to fear from you. So if someone has harmed you, what you offer back is they have nothing to fear from you. So that's sometimes taken as forgiveness and the other is a word called comma. kh ama, which apparently is a says, what are the words it's also used for the to mean Earth, the earth. And it has more than meaning of that far as I can tell of a quantum honestly

accepting someone's confession. Because in Buddhism, confessing what we've done is very important to stay Honestly, this is what happened, this is what I've done. And I disavow myself from this activity, to that kind of recognition, that kind of self recognition of what we've done in naming it is a very important part of Buddhist spirituality. So if you've done some major transgression, we want to be very important to find someone to talk to and say, This is what I've done. And I know I disavow myself, I separate myself from this. And then the role of the person who hears that statement of truth is to acknowledge it. To recognize Yes, I hear it. Now hear that you are disavowing yourself from That it's not the same thing as forgiving. But it's, it's a very kind of important interpersonal kind of movement there where someone hears it and acknowledges it. And that acknowledgement is maybe maybe because it's kind of this open, accepting kind of grounded, equanimity. It's same word is used as the word for Earth, like the Earth receives everything. So forgiveness is not a really big thing in Buddhism. And I would argue that the reasons for that is that it's a very different worldview, very different, that it comes out of the worldview of Christianity. And I don't know much about Christianity, and I put my foot in my mouth a few weeks ago here around this. I'm gonna be careful what I say. But my impression is that no, God is really important in Christianity. And so and in some Christian The judgments of God are very consequential. Because if God judges you one way, you go to heaven. If he judges you another way you go to hell. And that's a kind of a consequential distinction. And it lasts a while, you know. And so there's a lot at stake. And so and so, being forgiven by God is a very, very important thing, to be pardoned to be resolved of guilt in such a way that the cut the eternal, eternal consequences of this no longer there. So I believe that in the background of certain kind of personally, professionally Christian currents of Western culture. Forgiveness has this very big meaning very important. And so, people talk a lot about how important it is for us to forgive, probably because it resonates so kind of reflects back to this kind of theistic idea of forgiveness. So Buddhism comes from a very different worldview. Buddhism doesn't start with a god. In the beginning of the Bible, it says, you know, God made the earth. In the beginning of the of the Buddhist Bible, there's no beginning. There's no Bible and say, my book, the beginning of Buddhist scriptures, it says, the mind, everything begins with the mind. begins with us. There is no God, who's the Creator, and the arbitrator. For Buddhists. What there is, is your own conscience. And one of the ways of talking about that is he's talking about karma. And no one can absolve you of your karma.

So you have to live that out and take responsibility for yourself. So Buddhist it doesn't make you know, there is no other no God, no priest, no You know, no victim, who can absolve you of the karmic consequences of what you've done. You can change the karmic karmic consequences by how you deal with it. So if you go and confess for example and apologize, that changes the karmic currents. So you can you can have it, you have a role, a very important role in it. But your karma is not going to be changed much at all by someone else saying I forgive you. Or you or if you say I forgive you, to someone that might be helpful for them, but it doesn't really free them from their own responsibility their own karmic, the way their own conscience their own mind has to process it and deal with it. You know, it doesn't, you know, it shouldn't be we don't free we don't free someone from their guilt. By offering them forgiveness. We free them from from our Need for retribution, we freed them from our anger and resentment, we free them from the ways in which we might close our heart to them. But they still have to somehow cope and deal with what they've done. And how do we do that in a mature way. So the movement in Buddhism is too. So there isn't that kind of worldview, there's a very different approach to what to do with these kinds of interpersonal problems and harms that have been caused. So in Buddhism, the direction is, then is tends to be a little bit more personal. So if you've been harmed, and you're holding anger and resentment, if you don't have any peace of mind, then it's your job to figure out how to free yourself of that holding that clinging to that anger or that resentment. And that's a powerful process, a very deep process, sometimes depending on what happens, takes a lot of work. A lot of self reflection, a lot of wisdom. But, but the tendency in Buddhism to turn towards yourself, rather than turn and assign the blame, turn toward yourself and see what can I do to make a difference? So I

can find peace of mind with this. What am I holding on to? What am I, you know, afraid of what's you know, it's and to really do some, you know, very deep inner work, to free ourselves from how we're caught by whatever happened. And it's very hard. It's a very delicate thing, I think sensitive thing to say this is someone who has been deeply harmed, to say, you know, you should turn around and look at what you're holding on to here. Because it's almost like put salt in the wound. To ask someone to forgive is a very honorable thing, I think. Because when you forgive someone, you're it kind of puts you in little bit superior role, like you're on an honored role. You know, and so rather than thing that one has to kind of go and look at your stuff. It's more like you can offer something and it puts you in a better position. So for someone who's been hurt, it's easier sometimes to bring their forgiveness. However, it also does puts you in a little bit superior role. And Buddhism doesn't like that. Buddhism likes it that not not to have this sense of superiority or inferiority in relationship with each other, but to meet each other much more as equals. And so there's a lot of talk in Buddhism, for example, that compassion should never be hierarchical, shouldn't be that your higher than someone looking down feeling sorry for them, that should really be equals with empathy and a shared understanding of the shared kind of life that we live. So this delicacy around forgiveness, you know, the status thing and you know, a lot lot lot goes on there. So the tendency in Buddhism is not to focus so much on forgiveness, as a as a concept is understood in Christianity. But if we, if we divide up different elements of forgiving In Buddhism, the focuses would be on doing your own work, to free yourself of anger, resentment, clinging. And then a second thing and that is a second thing is to find goodwill in your heart to find some kind of goodwill or loving kindness for others. So rather than lumping those things all into one package called forgiveness, Buddhism separates them out into two different things. There's a work of freeing yourself from your clinging and then there's finding in your heart to be open hearted enough to have kind thoughts are kinda wishes are for the person for anybody for everybody.

And the Buddha emphasized a lot that you would you should have goodwill, an open loving heart, caring heart, even for your enemies. And that's not easy. And so, as as a powerful verb Religion. Buddhism is not only here to make you feel comfortable and nice, but also to challenge you really deeply. And this is one of the places of challenge is can you find not only forgiveness or letting go it can you let go of your anger or resentment towards people who are your enemies. But can you also find in your heart, goodwill and kindness towards them as well. So as the Dalai Lama says, My friends are he said, he said, my friends, the enemy my friends, I sometimes use it uses the word friend and enemy together in the same same sentence, referring to the Chinese.

the enemy of my enemy is my friend.

That's different. That's very different.

It's also good. Everybody should be here. Friend quitting. And so what does that take? And you know, one of the very dramatic places but the Buddha says this is in the ancient scriptures. He says he is talking to his monastics, monks and nuns. So there's expectation that they have a much higher sense of purpose for their life than maybe anybody else. So the higher standard of what's needed for their inner cultivation. And for his monastic, he says, even if someone robbers were sawn off your arms. If you get angry at them, you're not doing my instructions. You should cultivate loving kindness for the person who's cutting up your arms. So that's pretty dramatic. You can't get more dramatic than that hardly. Now he's just kind of religious. hyper bowl that you kind of just can make a point or is it really meant that meant that way? And we find this if some of you have heard the stories of die llama tells them he was very moved apparently when there was a Tibetan monk who was released. He knew in Tibet in 1959, who was prison for a long time in Tibet finally was able to release from prison escaped India. And Lama asked his old friend, he said, we were ever in danger when you're in prison. I think he

meant, you know, for your life, perhaps. And the monk said, Oh, yes, I was in danger. I had it was the danger, I had the danger of losing my compassion for the Chinese prison guards. So. So these so intent tendency in Buddhism is not to focus so much on forgiveness. But to focus on these two other things that could look like forgiveness as a package if you put them together as a package is To release the resentment and not be someone who's dangerous for other people, and then to find the place of goodwill for for somebody else. And so we go back and look at Simon weisenthal and this SS officer in that room. I think from a Buddhist point of view, there was no requirement or even appropriateness to forgive the SS officer. But from Buddhist point of view, it's also a pity or unfortunate that he walked out because the SS officer was a human being as anybody else's. And even if he couldn't forgive him, could he do something else for him? Were there the options there? And what what might have been some the options how to support and help? One might be to acknowledge the confession. I hear you another might be To encourage the SS officer to turn his heart around, and not just ask for forgiveness, but to generate goodwill to the Jews. And this is a very important part of Buddhism is to actually turn around generated, because it's not automatic that someone who confesses a crime has goodwill for the people, for the victims, there's still all kinds of things going on there. And for the for the well being of the officer for the Buddhist point of view, the well being of the officer is the idea to turn the heart around that dramatically and actually feel goodwill is one of the one of the healthiest things that can be done. That was in the times before dying. And so perhaps the credit, you know, could have been some help support for the opposite to do that. So to phrase the discussion as it should he or should not Have you forgiven is too limited in the discussion, but you know, to ask them Who's a concentration camp victim?

To do that, you know, this is someone who is starving

to death every day around him felt at any moment now he could be killed. You know, what you can't expect? I don't know if I was in a certain circumstance, maybe I would have walked out. Or maybe I just would have had a heart attack. There's too much there's too much from my heart to handle something like that. So it's difficult situation. So it's a powerful story. It's a powerful topic. And I say it here today, partly because when we sit down to be mindful, to be aware of our breath, our body, our feelings, our thoughts. It's not that Lightweight thing to do. We say it was sitting down in the midst of this life, where these things occur, these things happen, finding your way in it. And it's certainly my belief, my faith, my understanding, that to sit down in the middle of it and be present is to be honest and available and, and to, to work with and bring forth the best each of us in these kinds of circumstances. And I think its world really needs it. So forgiveness, I think, is a really beautiful movement, that people who can do it, for whatever reasons, powerful, beautiful. And for those of you who are more kind of aligned with the Buddhist worldview, perhaps your forgiveness will look like releasing your holding and generating goodwill. So we have a few minutes now I saw a hand Do you want to ask? No.

It seems to me what you're saying.

But not quite saying is forgiveness is a gift to ourselves.

I think that it is a gift to ourselves and one of the reasons to do forgiveness is for our own sake, not for the sake of the other, just because you can use continuing the harm not to do that. But if forgiveness is pardoning the other person or absolving them of their guilt, that's a delicate thing. So some people kind of are confused about that. And has nothing to do with anybody else. So sometimes forgiveness is very private. It can be the other person never needs to know. Sometimes they can, it can make a big difference. Yes, over here.

So these were very interesting stories. Put me in mind of that famous philosopher Lily Tomlin who said that forgiveness is giving up all hope for having a different past. Seems to me that Simon Simon was in thought did something that's very important he witnessed.

He sat in a neutral

place and listened.

hard enough to do under the circumstances. And then he continued to search his own mind in the years after. I'm just not sure there was anything more I would have asked him to do.

No, I think beautiful. I think so. I'm reminded also that, like in South Africa, they have this Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It's not the truth and forgiveness commission. And, and maybe forgiveness was not possible. But reconciliation is

I think the thing that I struggle with

is that tension between knowing that to forgive will be beneficial to me. But also feeling like if I do forgive, I'm betraying something

inside of me or

or over, overriding it or trampling on it or saying it's not important. It's not that important.

Yes. I think that there's many associations people have with forgiveness or many ways, many, many things people think they're doing when they're forgiving. They can make a complicated, so one of them might be for example, forgiving someone is to pardon them. So or, or forgiving means it was not important. You know, what didn't really count. It's okay. It's kind of dismissing it or it's sometimes even some kind of condoning it. Or and I don't think that works very well. It's possible to forgive some someone of what they've done and they still expect them to go to jail. In fact, you know, you did this terrible thing. I forgive you, my heart is open to you, I wish you the best. I'm not going to hold it against you. But you know you got to go to jail. That's that's the that's the kind of worldly consequence that I'm not going to free you from.

Last March there was put on a seminar Buddhism for difficult times or something like that. It was very good question like this came up. And the question was raised that we are all what what to do when the abuse is still ongoing. And are we not all still involved in those abusive relationships? They framed it much as you did. Releasing the anger, something like that. I don't remember exactly. But then the question arose, aren't we all involved with difficult work relationships, etc, etc? In other words, it's ongoing What to do?

Yeah, yeah. So it's a different, different things are required, if it's over, versus if it's ongoing and different strategies, different approaches, different issues going on. And certain things don't make sense to do until it stopped. If the if the if the violence abuse is still going on. The first order is first thing to do is to get it to stop. Yes.

The question I have and I apologize for kind of stumbling through it is when you get this story and then you sort of asked a question, or the question sort of implied, I guess, well, what would a Buddhists do?

Or what would we do based on our understanding, then it sort of seems that there's this writings or whatever it is. And there's this sort of hierarchy. And you've tried to kind of go up the hierarchy to find out the principle that first applies or something. And I'm a little bit confused as to why the question isn't so much whether or not there should be a principle in Buddhism applies to all possible things, as opposed to just saying, You must really think for yourself very deeply about what is actually happening in a manner that seems less prejudicial based on emotionally driven responses which might be true, but which may as a consequence, force you to make later on when you look back at a wrong decision. So to me sort of example, the story seems to be more of here, this person has had all these wrong things to him. But when he sees this specific individual there, then the sort of prejudicial stereotypes about the whole situation is, it's clear to him that that's forcing him to think differently about it. What do you should do? I don't know. But just simply the challenge of forcing you to think differently and try to get to some place that you can deal with is really what is being implied as opposed to trying to find some abstract principle that says in this circumstance, this is what you should do.

I guess reasonable. You know, I'm sure that see, so the distinction you're making is looking towards some religion like Buddhism for its principles to guide you in how you're going to live your life, versus using your own thinking and good sense to kind of sort through what's going on in your life and free yourself from your prejudice on your own. You don't need anybody else in your religious worldview to help you do that, or any ideas of what you're supposed to do, right? That's the difference

you're making with the caveat that you must always

be aware that you may not be thinking clearly or you may be driven by other events and others try to become as objective to what's actually happening with your thoughts as possible before making a decision. And it's

very hard to do that. So one of the reasons to study religions philosophy, other approaches, worldviews, is so we can get properly challenged. And if, for example, I would people tend to think That their their worldview, the how their way of thinking is kind of like that's how things are. And so for Buddhists, they have a deeply ingrained, traditional Buddhist, corrupt, Buddhist deeply ingrained worldview, which they're operating under. And someone who's Christian or Jewish or Muslim has a whole other worldview they're ingrained in. And it's very interesting to have interfaith dialogue. Because sometimes you see yourself in a deeper way, see caught, that's what's going on for me. Now, I understand. I couldn't have seen it unless I had some other. And so I think this whole topic of forgiveness is interesting because everyone has to grapple with forgiveness, but what is it there's some confusion is very, very vague topic. Everyone, people think they're all talking about the same thing. Forgiveness, forgiveness is good, we should all do it. But actually, forgiveness is many different things or movements of the heart to move it to the mind, or fit under the category called forgiveness. And people think they're talking about the same thing, but they're not. And so by teasing it apart by this religion, it's like this this worldview. It's like this, start seeing us more complicated. And, and my hope with Buddhism, and Buddhism is challenging religion, it's useful to study its principles and all that. Not so we become Buddhists. But so that so it's a it's one of the tools to, to free us from the prejudice from the worldviews from the ways we get stuck from the limitations we have. That's my hope that Buddhism like a crowbar.

Think about forgiveness. I think about spaciousness, because it's that space in which we have the we can use our mindfulness to have a reaction to what's happened. I don't know if Megan is here yet, but she works with kids in the schools. And she was telling me an amazing story last week of working with children to provide mindfulness, instruction and then as gangs, gang tensions develop in the schools.

One kid told her a story recently about having the spaciousness to decide whether to use a gun that was in his pocket or not when he was upset and not forgiving of something like it happened,

so I never had a good result.

And it was an amazing setup for me. I've really seen in our practice or for myself, that when I can give myself those couple of seconds, not always, of course, but I had a son who was kidnapped when he was 18. And he knew the boy who kidnapped him. And the story was, and we don't know for sure that he was being inducted into a gang in Berkeley. And one of the one of the things he needed to do was to harm someone and he told my son, he was going to kill him. My son broke out of the trunk of the car. And it was really amazing to me to find as a mom that what I really needed to do is make sure that that kid was put in a safe jail. It was just a reaction. My son was very upset with me that we didn't make sure the kid went to San Quentin which was an option, but to a California Youth authority, which didn't become when he had go to county jail where he was safer, but it was I feel it was really an outcome of this practice where we want for others what we feel for ourselves and, and our meta and our ability to step back a little bit and really try and feel out the situation. So I'm really grateful for the topic and for our practice that Yeah, influence it.

Yeah. So that's, that's a good way to end. So we're not really at the heart. Hopefully we're about here is not philosophy or worldviews, but rather practices that support us to do this deep inner inquiry that allows us to, you know, see what's really going on what's possible. And I have a lot of faith in the human heart that is mindful, that's aware that's attentive, really pays careful attention to what goes on. We have beautiful hearts, and, and Mississippi, it's beautiful, beautiful hearts. Given half a chance those hearts will do a lot of good In the world, and I hope that the awareness practice that we do allows your goodness to come forth and, and offer support to everyone. All beings be happy. Thank you