

2011-12-19 More Reflections On Gratitude

Tue, 8/18 7:24PM • 42:58

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, gratitude, grateful, meditation, day, world, mind, feelings, complaining, beautiful, monastery, developed, practice, interdependent, complaint, bow, feel, reflecting, life, attitude

SPEAKERS

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And thinking about what to talk about tonight, I my mind is still lingering with this topic that I taught yesterday morning, Sunday morning. So I'd like to take that topic again. I don't know if any of you were here yesterday, but and the topic is gratitude. And it's a topic which many religions have emphasized the value of different religions have different teachings on gratitude, partly out of the foundation of, you know, their theology or their view of the world. And Buddhism also has some emphasis of gratitude doesn't get a lot of press in Buddhism, but it's certainly there. And it's considered a beautiful quality of the heart to Beautiful, beautiful, positive approach of the mind attitude. And I was kind of touched many years ago when I read the myth of the Buddha's enlightenment. And the way the myth, you know, was kind of developed over time was, the Buddha had his enlightenment one night. And in the next seven days, he continued sitting there, under the Bodhi tree, enjoying the bliss of his enlightenment. That's a nice thing. And then, the next seven days, he, he got up and he took a few steps, walk kind of away from that tree. And then he sat for a stay stood for seven days, looking at the tree, and with an attitude of generosity, being generous for this tree that sheltered him for his enlightenment during his quest for it. And you know, I think it is a myth and so I take it Being symbolic representative of something. And that, you know, from, you know, it's probably idiosyncratic interpretation on my part. But the idea that, you know, Buddha turns around and an essay, you know, expresses or feels this attitude of gratitude, towards nature to the place of nature reset the place in nature, you know, he sat on the ground under a tree. And so for some reason that he expressed his gratitude. And I don't want to compare myself to the Buddha, but one of the great delights for me in learning meditation, and is at some point in my meditation. At the end of my meditation, I started to feel grateful that there was something that something had happened in the process of meditating that at the end of the meditation when we're ready to kind of end the meditation and come out and open my eyes I feel some certainly deep appreciation but I feel it keeps keep deep gratitude. And the people have asked me when I told them that I'm grateful for what and you know, I could probably give her give something I'm grateful for you know, I mean I can probably come up with a reason. But what is most remarkable for me is the gratitude isn't doesn't have a what to it? It's just, you know, I would say that that kind of heart out feels my heart and my mind it just grateful and, and there's not a reason for the gratitude. There's not a you know, there's a purpose for the gratitude. It just is kind of just there. And, you know, for someone who's as rational as I am, that's kind of a weird thing. You know, just have gratitude for no reason. But how I understand it is that is you know, how I've cracked my own mind. I don't know if it's true for you all. That when I am really busy either doing things or more likely busy with my little mind thinking about being preoccupied concerned with my daily life and things and whatever it might be, there's in that space of preoccupation. There's not a lot of room for some of the more beautiful qualities of the mind or the heart that if I'm really caught up in you know, holidays, cutting and all those holiday cards written and sent off, you know, concerned them I couldn't get them you know, out fast enough for something that you know,

you might feel the stress Stephen in that stress, there's not much space or time Who has time for gratitude in your, you know, sending happy wishes to everyone.

And you fill in the United States, their silly example but if you fill in if you're stressed and concerned and you know, running around like crazy and have a lot of desires or have a lot of versions and complaints, there's not much space in the mind for for gratitude to arise. But so what happens in meditation is that if you're lucky enough, the mind quiets down. And mind is not preoccupied caught up and concerns so much. And maybe the thinking quiets down some and the heart and the feelings and attention in the body begins to relax and soften. And there can be a feeling of calm or contentment or a beautiful feeling is your sense of being delighted for just being being present being alive. And there's no you know, just just the delight of being as opposed to the delight of having and getting or protecting or running away or hiding or, you know, all these things that people do. It. There's no doing is needed is just being and that high quality being certainly requires that the stress mine the busy mind, the wandering mind, the reverse of mind is quieted down some And so when there's that kind of quiet in the mind, contentment in mind, then it seems that that makes space for other feelings to arise. And I think of these, these other feelings or attitudes that can arise as being relatively shy, for most of us most of the time, meaning that for most of us because of these other these positive feelings that can be there, or not really well developed, they tend to be overlooked, they tend to be covered over ignored you know, much of the time so you know, feelings of joy, feelings of love, feelings of kindness of generosity, and also feelings of gratitude or sometimes are these belong to this category of shy states of mind, shy attitudes, but they're there and available. If we quiet down calm down enough for get settled enough and so this idea Of being grateful for no good reason at all, isn't that great that we have this capacity? And we scale? Like, you know, it's kind of revolutionary, isn't it? Especially when you appreciate how beneficial it is to be grateful for a beautiful thing it does. And so I wanted to read something about, you know, there's one of the great things about the modern era. Last time, you know, he said, all the clinical research that gets done on our psychology. And some of it, you know, in the last 20 years or so, has been this whole movement of positive psychology to look at, you know, to kind of compensate for all the, you know, studies in pathology that psychology did 400 years. And they realize that they left out half the, you know, half the human mind, you know, and so now they're kind of looking more focused on the on the positive qualities of mind that can happen, what does it take to develop what are the conditions for them and how beneficial are they what goes on how do they work? And so one of the themes one of the topics is Gratitude they want to isn't that great to be to be great to be a researcher whose job was to do clinical studies and gratitude. And so they have a whole body now of literature. And here's a little summary of the research. A large body of recent work has suggested that people who are more grateful have higher levels of well being grateful people are happier, less depressed, less stressed, and more satisfied with their lives and social relationships. Grateful people also have higher levels of control of their environments, personal growth, purpose in life and self acceptance. Grateful people have more positive ways of coping with the difficulties they experience in life, being more likely to seek support from other people reinterpreted and grow from the experience, and spend more time planning how to deal with a problem. Grateful people have less Negative coping strategies being less likely to try to avoid the problem.

The neither is a problem, blame others, blame themselves or cope through substance use. Grateful people sleep better, and this seems to be because they think less negative and more positive thoughts just before going to sleep. Whilst many emotions and personality traits are important to well being, there is evidence that gratitude may be uniquely important. First, a longitudinal study showed that people who were more grateful cope better with a life transition. Specifically people who were more grateful before the transition were less stressed, less depressed, and more satisfied with their relationships three months later. Second, two recent studies have suggested that gratitude may have a

unique relationship with a well being and can explain aspects of well being that other personality traits conduct many years ago, a friend of mine Who's kind of a therapist, and a Buddhist teacher said he was a little concerned about some of his longtime therapy clients. Because after years of practice that they still weren't grateful. It was interesting, you know, approach to therapy. So, you know, if this the kind of studies or even, you know, partially accurate or true, it speaks something really well about the benefits of being grateful. And so, therefore, you're supposed to be grateful, you better be grateful. All these people have worked hard for you. And that's one of the problems with gratitude is sometimes we get this message, you know, the obligation, you're obligated to be grateful. In fact, in some cultures, the gratitude and a sense of obligation are closely wedded and I think Luckily, I think Luckily, from you know, generic kind of Western culture, ideas of gratitude and obligation are two different things. And I think that's quite important that there's no obligation, you don't have to kind of, you know, grit your teeth and try to squeeze gratitude out of yourself. But there are ways of cultivating gratitude, developing gratitude. And I would suggest that it's a good thing to do. It's a useful thing to do, and it doesn't have to be artificial to do it. So one of the ways of cultivating gratitude is to do less is to relax deeply, you know, this meditation thing. Maybe you also if you learn how to relax well, and meditation, you also will come out of meditation and be much more inclined if you'll be grateful and come out and look. I mean, I've come out of meditation and walked out and looked at the sky and the clouds or the trees and the grass or the cars or the asphalt and I'm just so content Math, it just seems so special and wonderful, everything is special. And just just just just being a special and in that sense of specialness, it feels it's easier to feel grateful. Now this may be far fetched for people who you know, some people don't have access to these kinds of feelings at all. So are there ways if you don't have access to these feelings, eight ways of cultivating more actively, and it seems that people are researchers and people who are studying gratitude and how to develop cattitude the number one technique for developing more gratitude is to keep a gratitude journal. And every day, at the end of the day, write down three to five things that you're grateful for for that day. And, and, initially, it might be really hard pulling nails, what could I possibly be grateful for? But then you think about it. While you know there's a lot, there's a probably an infinite amount of things you could be grateful for. So one of the things I don't know if this is a accurate representation of how things are in the world, but it's an observation I've made is that cultures will have some relative degree of affluence have a lower degree of gratitude than cultures who have a low degree of Apple affluence there There seems to be higher gratitude. There's perhaps because when there's less affluence is less expectation that anything was gonna go right or work and so when something does work, simple things you're grateful so that when examples like I gave yesterday, yes. You know, I live in different countries in the world. And I've watched how long it takes to get the telephone installed, when you move into a new place. And the attitude I have some times when the telephone company installed and so you know, here the call the telephone company, they say the repair for is going to be there between eight and 12. Now if they don't come between eight and 12

I mean that you know, and you kind of expect you deserve it, you know, it's expected and you know, and when they come and do it, I mean, that's just, it's their job. And this is the way things are supposed to be and you have to write telephone. They're places where I've lived, where it might take several weeks to get the telephone installed. And, and there's no clarity, but when did it come? And, and there's, you know, it's like, you're grateful that God came. And Wow, thank you so much. This is great. And so I don't know if this is a you know, anybody say statistics about the relationship between gratitude and affluence, but I suspect that more often than not, there's a strong correlation with that. You know, we live in a culture here and we're broke we're pretty affluent, compared to much of the world here. And we also live in a culture which is society, which is more interdependent than almost any Where else in terms of the social interdependence, there's our, how we get through our day and the things that we use in our life depends on is, is, you know, so thoroughly completely dependent on other people doing things for us. Because we don't most of us don't grow our own food. We don't go, you

know, pull the water out of the wealth by ourselves. You know, we don't you know, you know, most of us don't walk to work. And there's a, we don't do a lot of the basic things for ourselves, we have to, you know, we go to somebody else grows our food, someone else has to bring it to the store, someone else has to show that in the stores, someone else he knows we do all this other people are doing this and someone else responsible for the water, you know, and who's responsible for your poop in how you're grateful for those people who make it all work so well. Or, you know, or you know, you could go out there and dig a hole in your backyard or you know, or you get a You know, the fact that there's asphalt on the streets, you know, you get gratitude make, that it's there, or you just upset by the potholes. So, I don't know if this kind of analysis makes sense for you, but the idea that we live in a world that's socially extremely interdependent and, and with that sense of interdependence sometimes comes a sense of it should be this way. And it's, I have a right for it this way. And so, you know, we have, you know, I think some of the highest incidence of depression and anxiety anywhere in the world, in this affluent society. And I don't think I don't think it's a coincidence, that the absolute that depression and anxiety comes with this kind of huge, interdependent kind of world where there's expectations and demands and, and, and all kinds of things that comes with this. But I don't get I don't think it takes a lot of reflection to consider how much we benefit from the work of others and other things. Then to feel grateful for it. This is a long winded way of talking about making this list of three to five things you're grateful for every day. And then stretching yourself from beginning to reflecting what am I really grateful for what I've been grateful for today, and slowly to kind of develop a stronger stronger sense of tuning in to those things that you've benefited from the day those things you've appreciated. And, and that's, that seems to be a number one approach to cultivating more gratitude, you don't have to feel more grateful. You don't have to make yourself more grateful. you review the day to find what you could be grateful for. So they've done these clinical studies where they take in a group of people, and they've one group of people, keeps a gratitude journal, and the other group of people and just writes a journal of all the significant that five significant significant things from the day just there's no researchers say nothing about you know, positive, significant or negatively, something just significant. And then another group of people keep a complaint journal And then they do this for eight weeks, every day. So what do you think the results are? You know, there's also a pretty dramatic that the well being of the people who did the gratitude journal were just dramatically better than people kept the complaint journal. They also had a control group who did nothing just kind of went about their life. And the gratitude people did dramatically better than them. And so this goes along with one of the principles of the teachings that Buddha gave, which is not maybe unique to him, but I like this little pithy way he said it whatever you think about regularly becomes the inclination of your mind.

You know, whatever you think about regularly becomes a habit of mind. And so if you are regularly complaining, you might have really good things to complain about, and you might be completely justified in complaining about the complaint. About, but guess what you're reinforcing words in inclination, the habit of mind, and complaining, you know, in spite of all the good reasons you have for complaining, and all the reasons you're justified to complain, it's kind of a downer. You know, I think it's just kind of you know, it doesn't really it's not really conducive to it, welfare for you. And so what about rather than doing the, you'd probably none of you but I don't think any of you have the complaint journal at home. But some of you probably, you know, I have a tendency to complain once in a while, occasionally, almost. And so, you know, what about just trying to tip the balance, maybe even continue complaining as you do, but just keep track of how many complaints you have. And then make sure to keep tally, and always have at least one more things you're grateful for every day then the number of things you have complained that you complain about. You make up for it, you know, balance it out and make sure you have a slightly more look at what your mind does regularly. And this is one of the great values of mindfulness practice. It isn't just simply to be present. But mindfulness practices also be present. So you can track what actually goes on for you in the present moment. And one of the things

to notice is what your mind regularly does. What's the top five tunes in your mind every day? Or over the over your lifetime? What do you tend to do with your mind? So mostly planning? Is it mostly complaining? Is it mostly fear based thoughts that you have? Is it mostly gratitude? Is it mostly generosity? what goes on in your mind on a regular basis? And, and because if you can track it and start getting a sense of the basic trends of what your mind is involved in, then you can start questioning that and looking is this really how you want to spend your time? The fact that your mind does it doesn't mean that it's natural, or to say differently, perhaps, the fact that your mind Does something doesn't mean that it has to be that way. And so what are the healthy ways to change your mind? What's the healthy ways of turning the ocean liner so it goes into, you know, slowly begins going a different direction. And I would like to suggest that gratitude is one of those things is to spend time you know, make it make it some negative kind of somewhat of a habit to consider what you're grateful for, and consider the people you're thankful for. And, and, and then to express that thanks. There's something very important about expressing gratitude that kind of makes it become a flower more makes it it's like acknowledged, so maybe it gets more fully acknowledged, a grows or flowers or becomes, you know, more real or developed in us. And I saw this idea when I was at the modern Zen monastery, where every day we had to do many, many times a day. I We had to bow there's all this bowing. And for me after in the monastery because all the meditation bowing for me became an expression of appreciation and gratitude. And because I had a lot there in the monastery, but we had to bow not just like, you know, all kinds of situations that they're saying in the monastery was, if in doubt, bow

and so, but one of the, one of the, one of the kind of rules in the monastery was that their customs was, if you pass someone, you know, fast, someone by walking up to directions, you'd always stop and bound to that person. And, and sometimes it was quite lovely to do and, but also there were plenty of times when people would see someone coming a distance and kind of take the long way around. Because you know, sees you always stopping and going, but there's something beautiful, whatever. So this is what I'm telling you. Bye. Because we did it over and over and over again, the feelings that I had inside that were evoked by that bowing. It's kind of a softening. Little, maybe a little bit of humility, a little bit softening, appreciation, gratitude, kind of a good feeling, you know, it kind of kind of a peaceful way of being with someone got reinforced countless countless times every day, and countless times over the three years that I was there. And so by the repetition of it, it gave strength and developed these kinds of qualities. in me that came from that I got a little bit attached to it, because we're habituated to it. Because after three years of living living in the monastery, down here at the Sahara, I left and the first day I was gone. I was walking down College Avenue in Berkeley. And there were a lot more people walking on the sidewalks in College Avenue than anywhere in the monastery. And the strong habit was I wanted to bow to But, you know, it wasn't appropriate about it people, you know, walking down College Avenue people, but I thought it was strange, motivate them uncomfortable or something. But then luckily for me, coincidentally across the street half a block away, was a woman who'd been to Tassajara that summer, you know, knew that you had been there for a few weeks. And so I ran after her run after that run after a woman, right. J said, woman, and I said, Stop, stop. And so I said, I really need to bow to someone. It's like, I'm a silly story, but I am but you know, it was true. You know, I felt I felt I had this this beautiful feeling that wanted to come out. So this is a long way of saying it's really good to give expression to the beautiful feelings we have. And to give expression to thanks is a beautiful thing to do. So occasionally, they say thanks to the people who support you and help you Or that you appreciate, say thanks to the people who you know even do small things for you strangers even to help you out. Say thanks to the trees say thanks to your house. Beautiful, beautiful moment for me. I have no idea what's going on to me it was all my projection on the story, but just this, this event was really meaningful for me. So I was sitting a retreat at the Zen center many years ago. And seven day retreat, silent meditation retreat, and the custom there is that on in the afternoon, middle of the afternoon, they serve tea in the meditation, not everyone sitting there meditation posture, and very formal, and that

people come in with trays and they serve cookie and this come with a teapot and they and during the first day of the retreat, they come with a tray that has a teacup little beautiful round tea cup and then you keep that the cup next to your place for seven days. So rather than bring your clean cup every time you use your own cup, and they just come with with a pot of tea and they pour tea for you in the afternoon for your afternoon, you know, tea. And so I was sitting next to a visiting Japanese and monk come from Japan and he was I don't know why he was there, but he was sitting there retreat. And he was very, you know, he was into it, he was much more proper than the rest of us knew the forms and then it was a kind of impressive man and enjoyed sitting there him watching him the very present very attentive, very mindful all the time was beautiful. And then the seventh day, the last day they serve the tea. And when you finish drinking your tea because it's the last day, they come with trays to collect the tea cups because you don't need them anymore. First day you received in the last day, take them away. And, and there's all these Zen it's very choreographed. So like what you do in the meditation hall is all Pre choreographed so you know you when you're supposed to bow in meditation hall when you stand when you sit down, how you put your hands what you do is all choreographed to you so it's not you know, it's not a lot of choices. So I knew the ritual Mahal is all done and, and he

varied the core, the choreographed ritual at some certain moment, and how he varied it made a big impact on me. And what it was, was he had the teacup in front of him and just before and when they came to take the teacup away, he bowed to the teacup and that you'll be in a bow to the door I have no idea what's going on. Maybe he was sleeping and didn't notice but I don't know what he what he was doing but but for me, how I interpreted was He was even appreciating an inanimate object. There was some kind of appreciation there. And I've known people I've been in debates with some Buddhist teachers, but is it appropriate to be thankful for inanimate objects? Because not doing anything for you? Is the argument. But, but I think, you know, I don't care if it's appropriate or not. If the reason the rationale whether it's appropriate or not to thank an inanimate object is, is secondary to what happens in the heart and the heart can feel grateful and that's good enough for me. Doesn't matter you know, the reason so, that's been one of the great delights of my life. I've many of these many delights but one of them maybe that's too loud. One of the great but it's a great wonderful delight in my life, is to experience gratitude for no good reason. Just have it well up and I attribute that to my meditation practice that had that experience and it it happens not only meditation but then from here, it now it can spill out from here and it's something that I if I'm little bit lucky as I go about my day and don't get too caught up in what I'm doing that it's really close by and I'm just kind of I walk around sometimes quite amazed and very appreciative and just grateful and grateful to breathe grateful for you know, just just life just to be alive. Grateful it's so much as so much is working. You know, they are the last things I'll say is many years ago, I reflected about all the things that were needed for me to my whole psychophysical you know, and were everything in the world that had to work in order for me to you know, live more or less somewhat comfortably. You know, the whole psychophysical you know, your own being, you know, the chemistry and Your body and the hormones and electrons and the nervous system and enhance it. You know that it's a phenomenally complex. You know, I read recently that there are something like 100 billion nerves in the brain. Neurons neurons, yeah, neurons? And how many times can they connect to each other how many connections they make is something like a million trillion or trillion billion. And, you know, good connections are so sick. And it's one of the most complex things that people you know, in the universe, the telecommunication system on the world is a lot simpler than your brain. You know, it's telecommunication systems pretty complicated. And they're supposed to be 100 billion to 100 billion neurons. And there's 200 billion stars in the Milky Way. So that's more. So it's phenomenal numbers anyway. So the point being your center own body, the amount of stuff that has to work right to us to live and go along is huge. So I'd like to Say 99.999999999% at least have what it takes for us to live well has nothing to do with us, or our choice in our running the show. And the point 0000000000 1% that we're responsible for, we get completely worked up about.

So, so then I'll end this evening by this talk by expressing my gratitude for all of you. I very rarely irregularly feel quite grateful for the opportunity to come together and meditate with other people to practice other other people. It's a beautiful thing. To do that. I certainly don't take it for granted that there's people to meditate with I find a supportive for my meditation in my practice, even though I'm supposed to be the teacher up here. And I suppose I know what I'm supposed to be a role model or something. But, but you know, I'm here to practice as well. And so to be together with other people who share the practice is a beautiful thing and very meaningful for me. And I'm very grateful for all of you. I'm grateful for the sincerity, the dedication, the interest, the fact that you're interested still and be quiet like this. There's a lot of other things you can be doing. And so I want to express my thanks. And thank you, thank you very much. And those who came tonight, and those have been coming for a long time. It's a beautiful thing. There's many people here who volunteer and to make this place work. And maybe at the end of the year, it's maybe nice to express the gratitude I feel for the many people I came today. Time see, like they often do in the morning. And and, you know, nothing's Monday. Morning, nothing happens here. Usually I come here and by myself and I came here and there are people here. And there was one person, Steve Johnson, who, who volunteers take care of the building, he was here to receive the roto rooter man who comes every year to clean out the redwood tree roots from septic lines, sewage line has to happen otherwise. And that was nice, you know, nicely here and this Monday to do that. And then I came here and then I didn't know it had no debt. I know happens once a year that we do as good as I could wasn't a complete surprise. But then, when I had no idea this was in the works or was happening or nothing. But there were people here, completely turning the kitchen upside down cleaning it. And I don't know what's gonna happen where they come from. It was not as far as I knew it wasn't planned or I was just there they were, I didn't know anything about anything. I feel so delighted to come in and see that people are taking the initiative to give the Kitchen soulstice clean. Thank you for that. And so many of you here, you know, have volunteered. I think one of the very nice things very wonderful things about IMC is that it's all run by volunteers. And it's the people who practice here who take care of the place so that the other people can come and have a place to come and practice. This place doesn't have to be here. There's no obligation for anything like us to be here. And it's, you know, kind of a remarkable thing that people come together so many people have come together with a similar vision and interest to support make something like this happen. And many people come to me You know, so we have maybe some of you here. Maybe this is not a nice thing to say. But sometimes I go home to my wife and say, there was there was another audio Dharma tourists today. Maybe That's it, and then apologize for any of you if you're in that category. That's what I say. But all these wonderful people, you know, have been listening to the audio Dharma talks, they from all over the country or the world, and somehow they're coming through Yeah, like you your audio, I'm a tourist, I hope you don't mind. And so you know, that they've been listening for a long time. Or, you know, and so that there's somehow, you know, coming through San Francisco and so they make the trip down to Redwood City, to you know, check out the place to see what's going on and, and, and they sometimes they come up and tell me, you know, how nice it is to listen to the talks that we produce Victor over there's big time responsible for doing all these talks and getting them out into the world. And, and, and they expressing their thanks. And one of the things they say is how you know, many, many of them live in places where there are no places like this. And all your Dharma talks is one of the primary connections to practice and support. And, you know, they're certainly grateful for us being here. It makes me appreciate even more of what we have here than just people's, you know, so far away. So and so quite, it's quite inspiring to me it's meaningful for me that these people like you will come this way because, you know, when people when people benefit from something, and choose to come, come and let us know or just to come and share it with us, like coming sitting with us, I think we all benefit it's a nice thing. So, thank you for coming and any other audio Dharma tourists here? Or if anybody wants to suggest a better term,

pilgrims Adia Dharma pilgrims

some people came from next door.

Right, Sophie Sophia Next door.

So, okay, so that's enough. So we have about five minutes and any questions about this or any complaints about it and anything you can want to say.

So I'm really grateful for your talk tonight.

It was exactly what I needed to hear I was, I was late. Today I was as I usually come for the yoga class at 630 and went to start my car and it didn't start. And so when and halls, you know, the repair people and the technician. And instead of being grateful that my car was still under warranty, she would actually fix it for me. Instead of being grateful that I had a car that it, you know, stopped working when I was in my driveway and in a safe place, and my kids were taking care of. I just got really upset and frustrated and the technician came and he didn't know where the battery was. So in came out to my house, and you know, at night and the holiday season, I was kind of pissed off that the technician didn't even know. And so then he got, you know, got really late by the time we kind of dealt with it all and they're going to tow it tomorrow morning to the dealer. And my husband said, Well, are you still gonna go to your meditations like, Well, you know, it's really late and I miss the yoga and I'm with the meditations, good moments. He's just like, he should go.

And it was exactly what I needed here. So thank you very much

a practice that I started doing on retreat maybe a year ago that I want to share and keep up in my life and before I eat, I'll take a moment to reflect on the wind and the soil on the water and the sun that support those plants and in the hands of care of the plants and the bees that pollinate the plants have sort of go like this and for more or less time, and the people that deliver the food, prepare the food to families that love them, things that help them support them. And I've gotten a lot from this practice helped me realize that farmers had had computers and I work in software and Oh, so the thing that I was doing actually, sure, sometimes I hate my job as a so worthless. So somebody is actually benefiting from this. And it really helped me connect with appreciative joy of like they have these children that they love and these things that that bring them joy. And so I think that was the first time I really connected with that brahma vihara and like, organically and got it so I love this practice. It makes me slow down before I eat, I notice if I'm gonna bout to inhale my food. I'm like, oh, it didn't do my gratitude in like makes me back from the sort of, you know, insane wanting happens before him. And anyway, so it's the lovely thing and

if it works for you,

beautiful, so you know the repeating what I said earlier, but the you know, the idea of meditating and being Present, and being calm and no longer caught up so much in your mind. Not only is nice in and of itself, but it also gives you the option to choose what you think about. And so you can actually do some creative thinking, reflecting on particular themes that are important for you. And to recall it was reflecting on, you know, this web of gratitude and appreciation that spreads out. And now that's a beautiful thing to do.

I guess I may talk about why I'm here as a tourist or pilgrim. I'm really here to thank Gil and Sandra members and about the great teaching and offerings.

I started to listen to your Dharma actually, starting from this fall, a greatly deepened and upgraded my practice.

I had to

Say thank you for your great teaching and offering and my wife will actually hear this when the recording is up online. So I

I really love to actually talk to you in person right after, but my flight is going to depart in less than two hours. Wow.

Okay, wait, where do you Where are you from? I from Wisconsin, Wisconsin.

Great. Wonderful. Thank you.

So, so thank you all very much. And I hope that you spread some gratitude. Spread the gratitude around and share it with other people. It's good. It's one of those things that the more you share, you know, the more you'll have. So I'll see you with a new year.