Okay, so the topic for these weeks that I’m here is the Eightfold Path. And the Eightfold Path is the most classic presentation of the Buddhist path. And it's a comprehensive description of different facets of our life that we address if we're interested in this Buddhist path. Some people when they hear the Buddhist path and the classic model the Buddhist path, some people I know react negatively because they don't want to be Buddhist and it's too religious and things like that. But the primary purpose of the Buddhist path is not to make people into Buddhists. In fact, you could walk the Buddhist path at a Buddhist path and not be Buddhist. And the Buddha is happy with that fine with that. I was quite remarkable to be in Asia when I practice there and I'm actually here in this country to, I don't think any of my Buddhist teachers ever that I had cared whether I was Buddhist or not. There was just that was not, you know, not the kind of how the game is played in Buddhism. So, but the purpose of the Eightfold Path is to live a life liberated from suffering, liberated from those inner psychological forces, that keep us in bondage, keep us caught, keep us in suffering, keep us in distress or bring us distress. And it's a really remarkable thing if there's such a path. It's really remarkable that you know, it's certainly remarkable the depth of despair and struggle, depth of fear depth of trouble that people get into and a difficult life can be. I am I'm very much. I mean, my my vision of human life is that it's basically basically pretty difficult. And even people who conventionally have privileged lives often have tremendous difficulty sooner or later. And to get through a life without, you know, to get through a human life is to get you know, and with some grace and some freedom and some dignity is to have to be able to know negotiate, people dying and things changing in dramatic ways and loss, and oppression and all these kinds of issues that come up in human life. Finding work dealing with livelihood, dealing with family There was a cartoon many years ago of this big, huge convention auditorium. And the big banner above the torium was it said, convention annual convention for functional families of America. And scattered and natatorium were three people.

So, so anyway, I think life is pretty. I believe life is very challenging for people. And, and so how do we face these challenges? How do we deal with them and so some people find it's very meaningful to have a path to walk, that you can walk yourself, it's up to you. You don't have to rely on something that's supernatural. You don't have to rely on Buddhism or say you don't have to rely on on something, some belief or tenant read rather your lot rely on practices that you can take On and practices you can you can engage in that carve away through the wilderness, or away through the difficulties to someplace where it's possible to experience peace, biding peace, compassion, wisdom. So the Eightfold Path describes eight practices that we can do. And there's a certain kind of logic to them. Part of the logic is that the first two has to do with the basic understanding that's needed to have to be engaged in the practice. The next three have to do with the external behavior, how we live our lives. And the last three have to do with the practice that has to do with our inner landscape, the inner ecology of our own minds. The first three, the first one has to do with understanding how there is suffering in this life. And
it's useful to have a sense of that suffering to face it honestly and fully and then to appreciate There's a
path through it, and to look for that path through it. And if, if that's what you want to do is to find
this liberation from suffering the peace to the other side of suffering. Then the second step of the
Eightfold Path, which I talked about this two weeks ago, was sometimes it's translated English as
intention. One translator, it has it as resolve, its need to be resolved or intent on three things that really
help this process. One, it's really important to be intent intent on not causing harm in this world. intent
on being compassionate, doesn't mean you can be compassionate or not cause harm, but you have to
be resolved on that. Then, the other thing is intent on being having goodwill, go through this world
wisdom. So some degree of goodwill, you can't find peace for yourself. If there's ill will, in your heart
that's just it's diametrically opposed. It's impossible. When there's ill will, your heart's not going to be at
peace. When there's cruelty in your heart, there's not going to be peace, no freedom. And then also
intent on letting go. And a lot of people think that they can be happy and peaceful about letting go so
that's, you know, the first two were okay, but what, letting go. But you know, you can't be peaceful if
you're if you're clinging tightly to something, holding on tight or resisting really tightly. So part of the
beauty of this path is to is to find a way that the heart the mind, the hands can be open and relaxed,
without clamping down or restricting or resisting anything. And how to live a wise life.

I live in effective life, how to live a life that That we stand on our own two feet and we face the difficulties
of our lives and difficulties of this world without needing to close down or grasp something is part of the
task. And so this idea of being resolved and as I was one translator translates the second, a full step, I
think is a very interesting word. More powerful than the word intent, the right intention, right intention is
kind of like can be kinda like wishful thinking. Right? resolve means you're going to put yourself on the
line for this, this is important. And, and you're going to kind of gather yourself around. And some people,
some people, I think, kind of approach Buddhism is kind of like a nice idea. And, you know, it's better if
they want their Buddhism to ask anything of them. Because, you know, you know, the kind of religion
they don't, you know, religion after all, and, and so, you know, you want to just kind of benefit from it. If
it initiate the ideas are somehow be in the, in the scene or something. But Heaven forbid that you have
to kind of muster yourself together and you know, really apply yourself and be resolved. But the
possibility is there to be resolved the possibility is there to be really intense, this is important, this is
what I want to do. And as I said, if you want to live a life of profound peace and freedom, there needs to
be some resolve intent on being compassionate and having goodwill and not having the opposite. So
then we come to the step for today, which is right speech. So here, the first, the first kind of practical
step that affects how we behave in the world, is this thing about Right Speech and the rights of what
what, in a sense defines right speech. It's, it's a right it's the speech, which is like a tool tool is right for a
certain task. So it's a speech. That's the right Each for a certain task, and the task is to help us become
free. And instead defined partly by the second step, the resolve. So for so for resolved on being
compassionate and kind, then the expression of that is in speech, which is compassionate, unkind. If
we were resolved and letting go, then we have speech that somehow represents or expresses letting
go. One of the really dramatic forms of letting go that happens in speech is asking for forgiveness, or
offering offering an apology or saying thank you. Sometimes even saying I love you, it's a very dramatic
thing to say. But sometimes we require a certain degree of letting go. Sometimes people say I love you,
you wish they'd let go. So it's not just it's not necessarily the case, but it can be. So right speech is to be
to become cerned about how we speak is very important because how we speak expresses what goes
on in our inner life. What goes on inside. And if we, if we are angry, it's much more much, much,
more likely to speak in an angry way. If we're greedy, some people are much more likely to speak,
speak in manipulative ways and try to get what they want. And so to be careful with our speech, not
only for the sake of ourselves, so we can be on that path to freedom, but also so we don't cause harm
in the world. And because they did not causing harm is so important. You know, it's really I think that,
you know, we're kind of caretakers for each other, the degree to which we're so connected and involved
with everyone in history to which we're a community and a global community, a local community of

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2
families, and how deeply, we’re connected to Others really something and to appreciate how to care for that and be supportive of people. So they thought path is eight steps, four of those eight steps have to do with our relationship to other people. How we live in the world. It's such a hugely important aspect of our life is our interpersonal lives. So this right resolves, and two of them to this to the two of the right resolves is compassion and kindness, that mostly that's about how we are with people. Right Speech is all about how we speak to people around us. And then as we see the next next the next few weeks, the next two are also have to do with our actions in the world, and then our livelihoods in the world.

So right speech, so there's a Buddha gave a fair number of teachings about what he considered Right Speech, meaning speech which supports this, this path. And he classically there are four things that define right speech. And usually it is usually described as the absence of something. So it's the absence of lying. The absence of divisive speech, slander, the absence of harsh speech, hate speech, for example, and the absence of idle speech, or, you know, I don't know what the right word is, but the chatter, idle chatter. So the idea of being careful with what we say, so we don't lie. You know, it's pretty much I think most people appreciate the value of it. What what what people who do mindfulness practice might appreciate even more is that honesty in speech is mindfulness out loud or mindfulness honesty, internally, because what mindfulness is, is really being very, very clear. And acknowledging what's actually happening in the present moment to yourself. And being honest about it. This is what's happening. Whatever it might be, I'm angry, I'm impatient, I'm happy. I'm feeling kind of uncomfortable, uncomfortable. I can, you know, being up and then what you see around you in the world, be able to see clearly and name it yourself. This is what I see. So, mindfulness is a kind of honesty. And so if you are being dishonest, you can't practice mindfulness in that moment and being dishonest. You're going against the grain of that kind of practice of honesty. Honesty is really considered seen as kind of one of the basic foundations of the path to freedom. How can you be free if you're not being honest? To be lying, manipulating deceiving people means that You're caught by something. And you know that you're not in your eyes rest, you're not at peace. And so to be careful with speech, there are some I've been told by that then maybe it's Chinese, when they translate this precept into or the city of not not lying into Chinese, they use the character for No, no rootless speech, no speech that has no roots. And so I'd like this idea of speech, which has roots, something is rooted deep inside of us and, and if we're connected and connected deeply inside of us, then you probably wouldn't be you probably wouldn't lie. So then the next one is no divisive speech. The idea of concord of taking care of our community is very important part of Buddhism. And so how we speak has a big as big role to say about You know whether we create harmony in a community or whether it creates separation between people. So very interesting guide for speech. Is the speech that your thing you're about to say is what you're saying? Or is what you have said, as a divided people as separated people has it. Do people feel less connected to each other because of what you said? Or do they feel more connected? is a speech I'm saying Connecting, Connecting speech, or disconnecting speech? So to consider that, and I hear a lot of people who say things that I don't feel more connected when they speak to me. They say things in anger, they say things that are not necessarily towards me, but they say things to other people that are angry, they complain. It doesn't seem harmonious. It seems divisive. The way they talk to other people then no harsh speech, the harsh speech means you know, it can be just a tone of voice that seems harsh, but it also includes like things like hate speech, angry speech, that's you know, you're talking in ways that are very uncomfortable for people to listen to.

So I was, you know, I was thinking a little bit this afternoon this evening about this talk I was going to give and my son my older son is a freshman in high school. And right down the street here you can see the high school if you can call it during the day. And the there was something I need to try to understand for him today about the high school so I went on on the high school website and was looking around and I came up came upon this and I was actually quite kind of touched moved in a know that's the right
word, but by what I read little bit disturbed that this had to be here. But I guess this is the world we live in, and it kind of made me feel very kind of tender towards people. Sequoia High School has adopted a policy regarding the use of hate speech by students and staff. This policy is intended to increase the atmospheric acceptance and respect at Sequoia review the use of hate speech against any person on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or parents as unacceptable behavior. The use of hate speech works against the basic principle of our schools mission statement to provide a safe educational environment for students. Hate speech is painful and oppressive, using language that's characterized group or individual in a negative manner can be psychologically damaging to the person at whom it is directed. And to others over here the language, even if the party is using it or not offended, common use of these terms by students, teachers that hate speech and slurs are acceptable and inconsequential. Our responsibility as educators includes creating a learning environment that respects diversity and advocates for the rights of individual students. We appreciate the aid of parents in maintaining this environment at home. Because we feel so strongly about each individual's right to exist in a safe positive learning environment, students who violate this policy will be subject to school discipline. So I don't know it was kind of sad that this is at the high school but I'm also glad that if that it's being talked about and made explicit and, you know, we have, we live in a society in a world where there's lots of things And no shortage of it. And so emphasize this and to stress this and make it a real mission and point in high school. Now, I was kind of both very saddened by it, but also heartened that was their concern was there. And, you know, I can't imagine that that never hurt when I went to high school. So as long ago now, but I don't I wasn't aware of any policy like this. Maybe there wasn't that wasn't told. The so harsh speech, you know, as hate speech includes hate speech. And so to be careful with that, and do the opposite. Try to find speech that expresses our care and love for each other. Not our animosity to each other. And it's kind of self fulfilling to me, this is one of the sad things about and Ben and great things about this. That Anger, angry speech, hate speech, divisive speech is self reinforcing. And kind of self fulfilling in some ways and kind of proves itself almost. But that's what the wonderful thing is the opposite is true. That speech that's kind speech that is, brings people together and creates harmony and expresses kindness and friendship creates more of the same and that becomes self fulfilling. So which world with what kind of world you want to live in? And what's what I think is really great here is that creating a better world of harmony and peace and respect for each other? Is goes completely. Together with helping us become free internally, becoming peaceful ourselves. These two can't be separated. We can't we can't expect to be able to sit in our cushion and become free and peaceful and happy and full of money. Without any care and concern about how we live and express our life in the world around us. And then the last of these kind of guideline around Right Speech has to do with avoiding what's usually sometimes try to translate translate into English is idle speech, or idle chatter, I guess. And now I think be over cautious about this because sometimes we can look like idle chatter, light banter, talking about nothing at all, is one of the important ways in which human beings connect and find each other and get a sense of each other and the important part of it all. But there's sometimes you know, filling the empty space that with stuff that's basically has no point that some people are uncomfortable with silence. And I think that learning to be comfortable with silence so that we can meet each other in a deeper way or sense each other in a deeper way. is a beautiful thing. I've told this story a few times before, but haven't heard it for those people who haven't heard, let me tell you.

So we bought this building 11 years ago from two elderly, Christian ministers. And they learned about us that we were looking for a building to buy. And they wanted us to buy it. They wanted us to have it. They're building more than other Christian groups, because they their primary practice was to sit in silence. And they wanted us to stay because we sat in silence. They want to continue that. And it took a long time. Before they showed us the building. I think it took like nine months from the time we heard that they were interested in selling it to us until we had a phone call from talk. And then another nine
months from that phone call until they showed us the building, which was great for us. We'd like to do things slow and actually They worked very well for us. And so I talked to them for a few times over those second nine months on the phone and it was like a week kind of became really close. So they were so full of love these ministers and such bright bright spirits and just like talking to them I get so high and happy and we were like friends you know we never met right still didn't meet. Finally they were going to we're going to meet for the first time and they're going to show us the church, the church here. And so I came first because we were friends right by not by surprise phone call. So I came first just to meet the couple. And then an hour later that people from our community we're going to come and look at the place and so you can see the buildings not very big, you know, basically looks like almost like one big room right L shaped room and a few smaller rooms. So they started walking around because that's what you do when you're gonna sell a building you walk around show you the building And they were talking a little bit about the building to us to me. And as I talked to when, you know, there was no gaps in the conversation. And those gaps in the conversation became longer and longer, longer. So we kind of went around the building, and we came back. We always pews here back way back in their time. And so we sat down on the front Pew, the three of us, and there was one of these silences. And so we just sat there for probably probably sat there in silence for about 10 minutes. It wasn't planned, you know, it wasn't it wasn't it wasn't self conscious. They just, it was just beautiful. It was actually quite profound. And in some ways, it was more meaningful to sit there in silence than it was to keep talking about buildings and plumbing and you know, the kind of, you know, real estate questions that probably you you could think of asking and we sat there in silence Appreciate it, the presence, the silence being together. And then some of our people started coming. And so we had to get up and welcome them. And then we started talking again. And so when we had a chance, I walked up to one of the ministers and whispered in his ear and said, some some time, we're gonna have to pick up where we left off.

So if I'd been uncomfortable with that silence, you know, and filled with idle chatter and stuff like that. Then, you know, in when I was, I don't know 21 or so 20. I was staying in a place called the farm in Tennessee. It was a largest hippie commune in memory. At the time, there were like 800 hippies there. And there was a teacher who was kind of a spiritual teacher named Steve Steven Gaskin, who was there. And when I got there to stay there for a while, he was in jail him in jail for a year because, you know, one of the spiritual practices of, of the comic universe drugs. And so, you know, that that worked. And he started off in Haight Ashbury, and that kind of work there, but it didn't work in Tennessee. So he was in jail when I got there, and before a year, and then they let him out. And so I'd been there for a while, and then he met him for the first time. And, and when I met him, you know, I thought we'd have an ordinary simple conversation. How are you? You know, you'd ask me where I'm from and what I'm up to and just kind of ordinary things. Instead, he just, he just was quiet and looked at me and he looked into my eyes, and my My experience I had with my mind exploded in a beautiful way like my mind just went out and out and out into the stars and fell quite profound. And then and then it was his contact high from all the acid he done and but anyways but then I got nervous because you supposed to say something socially right it was to do so you know socially you can just stand there in silence for this talk and say something so I blurted something out and I collapsed back. So I hadn't learned how to be comfortable yet with silence. let things happen. So idle speech, what does it cover? What does it prevent? What does it get in the way of in terms of depth of connection and what's possible? So if you want to walk this Buddhist tap, one of the things you could do is to start paying attention to your speech and what you say And give some care to it, not because it's a moralistic obligation to do it. And you're, you know, to, you know, it's, it's, you know, ethical, you know to that's, I mean, it's some kind of moralistic idea that thou shalt be honest. But hopefully it's a happier motivation in that it's a beautiful and happy thing to walk a path to freedom and liberation. It's a beautiful, happy thing to walk a path that supports our community around us and benefits the world around us. And so to be clear, and one of the
primary ways and many of us interact with the world and, and interact with ourselves is through speech. And so to give some character that and take some responsibility and take your time and speak, speaking, be mindful as you speak. Be aware of what you're doing when you're speaking, stay in touch the ground and yourself when you speak. It's so easy when we speak to lose touch with ourselves. I've talked to enough people kind of not so much The Buddhist scene but outside who I get a sense when they're speaking, that they're addicted. And you know that they're kind of caught there, there's, there's something really absorbed in some kind of addiction, some idea or some feeling or something. And you know, so there's been a few times where I want to just go like, wave my hand from their eyes and say, you know, wait a minute, I, you know, kind of break the trance that we're in. So anyway to be careful with our speech to pay attention to what we're doing to be grounded. Okay, I think

I hope that the idea of this path, the right speech, is something that you think about and hopefully think about in ways that will make you happy to beautiful thing. We have about five minutes before the end. Does anyone want to make any comment? or have any questions or have any protests? Yes. Right. The right is a word of some mine Polly. And can mean right? It asked me to complete. It could also mean Thoreau is almost always translated into English as right. But it's the right not in terms of right and wrong in some moralistic way, but rather the same idea that we would when we use right talking about the right tool. So if you have a screw, then you screw it in the right tool is a screwdriver, not a jackhammer. So we say you're getting the right tool for the job. So in that sense of right, the appropriate the appropriate for the task. Yes.

Sometimes we are in a situation where

we might Say something which is literally a lie, but the intention is, you know, the truth might hurt the other person. So, the motivation might be Noble. So, what to do in such

So, so he says sometimes it might be a situation where the intention is to benefit someone, but what's required is to lie. And you know, there's you know, philosophy and philosophy departments are filled with questions like this. You know, they love these kinds of questions, extreme questions, what would you do? If the answer the question is, so I think the Buddhist general Buddhist approaches, you want to be really cautious with that and try to figure out to say what you need to accomplish without having to lie. So, you know, you know, after the bride is, is dressed for the wedding, and she asked you, what do you think of the dress and you really think it's hit it's probably not the time to have that kind of honesty. It's not what's called for. But you don't say, you know, you'd maybe you don't just say, well, it's you know, it's gorgeous. Or it's like, that's the greatest progress I've ever seen. But maybe it's possible to say something like, you don't you don't answer the question directly right to say something like, you know, you look stunning in it. You know, so is there some some way of not lying, but also not, you know, but saying something which is appropriate. And so I think giving some care and thought about how you can say things that doesn't sound manipulative, you're not trying to, you know, get around it, but something that's honest, that suits the suits, the task that you're trying to do, the caring for someone, I think has a high value, because I think it has a lot of value, that people know that they can trust you that people and you can kind of know some of you I know some people who it's so clear to me that this is a person that Not gonna lie, they're going to be really careful about it. And to me, it's for most part, those people are very, very reassuring to be around those kinds of people during meaningful to be around those people. And so if you feel like you need to kind of say things where you have to lie, then you know, you might not, you know, and they find out, they're trusting you might not be there. So try to find some other way to say it. But then I also know people who can't lie there, you know, really know them it really To be honest, but they're not very wise about how they're being honest. And sometimes I've even felt that they're being not exactly lazy, but kind of lazy, they're not really taking responsibility for the
situation they're in, they're just gonna like, it doesn't really matter what anybody else thinks. I'm just going to say it say it as I see it, and they're very honest, but there isn't a care there isn't. It isn't kind and it's not compassionate. So how hold these things together I think are very important. Yes, you said Mike, please.

It seems like bluntness and compassion are rarely going to happen at the same time Are there examples in the Dharma or were kind of a blunt tool or blunt speech is appropriate?

It turns out that in the, in the Buddhist discourses is supposed to be the record of the Buddhist conversations with people. When he spoke to his disciples, people who as monks, he, the word in English is it's he's often often enough he's rebuking them. And he's like, he's pretty blunt. He says, you know, sometimes he says, You fool. Now, is that right speech? I don't know. But then it used to ask for example, some

It's interesting that in Buddhism, you know, in, in like Christianity, I believe, you know, the, the idea of being a sinner is really important or not being a sinner is important, I guess. And in, in Buddhism, they don't have the notion of sin and they do some being a sinner is not such a, you know, not a concept. But the comparable concept concept is a fool. You know, you're so rather than you you've sinned, you've been really foolish. And I think so To my mind, at least it has a different kind of meaning and connotation. If you use the the interview, see, you know, you fool by itself, it seems kind of harsh and cruel. But there are behaviors which are really awful that people do. And rather than saying, you know, you've sinned now and you're damned. If you say you're that was foolish, it actually kind of opens up the possibility for them to become wiser. That's the task. So I think it's had some meaning to say you fool it. In the rights in the right time and place, and the right time in place with Buddha was people who had committed themselves to Him as their teacher.

So there's a whole different permission that's allowed then. Last one, yes. actually led right into my question, which is about divisive speech. Can you talk a little bit about how you can disagree with injustice or, you know, something that you really feel you need to speak out about? I mean, when there is a difference of opinion or a different view, I mean, how do you get around that?

I think one of the things one of I don't know, because it's so situational to so many different contexts in ways, but one of the starting points to address that your question is for what purpose do you want to speak? You know, the purpose? What are you trying to accomplish? Is it just for you to get your opinion out? So there's other guidelines that Buddhism gives as well around speech. So the ones I gave here, but right speech was no lying, no divisive speech, no harm, no harsh speech and no idols chatter. The other guidelines that Buddha gave elsewhere was, you speak, you should consider these things before you speak, is what you're going to say true? Is what you say, I'm going to say timely, it's the right time to say it, is what you're going to say beneficial. is useful to say it and even something might be true. Sometimes it's not useful to say it, so why bother? And then, the other is, is does it lead to Concord to bring people together in harmony in some way, and the fifth is a kind. And so that so classically, in Buddhism, you would actually know it In all the time, especially in important conversations like this, you would ask yourself those questions. And so for you, but first question is, what purpose? Do you want? Are you speaking up against injustice? If you really feel like it's useful, you can make a difference. That's very different than you just kind of feel like you need to vent and you know, speak up and which might not be useful at all for anybody. But if it's useful to you, if injustice is happening in front of you, then the hope I hope that we make a difference and help out somehow, but that takes a lot of wisdom to know each situation, what's needed. I remember once, drawing in San Francisco and intervene. It was this car that came careening down the street, it's kind of screech to half to the intersection. And out of
the backseat, there's a woman tumbled out and kind of stumbled onto the middle intersection, these
two big football kind of guys got out of the car and they wanted that woman. And so you know, and she
was backing away, and they were going after her. So what do I do? You know, they were big, you know,
and so, I kind of got into the intersection and kind of stood between them. And to those two guys and
this woman, and they, they would, you know, they would approach me and I would take a step back.
And they'd approach me we had a conversation and you know, I'd step back you know, and that was
basically the dance at that wasn't didn't look so good. And but I was trying to help with an unjust I
thought it was I don't know what's going on, but you know, didn't seem good to me what's going on?
And, and then this other guy came out, you know, came on the sidewalk, and they came over and he's
kind of like being in the middle of the whole scene, but they're standing right next to them. I said, he
said, he said to the two big guys, he said You know, if I was in a woman position, I hope you would
come in and intervene and check out what's going on. The whole thing Calm down, Everyone calm
down the whole thing, you know. So, you know, he didn't stand there and say it's what you're doing.
And just, you know, he just had this very wise thing that made a big difference in that time. So what you
know, but I hope so I don't know how we say it, what we do, but I hope that that we always find a way to
try to intervene, we try to find a wise way. And that one of the functions of Buddhist practice is to make
us fearless. So that we're willing to stand our ground we're willing to face injustice, face struggle, face
conflict, and deal with it and honest and direct way. My hope is that Buddhists are Buddhist practice
leads to people who are unlikely to get into conflict. But who are not conflict averse? If so, if there is
conflict, they're willing to stay there and be present for it and then figure out what needs to happen.
That's my hope. Okay, so thank you.