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SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

Good morning everyone. The topic today is skill or skillfulness. It's a very important topic in all of Buddhism. And the word both in Pali and Sanskrit is upaya. There's a wonderful Zen Center in New Mexico that's called Upaya. Based on this idea of skill or skillfulness, sometimes the more full words or phrases upaya kusala, and kusala means actually, upaya means means or method and kusala means skill. So, upaya kusala, kusala upaya means a skill in means, skill and methods, skill in approach a skill and activities. So, the one of the reasons why this is important, is that I like to think of Buddhism as a series of instructions of how to become your own teacher. Rather than a series of instructions of what you should do, like structures that you have to do this are teachings that you have to adopt in some dogmatic way. And the whole set of teachings are set up as a way to support you help you understand how to become your own teacher. And in that regard, it's always been my dream that I could talk my way out of a job. And, but so far, it doesn't seem to work too well. So, listen carefully.

And so the idea of skillfulness I will relate to the topic of helpfulness in the sense of what is helpful and what is not helpful. And so to learn to have a sense of what is helpful for yourself or others for the world around us, what is skillful and, and then to be able to enact or do those things which are skillful or helpful. And that requires some ability to monitor or read a situation. And then to have some sense of what is useful situation that will have beneficial consequences. And so the idea of behavior or ethical action or activity in Buddhism is often seem to be, or to be understood or measured, situationally. Every situation has its own appropriate response to the situation. And we don't go into such a situation with a preconceived idea that this is what should happen. This is what what is, but rather we take our time to read the situation to discover what's there and then, given the situation then there's a response that is skillful or we Try to avoid the responses that are unskillful. The emphasis on skillfulness can be seen in a very famous and terrifying world. Little set of verses four line verse from the Dhammapada, which is sometimes considered to be the one of the kind of pithy summaries of the Buddhist teachings. I'll give you first more or less the literal translation then offer you a slight variation. Avoid doing evil. Cultivate what is skillful, purifying the mind. This is the teachings of the Buddha's. So the first line, avoid doing evil. Some people don't think it's very skillful to use the word evil. So, the word is connected to the Buddhist kind of personification god of death. So there's a very good scholar of our tradition, who prefers to translate not as evil because it's not quite right given that you know the connotations in you know, it's not a good match, but he prefers the word deadening, that which so avoid, avoid doing what's deadening. Wood takes life away from yourself drains you or drains, others deadening. And then do what is skillful, purify the mind. This is the teachings of the Buddha's. So this idea of the second one is cultivate what's skillful. In some places in translation, they'll translate this as because it's a contrast to evil. They'll translate it as do what's good. Avoid evil and do good purify the mind. But the idea of good is so vague, and it lends itself to a kind of little bit, maybe kind of black and white idea of how things should be. Whereas the idea of skillfulness is much more nuanced. It's much more situational. It's kind

of like what skill for him, it begs the question how do you discover what's skillful? Another reason why skillfulness is useful is that skillfulness is portable, that you learn a skill, you can take that skill with you in different situations. If you like meditation, if you attain a particular state of meditation, it's probably not that portable, you might be lucky to carry with you for a few minutes after the sitting or for a little while. But it's the skill, the understanding the ability to monitor yourself and adjust to meet the situation. That is what's useful over time. So one of the ways to approach meditation practice is not that you're trying to attain a state of calm or, or concentration for its own sake, but rather the calm and the concentration that we can have in meditation is this sets us up to be able to monitor and see have insight into the situation, not to see the truth necessarily the true nature of reality. But to seek to understand how we can respond better how we, how we can read the situation better read ourselves better, and understand what is skillful, what is not skillful to do.

And so part of the training in Buddhism is to develop a skill set to develop the skills we have, so that we can use those skills in different circumstances. So one of the skills is a skills of mindfulness, the skill of being able to stop and pay more careful attention to the situation, understand what's going on some more, with greater clarity than it would be if it was just barreling along. Business as usual, not paying much attention, but to have an ability to have a kind of sharpened attention to the situation and what's going on. And that's a skill that can be cultivated and developed. It's connected to the skill of letting go. It's a wonderful skill to let go because for a variety of reasons, one is that it helps us to see more clearly. If words appear barreling ahead with our own desires and wishes and mindsets and understanding, we can just completely miss what's going on around us. So the ability and ability to least temporarily let go or suspend our desires or wishes, or views is a very important capacity in order to be able to see more clearly. And as we see more clearly, it might invite back some of your views and understanding if they're skillful or helpful. But it really helps to have the ability to let go, let go, let go. Also letting go is very helpful that skill, it's like a muscle learning how to let go, that we will because as you begin to strengthen that muscle, you might be able to learn to let go in increasingly important areas where it's useful to let go. So for example, it's one thing to let go you know, in the, on the freeway, I mean, it's you notice to someone, there's a long line of cars ahead of you, and you're impatient. And he's and you say, Well, you know, it's nothing I can do. So Let go and kind of not be so tense around driving by cars given the circumstance, maybe that's a relatively easy situation maybe. And, but we practice in these small situations, and then it might come a time where maybe you are really angry with your boss. And maybe you have good evening, even if you have good reason to be angry with your boss. It might not be skillful to act on that anger, because of all the people who are going to suffer if you're unemployed. So, how do you do that wisely? How do you engage that anger wisely? Well, perhaps, because you've been practicing letting go and developing a skill for it. You know enough about letting go of the grip of anger, so that you're not not likely to act on it in unskillful ways. And perhaps you can find skillful ways to respond to the situation, because you learn how to let go of the grip that you've been caught in the in the vise so the emotion of the moment. So it's a skill we learned to develop. And then it's a skill which was meant to be used skillfully. To understand skillful means to understand have the wisdom to see when it's useful to let go. And when it's useful to pick up something, when it's useful to cultivate something to do something, when it's useful not to do something, let something be. So for example, if you come into a new situation, that is maybe challenging, maybe what's skillful is to not speak and not act right away. But take your time. Find out what's going on, ask other people what was happening and how are you feeling and all that. Whereas, and then later, you I want you to take in information, maybe then you can kind of assess what's needed from you. And so then you kind of engage in that. So the idea of skillfulness there in the English word skill comes from an Indo-European root word meaning To differentiate or to separate. And in fact, in Norwegian, which I speak, the word still means to separate. It's, the word is pronounced Shin shinda. So the H and the K kind of gets interchange in English and Norwegian. And

the separate out. And the ability to be skillful is to be able to make finer and finer distinctions and understanding about what's happening. And so we say that someone who's skillful, like a skillful swimmer repeats the movement of swimming over and over and over again. So a lot of repetition, training yourself to be a swimmer, same stroke for years. But as you as you do it more and more and more, the swimmer can learn to make finer and finer distinctions between the subtle movements that go on. Whereas when you first start swimming, you just flailing around. So the repetition of things over and over and over again allows us to take in the information what's going on. See the subtlety what's going on, we can make more and more useful distinctions and have developed skillfulness. So this applies to meditation practice, one of the reasons to do meditation practice over and over and over again, one of the reasons to over and over and over again, for decades, meditation to follow your breath. Is that is that you'll make finer and finer distinctions and what's going on inside, you'll start seeing the subtlety of how the mind operates, and how what goes on in the body. And, and as you see more subtly and more nuance what's going on, you see a greater range of choice you have in, in how you continue the meditation and what you do. And so this involves a lot of monitoring, and so important part of mindfulness and Buddhist practice. The beginning of learning to be your own teacher, is to learn to monitor yourself, which is another way of saying to be mindful of yourself mindfulness situation, and but it takes a lot it Don't be in a hurry. This is you put yourself in the same laboratory over and over again and are slowly begin to kind of tease apart and discover what's really happening, what's going on. So even something like meditation practice, retreat practice is part of this domain. When we do things over and over again, we start seeing not only more subtlety, but deeper and deeper. The movements of the mind the attachments of the mind, the different belief systems that are operating, the different kind of identities that are operating what we're doing. The ways in which we respond to challenges are great thing to discover in meditation, sooner or later in meditation, you'll be challenged. And, and maybe that's when meditation begins. Some people think it's over when it's challenged, but actually in terms of kind of the Buddhist path of maturation, perhaps that path or maturation begins when you lucky, lucky, lucky enough to get Ciao In the meditation is not working so well. And so then you can turn around and look and see what's really going on here. look more carefully. Are there expectations involved? Is there stress straining or striving going on? Is there resistance or contraction or tension happening as part of the doing? What's going on? What's your relationship to the challenge? Do you see it? You know, you interpret in a way that's not so useful other ways of different ways of interpreting? Are there ways of not interpreting and just being very simple with it? I would be very sorry. Or not sorry, I'm not the right word, but worried about someone who received the instructions in meditation practice, sat down, boom, went into deep concentration and bliss and just kind of, you know, just kind of float along for years that way. In fact, I know people who do something like That not necessarily the first time you sit down.

But I've met people who have somehow developed a mystic meditation practice that allowed themselves to go into bliss. And then they just hang out there for years, they go into place go into blissful bliss. And then they come and do an insight, practice, come and retreat. And we tell them instead of sitting there in bliss, why don't you notice what's going on. And they'll come back to the next interview. And their eyes will pop wide open, and say I had no idea so much was going on. And then after years of doing practice, they begin Finally, understanding what's going on under the surface or behind the curtain of that bliss. There's much more much more complicated. And in fact that what I've seen, I wouldn't want to generalize too much. So please be careful with I'm about to say, but what I've seen more often the knot is the people who have the ability to go into bliss states. great experience. emptiness states for long periods of time. And that's primarily what characterizes their meditation. Usually you're avoiding something usually did make, sometimes they develop it as a coping mechanism. They have a lot of suffering in their life. And so it's a way of kind of coping sometimes very wisely with a suffering because nothing else kind of works. But at some point or other, to stay there with

that coping mechanism is not skillful. Maybe it was skillful one at one time, but at some point in long, no longer skillful. And so then what skillful may perhaps, is to begin opening up to what's behind the curtain of the bliss or the joy or the emptiness that's there and discover, you know, a variety of things that could be there. The idea of skillfulness or being your own teacher implies that when you hear any instructions in Buddhism, you ask the question, when is this skillful, or how is this skillful Or when is this appropriate? How is it appropriate? You know, and so, in the, in the toolbox of Buddhism or the teachings of the Buddha, there's a lot of different kinds of practices a person can do. And so the question is, which are the tools is useful in a given situation? If there is a lot of anger, for example, sometimes being mindful might not be the right tool. Perhaps loving kindness is the right tool to do or if there's a lot of distress going on. Maybe meditation is not the right tool in the state of distress sometimes on retreat when people come and might be a lot of stress going on. We will ask people or tell encourage people to stop meditating not because they're, you know, now failing the retreat that any kinds of means, but because retreat practice, Buddhist practice is what's what's, what it's about is not Meditation. It's about meeting what's going on for the individual with the appropriate response. And so sometimes someone's distressed meditation is not appropriate. And we'll have them sometimes go work in the kitchen. And doing something physical being around community and other people like other cooks is sometimes a very useful way of grounding people helping them stabilize with their distress, in a way that maybe can't happen through meditation. So, and so sometimes we meditation is skillful, sometimes meditation is not skillful. Sometimes other things are skillful. And, you know, kind of a dramatic statement that I'm about to make. I don't know if I should say it. No, no one, no one, no one will ever come back here. I think sometimes I think that for people living, busy lives, that you know, have strain and stress. Some I think, for some Not everyone. But for some people, you know that what's most needed is basically to kind of calm down a bit, you know, distress. And sometimes something like yoga, or doing something physical is is a faster way of distressing than doing meditation. Is that something? Come back, give us a second chance. Yeah, come back when you're calm. And, but you know, so what's the question is what is skillful given maybe the stress level I have? The person has. Maybe it's not maybe it's not useful to hang on to the idea that Buddhism has the answer. It's the only answer and so I have to meditate all the time. Maybe given my life. The next step in order to kind of be a little more liquid more skillful life. more helpful life more useful situation. I need to relax a little bit. And re enter, relax, I need to maybe it all figured out Something else. Besides meditation, it doesn't seem to help me that much.

Maybe if I go on retreat, or maybe if I do it for a long time, so let's do something else, let's do yoga or something or go for a walk or do something. Some people, I say this because some people, some Buddhists, you know, put too much emphasis on the authority of Buddhism, as if Buddhism has the answer for everything. And, and, you know, it has answers. It has a very powerful and profound series of practices of methods of skillful means that we can use, but the idea is not to be locked into them. But to ask the question what is skillful? What is useful given the circumstances of our life? The idea of skillfulness and usefulness or helpfulness also is connected to the idea of purpose or goal. You we measure what skill for By the purpose we have in mind, there's no like just skillfulness in the abstract are going to do what skill for us if there's such a thing. So if purpose, if you realize that you're hyper stressed out, and the primary purpose you're trying to do is to kind of de stress, then you can ask the question, for the purpose of distressing, what is skillful? Or say that your purpose is to do the Buddhist path all the way. And then your question is what is skillful for that? Well, in order to answer that question, I think I have to look at the particular of this situation now that I'm in both the micro circumstance of the day maybe of the month of the face of my life, and then figure out what's useful in order to be on that path. So it might be that it's useful to go do yoga, before coming, meditate or go Or get more sleep. You know, in order before you, you know, try to do the Buddhist practice, it might be more useful to study a little bit, to try to understand the teachings better. If you know to kind understand

what's going on, it might be useful to develop a community of friends who are also practitioners. So you have some support in the community, you're not doing it alone, because sometimes doing alone can be quite challenging. It could be that the circumstances of your life don't allow you to do a lot of meditation. And the classic way. You know, if you have four kids at home and you're a single parent, and you have to work, it might not be reasonable to expect that you're going to meditate two hours a day. And so you want to be on the Buddhist path but given the circumstances of the life, this life what what is walking the path look like now with a skillful, what might be skillful, In that situation is to be ethical to focus on the ethical precepts of Buddhism, and to start being impeccable, are kind of heighten the level of impeccability. Around the precepts of Rwanda. And you know, it just doesn't mean you have to stop doing all the things you have to do and get through your life. But it means you do them with greater ethical care. And that would be the skillful way a lot of inner growth and development can happen that way. Someone else who may be different circumstances circumstance of their lives, would maybe what's skillful or useful is they can go on retreat, they can do a lot of practice at that phase of their life. And I wouldn't want to put measure one, as opposed to the other as one is better than the other. I think that's not skillful. Because if you start measuring one against the other one is better than the other ones are real Buddhist practice and one's not, you know, what's the consequence of that kind of thing. If you really Pay attention. As you ask the question, what is skillful here means what are the consequences here? Well, if those people are doing it, right, the real practice and I'm doing the lousy one, the second grade practice, or I'm doing the right practice, and these other people are not really doing it and why are they kind of like, whatever. You know, if you really are paying attention monitoring what what that's like you see it sets up separation, it sets up tension, it sets up all kinds of not so helpful things. It's not skillful. What is skillful? I think, so yes. What is skillful what skillful is to appreciate each other, value each other? What's skillful is to appreciate that the appropriate response is situational. Everyone has different circumstances in their life. And given the circumstances of their life, they have to adjust and figure out what to do in the in the 1970s, when I was a new practitioner,

You know that the age of Buddhist practitioners in the 1970s in America was considerably younger than what the average is nowadays. And so there used to be, you know, so like, I mean, a lot of them were in their 20s and 30s. And so there was a much more of the physical limb burness. And, and also a certain kind of zeal about being good Buddhists and stuff like that. So the idea of sitting cross legged in meditation was very high ideal. And there was very little appreciation among these hyper idealized practitioners back then, that there was other ways of meditating. And so, there were people who felt that they had to meditate cross legged on the floor. And I know people actually damaged their knees by forcing themselves with this and it's Not skillful to damage your knees, you know and need knee surgery and after meditating, you know, hope you understand that's not skillful. And so some of the ones I knew who damaged their knees, were not monitoring themselves. They had this idea. They're supposed to kind of just be present and tough it out. And so they weren't paying attention carefully to the signals to the situation well, and so they weren't adjusting themselves, according to what the need was. They weren't picking up the dangerous signals. What we've learned over the decades is that for certain types of bodies, certain people, it is skillful to meditate in a chair. And for other people it skillful to meditate on the floor cross legged, one isn't better than the other. The idea is to practice with the circumstances of your life. And if your circumstances are sitting in the chair, that's skillful, if you have the ability to sit cross legged, perhaps that's skillful. Some people Can't even meditate, sitting upright. So what's skillful is to maybe meditate lying down, or meditate standing, or meditate doing walking meditation. So there's, it's very permissive or very allowing this focus on Buddhist practice, when the focus is what is skillful, what is useful. And when we appreciate that the answer was skillful, is situational. It has to do with you yourself. It has to do with other people, what's the sort of circumstances you're in? You know, a lot of things to take into account. Finally, I'll say that this kind of emphasis I'm making today of monitoring yourself figuring out what is skillful, not skillful. Looking at all

the tools that Buddhism has, can also tie oneself in knots. It becomes a whole engineering project. And so but part of the monitoring is to monitor how you're searching for what skillful is the way you're evaluating situation is it's stressful. Is it agitating? Is it making you less calm? Or is it helping you be more peaceful? So this idea of skillfulness includes being skillful about how we evaluate skillfulness. And in that way, it's self correcting. So if you find yourself always sitting down to meditate, and always, you know, spending the whole time quick, is this skillful shall be doing this shall be that what's going on now? How should I do it? I'll try to remember that instruction. No, I'll try different instruction. If you step back and say, what's happening now let's look at this is a skill for them jumping around and doing all this? And you might decide No, it's not. Maybe what skillful is, since I don't, it's not obvious what to do. Why don't I just follow the simple simplest instructions that I've heard about meditation, sit down, close my eyes and follow my breath. Since I don't know what to do otherwise, and it's not useful to jump around. And then as you sit down and close your eyes and follow your breath, with time, you might discover that something else is useful. Some other focus, maybe it's not just a matter of following the breath. But it's also a matter of learning to let go of distractions. Or maybe it's learning that maybe you're tense when you're breathing. You notice that and so you find that, you know, I'm holding my chest always when I'm breathing, maybe I can relax my chest. And that would be skillful. And help me get into it more. So, the mindfulness, self monitoring that we do in meditation practice is a self correcting, because we're also looking at the approach how we're doing it in the moment.

So hopefully this protects you from the possibility that the teachings on Being skillful and being your own teacher doesn't tie your tie yourself and not doesn't get you caught up in evaluating engineering the situation too much. It's very skillful, to rely on simplicity. Not everything is simple. But if you consider always consider what's the simple approach how to be simple in this situation. That's part of the exploration, you probably are not going to go wrong. So kusala, who pi akusala skillfulness skill. Killing means it's a very important concept in Buddhism. So anyway, we'll see but between telling you that Yoga is better than sometimes better than yoga, yoga, sometimes better than meditation and you should be own teacher. I guess no one will ever come back. Right? We have yoga here.

It was not planned. So okay, so any questions or comments about this? We have a few minutes you can remove them Michael's mic over here.

There it is. I often find that I'm up into literature and less, I don't know a couple decades into poetry and sometimes I get it Concentration when I'm reading really good poetry because it says some essential truth, it's really resonates. It's not just thought, but you know, it's like, my whole body goes in it. It's like an aesthetic response, but to some real resonant, profound truth. And it's easier for me to get that response, reading that poetry than it is in meditation. 99 times out of 100 and I wish I could bring that to meditation. So if you have anything to say about aesthetic response, you know, to great art or some anybody ever read poetry to enlightenment.

I think it's great that you know this about yourself and you have this access to this possibility of using poetry or literature to get concentrated and present and nice way. Knowing that that's a skill or capacity you have then it's something you can maybe use and make it part of your life that benefit your life benefits the life of others even. So you're deep into it connects you with maybe puts you in a good state. It might be interesting to meditate after reading poetry, if that's the case for you and see what happens then with your meditation practice. Or it might be useful to read poetry before you have to talk with your boss, about, you know, this challenge you have with the boss right and put you in a different kind of focus. And so it's a useful thing to skill to have. Perhaps one of the things you can do is to notice some of the qualities, some aspects that are involved in your absorption and poetry. And, you know,

both while you're doing it then after it's occurred, kind of and then see if you can bring some of those qualities into your meditation practice. Because the absorption that happens in meditation practice is probably very similar to that option that can happen, and that you having an in poetry. So maybe it's something you learn about that maybe they both have state, your experience and the way your mind functions to get into that state, in poetry, maybe can teach you lessons about what's needed when you meditate. And you can then kind of, maybe as you meditate, you sit down to meditate and kind of maybe Intuit how to be with your breath in such a way that the breath becomes an aesthetic experience. And in fact, when meditation gets when concentration gets strong, it's the I would say that sometimes the focusing a breath becomes not only extremely pleasant, but quite beautiful. Some teachers talk about focusing on the beautiful breath, and the beauty of that and it feels more more beautiful and more concentrated together. And that's part of the reason that gets gets absorbing in the back,

you mentioned situational ethics as part of your talk. But from what from what I've been exposed to in Buddhism, for example, the five precepts, it seems there's very little situational there. They are more absolutist. And various teachers have come by here and lectured on similar things. And they've been very absolutist in their views about certain aspects of Buddhism.

Yeah, it's probably probably to some degree true. So, it's two things. A number of things to say about that is, is it's useful for all of us to look and understand what our relationship is to Buddhism and the Buddhist teachings. How do we understand it? What Background do we have that influences how we see Buddhism or Buddhist teachers? When people come out of another religion or any religion, in Buddhism, there are certain understandings of what it means to be religious. And then if you go to a different religion, sometimes that's carried with you, and people assume that's gonna be the same. I have known people who, for example, I don't want to mention religions, but I've known people who've come from certain religions. And when they come to Buddhism, they assume that to be a Buddhist, you have to discover what the tenets of Buddhism are, and you have to believe the whole package. And then sometimes people find a great struggle because, you know, it's either you're in it or you're not you either, you know, it's like so black and white. And, and so if people can struggle for years with that, so So, Buddhist teachers say all kinds of things

And so what's your relationship to a Buddhist teacher? You know, do you see a Buddhist teacher as having as, as an absolute authority, you see it as a guide as a mentor, I see you see it as a guide or a mentor. And you know, if you're if you spend your you know, if you've spent your lifetime living in the Vatican, and you think that you know, that, you know, that's your reference point for what a Buddhist teacher is, you might, you know, have you know, listen in one way, but if, if you think they would have Buddhist teacher is a is a friend who's further along on the path then, then you are, you might relate in a different way. And so, you know, how much authority to give a Buddhist teacher is variable depending on all kinds of reasons when people bring. So you find Buddhist teachers say a lot of different things about ethics and precepts. And, as some teachers like myself will say, the fundamental premise Behind the precepts is, which is maybe a little bit black and white or absolute, is don't cause harm. And it's very unskillful to cause harm if the idea is to be free. Or if the purpose is to free the world from suffering. It's unskillful to cause harm, and we don't want to cause harm. And then how does that 10 translate in different behaviors? So generally, we cause harm if we kill people, and that's kind of a little bit black and white. There might be some people who will argue that the greater good is accomplished by killing some people, rather than having a lot of other people die. So that's a whole ethical question, the different moral question that people fit on different sides of that kind of issue. But in generally, in the terracon tradition, they falls in the side as a tradition as a religious tradition. No killing. Where are you? What's your relationship to that? It's up to you. There's no there's no Pope in Buddhism. There's no final

authority. says, This is the truth. There's nobody like that. So you have to find your own way with that. But this tradition that we teach intends to be a little more. And there's no exceptions to not killing. Don't steal. Now, are there times when it's skillful to steal in the some of the earliest law books from Europe, in the 1200s specifically say that, that it's okay to steal if you're poor and your your family's starving to death, that it's okay to steal a loaf of bread is forgiven if that's the situation. So that's interesting that people that you know, back then were making that kind of distinction. Is that the case always or so what's skillful? You know, no circumstances I mean, I you know, I don't know. sexuality, you find Buddhist teachers who have particular ideas about what's right and wrong sexuality. I think that other Buddhist teachers who prefer to say, we don't have particular behaviors, which are right or wrong, but rather, we want to avoid inappropriate sexuality. And that's measured by whether it causes harm. Is anybody harmed by this kind of behavior? are not. So. So is that going on and on so now I'm curious, what do you want us to say here? Can you move the mic?

And this might be too big a question or too vague question.

Can you hear me?

screen Can you hear me now? Oh, okay. I wasn't levitating. This might be too big or vague question but I haven't done much sitting but I've done a little sitting in the Zen tradition and listening to your talk, I sensed assert a difference in orientation between what you're saying to certain degree and what I've experienced. In my small sampling. I'm by far not as serious practitioner. So I think I was kind of wanting to have like, and I know you have you have you are in both traditions. And so I was curious, from your viewpoint, what are the two? Like, what if you could summarize what are the differences or what is one of the main difference between Zen Yeah, and insight? Yeah. And I realize it's a big question and not entirely related to what you were talking about directly. So

if it's not appropriate, yeah, Roger is a really big so I'll try to go for your something simple. I mean, depending on the days people ask me, I'll say they're very similar or very different. The

generally, I think I think it's kind of useful in this in California to make this distinction distinction like this is that Zen as practiced in some of the practice centers here in California, is a whole religious tradition. And so Zen is much more than meditation practice. It's a whole training in community and all kinds of activities person does. Whereas the way that our practice practice inside practice was brought to the United States was primarily brought as a meditation practice. And so you're comparing apples and oranges if you compare Zen training, with insight meditation, and we don't have a full fledged training in the way, you know, we kind of brought to meditation we're kind of reinventing the wheel here, because we started off with this theory of meditation. But the but if what you're comparing is all zen, Zen meditation and insight meditation, if that's the comparison then in some One of my favorite ways of distinguishing the two is that they, the mature form of both of them are the same. But how you get there is different. The in zen, you're kind of thrown into the deep end and expected to swim. Whereas in the past now you're starting the shallow end. And you're you're slowly kind of taught to how to get to the deep end. So it's a little bit different so sometimes for swimming geniuses, it works well to be thrown, thrown in. My friend Ed Brown, who's a great sent teacher, here in California did both practices and his way he distinguished to what he said. Zan is like going he's a cook. great cook. He said sounds like going into the kitchen. And to make a cake without the recipe. We're As we pass in there, you go into the kitchen with the recipe. And so again, culinary geniuses can do it without maybe they maybe even make a better cake if you don't have recipe. Because if you're, you know, if you're a genius, and you know, but, but you're more reliably going to make the cake if you have the recipe. So I don't know if this is a good answer to your question, but it's what you get today. Thank you. So thank you all very much.

And please, stay for tea. And, and perhaps it'd be nice, especially if you're sitting there someone who, you know, those of you who've been here for a while. You see someone near you who seems like they're new or something, if they look like they're receptive to it. You know, it's nice to turn to someone and say hello and welcome them here. Because Yeah, my hope is that everyone who comes here will feel welcomed when they come. So thank you.