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SPEAKERS

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I believe many of you know that, that Buddhism puts a lot of emphasis around this notion of self. And in particular, the idea that most of the things, all the things that we usually identify as ourself, not really a good thing to identify with. Or to say it differently, that one of the most common ways in which human beings suffer, is somehow or other connected to are often connected to some idea of self, me myself in mind. And so the to somehow look into the activity of selfing is a very important part of this practice that we do with mindfulness. The idea of looking into the philosophy of self the metaphysics of self is not that interesting. But to look at the issue of self, from the point of view view of the activity of selfing is interesting from the point of view of practice, that the mind is involved in an activity. And if it's involved in the activity, that activity could be put to rest. And if selfing if the self concept self identity is something we're doing, that's good news. If you then appreciate it, you can put it to to arrest, you can stop, you can see through it, you can not no longer believe in those stories and those ideas and we build up and live our lives by. So a few examples from my own life that might begin illustrating this. The idea of building up a self concept and idea of who we are, and then walking around with that concept can be quite insidious and it doesn't have to be something that's consciously done. And you don't even have to know that you're doing the activity. It just kind of sometimes it's registered almost This is subconscious, I suppose. So when I was in seventh grade, I was in an art class, and I was drawing. And my art teacher came to me and looked at my drawing and said to me, You have no artistic ability. So that was nice to know. I was I was nice or not nice. I had no identity as an artist. I had no thought that way. I didn't couldn't care less whether I had artistic ability or not. So it wasn't like I felt bad. But she was the authority. So this is the this is the way the universe was made. It was made in such a way that I'm the kind of person who has no artistic ability. So that became my self under Standing until I went to college, I never questioned ever thought about I didn't think about it even just like it was just, it was just part of the operating system that I assumed that was the case. And there's a whole you know, so that's it and you know, society, family experiences, many things kind of bring us these ideas of who we are and we take them on. Or we invent them on our own, we think we have to be a certain way. And they build up over a course of, you know, certainly childhood. There is thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, little kind of events that happen that help build up the idea of what it means to say who you are, how you have to be, you know your identity. I could probably write a epic novel, epic biography autobiography, on the history of me and my hair. You know that all the different things that my identity I'm all the ways in which I've seen myself understood myself to the vantage point of my hair and the amount of suffering I've had around here and including a period of time when I was concerned about split ends that was when my hair was groomed down past my nipples. Long here. And then part of that, you know, big part of this opa smugness of mine would be how people related to me because of how my hair was. And there's been you know, it's quite fascinating to watch all the changing way that people i don't think i change right, but my hair changes and people you know, see it relate to me differently. When I was a long haired hippie, there was a whole different group of, whole piece of our society that

wouldn't talk to me. Just I was just like, I was like persona non grata. And sometimes it was worse than that. And then I became a Zen monk and I shaved my head.

And suddenly, all these people who wouldn't talk to me would start talking to me on bus stops and in public, they'd walk up to me and tell me what to do you know, what's changed. Now I have a shaved head before I had long hair. Before I was, you know, they wouldn't get close to me and now they want to tell me about their life and their stories. And you know, because my hair is gone. Even when I wasn't, I wasn't wearing robes, so just somehow there was something changed. So I think, you know, it goes up and down these things as a society we know people contribute to our sense of self and we create this. A strong one for me that had was when I was 15. I was sent to boarding school. And it was a beautiful place to live in the mountains. Beautiful, beautiful place. It was so beautiful, high in the mountains and inspired existential questions. So I was walking down the dirt road with a 17 year old. I was 15. And I was just in awe. And I said in my awe and wonder, why are we here? Anytime turned and looked at me and said, Don't be silly, and something inside of me just closed up. And the idea that, you know that that was silly that if I had those kinds of thoughts, I would be silly, and I can't be that kind of person again. And so that parts are part of me that got closed because I wasn't gonna be that kind of person was right. So these are all small examples. But what I'm trying to convey is there's 100 thousands of those free probably each of us probably more than that, that build up and create over time, and some of them build and create huge kind of complicated inner ecologies Sometimes the different ways and lessons ideas identities we have don't even get along inside of us. And sometimes, occasionally there are people who are at war with parts of themselves because they've incorporated one. One thing from certain life experiences something else rather life experiences, and somehow they don't get along.

And so one way or the other is a tremendous amount of suffering around this whole thing of selfing. And even this, even when this whole selfing project goes well, for a while, we get a lot of praise. So easy for just a setup to crash down. So I think most of you know now there was, I don't know when it was in the 80s, 89, 80s and 90s. There was a movement of self esteem movement. And all these people were parents were in school teachers was currently build up the self esteem of these kids, saying you're great. You're unqualified. Great, you're wonderful, everything should be available to you and you. And again there and kids felt that they just didn't have to do any work. And there was a study done in Palo Alto at DePaul High School some years ago 10 or 10 years ago so in that measure to show that you know what i unqualified disaster, the self esteem thing was there. And the kids who kind of went through that felt that didn't have to do any work, I guess they deserved. Just make everything work. So you know, to get a lot of praise to get a lot of, to have the whole cell thing thing look in a conventional way, like it's going really well. It's a very fragile world. To build a self concept is self idea. This is who I am. Now I'm seeing this way. And you know, it's so brittle, I can pass pretty quickly, all the way. I see it for my young kids, how quickly it can happen. They're even my You know, a 10 year old, you know, that wrong hair cut. It can be a serious existential problem to end up with a wrong haircut and going to school as a 10 year old or 12 year old or something. Probably some of you have forgotten those kinds of terrible dilemmas. So when I was 21 I was standing on a large field from a farm in Tennessee. And I was working on the farm doing something I don't know what it was. It was a bear field that just been tilled, I guess. And there was another person there, young men. And somehow I don't know what the occasion was. We're working together. I don't know what we ended up ended up standing in the middle of this field. And I don't remember so many details, you know, to fill you in exactly how this happened. But somehow it happened that we stood there looking at each looking at each other. And enough looking at him, I saw in a way that I'd never seen before. And I, I saw him I don't even have to say it, but I saw him without any projections without any ideas of who he was, without any putting him into a category without wanting something from him, or not wanting from him something, not

wanting to be defined in his eyes not wanting to create an image for him. I just saw him. But why it was so powerful for me, was the experience was I thought he I felt to me like he was seeing me the same way. And the idea of being seen by someone and seeing without all this project of selfing was the first time I've ever had that it was remarkable. This is possible. I said, it's possible to be this way. It's possible to relate to another person this way and to be kind of in a glorious, luminous way empty of ideas and concepts of self and other. So it kind of made an impression. And then about a year later, I was living on a small dairy farm. It's really small. I had five dairy cows, milking cows. And the farmer, the two farmers who had the farm on the farm, went off on vacation for a week. It was very hard to have a vacation when you have milking cows, because you have to be milked twice a day. But I was there. I was living there for six months. And so I'd been trained how to take care of cows. So I was left there for a week in this very rural, distant place. And for that week I was there, the only person I saw was in a distance I saw the mail carrier. Otherwise I didn't see anybody and talk to anybody. And it was 21 it was the first time I'd ever been alone. And it kind of that kind of way. You know, it's kind of secluded way I slaved away kind of. It wasn't done by intention just at what happened.

And in the course of those seven days, I noticed that my mind became sharper, there was clarity, and I looked at things, the things that I looked at seem to be sparkling. And I became acutely aware of my thoughts as they as they occurred, like, you know, in the way I'd never seen my thoughts before, like they slow down or they stood out in the highlight. And it felt kind of like a budtender seven days I felt the kind of a luminous time For me, I remember feeling particularly calm or peaceful. But remember, I was feeling luminous and just, I felt this intimacy and clarity with the world, everything around me. And then my friends came back. And very quickly, that clarity and luminosity and intimacy that I felt banished, and I could watch why it vanished. And why it vanished was that once I was in socially involved with people, all the different social ways of being came back in full force, my ideas of who I am and who I had to be in relation to them, and you know, who they were and who they had to be in relationship to me and it was a very complicated world. And I was struck by the dramatic difference between those two. So here are two examples I run into when I was 20,21 20,21 22. I think one was in setting in this field and looking at this person and the and just selfing activity fell away. And the other was seven days alone. And so much of the social interactions way of having a sense of self fell away. And then it came back. And when it came back in that dairy farm that then became the motivation for part of my, you know, nowadays maybe we can call it my spiritual quest. I didn't use the word spiritual back then. But the quest I had then kind of big life quest was question or quest that point was, how can I be alone with others? How could I didn't want to go off and be a hermit? That didn't seem to be the answer. But how could I have this luminosity and clarity and intimacy? without having to be away from people? What does that what does it do? How do you do this thing? And so that was part of what brought me into doing Buddhist practice because somehow that meditation practice in between Killer i thought was a way to explore this and to find out how to do this, not to be again a hermit go into meditation to be alone, but to be with the meditation or to learn how to draw the hole all the selfing activity of the mind so that I could see the world and see myself without all those ideas that I carry. So I'm sure that all of you probably have some example of an idea that you had about who you were, who you had to be that at some point you saw it. This is not accurate anymore. This is not true. I don't need this anymore. Or I've outgrown this, it's no longer operating. And in seeing that, you felt a relief. You felt some openness, some some ease or some peace around that. If you have trouble thinking of an example, just think back to high school I think most of you will probably.

So I wonder if some of you would be willing to share. An example doesn't have to be dramatic, just a simple example of some self concept that you had that something shifted, and you it just fell away. And you end up falling away or in that scene through it or no longer being caught in it. You felt some important sense of relief or ease or peace or just kind of something happened that that brought you a

good feeling. Anybody want to share some examples? What I'm interested in examples is to hear the relief part, the peace part that comes in the wake of it, so Some of you might have seen through certain things but didn't bring peace. Sometimes it brings the opposite. Yeah.

Um, I think that I noticed that a lot when I feel like I'm supposed to have an answer. I'm supposed to know something or be a certain way. And then I noticed that that's happening and I let go of it and I feel a lot of relief.

So feel like you have to have an answer when you realize you don't have to, then you feel really great.

Yeah, I remember.

I had graduated college and wanted to be sophisticated masculine man, I suppose. And I couldn't find work in the field that I studied.

So I was just I remember racking my brain.

And

I, someone mentioned Oh, well, there's, there's my friends have a four month old baby and you can do childcare for it. And it was almost like insulting to me. I have this sophisticated degree, but I had, I didn't have anything else. So I went and did it. And I was resistant, really resistant to it for probably, maybe even six months doing it. Yeah, it is really tough struggle inside of me because I needed to be nurturing. I think I did a good job, but it was really uncomfortable for the first six months and then something just switched. And I am this kind of was like my heart opened up or something. And I was just able to totally unconditionally love this

baby. So and so the image of needing to be this masculine. Machover a degree carrying college graduate,

right? pushing a baby on swing.

Great, thank you.

My name is Noel. And I come from a family that loves parties. My father especially, really is interested in other people. My mother is also she just makes connections. And I thought that that was exactly how I should be as well. And of course that's the way to be. Because I had no other idea of how to be. And in my first marriage a kind of by my first husband for like, you know, you're not we're not having parties. We're not doing what I think we're supposed to do. And I and I felt really, I kept thinking if I had a different husband, we'd have more parties. And I'd have more friends. And then, you know, I got divorced and I started noticing like in my second marriage, we didn't have parties. And I really didn't want to have anybody over that badly. And I began to understand very deeply that I am not a people person. And I began to understand that I just was different. And I, one of the things I pick that comforts me so much about IMC is that I can be here with many people, but not have you know who I Am I or not have to play out who I am for you, nor you for me, and we just get our shoes on and leave. And I find that, you know, after a childhood, full of Easter parties and just full of all kinds of, you know, company and crowds, it's very comforting for me to realize that it's okay just to be different to let go of being anything but a private person.

That's very nice. No, no, no, no, thank you. That's very nice. And so one thing you've indicated in saying that is what a relief it is, to let go of the idea he's supposed to be a party person. But in the doing that, the relief of discovering who you are that you're just like a pirate, you're a private person, you're and that's and you're comfortable with that. That's who you are. And so that part letting go of all these ideas sometimes leads us to be more accepting of how we actually are. It's very nice.

Thank you. It's

nice to say your name.

My name is Lindsay.

And an experience that I learned the sort of thing that you're discussing is paying people here. Okay, maybe a little closer.

Get closer. Okay, hold on.

I'm learning to teach. A couple summers ago I teach sailing during the summer on little sailboats, Mountain View. And then the management just randomly asked me if I'd like to teach an adult course on weekends. And normally I'm used to teaching kids and it's sort of like babysitters on boats, but now I had to actually teach sailing to people twice my age, you know? And so I should showed up right and taught anything or had a very interactive job before. So it was very interesting. And there was this whole relationship of, you know, me, I'm the teacher, and you're the students. And I'm the sage, and I'm on the stage, right? And you listen to me, and then you follow my directions. And so you start out with this I this stereotype this role, right? And then if you do your job correctly, you you share with them part of what you know, and you actually break down that that relationship over time now, I only teach for a weekend at a time, right? But I would sort of be taught this every weekend for multiple summers, right. And I began to play this game with myself where I would start with the idea of I'm the teacher, you're the students, and I could, I would try and see how much I could break down that concept by the end of the weekend. And it's very counterintuitive because I think in most interactions, you have a group of people who are all sort of on the same level, they don't really know each other. And then eventually people are working to develop roles to like, differentiate themselves. And so this is exactly the opposite of that. You come and you're handed the roles automatically and then you're actually working to break them down to the same level.

It's a great the great The Great example and my hope is that that's what my role is to get out of my role as a teacher, you know, to somehow break like you said, your language break it down. Because you know, I start off here being a teacher, but it is do you no idea ideas that you don't need a teacher at some point. I wasn't trying to talk my way out of a job. Thank you. Hi, my

name is Carolyn. I'm so when you mentioned think back at high school, it made me laugh. And then suddenly I had this really sharp memory. And it was so in high school, I was like, the awkward nerd on the math team, like, and I was a girl and I didn't. I was just awkward and, and I remember by my junior and senior year, I felt like I was changing and growing up, but I was with the same people. I've been in school since second grade. So they were still treating me as the awkward, unpopular nerd that got teased, you know, whatever. So, right after high school, I went live with my sister in a totally different state because I was so sick of my hometown. And I was like, Hey, I have a chance to be myself. And so

I just acted normal for me, like I acted like the person I felt like I had become the previous year. And then suddenly, I had three dozen friends. Like, it was just it was the weirdest feeling of my life because everyone was inviting me to things and I thought I was funny and they and I was just like, What happened? I thought I was unpopular. And suddenly, I have three dozen friends I made in the past month that by definition that's popular. And I just remember crying on my way home one day from a party being like, Oh my goodness, like, my entire self esteem that I build up that, you know, I'm a geek, I'm proud of it. That makes me better than everyone else just been destroyed. Like, I'm not better than anyone else. Everyone is wonderful people. And if I just put myself I don't like, put on these pretenses. I guess I'll have a lot of friends and that was very powerful experience for me.

Great, thank you. Yes, please. Yes. If you hold it parallel to the floor, so it's kind of horizontal, it works better

and pretty intensive physical therapy and by image Myself wasn't fit. I never made a flexible soccer signature, this physical therapy working really hard, and then didn't really get any feedback through physical therapists, which was interesting. But then I said, you know, maybe I am flexible. And she said,

so we carry these images with us, we carry these ideas. So maybe one more, maybe here and so two more.

So one, the one that came up to me when you start this, I was thinking about a period of my life when I was living in Santa Cruz and I was on the beach. I spent a lot of time on the beach and I just really loved it there. And I really did like to work. This just was 2pm To me at all, and I had worked my life out. So I didn't really have to. It was, like, just very simple. And it was back in the late 60s, early 70s, where it was easier to do that. And I got this opinion of myself that there's conflict going, that I'm supposed to be doing something. Because people say, dude, weren't you here yesterday? I keep seeing you there. You know, like, like, do you just serve? And I would think myself? Yeah. I didn't, I mean, I so I like to do and I like be on the beach and the nature was nature was there. I felt healthy and alive. It was just great sunsets every night. You know, you're in the ways it's just beautiful. And I couldn't think of anything that would be better. So I like every time I thought of something that would be better. I think what might be better, it didn't match up so I just didn't leave there. And then it got this opinion my dinner my dad called me going listen I've heard from friends and stuff hear this on the beach every day all the time, because you have to get off the beach. If you're turning out to be a worthless beach hippie bum. I never going. Whoa. You're like, I mean, I was like, wow, your dad says you're worthless, hippie beach bum. And so like I thought it didn't seem bad to me. But yeah, this is getting bad because there's a lot of opinions about this and self esteems caving in. So anyway, surfs really big one day, some kids out there, he's, he's drowning. He's out there. He's screaming for help drowning. No one on the beach will go out. Because it's like, the waves are too big. It's really dangerous and like no one's gonna go out looking like God has anyone going? I thought oh my god. So I just like took off and went out and had a big struggle with escape gotten brought him back into the beach and he was safe. And it was a big drama thing, everything and people just like oh wow. Cool wow that's really great Look at you. Oh, my self esteem was just like oh I'm like, oh finally I'm worth something I had to save a life you know to get a little recognition here that it's okay to be a beach bum hippie dirtbag. So it comes out in the paper the next day but doesn't have my name nameless guy on beach saves. So I take the article, cut it out and send it to my dad I go I'm the nameless beach bum dirty hippie. That saves lives on the beach, it must be worth something.

So that was

great. Thank you. One more up here if you can

pass it up to this

All right, well, I don't know how I can tell that.

My name is Lindsay. And I feel like my story is similar to everyone else's. I feel like when I was coming towards the end of my time in high school about to go to college, I thought I had such a solid grasp of who I was, and, you know, my self identity. Um, but at that time, that was a scary cat to me. I had never been on a roller coaster until like college, I had never left my house before or like left, you know, home before I'd never done anything. And then I get to college, and I signed up for a study abroad trip. And it was the first time I'd ever left home ever done anything. And it really challenged me because I was so fearful and my self concept of myself as a child was, I would always let my fear get the best of me. So I already signed up, you know, already going and the fear was there and I had to you know, push through it. And I think that experience of really challenging myself helped me and I went on the trip and it was the best time of my life. And I had challenges all throughout the trip. But on the trip is when I really started to question who I was, and I, you know, I was like, I thought I was this scary cat who was never going to be able to do anything exciting and I was going to be this person, and I'd have the same struggles my entire life and deal with the same things and always be this one person. And I felt this extreme relief in realizing that I was changing and I wasn't this very strict concept of myself and that I realized I was holding myself back by letting all my fear gets to me and also that I was personalizing everything and selfing everything you know, like just because I was afraid of going on roller coasters identified as being a scary cat or being a fearful person instead of identifying it as a fear itself. And realizing I am separate from the fear or the thought or the emotion and just dealing with it and so I think pushing myself was really great experience and Realizing that it's I think it's good to have self confidence and your self opinion, but at the same time, now I don't have to let that concept, you know, hold me back. And now I'm trying to be more open about who I am and not letting it

too great. That's a great example. I appreciate it. And they said, there might host one of the things that stays in my mind this year, for example, is the way the self concept is holding you back. The idea that is our activities of the mind is doing the activity of selfing activity of having ideas and concepts. Sometimes our society helps us to have those concepts or infuses us with them from outside, sometimes they come from inside, and then we live by them. And some of them are not accurate. And so it's nice when we see through those and they drop away. And what's interesting is some are accurate, and some of them sometimes it's what's nice is when the false ones drop away, we can finally be ourselves and it's such a relief to be kind of more who we actually are. But what's interesting is even accurate concepts as useful as they are, and they have certainly a place to have theirs, they can still be concepts. And in other concepts, they're still activities of the mind thinking those things out. And, and so what happens? So it's possible like I like when I was standing on that field with that man, it's possible to have an experience of oneself experience of life without the concepts, even accurate once. And, and so just because you have an accurate concept of self doesn't mean you always have to be going around with it. In fact, sometimes the attachment to accurate concepts can be just as painful as attachment to false concepts. And because it's accurate, there's a lot of justification to hold on to it. Because it's accurate, right, and you think you need it and we depend on it and in some of the reasons why we attach to these concepts of self is that they are useful to help us negotiate the world And other people will cooperate with us because there have their concepts and they want you to have certain concepts sometimes. One of the things that I found after I started meditating, meditation for me was a time where this activity of selfing, the self concepts began to diminish, and acquire down and have come out of meditation and wasn't there so much the way it usually was. And that was part of the relief of

meditation. And then I go into the world of my friends, and my friends except expected the old guilt to be there. The old identities, the old assumption for who I was and how I behaved and who we were together as people. And I didn't feel like being that way anymore. And it created certain kind of tension with the people around me. Or then I started hanging out with people in San Francisco Zen Center, and I was still you know, trying to figure out this whole self thing and I remember I was, I would go there as a new kind of sense student, and I try to talk in ways to present myself in ways to make an impression. To create an I was trying to make sure that they knew who I was that you know, you know, plant an image that they're supposed to have about me. And, and that was relatively accessible with my friends. They could do that, you know, they kind of all kind of got along pretty well with the games we were playing. But when I was at Sam's, go Zen center, this the people there especially the senior people there, they weren't playing along. And I'd never been around people who didn't play along. And, and it was, it was awkward was difficult. Like, I felt naked. I felt like what you know, like I try harder, you know, all kinds of things and, and frustrated, you know, like, most I felt like I had bang on the, you know, bang on them, you know, because I wasn't Getting what I wanted. But it's one of the reasons I then ended up going to San Francisco Zen Center because I thought it was so great to be around people who became the mirror for me. Because I wasn't getting what I wanted. My self concept wasn't reinforced, wasn't threatened even. It just wasn't, they weren't playing the game, I got to see what I was doing much more clearly. And I wanted to see it so I can take responsibility so I can work through it, and come to the other side. And so what I found, in my case, through meditation practice, is that meditation is a time not to just get calm and peaceful, but in the calm and the peace, to begin understanding something about the concepts the ideas that we have around self as they're operating, to watch the activity of selfing occur and the quieter and calmer the mind is the better vantage point it is to watch the subtle movements of self operating the subtle ones that maybe aren't seen ordinary life.

And one of the important functions of meditation in this kind of investigation is to get as calm as you can in meditation. And then as you leave meditation to watch how the activity of selfing gets started up again, and the coarser ones come back, and that builds the ability to watch it, come back and see it operating as an activity, as opposed to being this is the way the universe was set up. But seeing Oh, this is a thought that I have even made. This is even an accurate thought I have, but don't have to always go around carrying accurate thoughts. And one of the reliefs of meditation is to show that you don't have to be thinking all the time. You don't have to hang on to your thoughts. You don't have to negotiate your world through the thoughts. You don't have to understand yourself by thinking about yourself. It's possible, let your thinking get caught really quiet. And as this thing thinking and mental activities get quiet, one of the things that gets quiet is the selfing activity, the way in which we identify and take different things to be myself in mind. And the hope is, is that at some points in your life, you have the experience of putting the selfing the self thing completely to rest, a vacation and people will come to that edge of beginning close to that sometimes get very frightened, because it's very disorienting not to have the usual sense of self to operate and operate in the world with but it's such a relief to put it down and, and to have the peace and to see the world and to be present without any need to be anybody without a way needed to define yourself as anybody, without seeing yourself by your gender or by your nationality or ethnicity or by your hair by, you know, all these different categories that we, for me, the big thing for a long time was, I saw myself as someone who was not likeable. And I was neurotically concerned about making people like me, it's exhausting both those things. And so do a meditation. So it says meditation is not necessarily going to solve your self problems. In fact, solve at the danger of solving your personal problems, density problems, which sometimes you should I'm not saying you shouldn't, but is often enough, we're trying to solve it with the very tool the very activity which is causing the suffering to begin with. So if we're if the selfing comes out a lot of thinking, and you try to think yourself out of selfing, it's going to be almost impossible to do it. So rather than solving it's dissolving, meditation gives you the opportunity to dissolve all that activity. And to understand that

means that you don't have to solve so much. You don't have to fix so much. You don't have to resolve, you know, resolve so much in a sense, you dissolve it. And when you dissolve all that activity of selfing memory, we're talking about something you are doing. One way to stop this process of calming and settling and quieting is to be caught in the world of thoughts. And say, Well, this is an accurate idea. I can't give up an accurate idea. But in meditation, you can give up all ideas and there's a profound peace and well being there. So When people say they just feel like it is finally discover how to be at home, where they discover who they really are below all these ideas we have. And from and, and one of the important functions of taking this profound meditative vacation from selfing really let everything quiet down is that, as I said earlier, then you can watch it all arise again. You can watch how it gets appropriate how it builds up again, because it's I think it's a very rare person who can just want to be quiet down and get really peaceful. it all falls away for a while, and then it stays away forever. It comes back. And part of the responsible way of living I think are the very important functions of Buddhist practice is that give us a tool or an ability to watch the code Destruction of self occur. If you can see the construction of self occur, then you don't have to be fooled by it,

then you can just see it as just phenomena that you may or may not be involved in, you can kind of not be tricked by you don't get pulled into it, you don't get seduced by it. And then if it's useful to have a particular construction, then you can act on it because it's useful. And if it's not useful, then you don't act on it. I was at the airport recently. And I wasn't quite cooperating with the right self construct that everyone wanted me to have. I was going to the bathroom and you go into this kind of big wide door. And it turned out to my surprise that you go through this door and then to the left is men, to the writers, women. I just thought I was going into the men's room. So I was following all these men kinda But I made the wrong turn. So I needed to have a certain self concept at that particular time. Everyone wanted me to have this particular idea of who I was. Otherwise it was gonna be chaos. It's i was i was stopped at the door but didn't get very far. But so so anybody who watched the construction of it, if you're present and mindful enough to notice these things, then then you can we can take much more responsibility for these constructs for ourselves, and we don't get caught by these constructs that we suffer so much from. But there's even one more thing I'd like to say. But this ability to watch the construction of it, is that then we can watch how we construct others, the image and the ideas we have of other people. Because that we do we do that just as much as we do for ourselves. And if we want to be helpful in the world if we want to avoid causing harm in the world It's really important to watch be able to watch the construct of other ideas of other as they arise in the mind and take responsibility for it. So it isn't simply we want to kind of drop the whole selfing project, because it's just nice to drop it and have that piece. We want to sit and get in. It's not easy to do this, but to sit and get quiet enough and still enough to let go enough, let go enough. So that from that vantage point of letting go, we can better watch the constructs. It's like if you have a lot of noise and environment, one more kind of noise you don't notice. But if all the noise gets quiet, then someone rings a bell you hear the bell? So you can see it then No, that's a bell, you know, see how that happens. So same thing all the noise in your mind quiets down. Then you can watch the big voices to begin to arise as they arise. make some sense so take a self vacation this week. vacation from self. Thank you