

2016-09-11 Generosity And Volunteerism

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SPEAKERS

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IMC and it's I think it's always nice to sit together and meditate together and community in sharing the silence the setting the intention of trying to be present and mindful and, and free in the middle of our complicated lives. So I certainly appreciate being here with all of you. Because this volunteer fear was chosen to have happen today, I thought I would talk a little bit about volunteering, the Dharma of volunteering. And the seems that the word volunteering comes from maybe French or Latin, and in, it's related to the word to want to want to do something. So voluntarily means that you do something because you want to Italianism, I would like to. And so the idea that there's intentionality that arises from the volunteer that wants to be expressed. And I think volunteering in Dharma setting, and any party setting hopefully, has two different component parts that I cherish value. One is that it's a practice. And the other is that it's an expression. And as a practice, it's like any other Buddhist practice that we do, that it's a place to cultivate ourselves to develop ourselves. And not just with mindfulness, certainly, it's a place to practice mindfulness. But it's also a place to practice many of the virtues many of the good qualities of character, that support, practice support human life in general. The key one is generosity. And volunteering is a subset of the Buddhist emphasis on generosity. generosity is the kind of the first I think, for most Buddhist virtue. In some of the lists where generosity appears, it's always appears first, and being ethical appear second. So it kind of considered variant, the idea of being generous, that somehow we live in the world of our community, we don't practice Buddhism is not only about one's own inner practice, but has a lot to do maybe, first and foremost to do with how we live in the world, with our family and friends and neighbors and colleagues and community and global community. And one of the primary ways to create a healthy community is to be generous. Many years ago, I read a anthropological study of a community, I think it's fairly isolated community, the mountains of the Philippines, where they had been living, much as headed as they had done for many centuries. And so fairly, you know, the wisdom of the ages was still intact there before they've been modernized. And one of the great pieces of wisdom that they discovered that helped create harmony in their in their I think that's just their community, but there was villages around that, I guess, extended community. And was that if, if someone had a dream where someone with somebody else in the community, so in your dream, somebody else when the community appeared, and especially if that person appeared in a negative way, like they were writing for kids, or frighten you or cause problems for you or something, then it seems the customers when you woke up in the morning from that dream, you would go find that person in the village or in the neighboring village, and you'd give them a gift. And that's not great. So who knows why someone appears in your dreams. Yeah, I kind of my assumption is most usually more often than not, it has mostly to do with your own inner life, not the external life. But even so, gift giving is a social harmonizer. It's a way of kind of creating harmony, breaking, breaking down resistance and barriers and grudges that people have. It's a it creates a very nice, I can create a very nice connection between people. It's like this thread of goodwill that can exist between people if

the generosity is generous. giving giving can happen without being generous. And sometimes it doesn't matter. Even then it works.

So giving can be good. But to give in a generous way, is a wonderful thread that kind of tie a connection between people, that tends to create better relationships. And I often advise people when they are, there's some kind of social friction between family members or different people is to find some way to give a gift, it can be very small one, something that seems inconsequential, but still kind of reaches out and crosses that barrier between self and others that somehow can be kind of, you know, represent the, the distance between people who are have some animosity or challenge or tension between them. So generosity is kind of the first and foremost kind of virtue in Buddhism. And one variation of it is being a volunteer, which means that you offer your labor your efforts in order to support other people. So it's not a gift or something, you leave something with someone, but you've come forward with your own efforts and time and labor. And so you're the gift. In this situation, you're the gift through through which you your generosity flows. And I'm really struck by how our world you know, our world, pretty much everywhere, is really built on generosity, probably more than anything else is probably the economy of generosity probably is one of them, maybe under appreciated economic systems that are assist our world as and underappreciated perhaps of the way in which our society kind of kind of is kept fluid flowing and supported. You know, we just imagine that if, you know, parents everywhere, raising children decide, you know, I'm done with this volunteering. You know, there's a lot of volunteering going on here. And, you know, until they start paying me, these kids, you know, her sons are just, you know, they're on their own. Now, you know, they're, I've done this for three years. I think, you know, you know, they're, they're on their own, and, you know, I have more important things to do, than volunteering at home all the time. You know, it is a kind of volunteering at home. And sometimes volunteering at home or with family can not feel like volunteering, it feels like an obligation, it sounds like you know that you have to do it, no one else is going to do it. And that it can feel that way. And if it feels that way, then maybe it is. But there's always the opportunity to turn that around in your heart. And for you to feel that is generous, where for it to come from an as an act of generosity. At work, you might be given the most boring, mundane, maybe job to do. And you might not feel very generous in doing it. But I would like to propose that maybe more often than not, generosity is an attitude that you bring to your, what you do. And maybe you can look at it, what you do, through the perspective of you could do this in a generous way. So I used to work as a fast order cook for a while. And, and, and I would kind of be swirling around in the kitchen making all this fast food and waiters would cut weight, the waiters and waitresses would come in very fast and pick up the food and, and I made it my task to always try to improve the well being or the level of happiness of the waiters and waitresses came in, even though it's like maybe a second that we were together a couple of seconds. And it went to such a small thing is how I placed the dishes that were being served up on the counter in the kitchen. So they could pick it up to I would lay it out there in such a way that it was a nicer layout, it was easier than to pick up. And so and then if there was a chance to speak to them, I would have a little I would say something and I remember what I said no conversational exchange. And then next time they came through, I would continue the conversation in nice way. And for me, it was you know, it was a way of sprinkling in generosity into the situation that didn't have to be there. I wasn't expected to be generous. So So, you know. So it's two points I'm trying to make. One is that our society has a tremendous amount of generosity and volunteerism that goes on. That's a Fortson and I don't know if American society has more than others. I kind of grew up in Europe. There's certainly plenty there. But somehow I associate At America with a tremendous spirit of volunteerism.

And in churches all over and in sports for kids, I mean that my kids grew up here in Redwood City, and the level than the amount of parents involved in coaching. And, you know, volunteering their, their time and effort to coach these kids was quite lovely. The the, there was a kind of very special moment where

I kind of appreciated this, it was idiosyncratic for me that I would see it this way. But that's okay. That maybe was, my son was did a lot of years of baseball, and all these parents were baseball coaches. And when he was maybe eight, or nine, it was the beginning of the baseball season, Little League seeking season. And he was meeting the coach in the team meeting themselves for the first time. And so their coach had all the kids sitting on the bench in the dugout. And he was just outside the dugout. And the first thing he said to them, and I suspect most of them didn't even hear him was he said, You are now sitting in hollow ground. And I suppose what he meant it in America, you know, there's something sacred about baseball. But what I heard, what I prefer to hear, but I heard that I kind of wanted to be associated with, here we are in America, where have all these little leagues and sports teams and everything, and that are being supported by people's generosity and volunteerism. And this is special, this is hollow ground. And, you know, in the city, Redwood City, and communities all over the country have put together their tax money to build these little fields and all this stuff. And it's pretty pretty far out. I think it's pretty neat. So volunteering is a practice, where we have a chance to practice generosity, we've a chance to practice some of the qualities of character that come into play when we're involved with other people. I think being able to be have a commitment sometimes, and be able to stand behind it is a kind of developed certain kinds of inner strength. Being it being in communication with other people, and there's all kinds of you know, people are complicated being communities, you know, all kinds of interesting things happen. And so part of the value of being in community is to bump up against each other and, and maybe even part of the advantage of being volunteering, so you can be intention with people, and conflict. And so you can work to work through it and, and understand yourself better and find out what it's like to keep an open heart or even when there's conflict or how to find your way through it. There's chances for developing equanimity or patience, the chances of cold chances to cultivate loving kindness and compassion. When we volunteer. And in wisdom and understanding, a lot of things can be cultivated in the process of volunteering, if we engage in it as a practice, we have a sense of understanding, or this is a place where I can grow and develop myself. And as a practice, volunteering, work sometimes even if you don't feel like doing it, just like meditating. Sometimes you might not feel like meditating, but it still works. It still is beneficial. It's still something that grows and develops over the days and months and years. And so as a practice is multifaceted, and you know, and, and it's a rich area to practice. And the second aspect of volunteering is it's an expression. And as an expression, it's as we have good hearts, we have the capacity for empathy, we have the capacity for generosity, we have a capacity to really feel that we're not just isolated individuals, but we are each other We are a community. And so the natural expression of an open heart, a liberated heart, is to want to be in relationship with other people in a generous way or connected way to care for each other. It's like the right hand, in the sense cares for the left hand, it's like you know, you don't, the right hand doesn't have to when you wash the when the pants wash each other, the right hand doesn't have to think about I don't know, if I want to wash that left hand, or the left hand says, you know, we know I don't know that right hand has been, you know, been up to no good or something, you know, just kind of a natural thing to make that connection. And so it can be that way. So it's an expression, attachment, expression of generosity, expression of compassion, expression of goodwill, spread expression of community. It's a natural thing and it's a beautiful thing to feel the heart open enough to let it flow this way.

And the thing about the expression is that some things grow in the expression of them. Some things are only become, you know, if they don't get expressed, they get bottled up. And so the pulse, the desire, to want to be generous to want to support others, I think it's a healthy thing, to let it let it find expression in some form or other. And one of those ways is to volunteer, whether it's to volunteer volunteer means you do things, which are, I understand this, you know, at least when it's when it's an act of generosity, when it's not required, it's not expected. And maybe we don't always think that you know, you're at home with your family, you're volunteering, when you make an extra dessert to one night to make it,

you know, you don't have to make the dessert, but you're volunteering to make a dessert. So you offer something nice, it's a generous Act, or at work. You know, there's other people who are responsible for cleaning up so you don't have to clean up the mess. But then everyone has to live with it until someone comes, you know, in a few hours. So it's a generous act of volunteer to clean up and make a little bit nice for everybody else. There's all kinds of ways in which we can offer ourselves over to the world unto ourselves. So IMC and many Buddhist communities, and as well as it's true for, I think, many religions all over the world. volunteerism is a huge part of these communities. It's partly, they exist successfully, because of so many people contribute their efforts and time to it. And I think it's a beautiful thing that there are a series of institutions that come together, and they exist out of the goodwill of the people who are part of them. And that's particularly true here at IMC, where everything is done by volunteers. There's no one on paid staff here. And no one's no one's really obligated to do anything here, we have kind of an open door policy people can come in and practice here and hear teachings here. And, and, and, you know, people, people can and people do do it for years, and sit in the back row. And we hardly ever get to know them. And they're kind of very content, and we're content. And it all seems to go along. And but then there are people who step forward to volunteer in many different ways. And we have volunteers here who do major jobs, you know, who do a lot of a lot of work some of the people they were some of the big responsibility jobs is our bookkeepers. And we have some, like, six different people helping with bookkeeping. Because it, you know, took big, relatively big operation here, that, where it actually turns out that there's a lot of things to take care of, and financing this place. In spite of the fact that because of the fact I don't know what exactly, but we don't charge for anything. And it's very, very, very rare that we even ask or see or mentioned that there's opportunity to donate. And, and, and it's kind of the people who are in the book who volunteer and the bookkeeping. I think most of them, all of them are kind of when they first start doing it are surprised and inspired. That we work with it works financially, that somehow we manage, and the money comes in, and we're able to support this place and make it keep going and do newsletters and websites and pay for everything and like they're kind of like, wow, how does this work? You know, and I don't think our treasures have ever had to be anxious. You know, it's quite something and how many organizations in the world where treasures are not anxious, and I think I don't think our Treasurer has ever had to, you know, lost any sleep about, you know, how are we going to pay so if we manage just to be managed, you know, it's not like, you know, luxurious, you know, but we manage it so the treasure that people in bookkeeping are inspired to this. Once you've told me by being part of that field of generosity and, and feeling that all the money coming in is people's generosity and wow, this is it makes them happy. It kind of makes them sing a little bit.

So to practice in community, and to volunteer at IMC is considered one of the ways one of the options for practicing in our community. So you can come here to practice to meditate, you can come here and practice in some of the different programs we have that we offer here. And it's possible to practice as a volunteer. And so it is a practice. As I said earlier, where people practice mindfulness, people practice getting to know themselves better. The third thing, they learn new skills, they sometimes challenged themselves and in areas which they're a bit hard Sometimes people are challenged by the very idea of being in community. And so volunteering puts you more into the middle of the community. And you get some of that the both the challenges and the benefits of being in community. And then growing as a result. One of the nice things about volunteering in a Buddhist community is that it many of the volunteers tend to be people who've been around for a while, and have started to mature in their Buddhist practice. And so when we volunteer, we have a chance to be around other people with shared values and shared shared maturity in the practice. And we learn from each other. And because of that, we're a big bump up against each other. And we see how people are mindful how they do a task, how they talk, how they the values they live by, and it can be quite inspiring. I know people who find some of the values and ways people talk to each other in, in certain domains in their life quite challenging. It's not uncommon for people to come and talk to me how much gossiping goes on at their place of work.

And they really feel uncomfortable being part of that. And they don't know, you know, it, but that feels like that's normal. That's what's expected. And then coming to being around another community where there is no gossip, and people are talking kindly to each other. It can be very inspiring for some people who haven't had much experience with that. To show the kind of, to be in a community where there's some modicum of care and mindfulness and what we do is inspiring as people are learning to be mindful and caring for their attention to what they do. to witness people have values of generosity. It was very important for me because I, I didn't grew up without generosity, but I didn't grow up with it much of either it was kind of like in the neutral zone. And with the first time I was involved in a Buddhist community, and I was sitting at the office, it was at Tassajara. bakery is in terms of Zen center had a bakery once upon a time and up in the Haight, Haight Ashbury area. And it was in the office of the person who was the Zen priest, who was kind of running at that time. And he opened a piece of letter that came. And it was a fundraising letter from some neighborhood organization. I don't know what the neighbor acquisition was doing, but something for the immediate neighborhood there. And this was like, 1979. And he said, You open he said, We don't Gil, what should we do with this? And I was completely perplexed for what? I didn't know what to do with a fundraising letter. I was just a little kid, and he pretty young and no experience of anything like that. And he said, Well, I think I think we'll send them \$100. And I was like, completely perplexed. Why would you do that? So I didn't say very much. It wasn't the you know, I don't say that proudly. But but it made such a big impact on me that he would want to do that. He wasn't he wasn't required to do it, I felt, and that was kind of the camp began to open me up to the certain level of generosity and being a citizen of the world and sharing and being supportive of others. That little act. So here I was in a Buddhist community, and I witnessed an act of generosity, that was beneficial for me. So to watch and see what other people do to be in communities, a very important part of volunteering. And then I think as an expression, many people who do Buddhist practice, if they find a lot of value in it, and some people find ultimate value in it, they find this is the most important thing for them in their lives. There's nothing else which seems like more important because it's, it penetrates everything else they do, and the values of compassion and loving kindness, the values have the capacity for empathy, being together, the possibility for freedom and finding great value in a life that somehow addresses the core sufferings of human life and finds a way out of it into a level of peace and freedom that is incomparable that some people find this could be you know, this is like, you know, so for some people, the most important thing they've encountered the most important transformation they go through in their lives.

And, and then some people feel very free like naturally that I want to share this with other people I have I received all these gifts. So all these benefits, and now I feel like I'd like to kind of bring it back into the world and have the world benefit from this as well. And so one of the ways to do that is to support the place that is making these opportunities available, making it the opportunities have come of practice of Buddhist teachings of to more people. And that was my first inclination, or choice decision to make. At some point, I really wanted to base my life on supporting other people to practice to support other people and the teachings. And I had no idea no thought that I could ever be was going to become a teacher. And doing that, because that would just seemed like too, you know, I don't know, I didn't feel like I was, that was going to happen. But I didn't want to find some way to support people. So. So it took the form of being ordained as a Zen monk or Zen priest, back when I was part of the San Francisco Zen Center. And my, my ideal was to have a small neighborhood. Zen meditation hall is endo. And then I would have the key. And I would open the door, keep the place clean. And I would sit and meditate when people came to meditate with me. And I didn't have no idea I was I wasn't going to sit up here and teach. But, but I really felt like this is how I could give back to our society, how I can respond to the suffering society. Because I've gotten so much benefit, I saw the benefit of this practice. And so the idea of supporting a community supporting a place supporting others supporting each other in having, you know, in offering these as a way of giving back to our society. And so as many of you know, I've often

say, you know, wonder, I think one of the profound ways of growing in the Dharma is to not just take care of your own practice, but to actually take care of the place in which you practice. And I thought this was so important that when we first started in, in the Palo Alto days, we were very small group, Monday nights, I remember about 1215, people would come. And there was almost nothing to do in terms of the tasks, we someone had to have a key to get in and out. Someone had to collect a little bit of money we people donated, so we can pay rent to the church. And then the other thing that had to happen was, didn't have to wait at some point spirit rock meditation center in Marin County that we're affiliated with. Got going with their programs, and we have little flyers spirit rock to put out. We didn't even have any flyers of our own, because we had no programs. And so early on, I think, you know, some of these things were easier for me to do myself than to find volunteers. But I thought it was, even though it's easier for me to do alone, I thought it was more important to have people volunteer and do it. Because to spread it out so that everyone is participating has a chance to step forward and offer their, you know, be part of that experience of caring for the place that they're practicing in. And they remember in the late 90s, I asked once, for volunteers to do some task. And I was dismayed by the results by the consequence of asking, because something like six or seven people step forward, and we only had one thing that we had a need to do. And I felt so bad because it's, you know, this all this goodwill and generosity and wanting to be of service wanting to be in the community more fully. I, what, what can I couldn't give them something to do? Because we were so simple. So we've rectified that here.

So now we have, you know, almost infinite opportunities for things, Infinite Opportunities, and hopefully, very little needs. I'm hoping that we set up IMC that will how we run here is we're opportunity based and not need based. So there's a lot of the things we do here that don't have to happen. And I think I feel like in our hearts, we should always be ready to kind of collapse and do less. Because I think it's very important to provide an environment where people's generosity comes first and foremost, and not a sense of a need or duty or emergency. Oh, no, we're have a crisis. We need something. And so the idea is, you know, we don't have a lot of stuff we do, we don't have to do. But when we do it, it's wonderful and the people who make it possible. It's a great offering and it's a happiness producing thing and it supports many people. So it to be opportunity based rather than need based as part of the principles of how to be a volunteer at IMC. And finally, what I like To say is that about volunteering, where you put yourself in, it's not just you know, offering money or gifts or things, but offering yourself, your time, your labor, your whole being is offered when you're a volunteer is one of the profound aspects of Dharma practice is learning to give up self preoccupation, or kind of an unhealthy self centeredness. And I think, especially in American culture, where there's a very strong streak of individualism, which is not necessarily bad in and of itself, but lends itself to a lot of self centeredness to easily that one of the nice things about meditation is supposed to kind of dissolve that's unhealthy self centeredness, selfishness, and one of the ways to expediate that or, or, or continue that growth and being unselfish or unself preoccupied, is volunteering is to be in community and offer yourself step forward and offer yourself and offer yourself a little bit beyond even your comfort zone, sometimes, in order to discover where that line is worth self and others and where there might be attachment and holding. And that discover it the great pleasure and joy, of letting go of attachment to self clinging to self identity, clinging to fear, clinging to an unwillingness to share yourself or be seen by other people, you know, and all the different things that come up, and discover how to be present and open, available to the world participating in the world confident feeling, a sense of belonging, feeling a sense of efficacy and purpose. Without the contraction of that can happen around self liberation for himself through volunteering. So anyway, it's a great thing. So to me, it's one of the wonderful things about the IMC and having been part of this community for so many years and been the risk both recipient and the participant, as a volunteer in this community. It's I would say, it's been very, very inspiring, inspired me and my practice inspired many other people in the practice inspiring to have this as an example of what's possible in our culture in our society. I think it's kind of a remarkable place. And I don't know if

many of you, I don't know many other places like this, where it's just kind of so open and available for people to come. And so little is expected. But the teachings are offered freely and there's all these goodwill, people who come forward to support it. It's really been inspiring for me. And so one of the things I'd like to do is to thank all of you who have volunteered in small ways in big ways, whether you've been a bookkeeper, or been a president, or been a recorder or you've been, you've come here and spent some time Sunday morning, we do the 1015 minute of cleaning at the end of Sunday morning. That's a wonderful offering to our community. I want to thank all of you for who have contributed. And what I'd like to do is for a moment is if those of you who have in any kind of way, in even the smallest possible way, being a volunteer to do something that supports IMC, could you stand?

That's impressive. I could sense that's like more than half of you here today. Why are you standing? It's too hard. It's too hard for Stevens, Dan. So thank you all. And that's what that was. A little bit, I was a little stunned myself to see that many people. And, and, and for those of you who didn't stand, it's completely wonderful not to volunteer and giving this talk. And I guess his volunteer fear is partly, you know, here to see if other people want to volunteer. We really want it to be without any pressure whatsoever in any sense of obligation. And to always feel free to come. But there's always opportunity to volunteer so if you'd like so you won't know.

So I'm Hilary and I'm the volunteer director here. Head volunteer. And actually, this this morning is broadly about community. And one aspect of that is volunteering. So I just want to let you know about the volunteer opportunities. There's circles that we have here that are groups of people and an email group and a request goes out if you're available you can offer to help. So it's really easeful. We always want it to be that way for you. So I'm just going to name the groups in at the head of the group will just stand up so that people can see a friendly face. If you're interested in getting involved with that group, then you can talk with that person from this circle on wall be out in the social Hall and there's some refreshments as well. So the first one is cleaning circle. And it can you the landscaping circle Fiona, thank you. And the maintenance circle gems demo. Managers circle is Kate Boeheim Kate, as well as the potlucks circle. Thank you. Let's see. Recording circle is Mark Mark is here, Mark Goldberg, head of our audio Dharma program. And on adding a new one special events circle. So anybody who's interested in event planning, please see me. T circle we've got Lauren. Lauren in the back. Thank you. And technology circle. We've got Ryan in the back there. Thank you. And we have representing our board of directors, we have Liz powers, our president of the board, and also is the director of the youth and family program, which is one of our big lights here. I just want to make a little plug for the youth and family program. There are a couple new programs that we're trying to get off the ground and see what kind of interest there is. There's one that's for a toddler program. Yes. And a for a mom and baby kind of support group too. So if you're interested in any of that, or any of the Family Programs, you can see Liz or me and during the social hour. We also have affinity groups here at home in the world people in their 20s and 30s. Do we have anybody here from that group? They tend to come Monday evenings, but there's somebody here

Okay, Sunday evenings,

right? Okay. Um, Dharma and spaniel, Andrea Castillo? Dharma friends. Do you have and foster Shelly Gordon? There are people from the Dharma friends group here. I'm sure so we can speak at them. fell. There we go. Okay, thank you. So then we've got the LGBTQ songa anybody from that? sonka here Yay, Sue in the back the T shirt on

women's circle mindfulness that would be me.

There we also have some interest groups Earth care group. We have Diana gross and Schmidt, thank you so much if you want to get involved with that, greening the center and the world. Dharma friends. Did I say that already? Okay, Sona. strummers. Our ukulele group Martha is one of them. Yay. Paul just had a baby while his his wife had a baby. And Mary Yes, and they will be a serenading us with ukulele playing during the social hour. Then we have a number of support groups we have Buddhism and recovery a 12 step group. Jen Lemus there she is back there. And then Nick Bennett isn't here today. But we have a couple life threatening and chronic illness support groups. So if anybody's interested in that, you can talk to me and I'll let you know a little bit about that. We also have a chaplaincy Council on end of life companioning programs. And again, if you're interested in that you can talk to me. And then we have neighborhood Dharma discussion groups. So if the leaders of those groups could stand we have Peter now who is from the bell mine dish group. It's kind of a Redwood City San Carlos samento kind of eclectic group. Berlin game can Kabbalah There you are. Thank you in the back in the pot. Mountain View. We feel so good. Thank you Palo Alto is Jenny here today. okay even if the person is not here we have a table for neighborhood groups and if you're interested we have forums you could sign up. sanitaire, we have a lane Salinger. I think she'll be coming Monday evening actually. And San Carlos, we have Agnes Faye. Thank you. And we have yoga. Terry lessor and Charlotte teachers. I think they're coming tomorrow night. Is there. A lolly Stan?

Molly? Yes, you can represent the yoga yoga. You're also she's taught yoga for us.

Yeah. She's

great. Um, so is there any group that I have actually not mentioned? That would? Would you like to let me know about? Let us know about? Okay, and if there's any groups that you feel like you want to start, then also let us know. So we'll be having tea and refreshments and then representatives groups will be out in the social Hall. If you have any questions, you want to sign up for things just for you, feel free to come and talk to us. Thank you.

And if all that seems overwhelming, and you're not interested in volunteering, or you're kind of interested in volunteering, but all that sounds too much. It's a wonderful way of volunteering is to sit quietly and meditate. It's a way of volunteering for yourself and volunteering for the world in a very special way. So thank you all for coming in. And being part of us today, and please stay around and socialize and talk a little bit and it's a friendly group chance to you know, just if you feel it's your first time here, especially some people have name tags, people at these different tables. You don't have to be interested in volunteering, but you might be interested in just to get learning more about people here and what goes on and making connections. Please stay thank you all