

# 2018-10-22 Four Approaches To Ethics

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## SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

Good evening everyone. And so in 1981 I was younger than I am now. And I was living at a Buddhist monastery. I had decided not to go to graduate school which I've been accepted to. And I was wondering what to do with my life and the thing that I was most interested in had to do with the practice of Buddhism. And then, in a moment, particular moment, I knew that I wanted to spend my life making a difference in the world somehow addressing and meeting the suffering in the world. With teaching Buddhism, I didn't actually think I'd be a teacher too much. Back then I was a Zen monk or Zen practitioner. And I thought that I would have a key to a small Zen Meditation at some place in city. And my job was to open the door so people can come and sit and I would sit with them. And, but I wanted to somehow present the practice opportunities because I wanted, I felt very confident that first I knew the best way to address human suffering was through this practice. And I wanted to try to find some way to alleviate suffering for individuals, and I want to make this a better world for all of us, that's what I wanted my life to be about. And, and reason I chose Buddhism was that, for what I knew at that time, that was the only thing I knew that really touched some of the deepest places of suffering in the human heart, some of the deepest places of holding and attachment to self.

And so that set my life in a certain direction. And my life is still dedicated to that still interested in that just as much as it was back then. And, and so, but, you know, I've given a lot of thought to this topic of how do we make this world a better place. And over these years, one of the things that I've done is been involved or was required. routed for various efforts in different Buddhist centers and elsewhere to be involved with. They called ethics to be involved in situations where people were in conflict with each other situations where someone had hurt someone else. And or someone's situation where someone had violated a principle that different institutions had. And so I spent a lot of time thinking about how do you address these kinds of issues? And how do you do it this dharmic point of view from Buddhism, how do you approach conflict in a way that doesn't side with one side? But how do you approach conflict in a way that tries to consider what's best for everyone involved? So much everyone involved feels like they're being supported and helped understand what's going on. How do we understand you know, it's all these these different issues and so slowly, I've been kind of You know, studying this area of what in the West is called ethics. And you don't have to do too much ethics if you just sit and meditate. Because it's all kind of negotiated with your own heart and finding your freedom and find working through the different attachments. We're going through the ways which when conflict with ourselves or the ways we hurt ourselves, and, and so you kind of do this deep inner work. But then most of us just don't sit with our eyes closed, meditating all day. some point we have to talk to those other people and interact. There's a story of Suzuki Roshi and founder of San Francisco Zen Center, who said that when he looked around the meditation hall and saw everyone sitting, he thought everyone he saw everyone is a Buddha. There's nice and then he said, but then you open your mouth. Then then you're not quite good fish anymore. So one of the things I would like to share today with you, is some of the things I've

learned about this field of ethics about conflict and how do we make moral choices? How do we decide how to find our way in the wider world. And I want to do that little bit in the relationship to within Buddhism is called the five precepts. These are sometimes considered considered the fundamental ethical precepts for laypeople. There are five of them, and not to kill, not to do the kind of in a simple way of saying it not to kill, not to steal, not to engage in sexual misconduct, not to lie and not to intoxicate oneself a little bit more nuance that says, not to harm living beings. It's understood to be not to kill Not to take what is not given, which is a little bit higher bar to live by, then simply don't steal. If it's not haven't been offered, don't take it. And then no sexual misconduct, no, no lying it's and then there's a little bit nuanced what it says about intoxicants. And there's some debate whether the rule is don't drink alcohol and take drugs to the point of intoxication, or don't drink and take them at all. So it's a little bit nuanced a little bit. So that's a whole topic. But these five are very important and they're very cherished in this Theravada Buddhist tradition. They're held up in high esteem and high value and, and a way that I couldn't understand when I first entered into this tradition, how valuable they are. But I've come to appreciate and love these five precepts quite a bit. So it's in relationship to those. I'm going to talk About principles of ethics.

And people come into conflict with each other around their ethics around their decision making and how they make choices about how to live their lives, how they vote, what they do with their time and what they buy, and all kinds of things. They have different different points of view their politics and everything. And many people feel that their way is right. And so how do you have a conversation with people? How do you find your way with it? So in order to become much more sensitive and aware of how we make choices, how we're in conversation with people around ethics and behavior and conduct of right and wrong, people who study ethics come up with the idea that there are five, four basic approaches for making ethical choices that people make and, and different people and no one does. Only one different circumstances they people do different ones. different ones are more amenable to certain situation than other situations or some reason they evoke different approaches in us. But when sometimes people are in conflict with each other, it's because they're coming from a different ethical approach have a different kind of attitude or what the other understanding it. And so they will think that they're ethically right, but somehow they're missing each other or in conflict because of the differences of how they understand the situation. So I thought it might be interesting to let you tell you about these four approaches, and then maybe show how these four approaches can be applied to these five precepts. And you can see how people can live by the precepts these five basic precepts from very different perspectives or orientations towards them, there are reasons for why they want to live this way. So the four ethical approaches the first is based on principle so there are principles that be followed. And it's very clear like so there's a golden rule and that's the principle. Do unto others as you would have them do to you. And so that's a principle and people can live that way I follow that principle. The precepts are principles, so like, don't kill. And just that hobbett the Buddha said that so that's good enough for me. And answer I'm not gonna kill that's the you know, no matter what. And the precepts can be taken as principles. The problem with principles is that there are many principles people live by. And some of them is to be free, say problems. And some of them are deeply enshrined now in our modern secular culture, because we have professional ethics that are based, mostly principle based. And so we have a hospital ethics where there's principles that patients have autonomy. There's four major methods Basic principles in hospital ethics, medical ethics, that patients have autonomy, autonomy, it's called beneficence non maleficence. And justice. So, autonomy means that the patient is has complete autonomy to make their own choices. middle management, beneficence means going to benefit people. Non maleficence means you want to do non harm. And then justice, especially when they talk about a lot in the medical profession has a lot to do with fairness, fair allocation of resources and all that. So, these are principles that they try to make very, sometimes very complicated decisions about about justice decisions you have to do often with life and death issues. How long do you keep

someone on life support and who makes a choice to take someone off life support? The doctors don't want to have to do that themselves. How do you find your way with them? They have these basic principles that they operate under. And with those they find their way and try to work with everyone. In psychotherapy and helping professions, there are very clear principles that people have to follow; their lives or their license, there's no question about it. There are certain principles that are expected in the world of business. This, this is how it should be. So principles are a really important part of our culture. And, and but one of the problems with principles is that they don't take consequences into account. So applying a principle in some situations might be great, but in other situations, it might be the wrong thing, it might cause more harm than good.

So the second approach for ethics is to approach it from the point of view of consequences. What are the consequences of the actions? What's the result going to be? And Buddhism is primarily isn't early Buddhism is primarily a consequentialist approach to ethical decisions. And the primary kind of simplest way of saying that is do no harm, avoid causing harm, and, and eliminate all forms of harm. So those are consequentialist, because that's something you're gonna do in the future. It's a goal. It's a result that you want to have. You could say it looks like a principle, but because it has to do with something in the future that you're trying to attain, rather than a particular idea. This is how you're supposed to live like a very narrow kind of principle. But consequentialism has a lot to do with you know, what are people in ethical terms, look to see what has the what brings benefit, and what does good in the world. And unfortunately, consequentialist can be very egotistical. What's best for me? Or what's best for my family, what's best for my group of people? What's better from my country and, and so it's you know, it's you know, it can be very carefully bounded, and then others don't matter or it can be the maximum good for everyone involved. But once you get into questions of the maximum good for everyone, then you get into some people get into big quandary. So, what to do, it can be very painful, like in medical ethics, when you have a limited amount of resources and you want to do the maximum good for everyone. Does that mean that you have to allow some people to die because it's just too expensive to keep them alive? And those resources can be used to keep a lot of other people happy and going well or something? And so people are kind of trying to work these things, these questions out. The third approach is for making ethical decisions is virtue ethics. And this is where what guides people is it virtuous? And is it a certain kind of understood a certain kind of not just principles, but certain dispositions or elements of human character that are upheld as being very valuable. And this is, this is what you know. So someone in Buddhism we put a lot of emphasis on generosity. Generosity is a virtue and so you do the things that you do the things as generous. And our compassion is a virtue, he thinks they're compassionate. And generally, the virtue ethics has to do with others an ideal way of doing things, and you follow the ideal. And so, the, oh, you know, what, what would Buddha do? You know, is the question, you know, just figure out what the Buddha would do we have someone you really respect a lot, and you do what, you know that that person would do that. So I'll do that way too, because that's the ideal. That's the virtuous way of doing it. And people who do take a lot of refuge in the idea of integrity, are taking refuge in virtue ethics, you know, this idea. Number two, check in with my integrity and do what's integris. And that has to do with doing something with what's right for your inner disposition, as opposed to the right by principle, or right by what the consequences is going to be out there. The fourth approach of ethics is called moral sentiment. And that means that you make ethical decisions based on how it feels for you. It feels good, or it's just disgusting. That that's become popular in the news lately, the idea that things are disgusting, and, but that's considered to be a very fundamental, almost basic human ethical instinct, towards purity and the impure things like that. There's certain emotional relationship to things like fairness as opposed to a principle of fairness. But you know, beauty all kinds of things that inspire a certain kind of emotional feeling. The difficulty with people like doing ethical choices based on what they feel, is they can't explain why, except they feel that way. And so it's very hard to have a conversation, it's very hard to

unpack what's going on. It's very hard to then be in conversation, people have other reasons for doing things that are maybe different than you. And that one has moral sentiment that is difficult to have a conversation just like a kind of conversation stopper, I just feel like it and then you know, what are you supposed to do? And, and so, these, these are four approaches that are done. So now in terms of the Buddhist precepts, not killing.

Some people will take it as a principle. It comes from the Buddha. This is what Buddhism says, I'm a Buddhist, therefore, this is what I have to do, and no question about it. And there are times where I will like to champion this principle approach and what comes to mind right now we don't have it anymore. Now, when I was younger, we had the draft a conscription. And so I spent a lot of time thinking about what I was going to do if I got drafted because I was of the draftable age and that was pretty clear that I was either going either going to get 30 pounds of Dental Braces or something, you know, something that just made me I know, undesirable in the military or declare I was a conscientious objector. It's very hard to be a conscientious objector. If you tell the draft board, oh, I don't feel like going to war. You know, it's just the you know, just this kind of bothers me and, you know, you've kind of have to come by principle postcard to this this it goes against my principles. I'm a Buddhist Buddhism have a principle that you don't kill and therefore I have done I'm bound by that principle. And that makes it clear. And I think that kind of, you know, in that kind of situation maybe works better than, than other approaches. But then some people, it's not principle based that they don't kill some people to hear this precept don't kill. So they give thought to it, they reflect on it. But they're, they're motivated not by the principle, but they're motivated by the consequence. They realize it took a lot of harm is caused when people get killed. Certainly the person who's gotten killed has been harmed. Maybe their friends and family have been harmed. And, you know, most people in our society generally think that killing people is not a good idea. But as a society, society kills people, right? We have capital punishment, and we have we go to war and, and so decisions are made and sometimes those are visions are based on consequentialism that this is there's a greater good for society for us if we are involved in killing those people over there and, and so that justifies some some people's minds that this is okay. Because the worst if we don't, and this is uh, this is better. So that's a consequentialist attitude. And some people who don't want to follow the first precept of not killing will understand that how much how much harm is caused in killing human beings and maybe animals as well. I'm just really struck by the legacy of wars of the 20th century, going back, you know, 200 years that what people went through, still ripples down painfully into families today. And what happened in World War Two ripples powerfully into families to this day. I have You know, I had I have two children who were born one was born in 1998. One was born in 2002. So decades after World War Two, but their grandparents went through the concentration camps. And they know it looks the older windows. And, you know, it's, it's, it's in his now in his family history and his memory and his contact with his beloved grandparents and their experiences. My older son interviewed my grandfather before he died, died and got all these stories and filmed it and all this it was quite something when he was 14 or 15. And, and, and my son now is 21. So you know, maybe he'll live another 50 years or more, I hope And the legacy of world war two will continue and in Him for all those decades in some way or other, so the ripple effect of going out and out and out of war, even with a consequentialist calculation, if we take into account, you know, the ripple and the way it expands outward, is it ever worth it just for a short term gain.

So that's one reason why some people will not abide by the first precept because they think consequences is just not worth it. The third, third approach with the first precept is that our virtue and some people will feel that somehow that there's a sense of inner goodness or purity, some sense of compassion, something that's operating in their heart that really is vibrating and strong, and they just can't violate it that just seems to carry the day for them. And it just seems that goodness is or that integrity is where they want to come from and what they want to do. It doesn't matter what the



consequences are. It doesn't matter if it's a principle or not, doesn't matter if the Buddha came back and so you know that principle but the first precept I was all wrong about that, it doesn't matter because they've tapped into or they have in them certain qualities or dispositions or character that are so strong that this is what they base their life on. And so I'm going to follow the first precept because of the compassion that I feel I'm going to follow because the purity I feel for me the when I started doing this practice of a person one of the I did my first retreat was 10 weeks long on retreat. And I sat I didn't know what to expect sitting it, but one of the big impacts of that retreat was, in the course of it, I opened up I discovered I found something shifted, that I discovered an inner feeling of purity, in that I'd never experienced in my life before. And there's a little bit surprised for me because the word purity was a word that I kind of didn't like. And then to feel it, you know, then I couldn't, you know, it was my own, then it wasn't just an idea out there and other people who are a little bit uptight about purity. It has this beautiful feeling of cleanliness and openness and freedom, that seemed to, you know, really kind of course in my body. And so that would be kind of related to virtue. And I felt that this is good. This is like one of the best things going and I could see that as I different. Like lust arose or anger arose or different. The resentment arose, these different things arose, that I could feel how it kind of violated or did violence to that sense of purity or darkened dead or tore it or something? And I felt like No, I don't want to Why should I why I shouldn't do that I want to stay true to this purity that seems like the best place to be or the right place to be had a rightness to it. And so I'm not going to kill because that violates, you know, violence to this sense of virtue or character that I had now. So that would be kind of a virtue approach to the this second, the first precept the problem with the virtue approach is that sometimes may be the consequences are so dire, that you don't just sit there and stay that way. Maybe sometimes you want to sacrifice purity or goodness. If you know if you know someone is going to kill your entire family. What do you do?

And I'm not going to answer that question. I hope I never have to answer that question. I don't want to answer that question. But, you know, some people would clearly make certain choices then that maybe then that that and that circumstances, their period doesn't count. Or what about their country? What if they go to war? What if you know, what if the consumer goes to war against your country and lands on Baker beach? What do you do? So all these questions, you know, they, what do we do? How do these things come into? How do they balance out? And then finally, moral sentiment, I suppose with the first precept would be, it just doesn't feel right to go around killing people, you know, just doesn't feel right to live in a society where that is. It just kind of bothers me it's feels really yucky. And so that would be the reason the basis for that someone could have all four approaches and different balance. Someone could have them in different ways, so that they end up in conflict with other people. So Someone who is going to be purely virtue based or principle based, might be in conflict with someone who's consequentialist based, who really makes different choices and balances as different different ways. They might say, Yes, I agree not to kill, but there are times when it's appropriate because of the great difference between the harm and the benefit can come. And, and if we go to war, that's going to save a lot of problems. And it's, you know, or, or that or capital punishment is needed, because the principle of justice needs to be you know, needs to be upheld. And someone else's consequentialist will say, yes, but that perpetuates a society that thinks it's okay to kill and it ripples out into the into the wider society and supports a violence violent society, they'll say. So people have different arguments and different ideas, but has a lot to do with where they're based on on these four. So Same Same thing with a second precept of not to steal. It can just be a principle and some people hold too tightly. Some people will look at the consequences, some people will look at the virtue around it, some people will look at, you know, what they feel. What's interesting is that there's idea of moral development over time, that people can evolve ethically, over time. And generally that people The idea is that young children tend to be more principle based. And it's just, it's kind of, you know, they don't have a maybe a sophisticated mind or they need to have a lot of order and clarity. And so having things be principle based works

really well. And, and that's kind of and then as people grow older, and if they grow in a normal kind of maturing way, then different ones of these come into play. And, and so We see this in Buddhist practice as well, that people who begin with principle based approach which some teachers, that's what they'll tell you, you know, when you first come to Buddhist, Buddhist practice, just follow these principles, follow the precepts. If you come and retreat, that's what we kind of tell you. These are the these are the rules, these, you know, the precepts. And if someone decided to break one of the precepts in on the retreat, they wouldn't stay at the retreat, probably, you know, and that's, you know, it's kind of violates the container and safety that people have. So we follow it. They're kind of a principle based approach. But, but as people develop, they don't need principle so much, because they have a different relationship to other people. There's a more sense of empathy, more sense of connectedness to others, a beautiful feeling people can have or sense people have is that why would you harm someone else because I'm harming myself then they feel oneness or connectedness to other people and, and they're hurt other people feel is felt for oneself. And so and so is that. So it's not a principle anymore. Is it a virtue? Is it a feeling then more feeling based because you feel like inseparable from them. So, you feel when you when you hurt them, you hurt yourself and simultaneously Yes.

So you know, why would you want to do that. Or as we develop in practice, we have a consequentialist approach, which is we learn that living by the precepts trying to live by the precepts is a fantastic way of purifying the mind, look, flushing out all the places where we're kind of attached and greedy or have hate or something. And it's a great way to cultivate some of the wonderful virtues in Buddhism is we want to develop cultivates compassion. It cultivates generosity. It cultivates wisdom and cultivates patience. It cultivates respect, the clarity of mind all kinds of things. And so as practitioners, the precept start having a pragmatic value, it's understood these really support the practice, I want to develop my mind and grow my mind and develop these good qualities. And this and that that happens as a consequence of living by the precepts and doing them. And so a consequentialist approach can sometimes become much more significant for practitioners, they go along. And then as people go further and practice and they their mind really starts becoming free, they feel quite kind of these qualities become quite mature in them. Then sometimes, this virtue base becomes much more salient, much stronger. There's just so much compassion just radiating. There's so much sense of generosity and goodness, that just clear that this is what's going to do it. Of course, I'm To live by the precepts, why wouldn't I live by the precepts, I don't have to have a reason. I don't have to have a reason to have that principle. I don't have to have consequences. I just want to, you know, let this pour out of me because it's so strong here.

And then, once I think a little bit interesting is that once in once a person becomes liberated, once they have enlightened and then once they really let go some of the deepest attachments they have with the with the Buddhist tradition says is that they can no longer they're not capable any longer anymore, of breaking the precepts. They don't have to have a reason anymore. They're just they're just incapable they're incapable of stealing. they're incapable of killing of stealing, of sexual misconduct of actually, it's kind of disappointing for some of us, maybe they actually say if you're fully enlightened and you're incapable of intercourse, so, you know, we don't advertise that too much. And, and then, and then incapable of lying and incapable of being involved in toxic and that's quite a statement of quite an ideal or quite an idea that there's something about the deep letting go the releasing. And I think part of the, how this could be understood is that these forces have these to break the precepts generally, at least from a Buddhist point of view. If you have to have some unhealthy unwholesome motivation. You might disagree with that. But this is what the Buddhist tradition says is that no matter what The Act is of killing, always going to be an unhealthy unwholesome motivation within it. Someone is liberated or no longer it's no longer capable of having unwholesome unhealthy motivations. And therefore this they simply can't get motivated. They can't do it do it is the ethic that the idea here. So I suppose that for a liberated

person, there's no ethical approach to worry about. Because they're simply not going to do these things. Which is kind of nice, maybe for the precepts. But I think it's a little bit too simplistic for this complicated, complicated social life we live in. I think, in the time of the Buddha, there was not they didn't vote, didn't pay taxes. They weren't involved in all kinds of social issues that were kind of expected to be part of these days. And so it was some ways was a simpler time. A radically simpler time. And so, you know, ethics came down to these five precepts. But what happens if you're a doctor in hospital or your therapist or you're a police officer? Or there's all these different professions that have, you know, Prince, you know, when you're expected to lead by certain principles and negotiate your way with them and understand them? And what about with, you know, how are you going to vote? How do you vote for the distribution of resources in our society? And how do you make a decision there? Is it said, an ethical decision? Or maybe you want to say it's ethical, but still, you have to have some basis for decision and how do you how do we share the resources and how do we live with the natural world and take care of it? And what's the basis of those kinds of decision making? So people will have those four approaches to make that so I think even if someone is fully liberated of unhealthy motivations, they still have to do that kind of reflection. It's called ethical reflection and no one The idea is that when people becomes ethically mature, they become ethically reflective. Meaning that they're able to think in ethical terms, they are able to think these things out more carefully. They understand the different approaches understand the pros and cons of them. And they're articulate about it, and they know how to talk about it, and they can recognize it. And other people say, Oh, that's, that's a consequentialist approach. And I'm coming from virtue approach. And so that no wonder we're not kind of seeing it. So now we can talk about that. Now we can talk about it specifically, as opposed to who's right and who's wrong. And so becoming ethically literate. And reflective, I think becomes increasingly as big an increasingly important for us in a way that was not true 2500 years ago, if what we want to do is to be citizens of our society, and participate in it.

So Four approaches for the five precepts, four approaches of ethical decisions for how to live in society. One of the things you might do if this you found this interesting is spend some time considering of those four approaches, which is the one you tend to go to the most. Most people use all of them are different, but they all usually have one which is the predominant one. And you might kind of start kind of telling up or looking and seeing, which where do you tend to go? Do you tend to be more principled or consequentialist? More virtue based more just because it feels good? Or feels bad? And, and what is your particular and then what what's what's the the, the pros and cons of these different approaches and what's the pros and cons cons of your particular favorite approach, they get wiser and more caring and to understand this and reflect on it will make you A much wiser person or society much easier able to navigate through our social world around these issues, much easier to kind of find your way when conflict with people and, and that's one of the best things is to be able to work through conflict to the other side. And so we can be live together in friendly, kind, supportive ways for each other in a society of mutual benefit. So we have five minutes before the nine o'clock ending. If anyone wants any comments or protests or questions about this, you're welcome. different points of view and what I've said

When I think about the ethical obligations that I feel as a Buddhist, I am so confused and puzzled at what I see happening in Burma, Myanmar. And I just spoke with a woman who for the past eight years has run the refugee camp there. Can you shed any light on that?

I don't think I can shed much light on it except that I think every religion in the world has had examples of people who wear the garb of the religion and follow ethics that don't seem to be the intent of the founder. But if you look at it carefully, you probably find That there are values behind that. They often think they are doing Buddhism, they are doing the ethical thing. And so what are the values that come

into play there? What are they believing is important? What are they? What are they? How do they see other people, view other people and our people. So, anyway, the only light I can chat is that it's this is a common human phenomenon that happens everywhere. And, and so if you're involved in Buddhism, it's best not to hold up Buddhism as being this pristine, Pure religion that has it all just worked out and fine.

I guess my question is, do you have any awareness of what it is that they're valuing? What is it that they're thinking because they are Buddhists? I

think a lot of it is ethnic strife. You know, ethnic strife goes on. trees all over the world. And people kill each other for that, then genocide happens because of it. It's. So I think it's just another it's another variation of agenda of ethnic strife.

Thank you.

And we know we've done we've had plenty of that in this country. Right? We have a whole we have a whole long legacy of the same thing happening here. It's not like it only goes back a few decades where this country was involved in the same thing.

I have a question about your comment about what would you do if your family was threatened or group of people wanted to kill your family. What would be the Buddhist response?

would be the Buddhist respond Buddhist response. I don't think I care about the Buddhist response. I don't think Buddhism at that point for me with, because I wouldn't be so principle based, and that situation. So there were a Buddhist response, it wouldn't make much difference for me. But I would, you know, somehow i'd respond for sure. But what what I would consider what are the factors I would consider how I look at this, maybe it depends on a lot of different things. And it's so impossible to know what the actual context you know, the situation might be. Is it appropriate to just die dictate with dignity, if that happens, is it that's that would be the best thing to do. Because nothing else is possible. The media jivox my grandparents are at my fault my parents in law, who lost their family when they're in the concentration camps, right? And so there's sometimes there's situations where there seems to be no, you know, no alternative. So what do you do then? And then what are the consequences of different actions you might take? And what are the consequences for my family? Were the consequences for those around me and more widely. And how do I calculate how do I consider that and in the split seconds that I have? When I do, what would I? One of the things I like to think about in situations like always, is to, in some ways, devalue being prepared. So we know alternatives. We know different ways of responding dealing. One of the set of the sad things many years ago someone asked me when we used to have to In follow up when we are group here, met in Palo Alto, she, this woman came and said, I'm afraid to go to Palo Alto at night in the evening. And I'm thinking of getting a gun. And what do you think of that. And I didn't want to be in the position of telling her my opinion, but getting a gun. But what I told her was, you know, that, that it's sad to choose the option of getting a gun, when they're when a person doesn't try to explore the other alternatives to a gun. There are self defense classes that they can take, for example, and other things you can learn to do, and other options, and maybe they're not 100% is good sometimes and defending yourself as a gun. But a gun isn't sometimes the safest thing either. That sometimes is, you know, so. But so learn alternatives and so be prepared and think ahead. And I think as part of this, and so learning how to be in conflict with people. Learning to be Why about conflict, which is one of the things I like to people to have. So, you know, when that situation comes, can you step forward and defuse it? I mean, isn't that that's not the same situation. I remember once when I was a hippie going in the Florida Panhandle into a bar and this was not a good place for hippie



to be back then. And, and, and it was winning with a friend and the tension in the room cuts I thought, oh, there's going to be blood in you know, not gonna be their blood. You know, there was really put the person I was with was a natural born comedian. And somehow he was able to just kind of turn the whole thing upside down then around and diffused everything and we get out of there with no Blood. So that's maybe a silly example for, for the example you brought up. But, you know, so we practice meditation. So they were calm enough and clear enough and wise enough, so we can look at all the options in that circumstance. And maybe we choose the wisest one we can do. But if we don't haven't done the inner work to be calm or be centered or know ourselves, well, then some of the unhealthy reactivity we might have might take precedence. So some people will, they're there, when they're not wise, will attack in unwise ways or will run away or put their head in the sand or, you know, there's all kinds of unhealthy things you could do. The I've had friends who were held up at gunpoint and because they said they attributed because of their meditation, that they're able to stay calm enough that They were able to somehow they surprised themselves, but they were surprised by what came out of them the defuse situation.

So, you know, so they attributed it to their meditation practice. When one friend of mine in service was in center he was going to a meeting at the up there, San Francisco Zen Center across the state he was across the street when someone held him up. And I think it was a knife with a knife. And

and

and while they were there happening someone to one of his friends kind of walked nearby and walk into the Zen center. So there is over in my the mugging happened my my friend went to his friend and said, you know, you see me out there you walk by Oh yeah, I saw you were talking to this guy. And I thought you know your involves getting mugged or whatever. did was he calmly talk to the guy and said, you know, you can have all my money, but I kind of need my driver's license. He had a kind of was able to keep us cool. And it's and you know, and have the exchange and they were able to come to some kind of agreement. And in he was out of his money, but he kept his wallet and his driver's license and back then, and all people had credit cards so much. And, and so was that a wise way to do to do it? You know, man, he attributed that ability to stay calm and present and have that kind of exchange because he didn't freak out. He didn't get afraid. His meditation practice. So I don't know how to answer the question what I do, but are we prepared? Do we do the best we can to be prepared? Are we just going to kind of grab the gun and just, you know, you know? And then worry about until then. I don't. So I don't know if that's satisfying my answer, but that's the best I can now for Thank you. Okay, so go forth and make ethical choices. And try to be conscious about what the approach you're using, what, what's the rationale for it, and, and start getting a sense of what your predominant ones are. And if once you get a sense of what which of these four approaches is your predominant one, go find it some people who have different predominant approaches and talk to them and find out to understand them and get to know them and, and, you know, and, you know, see what you can learn from them. And I hope you enjoy it. Thank you.