

The Eightfold Path: Finding an Ancient Path

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I would like to take today to talk about the Eightfold Path, both as an introduction to the year-long series, and also just as a nice topic to talk about. The Eightfold Path is the most common way in which the Buddha talked about the spiritual life, the practice life, the life of liberation that he taught. And in a sense, it's a metaphor for that life, to talk about it as a path. The Buddha used a variety of metaphors both for the path and also for the practice life, but also for the path itself. Sometimes it was called a path, sometimes he called it a stream, sometimes he likened it to a wheel, and sometimes the path is you, so it's not something out there but something here in you. In fact, that's the idea: the path is something you discover in yourself.

Initially, maybe you read about it, then it seems like it's out there in the books or in someplace else. But if you actually start looking for it, where is that path? You come to IMC and, you know, where's that path? There's a little bit of a path out there in the bushes back there. But where's that path? And no matter where you go in the world, you won't find the path outside of yourself.

You are the path. You make the path, you create the path as you go. So one of the common metaphors for the spiritual life of Buddhism is the path, in particular the Eightfold Path. And it might be interesting to reflect a little bit that given people's life, kind of life circumstances, human beings often create different understandings of a religious life. So people who live oppressed lives, often maybe in great poverty, great oppression, and they see no way out of that in this lifetime, they just seem stuck in this kind of situation. It's fairly common for those kinds of people to create religions that are about the afterlife.

Because that's where the hope is going to be. There's no hope here, so there has to be hope

somewhere, so in the afterlife. For people who live in relatively comfortable circumstances, sometimes they, you know, they don't have to look for hope outside of their present life. But sometimes they create religious worldviews that are much more about how wonderful life is. You know, life is so wonderful, it's just a matter of resting in the innate goodness of our hearts or in the innate benign quality of life itself. And it just isn't wonderful.

And in between those two extremes, there's all kinds of, you know, based on people's circumstances, they create different understandings of what the religious life is, religion is. Recently I read a little bit that people in rural America have a very different sense of what it means to be part of a church than people in a suburban or urban situation where they come and join the church. They have a different sense of what church life is like in terms of Christianity, perhaps. The Buddha also had a particular worldview of what religious life is like. And there's also an introduction to say that based on, depending on what you do in life, the activity you're involved in, what it calls from you, what it requires from you varies. So in some situations, what's called is a lot of intentionality, a lot of engagement, a lot of kind of taking responsibility, engaging.

In other situations, it's more you sit back in the passenger seat of the car. You don't have to do any of the driving yourself. You're just being carried along. Some religious worldviews are more like, you're the one in the driver's seat. Take charge. And other religious worldviews are more like, oh, you're in the passenger seat. Someone else is in the driver's seat. You're just going to be carried along.

So, in this metaphor of the path, I think it points to a certain kind of understanding of what it requires from us, what it means to be engaged in a religious life. So one of the stories the Buddha told, the myths he told, to lay out the idea of a path, he told a story, a fable, of a person who, a woods person, someone who maybe explores the woods, the jungles, the forests. And that person goes out into the forest and explores and finds just little hints, traces of an ancient path, an ancient road that's long since overgrown by the jungle. If you've ever been to a jungle, you can see how quickly it overgrows everything. And that person, maybe being a tracker, is able to kind of track and find the traces of that ancient path and follow it to its end, deep in the jungle.

And there, deep in the jungle, there's an ancient capital, an ancient palace, that's, again, long forgotten, all overgrown, kind of like the Aztec pyramids that have been overgrown in the jungle the explorers found. And so this person then goes back to civilized society, to where the king and the queen are, of the realm, and says to them, I found this ancient path, this ancient

road. We've all forgotten about it, but it's actually there. It leads to this wonderful capital, this wonderful palace. The king and queen, in fact, then go out there to see for themselves. With a lot of work, they're able to clear that ancient road, clear the brick path, or whatever's there, the yellow brick road. They're able to go and find the palace, and then they were able to repopulate it.

So the Buddha said that he did not invent the Buddhist path, but rather he rediscovered an ancient path that had been forgotten and overgrown. So there's some understanding in the Buddha's mind, at least, that is somehow inherent in human life, is that there is a path to walk. And that path has always been there, but it's forgotten, it's overgrown. The Buddha just discovers it. He doesn't invent it. But what does it mean to walk in a path in the woods, in the forest? What's required of us?

And what comes to mind for me is that of backpacking. Or if you go for a long hike, even a day hike, up in the woods, in the wilderness. I did a five-day hike, solo hike, five years ago, early in the season, up in the Sierras. And one of the things that struck me was how parts of the path were so pastorally beautiful, romantically beautiful. It was just wonderful. It was like taking a stroll in a park.

But it was deceptive because I was not alone. I was several days away from anybody else. I was one of the first people in the season backpacking in the backcountry. There was still snow on the trails. And if I had a slip, if I fell, you know, or there are bears and all kinds of things, you know, there's actually some great challenges out there that are kind of hidden away. I can get mesmerized by how beautiful and pastoral some of these alpine meadows were that I was walking in.

And in fact, today's paper I read, they discovered the body of a man who died backpacking by himself up in Kings Canyon area. And so if you go backpacking or hiking, you're supposed to go with some caution. It requires something of you. If you do it, you want to do it carefully. You're supposed to tell a friend out so they know what to look for you. You're supposed to be prepared for the high Sierras with all kinds of clothes, with different kinds of circumstances, because it might suddenly have these summer thunderstorms that come along and they can even get very cold and get hypothermia or whatever.

So you have to go prepared up there. And then when you walk up in those mountains, the walking is something that you do. You're not in the passenger seat. So you're the one who's actually do the walking. And in doing the walking, you're actually required to pay attention in a certain way. You need a certain kind of attitude of mind, approach, when you're there.

You have to be attentive, pay attention to the trail. When I went in those two years ago, some of the trail was either covered by snow or it was hard to tell the difference between this trail at places and where the gullies were, where the water, the erosion was going. So you have to be very attentive, very present, very mindful of the track and the trails. You wouldn't get lost. Lost the trail a few times because it looked like a trail to me. And then I realized when it petered out that, uh-oh, this is not the trail.

So you have to have a certain kind of mindfulness and focus and attention. Ideally, if you go backpacking, you're supposed to travel light. Because if you travel with both suitcases, you know, up there in the high Sierras, you're not going to get very far. I went backpacking a few weeks ago with my eight-year-old son. It wasn't as flat as I remembered the trail. And there were several times going uphill where I had to carry his backpack, too. Otherwise, we weren't going to make it.

So you want to travel light as you can. So there are people who are experts in getting the most lightweight material possible. And you don't want to bring anything extra. Some people, when they go backpacking for a long time, will carefully go through all their stuff and cut out the labels, the washing instructions on the label. Anything that can be extra weight, because they want to reduce the weight, absolutely the minimum amount of extra weight is possible. You want to travel simply and lightly.

You want to travel, hopefully, in a way that doesn't cause damage. Some people say when you go backpacking, you're supposed to travel with respect and kindness in your heart, because then somehow the nature, the environment, the animals will treat you appropriately, nicely. So there's a whole bunch of attitudes and approaches that you need to develop or bring about or arouse in order to go through backpacking in a way that's safe and respectful and appropriate, that requires something of you. So if you liken the spiritual path, the spiritual life to a path that's going into the jungle, into the woods like that, you realize that that metaphor is calling upon something from us. If you liken the spiritual life to another metaphor you could use, it's like sitting on your couch watching television. That's the spiritual life, that's the metaphor. Then not much is required. Good finger control.

So that's the metaphor, that of a path. Now if you extend a little bit this metaphor, the Buddha used of the person who found the trail and going back to the king and queen. To tell them about the path, the king and queen here, almost explicitly, is you, is us. The Buddha has discovered this path and he comes back to tell us about it. And he's telling you. And I love this idea that in the metaphor, the king and the queen is us being told about the path, because

it represents to me a very high degree of respect and dignity that each person is offered or seen as having.

So, the idea of being a king and queen, a certain royalty of dignity, that you're actually going to walk this path with a degree of, not as a scared little kid, not as someone who is unworthy of it, or incapable of it, but you're actually going to walk the path with a certain degree of dignity and nobility, of royalty. You're really special. You are someone. The idea of being self-effacing is sometimes associated with Buddhism. I don't count. I'm not supposed to stand out. There is a certain degree of letting go of egotism that's a very important part of the path. But the idea of being self-effacing so you don't count, that you're not allowed to have your dignity, is not part of the Buddhist path at all.

So here, this person who showed us the path, and then we're going to clear the path and walk the path to a certain degree of dignity. Now, the image of a king and queen, I don't know what image you have of that, but I have the image of someone who stays somewhat balanced no matter what's going on. They don't get ruffled by things. They stay there, they stay balanced, they stay upright, they keep their head up, and no matter how difficult the circumstances get or how wonderful they get, they stay balanced and poised in that situation. I read last night the kind of accounts you can read about of people who maintain a certain degree of balance, poise, centeredness in the face of the concentration camps in Nazi Germany or the Chinese camps the Tibetans are in, where they refuse to give up their generosity to the spirit, their integrity, even in the face of tremendous hardship. It was easy to want to give it all up.

So the idea of the King and Queen is calling forth from us some of our best qualities, in the best sense of the term, of self-possession, self-mastery, self-here I am. I'm going to walk this and stay balanced through what's going on here. And so I like that. I hope that's kind of the image, the path. So, when you walk a path in the woods, the first thing you need to do is to know how to find it. And so you have to have some process of finding it.

And so maybe you have someone who points it to you, here it is. Or maybe you have a map that shows you where it is. Some kind of way that gets you oriented and helps you find it. So when the Buddha taught the Eightfold Path, He taught the first step in the Eightfold Path was getting that right orientation, finding it. And he called that "right view." Right view. And right view here is different than right opinion.

Right view here is more like the orientation. How do you find the path that you're going to walk? If you're going to walk this path, you have to find it. Right view is the beginning. Right view is inseparable from what the goal is of the Buddhist spiritual life. So you have to have

some sense of what the goal is. The goal, in the metaphor, was that of a palace.

But the palace that's in ourselves, the palace that we can become, is a palace of happiness, of peace, of well-being, freedom from suffering. It's often said that one of the most common and universal drives in human beings is the drive to be happy. And even though it takes many different forms, the idea of being happy seems to underlie much of it. Sometimes it's maladaptive. We think we're looking for happiness, but in the wrong ways. The goal in Buddhism is that of being free from suffering, free from distress, worry, anxiety, free from all things that cloud the goodness of the heart, the clarity of the heart, the peaceful heart, the happiness of our heart. That's kind of the goal.

So if that's the goal, if that's the palace we're going to, then we know what trail we have to walk. If what you want to do is to find the lake that's in the jungle, you have to follow maybe a different trail. Or if you want to find the garbage pit which is in the jungle, sometimes they use the garbage pit off in some place, you need to find a different trail. So you need to kind of know where you're going in order to find the right trail, the right path to walk. So, to be free of suffering is the shortest way of talking about the goal of the Buddhist life. So, finding the right view, the right orientation, is closely tied to this idea of becoming free of suffering.

And the Buddha's suggestion is that to do that in the simplest way possible, you need to understand your suffering. And he said at one point that the Eightfold Path is the way in which you can understand your suffering really well. Now some people are going to hear this and say, "Oh, these Buddhists. They're always kind of down, party poopers, bringing up this thing about suffering. I've even heard rumors that they say that life is suffering. It's such a depressing religion. And that's not the point.

The point actually is not to be depressed, but actually to find the conditions that help us to become happy, to be relieved. But in order to become happy, to be relieved of the illness of suffering, you need to understand it. Just like if you go to a doctor and you ask her, you know, if you're 15 minutes at Kaiser, and, you know, have this really thing that really worries you a lot, and some health condition, and the first thing the doctor says is, see how the Giants did yesterday? You think they're going to make it this season? What sports are you interested in? Do you have any hobbies? How are your kids? You know? On and on it goes.

And you look at your watch, you know. The time's quickly ticking by. You don't want them to ask those kinds of things. You want them to ask, what ails you? What's the problem? That's what you want them to ask, because that gets to the point, gets to the heart of the matter, so they can deal with what's going on. So, a really central part of this finding the path is finding

your suffering.

Some of you don't have any trouble finding it. And some of us, maybe some people, need to kind of scratch the surface a little bit, look. But the point is, what is your suffering? To really understand it, to admit it, to see it, to understand it. This is a huge undertaking for some people, because some people are experts at avoiding it, denying it, pretending it's not there, covering it over with all kinds of affirmations and distractions. Even certain religious world-views, religious teachings, sometimes function as a way of covering over our suffering.

I've actually heard religious teachers say things like, say very explicitly, you have some suffering, but let's just kind of put it aside and let's focus on this other thing. The good message that I have. And ignore the suffering. Buddhism says, look at the suffering. You need to understand it. Again, if you see yourself as a king and queen, I see this as a very dignified thing to do. It's a very appropriate thing to do, to actually engage yourself with your life as it is and see where is this suffering that I'm going to work with and work through so that I can get to the other side of it to become free of suffering, to find that happiness that's beyond it.

There is no freedom from suffering without first understanding it. So the right view begins with understanding your suffering, and being willing to look at it. Then part of that looking at it is looking at what are the causes of that suffering. What generates it? My parents. Those parents of mine, they just did me in. They did it. Or the government. If the government was just different. Or my neighbors. Or my spouse. "Oh boy, that's the loss of mine."

There was a study done of prisoners in California. They asked a whole bunch of them who was responsible for them being in jail. And the vast majority of them, like 80% of them, blamed someone else besides themselves. My lawyer, the judge, the police, this and that. Now maybe some of them were framed, and someone is responsible in some ways, but there's a strong tendency to look elsewhere for the blame. Those people, they did it. That's not to deny that the conditions of the world contribute to our suffering, but the dignified thing to do in following the path, in making ourselves the path, is to discover: What is it that we contribute to this suffering? What do we do?

And one of the great, one of the unfortunately fortunate things that can happen to you, to us, is to have some suffering, some terrible thing happen in your life, where it's really clear that you cannot do anything about the external world to make it better. And one of the reasons why that can be such a fortunate thing is then you realize that if there's going to be a difference, if you're going to make a difference, if you're going to cope with your suffering and find happiness and well-being, you have to rely on yourself. You have to change yourself because

you can't change the circumstances around you. Make sense? So, as long as you think you can change the circumstances, then you have a way out. So in finding the path... So this is not saying that you don't try to change the world, or change circumstances.

But if you want to find the path that the Buddha is pointing to, that's what you want to find. If you want to find the path the Buddha is pointing to, then the task at hand is to understand what is it I'm contributing to this suffering? What is my role in this suffering. So, maybe a little example. I've been, the other morning I was driving and I was cold. No, no, I wasn't cold. I was hot yesterday. Got in my car. Sorry. It took me a while to remember. I knew I had an example, but I just had to find it.

Somehow my car had been in the sun for a while, and I got in the car, and it was really hot. And my first thought, sitting there in the heat, was, "This is a drag." This is kind of like oppressive. And then I thought, you know, wait a minute. I've had this kind of heat before. I can remember being in a dry sauna. And it was the same kind of feeling. And in dry sauna it was like, great. Is it terrible or is it great? How much am I contributing to the suffering of, This is a drag. How much is my contribution, my creation, my story that I'm living in? How much is it?

So where is our contribution? To find the path, you have to understand your suffering, be willing to stop for it. The Buddhist bumper sticker is, "I stop for suffering." And then you need to look at, "What is my contribution to this?" To look at that. And then, hopefully you get some sense of a possibility of freedom from that suffering. Some sense of possibility. And there's two essential ingredients in Buddhist spiritual life. One is to be present for the present moment. To learn how to be here for this moment. Appreciate its value being here. And simultaneously have a vision of a possibility that's different from what's here. If you're suffering. A possibility that's possible to become free of suffering, to be at peace, to be happy.

So the right view has to do with also having a vision. To be visionaries. You have a vision. Each of you have a vision of what's possible in your life, in terms of some degree of freedom, of peace, of expression of compassion, some degree of being transformed and changed, so the best of you can come out of yourself. To have a vision is part of the path of what's possible. And this is understood to be the possibility of cessation of suffering.

So the first thing, in order to find the path, the first step, it's called Right View. The essential element of that is first stopping for suffering, the second looking at our own contribution to that suffering, and the third having a vision of what's possible in terms of becoming free of that. There's one more element to the first step, this Right Vision, it. And that is, once you have a vision, you realize that it's not always going to be easy to fulfill that vision. There are

times when it's going to be really easy. Like driving yesterday with my car being so hot. I think, "Oh, this is a drag." I mean, it only took me a few seconds to realize how much I was contributing a story there. And I'd let go of it and then I was just driving and I was hot. I wasn't driving hot and suffering, just hot. And it was easy.

But there are times when it's not so easy. It can be very difficult. And so sometimes then you have to realize how seriously difficult it is to overcome the complex of things that goes on inside of us that keeps us suffering. And so because it's complex or difficult, we need to kind of have a very considered, mature way of looking at it all. And what the Buddha suggested is that if you really want to get down to the heart, to the root of your suffering, you need to have an integrated approach where all of who you are is integrated on that path. You bring all of yourself along. All your resources, all of who you are. So your sense of vision, your attitudes, your dispositions, your intentions, your speech, the way you talk, your actions, what you do, your livelihood, the kind of work you do, the strivings, the efforts you make, the mindfulness you cultivate, and the concentration you develop.

So it's all these things that kind of broadly include includes much of our life. Speech, action, intentionality, our mind cultivating our hearts, are all part of the path. So it turns out that the right view is understanding the Four Noble Truths. Understanding the Four ends with understanding the Eightfold Path. So there's something circular here. If you follow, the circular thing is that there's a Four Noble Truths. The first step in the Eightfold Path is the Four Noble Truths. And the last of the Four Noble Truths is the Eightfold Path.

So the Four Noble Truths is the primary definition of right view. If you have other things to do in your life besides becoming free of suffering, then don't bother with the Four Noble Truths. But if the palace you want to find is this freedom from suffering, then the clearest, most direct way is this Four Noble Truths. Then once you have the view, once you have the map and the direction, the orientation, that's where the path is. As you get ready to step on the path, just as you would going up into the woods and backpacking, you need to reorient yourself, your attitude, your disposition. The way you're disposed to go around life in your own living room, your television on, whatever, is very different than how you need to be disposed as you walk in the woods. You have to have a certain kind of care, attention to what you're doing, presence of mind.

So the Buddha's second step of the Eightfold Path is having a certain disposition, a certain intention, a certain approach, a certain way of thinking. And there's two primary aspects of this. One is to be disposed towards not being caught in your desires. And to be disposed

in not being caught by your ill will. The human mind is often caught up in greed and hate, and wanting things and pushing things away. And so if you want to kind of orient yourself on the path, you need to begin the work of changing the disposition, changing your orientation, changing your intention, so that you're not primarily motivated by wanting, wanting, wanting, not primarily motivated by ill will, aversion.

It's very easy to have that be the primary thing that drives us. So instead of those things, we want to orient ourselves. Can we practice more the simplicity of not clinging, not wanting so much, letting go of wanting. And the word wanting here that Buddha used was the word lust. So lust for power, lust for sex, lust for food, lust for alcohol, lust. Very powerful kind of thing. So it's a reorientation, simplification. Simplifying ourselves. We're always wanting, wanting, wanting. And also dropping ill will. Or orienting ourselves more towards being kind, being friendly, being compassionate. Try that.

So you can't necessarily do that automatically. It's not that easy. But to know that this is the shift, we're trying to make a shift, to the degree to which you consciously can make a shift, take responsibility for your disposition, the path involves making that shift. Even if it's just a teeny, teeny bit. Can you kind of be a little bit more inclined towards not being driven by desire or driven by hate and ill will? So, right view, finding the path, getting the right disposition for walking the path, and then you start walking the path.

And the first step, actually the first three steps of the path, have to do with what can be called in English ethics. Or, like I say, it has to do with our relationships to other people. So, it has to do with right speech, right or proper action, and right livelihood. And I love it that the actual first steps of the path have to do with our relationship with others. Because often in meditative circles, people often think, oh, the path has to do, I just close my eyes and have to do it myself in here. And it's kind of a solitary, inward kind of thing.

But here the suggestion is that the way you first begin to approach the path is you begin setting your relationship to others in order. It's a gift to yourself, it's a gift to others. Benefit yourself and you benefit others at the same time. When you practice right speech, you're benefiting others. If you do speech which is kind and truthful and helpful, you're helping others. When you do speech which is slanderous or spiteful, then you're harming others. But when you do kind speech, you help yourself. When you do angry speech, you harm yourself.

So there's a kind of wonderful mutuality in Buddhist practice between self-benefit and other benefit, other benefit and self-benefit. They're both actually the same thing, like two hands that wash each other. You need both hands. So then beginning to practice our ethics, practice

an ethical life, life of integrity, looking at our speech, looking at our action, and looking at our livelihood so that it benefits everyone concerned, laying the foundation. Requires a high degree of mindfulness to do as well. So we're cultivating capacities of mindfulness just by paying attention to how we speak and trying to speak in a way that's kind.

Then, after those three steps of the path, the last three steps of the path have to do with taking responsibility now for our hearts, for our minds, for our inner life. Speech, action, and livelihood have to do with our actions in the world? Well, we do. The last three steps have to do with ourselves, our inner life. So, giving some attention to the quality of our mind, the state of our mind that we're in. Is the quality of our mind, the state of our mind, one that is wholesome, helpful, healthy? Or is it not?

And then begin looking. "What I'm doing now with my mind or my heart is not healthy. Can I let go of it? If it's healthy, can I reinforce it? Can I develop it?" So begin looking at, "What is going on in my mind? What's going on in my heart here?" You could find yourself thinking a lot about how angry you are with someone. And you might feel very justified in thinking about that. If you analyze your state of your mind from the point of view of, "Is this healthy or unhealthy for me to have this kind of anger?" chances are you'll find that this is actually unhealthy for yourself to be churning away the anger, anger, anger. It's exhausting.

So is it possible to begin changing the state of your mind, the health of your mind, the health of your heart? So it's a whole thing to talk about this. This is called right effort in Buddhism, but making the effort to take responsibility for the quality of our heart and minds. It's a whole teaching in itself. We'll get into this later. Part of this taking responsibility for the quality of our mind involves cultivating two particular qualities of mind, which are said to be very, very centrally important for the task of becoming free of suffering. And these two qualities are the qualities of mindfulness and concentration.

To cultivate an ability to see more clearly, and to see with the mind as quite stable and still, allows us to begin seeing into the depths of places we know, in the shadows, in the crevices, in the deep, in the cellar of the mind, to really begin understanding things we maybe normally can't understand at all about ourselves, but why we suffer in certain ways. It can be a mystery why we all, you know, certain kinds of, all kinds of suffering can be a mystery. Why do I suffer so much? Why is it so hard for me? Why am I doing this? But you need to have a very mindful, alert mind that has the ability to be still, to be able to get down into the cellar of the mind, deep down to really see what's going on. The more you develop mindfulness and concentration, the more ability you have not to be caught by what's happening. The more

ability you have to stay dignified and balanced in the conditions of the world.

So this is the integrated approach of the Buddha. He called it a path. He said there were eight elements of the path. They can be seen as sequential, you build one on the other, or they can be seen as the intertwining cords of a rope, of a cable, they all go together and support each other. In the end, when there's a distinction being made between the Eightfold Path and what's called the Noble Eightfold Path. And the Noble Eightfold Path is when you have become the path. The path is not something you find, not something you develop, something you're cultivating and working on and developing. But the path is who you are. You are these things. You are the expression of right speech.

It isn't that you practice right speech. That's what comes from you. Right action. You are mindful. This is what you are. You are transformed, so you become it, rather than something that you're cultivating and developing.

The last thing I'll say, part of the beauty of this approach to spiritual life, is that the goal and the means are basically the same. That the means is the Eightfold Path, and the fulfillment of the Eightfold Path is becoming the Eightfold Path. So you're practicing the goal in the means. The means is reflected in the goal, the goal is reflected in the means. The path requires something of us, something we have to walk. No one can walk for you. It requires a dignified approach of being self-possessed, being present, being here, and engaging yourself in these different steps, different aspects, about how can I speak more appropriately, how can I act here right, how can I be more mindful here.

And my hope for each of you is that if you want to walk this path, that you find it ennobling, you find it invigorating, you find it a strengthening of some inner core, some inner sense of being present and alive, where we kind of feel that, "Oh yes, I can't take responsibility for this life I'm living in. I don't have to be a victim to the whims of circumstances. But here I am, present, alert, and responsible. The Eightfold Path is the central way the Buddha talked about the spiritual life. And over the next year, we'll explore that on these Friday Dharma practice days. And in the course of the year, somewhat corresponding to those Fridays I'll periodically be giving talks about each of these eight whole steps and those of you interested in more you'll get periodically over through the year we'll have more talks on this. Okay, so thank you very much.