

6_24_26 Talk*

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Rick Hanson: [00:00:00] When you look back on your own journey of practice, all the way back even perhaps to being very young and you, by practice I mean, started making deliberate efforts in your own mind to both cope with the outer world and in particular to cope with and be with and work with your own minds. That's what I mean by practice. And it could be very, very simple forms of practice in the very beginning. Day than could. Include things like doing some therapy, some psychedelics, some, you know, this and that. I had a lot of background on the human potential movement. I still, I think, have a foot in that world, as well as perhaps formal forms of mind training of different kinds, whether secular or religious, let's say, or contemplative. Anyway, your own journey of practice.

[00:00:53] So I ask you, first question for you is, were there some major turning points for you? For the better and what, when you look back, did they consist of? And maybe might there be some value in dusting off some of the key themes or elements in those turning points and foregrounding them again, you know, returning to your greatest hits as they were things that really helped you along the way. So that's an opening question. And I'll say for myself, when I look back there were I think five sort of major turning points and I'm maybe in the sixth. What? Right now. And one of these turning points will be kind of a centerpiece for our exploration tonight. And first, I recall right around the time our kids were born and young, I was mid 30s, late 30s. And that would be about 35 plus years ago. I started getting serious about Buddhist practice. I got started getting interested in it. I wanted to understand it more. I wanted to learn about it. I wanted to hang out with people who are also interested in it, and just that initial, okay, I'm gonna kinda sorta take this particular path a little seriously. That was a real beginning. Before that, I was, I would say lackadaisical and hit or miss, and kinda sorta maybe interested in some kind of contemplative training, but not really. So that was the first turning, first turning point.

[00:02:25] Second key turning point happened when Christina Feldman a key teacher at Guy House in England and elsewhere, asked a group of people I was in, what about concentration? Whoa. What about in the Buddhist sense? This is not concentrating on your wordles and the New York Times puzzles. This is purifying the mind and really training the mind and entering into increasingly non-ordinary states of consciousness for the sake of your your own path, your own journey. What about concentration? Oh. And so I got interested then in practices that really steadied the mind and began moving into the eighth element of the Eightfold Path, wise or right concentration, which include these four non-ordinary states of consciousness called jhanas. I'm not gonna get detailed about that. I'm just gonna say in general, the turning toward, you know, steadying the mind and taking that kind of seriously. So my question to answer the question, is I'm kind of asking you to reflect on what have been major turning points in your own journey of practice, and what might be valuable for you about reflecting on those. And I'm doing this myself. I'm answering that question for myself. And I've named two turning points so far.

[00:03:49] One, fundamental entry into practice, Buddhist practice in this case, and second, an interesting concentration, just, you know, steadying the mind. Deepening states of consciousness taking meditation really seriously.

[00:04:04] Third major turning point will be my topic tonight was really appreciating the value of positive emotion I'll say more about that in a moment, but the ways in which Emotionally positive experiences including fairly intense ones were major factors on the

path Besides feeling good in a movement. They had much more value than their ordinary hedonistic, you know pleasure in the moment. Wow, they were very cleansing, very purifying, intensely positive, emotionally positive experiences, and they were guides and resources on the journey. Oh, positive emotion, not pushing it away, as many do, unfortunately, in contemplative paths, including in Buddhism, but really making use of these experiences.

[00:04:55] Fourth major turning point for me, I had to do with love and getting more centered in those outflowing qualities of the heart, kind of to balance the previous attention to and focus on in-flowing qualities of practice and just love broadly in many forms. Good heartedness, basic kindness, seeing the good in others, really taking a moment to let others land in the heart. Looking to the being behind the eyes, just being an ordinary, loving person in everyday life. Others do what they do. We can still establish our boundaries. We can stick up for ourselves while resting in a fundamental goodness of the heart. That was a fourth turning for me.

[00:05:41] And then a fifth turning was kind of a refinement of that around generosity in particular, really appreciating generosity, which includes the generosity of restraint. Generosity of letting them finish their monolog before you know interrupting them you know five minutes is long enough though but anyway you know forms of generosity and I think I'm sure I'm there's a six and maybe seventh turning as well but I'll leave those five right there and you might consider those five for yourself if there's anything in particular about them and your own turnings you know might include those some of those five or might be quite different okay.

[00:06:22] So in that context, then, I want to talk about the role of positive emotions or emotionally positive experiences as key steps on the path of awakening. And it's easy to think of Buddhism and maybe some other contemplative paths as well as like a grim and stoic slog, right, kind of with a view of conventional existence as this sort of a trudge, best managed by intense practices of renunciation. Leading to no longer being stuck with this miserable human life. Now that view is pretty widely expressed, and you can find it, including from some pretty senior teachers. Ugh, it's all samsara, ugh, blah, so unsatisfactory, ugh. Well, But is that really what the Buddha taught? I don't think so. I think there are many examples that this is not what he taught.

[00:07:22] So first, while life includes many, we'll call them primary pains. He referred to them as the first darts or arrows of life. You know, physical pain, inescapable physical pain or emotional pain. You know the loss of a loved one or that hurt when someone attacks you or mistreats you. You know more just being. Kind of disgusted morally at, you know, injustice of various kinds. You know, there are some primary pains in this life. Meanwhile though, life includes many primary pleasures, including the deep fulfillments of love and service. So life does include pains, but it also includes pleasures. And there is indeed the secondary suffering identified in the first truth for noble beings, that suffering that we add ourselves. Through our many forms of craving, which is the second ennobling truth. Yeah, there is that secondary suffering that we construct ourselves, we added ourselves to the inherent conditions of life. But because we added to the inherent conditions life, it's not inevitable. And the Buddha offered a detailed path of practice that is highly effective in reducing that secondary sufferin, even to the point of full liberation. From it. That's the first point.

[00:08:45] Second point, that path of practice laid out in early original OG Buddhism is chock full of emotionally positive experiences, both as the fruits of practice and as crucial

necessary beneficial factors on the journey. As factors, these positive emotional states have three particular benefits to them, or usefulnesses. First, they mark important states of being. Tranquility feels good, right? Gladness feels good. Happiness feels good Rapture feels really good because they're good for us. Now sure, if we fall into the pitfall of the second noble truth of craving to these positive experiences, yeah, then we create the first noble truth of the add-on unnecessary suffering we make ourselves. Well, lesson learned. Do you know? Cling less, love more, as I admonished myself after I left a retreat some years ago. You know, yes, don't cling to them, but still we can gain their value.

[00:09:56] So first off, these positive emotions mark beneficial states of being. Second, they don't just mark them like, hey, that's useful. They motivate us to encourage them, to look for them. To stick around when they arise, right? We're more motivated because they feel good. They have reward value. Biologically, that which is emotionally positive attracts attention, that's the marker. And second, that, which is a mostly positive has reward value, and in operant conditioning, it motivates us to pursue it. That's the carrot that the donkey of the mind, you know, keeps pursuing.

[00:10:40] And third... The emotionally positive aspect of beneficial states of beings increases neuroplastic change. So that the, with that which is emotionally positive, increases memory broadly, especially emotional memory and somatic memory, in other words, implicit memory for states of being that are really useful for us. In this way, opening to and turning up the dial on that which is emotionally positive and beneficial states of being, increases their transformation from mere passing states of mind to lasting traits of bodily being. Literally grounded in lasting physical changes in your nervous system, especially in your brain. So we have these three beneficial ways in which emotionally positive experiences are factors. Of healing, growing, and awakening, marking, motivating, and memorizing, or remembering in an emotional and somatic sense.

[00:11:51] So, consider this example. This is a traditional example. Consider how positive emotions can strengthen your grounding in virtue and ethics. Sila, in Pali, language of early Buddhism, you know, one of the three great pillars of practice. Sila. Virtue, morality, restraint, non-harming, appropriate conduct, good behavior, in the best sense, really an important aspect of practice. Very foundational. It's often very much what the Buddha began with. You know, hey, get your quick cause in trouble for others and yourself. Get your feet on the ground, you know, take a higher road. It's kind of where he started off, because it's foundational to practice. Not coming from a shaming, oh, don't be a sinner kind of place, but more from, hey, this is Coach Buddha or Dr. Buddha talking. This is valuable to rest in your, to find your virtue. And there are these three elements in the Eightfold Path that are particularly, particularly focused around virtue, which is to say, right action, right speech, and right livelihood.

[00:13:00] So here's a bit of a teaching from Ajahn Brahmavamso. From his short essay, In the Presence of Nibbana, Developing Faith in the Buddhist Path to Enlightenment. Here's the quotation. When enough days are spent in pure livelihood, pure speech, and pure action, you should notice the result is unblemished happiness inside. In other words, when your conduct is reasonably good, it doesn't have to be perfect, but pretty good, pretty darn good, you should notice that the result is unblemished happiness inside. And then, he continues, turn to that unblemish happiness, recognize that unblemished happiness, and you will be affirmed.

[00:13:55] In other words, as we appreciate the unblemished happiness, the happiness, happiness, which is one of the four that we're exploring here, as we recognize the

happiness that comes from our own virtuous conduct in thought... Speech and deed, ah, that happiness is fuel. That happiness is nourishment and food for the good conduct that we want to preserve and continue and even grow over time. So you can see how that is effected there. Okay?

[00:14:28] So now let's explore four of these key emotionally positive experiences And we'll explore four now. That are not inherently embedded in relationships. And then next week we will explore three key emotionally positive experiences that are indeed embedded in relationship, notably compassion, kindness, and celebrating the welfare of others, being altruistically happy for the happiness of others. But now I'd like to get into the four, gladness, rapture, and rapture is sometimes translated as bliss, tranquility, and happiness.

[00:15:12] Now, these four experiences appear in the Pali Canon, which is the surviving written record, the Buddhist teachings, which were then handed down warily for some centuries before they were finally written down in a form that has survived to this day. So you find these four, right? Gladness, rapture, tranquility, and happiness refer to both as to be experienced in everyday life and appreciated in everyday life, and also to be used and valued as objects of attention in absorption as we become increasingly absorbed in these and strengthen them. And they become increasingly observed in you, cultivating them over time as traits of gladness, trait rapture. Trait tranquility, trait happiness, right? They're referred to in these two ways. And all of this as these functions of marking, motivating, and cultivating these wholesome qualities in us is very consistent with modern neuropsychology. And I'll refer to certain aspects of that as we go along here. In effect, to me, we have this architecture of positive emotions from 2,500 years ago. That's definitely confirmed. There's no argument with it from modern brain science. That's for darn sure. And it's increasingly confirmed with new studies every day. We have this phenomenal architecture of positive emotion that functions as both a roadmap and a toolkit for your own personal journey of healing, growing, and awakening. I just love this stuff.

[00:16:56] And there's all kinds of current research about how these positive emotions contribute to resilience, they strengthen relationships, they support physical health, in part by buffering against the negative effects of stress, and even they confer an independent benefit towards longevity. Happy people live longer, not just because healthier people are happier, but because happier people are healthier and do the kinds of things that help themselves live longer.

[00:17:30] Okay So let's explore this. And I wanna drop into this, as I started doing in the last several talks we've had, by turning to a traditional text, and this text is typically titled, In the Bhikkhuni's Quarter. I also love the fact, consistent with the previous text we explored, that key players here are women, fully practicing in the time of the Buddha. And the previous talks referred to the nun, Damodina. Who was schooling her ex-husband, her former husband, who was a lay practitioner and teaching him some things. And here we have a situation that starts out in which Ananda, the Buddha's primary companion, has gone to visit the Bhikkhunis who were asking Ananda or reporting to him that in their meditation they were entering into very distinctive states of being. And there's some detail in this sutta which is worth reading through in its own right. Is quite short and I think also quite clear. They're making a distinction between being directed and undirected. I'm not gonna get into that here. And there's exploration and complication about entering into positive emotional states of being in different aspects of the four foundations or establishments of mindfulness. I'm gonna get in to that either. I'm going to zero in on just these four states of being themselves with this as a launch pad. Okay?

[00:18:59] So I'm going to start here. I'm gonna read the passage and I've updated it in terms of gendering, the gendering of the language, the traditional language. Here we go. Here Ananda, people dwell contemplating the body in the body. This is the first of the four establishments or foundations of mindfulness, mindfulness of the body and everything that's said here is applied to the other three. Foundations of mindfulness, which is to say awareness of the hedonic tone or feeling tone of experience as pleasant, unpleasant, or neither pleasant nor unpleasant. Third, different states of being globally and fourth, different major themes in the Buddhist path. I'm not going to get into that, I'm just naming it, all right? So people are contemplating the body in the body. They're mindful of the body, ardent, love that word, they're heartfelt. Clearly comprehending and mindful, having removed covetousness. Some other translations might be things like greed or desire, clinging, and displeasure, discontent in regard to the world. They've disengaged from the world, at least to some extent, and are rested in their meditation. While they are contemplating the body and the body, there may arise in them, based on the body. Either a fever in the body or sluggishness of mind, or the mind is distracted outwardly.

[00:20:30] So here we have some traditional meditation instructions. You can, you know, take them for what they're useful for you. The Buddha is then saying, okay, when stuff comes up for you, here's what you can do. And then. Buddha continues, those people should then direct their mind towards some inspiring sign. Now a sign could be anything, inspiring, the tradition, the translation has to do with leading onward. That which leads us toward what is good.

[00:21:05] So bring to mind, deliberately, something that gives you hope, or reassurance, or inspiration. Leads you onward in a good way. When they direct their mind towards some inspiring sign, gladness is born. I'll get into detail about gladness in a minute. When they are gladdened, rapture is born, and I'll into that as well. When the mind is uplifted by rapture, which has this rising, energizing, joyful, even blissful quality, the body becomes tranquil. You know, after it's gotten so excited, it just naturally kinda exhales and settles down. And then one who is tranquil in the body experiences happiness.

[00:22:02] Now... Before I go further, I want to make a very important point. These practices are aspirational. They're forms of training. You know, we look at people gliding down a mountain on these sticks and we go, wow, I'd like to try to do that. And the first time you do, if you're like me, you fall over in the snow. But after a while, you learn a few basics about skiing. You can make your way down the bunny slope and then you get a little more stable and you try an intermediate slope and you can barely make it to the bottom without crashing, but you did, yay. And then you gradually improve from there. So there's an aspirational quality here.

[00:22:42] Second, it is certainly true that under some conditions of the body-mind in which we're, for example, very shocked by something or we're quite seriously clinically depressed or we are very ill. It could be very difficult to self-generate these emotionally positive states of being. In a way that fact is certain, is a kind of rationale for being deliberate in your practice if you're able to access these states of Being to build up emotional memory. So that there's more of them as a trait in you if and when life becomes really challenging. But there's nothing here that's about performance or pushing. The whole point here is exploration and imitation and valuing and not brushing away if they're there and and settling in and landing in them when they're present. Okay? And alongside these emotionally positive experiences which we might develop in our meditation we give a very busy stressful painful difficult challenging life. And over time the increasingly unconditional. Core of Gladness, rapture, tranquility, and a contented inner

peace develops in you that is your refuge increasingly, even amidst a very, very difficult life. The mind of one who is happy becomes concentrated. That's a bit of a technical term here. It means that the person is increasingly entering into Samadhi or deepening, deepening non-ordinary states of consciousness. For a future day to get into here.

[00:24:29] So the mind of one who is happy becomes concentrated. That person reflects thus, the purpose for the sake of which I directed my mind has been achieved. Let me now withdraw that directing-ness. So these people withdraw the mind and do not think or examine. There's not a deliberate cognitive verbally directed process that's going on. They just rest. They understand. Without thought or examination, internally mindful, I am happy. Okay.

[00:25:07] So let's take kind of a quick tour through each of these four all right first Gladness in Pali the word is spelled or is pamoja and Some of you know that already perhaps and I'm going to put that in the chat for your future delight if you care All right. This is the initial upwelling of delight that comes from confidence in the Dharma for example, it could come as well from virtuous conduct, so-called bliss of blamelessness, relief, reassurance, you know, for me it's sort of like the end of the day looking back and not perfect, but you know in all fairness, yeah, I'd give myself an A. A for effort, A for accomplishment, you know, good enough, not an A+, that's okay, but yeah, Solid. Okay. That's a kind of potential bliss, if you can do that for yourself. And in my experience, many, many people have experienced grade deflation in their adulthood after they left school, and that they grade themselves much too harshly. And if you were thinking of another person who had your life and went through your day, swerving away from difficulties, accomplishing doing what you're accomplishing, operating on the basis of generally good intentions. What grade would you give them, you know? And in all fairness, maybe you deserve the same grade, which probably would be an A. This is a kind of a light brightening of the mind and it can occur when you reflect on your practice or hear a teaching. It's a kind relief, a kind confidence. It's not yet that intense. I really love the words relief and reassurance and kind of like, how do you fill with good news? Like, trust. What a relief. Something I can count on. Yeah. I'm trying. The gladness in just knowing that you are trying. Know, can you discern that subtle feeling?

[00:27:28] Tony, I will get to your question. It's a really great one. I'll actually say it right now. When during a manic episode, the quality of elation in and of itself can be very akin to some of the emotionally positive states we're talking about, especially rapture, bliss? Sure. On the other hand, along with, during a manic episode. Those qualities of emotional elation are typically very associated qualities of a kind of irritability, you know, a quick readiness to be frustrated, a grandiosity, cognitive distortions, you know a kind a drivenness, even an impulsivity. These qualities are not present when, as I'll get to it, rapture, which I'm about to get into, is present in the ways that the Buddha is talking about here. It is also true that people deliberately stimulate a certain intensity of emotionally positive experience, if they're vulnerable to true bipolar, to true manic episodes, true manic episode, they can kick one off. And so there are some cautions. The way I think of it is that if there's a range of intensity of positive emotion from one-tenth all the way to ten, be careful of eight, nine, and ten. Maybe it'd be totally thoughtful if you approach a seven, but you know, the lower range, if you can explore it and make use of it and enjoy it alongside those qualities of insight into your own mind and not getting driven in your body, your body stays calm basically. If you can steer clear of the add-ons in a manic episode then yeah, make use of, you know rapture. If it's there for you. So now, rapture. The word for rapture, typically in Pali, is piti or piti, spelled P-I-T-I. Rapture or bliss. You know, the quality of

rapture is that you're really interested. Like, oh, the breath. Oh, the moment. Oh, you know, it's quite energizing.

[00:29:44] Bliss is one of the seven factors of awakening, piti and rapture because it's very energizing it. Kind of when we're, you know, getting lethargic or dull during meditation, it's very enlivening. Yeah, we're turning up the volume, if you will. There's a kind of a key metaphor about PT or Rapture that it's as if we're taking bath salts that are dry powder and we're gradually filling them with water or maybe oil as well so that they form kind of more of a dough. Well, in much the same way, much as the water, let's say, suffuses. Dry powder in such a way that the rapture should suffuse the whole body mind. The Buddha advises it has that sense pervading, suffusing, energizing. There could be surges of a kind of bliss. You know in meditative settings I've experienced extreme forms of rapture where it's like kind of hard to get up off the chair, you know, and after a while it's almost overwhelming like, oh wow. It can get really intense and it's generally held as, you know, as a beneficial thing. Eventually we move beyond it. But yeah, rapture. Wow. So rapture is the most difficult to just drop into in everyday practice. But you might explore fairly mild versions of that rapture or bliss, that just have this quality of arising, you know, of a joyfulness. Even... You know, the possibility of a joyfulness, you know, for no reason. You know my friend, Marcy Shamoff, wrote a book, Happiness for No Reason, Happy for No Reasons. It's kind of even a joyfulness for no reasons. You might kindle some of these qualities of joyfulness or rapture with, you know, inhalation, an intense inhalation. To be explored.

[00:31:43] And then I want to complete my survey. By the ways in which Rapture can then settle back down into tranquility. Search as I might, there is a surprising relative lack of good credible neurobiology underlying these emotionally positive states of being. People point to things like, oh, dopamine signaling or release of natural opioids, kind of like they're waving their. Scientific hands in the direction, as if that's an explanation. I don't know if it's much of one and the distinction between, you know, gladness and happiness and rapture. Like what's going on? It can have an almost orgasmic quality in certain aspects. What's going there? I've yet to find really good explanations. And I just want to name that good opportunities for future PhD dissertations and research. Anyway, tranquility. So concentration on rapture increases it. Yes, really important point there from ND. Each one of these beneficial states or others can be an object of meditation.

[00:33:00] So you can start with something like the breath and gradually settle in to gladness and then take gladness is what you're staying present with, and you're resting your mind in, and you are gradually becoming absorbed in, and you dwelling. Dwelling is a good word. You dwell in gladness, as gladness dwells in you. And then, gladness becomes rapture, and you dwell in rapture as rapture dwells you. And then tranquility, and then happiness, and then even deeper states of concentration. So yes, in fact, as it's kind of like the line I was thinking about recently, what you appreciate, appreciates. In other words, as you rest your mind on gladness, rapture, tranquility, or happiness, your mind gradually takes the shape of what it rests upon as you neurologically gradually hardwire the underlying neurological structures and processes that support those states of being as you hardwire them more stably into your own body. Yeah That's a lot of the point. So tranquility. Tranquility is passadi.

[00:34:15] And by the way, maybe this is a turning for you. I said that second turning for me was around concentration and steadiness of mind and getting really interested in these kind of cool states of consciousness. Not just, you know, enjoy them, they're great, and really appreciate them as factors in easing your pains and sorrows. You might find that

they actually have a benefit. For depressed mood, or anxiety, or irritability, or feelings of shame or loneliness or hurt. Worth exploring in terms of your healing. And then even certainly in terms of growing and cultivating a brightness of mind that leads you further on the awakening path. These are worth exploring. All right, so tranquility.

[00:35:02] Tranquility is also one of the seven factors of awakening. And I recall Joseph Goldstein really emphasizing to a group of us the value of tranquility in practice. You know, the etymological roots of the word in Pali for tranquility involve a settling. It's a little as if in the metaphor I used, that rapture is like, whoa, super waves, yo! You know? And then after a while, it'll be exhausting almost. Like a settling into a still mountain pond. So tranquil, almost undisturbed, like a single drop of water falls onto the surface, ripples spread briefly, and then, whew. Stillness again. That's a nice sense of tranquility. In the passage here the Buddha talks about tranquility of the body in the mindfulness of breathing sutta in the sequence of you could say 16 steps people count them differently occasionally but let's say 16. One of those steps certainly is tranquilizing quote unquote the body and then a little further on there's a tranquilizing of the mind. Brought them both together and I think it's fine to bring both body and mind becoming more tranquil in your own practice. There's a subsiding of any kind of agitation. I love the deliberate release of anxiety because we're very scared monkeys and then we become trained to become more fearful through trauma and a very busy, turbulent, invasive and definitely sometimes scary world we live in. You know, it's really important to just kind of help the scared monkey. Least for a little bit, recognize that it's basically all right right now.

[00:37:07] And a nice way to do that, by the way, if you're focused on tranquility, is to be aware of your diaphragm as you breathe and really bring tranquility to the diaphragm. And as the diaphragm becomes more tranquil as you breathe in the body, deliberately kind of survey your consciousness to see if there's any uneasiness, un-easiness apprehensiveness. Weariness, you know, guarding, bracing, and see if you can relax that as you, you know, retain your knowing of what's happening around you, but you can settle into enjoying the tranquility of feeling basically all right right now. Extremely useful if you have any anxiety in your body-mind. So there's a subsiding of agitation in the body, a quieting of tension, and relaxation and ease moves through the body. Restlessness also subsides. There's a kind of a release of chronic gripping or effortfulness that normally underlies experience. Letting go, it's very close to tranquility, helps us be more tranquil. Ha. Tranquility, so nice.

[00:38:34] And then that tranquility, which is fairly mild in terms of positive intensity by definition, can then spread out into a peaceful wellbeing. The peacefulness of tranquility opens out into this beautiful happiness. The word for happiness in Pali is suka. The sukka is close to Sanskrit as well, Pali and Sanskrit are close. These are the Indo-European roots of the English language. Sukha is the root for sucrose, sugar, that which is sweet. There's a kind of a sweetness in this happiness. I love sukka, I admit it. I'm a sukka kind of guy. It's this quiet, subtle sense of well-being. It's okay. You're okay. And to be clear, sukka can rest alongside anguish at the suffering of so many others. It's not either-or, really. And if anything, your own cultivation of sukka, increasingly unconditionally, hardwired into your body, enables you to open your heart and not be overwhelmed by what compassion opens you to. Sukka is a factor of virtuous conduct. One nice metaphor is that PT is like getting excited. You're thirsty, you're approaching the oasis. Ah, ah, it's going to be so good. And then sukka, ah. It's a calm satisfaction of actually drinking the water. There's a sense of contentment. I am content. I am all right. This is enough. I am enough. Release of discontent. I am content. Very nice, very nice. So you see the progression.

[00:40:39] And then that progression can, of course, lead onward into very deep, non-ordinary states of meditative absorption. And you could enjoy these states of being, explore them in your meditation, and then, you know, kind of... Relax, and come out of meditation refreshed. You can also mark these states of being in everyday life. This, you know, rapture might be a little difficult to access while you're, you know, driving on the freeway, I don't know. But maybe you could find a kind of peaceful happiness while you drive on the freeway. You know, letting go of unnecessary agitation while remaining alert and competent. And I really invite you into this exploration. I think for many people, there's been a sort of a taboo against really enjoying these kinds of experiences of, you know, gladness, rapture, tranquility and happiness. Or maybe there's just been a, oh, you didn't know about them, or you didn't know it was permitted. You didn't even know it was encouraged. The Buddha has encouraged us to deepen our experiences of these four states of being, really, and to become more familiar with them. To learn to track the difference between rapture and happiness, or the difference between gladness and tranquility, as well as other differences. Not to be pedantic about it, but to become familiar, like a chef, in effect. You're becoming familiar with the difference, let's say, between granulated sugar and honey. They're different, they're both on a spectrum of sweetness, but they're different. Or the difference between an orange, a lemon, and a lime. It's useful to track these distinctions.

[00:42:35] My teachers have directed me to be aware of distinctions between important states of being so that you can become more skillful in both being with them and working with them. All right? So I want to leave you here with perhaps an inspiring sign to, you know, draw on what the Buddha has said to us all. You know, as he said to us he has really offered, you know what? A complete teaching. He says again and again, okay, this has been offered to you all. Now, go do your own work. You know, find a place of seclusion, a hut or a place in the forest and establishing mindfulness in front of you and all around you. Do your own work. And even to quote his final words, things fall apart, tread the path with care. And may that care include these delicious, beautiful, helpful, cleansing, healing, positive experiences of, what are they again? Gladness, rapture, tranquility, and happiness. Take good care.