

9_23_26 Talk*

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[00:00:01] In the last talk I talked about the Mahayana, the middle way, the great path of Buddhism and what were some of the key principles there. And I presented on what's called the four karmas, which are the actions of a bodhisattva, or the actions have a protector. And that's within the context of understanding that in the Mahayana path, you have the development of compassion, of skillful means and of wisdom. And it's almost like a mechanism how it works together. That as you practice, as you sit and meditate and develop the ability to stay with your mind and stay with your experience, you do start to see that there's a fair bit of suffering going on in the world, in yourself. And the kindness that you bring to yourself about that radiates out and you connect with other people's suffering and you develop the sense of compassion, of wanting to be able to help, of yearning to be of benefit in the world.

[00:01:19] That yearning, to think of others, to be helpful to others, opens up space because conventionally we're more about protecting ourselves about using different. Techniques of mind to protect our ego, to ward off things that are challenging, to seduce things that you can't ward off or to ignore them if they're too difficult for us. So that drives us in with practice and with a sense of opening to the world. You reach out. As you reach out, you have a natural experience of spaciousness because you're thinking of other people. Within that space, with that spaciousness, that somewhat slowing down of mind, you learn to be able to allow wisdom to arise. You can see, you can see what's actually happening. So that's a really important point. That's the birth of wisdom, of insight into understanding what's going on.

[00:02:27] The next point is, once you see what's going on... Your compassion has illuminated your intention. You become more spacious. You're able to see what's actually happening in the dynamics and in other people and in yourself. And you start to develop skillful means, the ability to actually be beneficial because you can see what it's actually going. And that's the journey that unfolds. That is your life as a practitioner. We don't meditate to become good meditators. We meditate to become good people. So that ability to combine compassion and then have wisdom arise naturally, and then to develop the skillful means, the ability to actually be wise and of benefit, that's the heart of that path.

[00:03:20] So then how do you enact that? You could go back and listen to my last talk, but in a nutshell, the actions are pacifying, enriching, magnetizing, and destroying. These four things. And there's all kinds of numbered stuff that map onto each other in Buddhist practice and teachings. And I'm gonna go into a different one, but I just wanna refresh this one a little bit. So if... In life, you encounter a situation and you're looking for the skillful means. The first thing you can do, and this is working with your own mind or with someone else, could be a little kid who's having a meltdown, it could be someone who's upset about something pacifying, is you encounter the situation and allow space, a certain quality of equanimity. Infusing the situation not with boundaries, but with a large container and you're promoting the development of equanimity within that space.

[00:04:27] As that energy, whatever the energy is that you've encountered, starts to settle somewhat and become more workable because of the equanimities, then it's pass away enriching. And enriching is a quality of Maitri. Of loving-kindness, where you allow yourself to express your care and your loving-kindness for that person. So you're bringing in a sense of care. And in that there's a quality of richness, you could say, of love, of heart.

[00:05:06] Then the next step is magnetizing, where you're pulling out the specific wisdom or the attributes of the situation. What is really going on? Because you've been able to have the quantumist basis, that equanimity, and then you've be able to bring Maitri into it, and that loving kindness, then through compassion, you can start to draw or actually through. Yeah, through the magnetizing you can draw out the wisdom of the situation and the confusion of the situation. You can see what is happening there. And then the last one, destroying. It's a bit of a challenging word. Destroying is the traditional word, but it's really finding a way to help the person let go of the confusion and hold the wisdom. So it could be a smile. Or a warm word or a hug, or it could be no expression on the face. It could be a parent running out into the street to grab their child before they run into traffic. It's letting the confusion go and letting the wisdom remain. So that is a cycle of four called the four karmas, and it's the actions of someone who wants to be of benefit.

[00:06:27] Um, so. That, I go into more detail in the last talk, so it's available and, you know, with AI these days, frankly, you can get all kinds of wonderful teachings on the internet on this. What I want to talk about today is the four immeasurables. So... If the four karmas are a description of the action of a practitioner, the action of a bodhisattva, of someone who wants to be of benefit, the four immeasurables are kind of a description of how you engage, what's the emotion tone, what are the things that you can do, the different ways that you relate to situation, the situations. There's also a thing called the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. And if we have time next week, we'll bring that in as well. So the Four Foundations of mindfulness, the Four Immeasurables and the Four Karmas all really function to help you understand how you're working with your mind, why you're meditating and how you can take that strength of mind and the care and kindness to yourself that comes with meditation and apply that to your life as a whole. So I want to try to make that real or share with you my perspective on how that works.

[00:07:56] So I think the starting point with the four immeasurables is equanimity. So. Equanimity is a quality of being in relationship and not shying away from relationship. Being able to actually connect and engage and... Not judge. And that can mean not judging the judging. Because our minds work. You know, ego functions. Ego is not a person or a thing or a demon. EGO is a mechanism of mind that serves to try to self-identify, to build a sense of our own identity and solidify that to protect us from things that challenge equanimity. Is developing a relationship with all of that and being able to have some sense of stability of that relationship, understanding that at the heart of it is a sense of warmth, a sense care, a sense gentleness and compassion that whatever arises in mind, in your mind, is worthy of being cared for, is worthy. You are worthy. And your basic nature is perfect. Amazing, brilliant, luminous reality. And there's just these clouds of confusion that overlay that.

[00:09:35] The more you start to get glimpses through your meditation of how you can be kind to yourself, the more you started to connect with that Buddha nature, with that unsullied, perfect reality that is the truth of every single human being, of every sentient being. So equanimity is tuning into that and developing a relationship that's very accepting, very stabilizing. It's the birth of developing a meditation that is vivid, stable, and clear. And it's a long journey and it goes in and out. And some days your mind is like, ah, and other days your minds super chill. All of that is worthy. All of is wisdom. All of it is worthy of your care and your kindness, your appreciation.

[00:10:25] So, if equanimity is the basis for developing the four measurables, a relationship with the emotion tone of your mind and of other people, understanding other people. The

next one is loving-kindness. Loving-kindness is a quality of caring for other people. You wish happiness for other people. You wish well-being for other people. And there are techniques, there are ways for developing that. And next week we'll touch in on some of the practices for developing each of the four immeasurables.

[00:11:12] The loving-kind-ness is as simple as. A simple practice would be visualize in front of you someone you really love. And then visualize someone you do not know, just somebody you bumped into or you saw on the street or whatever, and then someone you're really, really dislike. All three of them are there before you. And you can start with the person you really love and feel that. Wish happiness for them, wish wellbeing for them. Then extend that to the person you don't know, the stranger, neutral to not caring. And try to generate within yourself a sense of understanding that whatever their life is, they have the same quality of confusion and wisdom and suffering, and you want the best for them and as you build this, you're generating a strength of mind and of heart. The ability to think these good thoughts for people. And then you extend that to someone you really don't like. And you, it can be an exercise of mind where you actively think through the reason this person does things that are painful is because they're confused, you know? There's no such thing as evil. There's energy and confusion. And when you've got a lot of both of them. Really bad things can happen, really unfortunate things can happened. So if you can understand that and kind of deconstruct what is causing that person to act in that way, then you can start to develop empathy and care for their situation.

[00:13:00] So as you develop for each of these three people, the person you love, the person that you don't know, the stranger, and the person who you don't like. Developing that sense of wishing happiness and well-being for all of them, all three of them becomes a strength of heart and a strength of mind and then you can extend that out to all beings. So that would be loving kindness and you know that all started with your own meditation and with being kind to yourself.

[00:13:30] So I just saw a question come up of confusion. What does confusion mean? It's a great question. Thank you. Confusion is basically you think you're going to get happiness out of this. You think you're gonna be happy. It's like if you think about smoking, I used to smoke. And my impression was cigarette gave me happiness. What the cigarette gave was a cessation, temporary cessation from suffering. My addiction stopped. And I was pacified. People think something's going to make them happy, but often it causes them and other people's suffering. So confusion is misunderstanding the nature of joy, the nature, of happiness and how you can go about getting that.

[00:14:22] Okay, so we talked about compassion and space, wisdom and skillful means. We talked a little bit about the action of a bodhisattva, pacifying, enriching, magnetizing, and destroying. And now we're talking about, and to be clear, those are actual templates of how you can relate to situations. So it's interesting to contemplate these. If you're in a situation and you're feeling overwhelmed, you can actually think, well, what is the necessary energy here? Where do I start? That can even be with yourself. And often that sense of spaciousness of allowing the energy to pacify is really helpful. Okay, and then we talked about the four immeasurables, and we started with the first one, loving-kindness, and the exercise of wishing happiness and well-being for all beings, without limit, for every single being, every single sentient being on this earth, and sentient beings encompass a lot of stuff. Yeah, it's a really important one. It's an interesting exercise to pick people that can really upset you in politics or in any other way. People who've done heinous things and to really look at why are they doing this? What is the confusion that is at the heart of

that? And then develop compassion and loving-kindness for them. And remembering the equanimity is at the base of all this.

[00:16:13] The next one of the four immeasurables, equanimity, loving-kindness, the next one is compassion. So that's more about empathizing with pain and wishing to remove the suffering of others. So if loving-kindness is encountering someone, could be yourself as well, and wishing the best, that's developing that capacity to wish the best for everybody. Compassion. Is where you encounter some suffering, overt suffering, and you bring, you open your heart to that situation. You open your to that person's pain, and you empathize with that pain. You allow yourself to touch it, to feel, and through that empathy, to try to understand what's going on, and you develop a desire for that pain to end. So there are practices that we'll look at next week where you can actually develop in your mind an experience of someone else's suffering and you take that on. It's called Tonglen and Pema Chodron writes incredibly eloquently about Tonglen if you know Pema chodron and has detailed descriptions of how you go into that. But the essence of it is you visualize someone who is suffering or causing suffering and you draw that into yourself, you transmute that into white light, into clarity, into joy, and you send it back to them. So you exchange another person's suffering, you bring it into yourself and you give them back peace and goodwill and happiness and such. Yes, it's Every now and then I catch something in the comments, and Tonglin is like being an air purifier for suffering. Thank you, Jovi. And yes, that is completely accurate.

[00:18:17] So. Sympathetic joy is the next one. And sympathetic joy is a very interesting one. It's when someone is sharing a joyful experience, when someone has a good thing happen, you rejoice in that. You take pleasure in other people's good fortune and other people joy. Okay, that's... Can sound kind of simple. And again, remember the point of all of these things is not only to be developing the skill of being able to do this, the heart strength and the strength of mind to be able to hold to these thoughts, to give rise to them in the moment, to apply the practices, to apply the teachings, it's also to familiarize yourself with the subtleties of what's going on. And what some of the confused aspects are.

[00:19:21] So, for example, with sympathetic joy, one confused aspect could be envy or jealousy. And that's kind of a further out, it's the opposite of sympathetic joy when you're just like, damn, I wish I had that. I wish that that was my experience and I'm jealous of that person. That's the, it's called the far enemy. A nearer enemy would be a quality of kind of smarmy, you're saying the right things, but you're not really, it's more a facade and you're doing it to be seen as a nice person, but you are not really wishing, taking joy out of the other person's experience. So it's a continuum of subtle distortion and confusion. Around what can be a really wonderful experience of feeling sympathetic joy for somebody. Jovian, what did you write here? Sympathetic joy is, oh, I lost it. Oh well.

[00:20:31] So each of the four immeasurables, equanimity, loving-kindness, compassion, and sympathetic joy have their confused kind of continuum of distortions. We talked about what sympathetic joy is, that sense of jealousy. With equanimity, it could be indifference. You just don't care. And that one is a really good one to contemplate because we can feel sometimes as if we're being kind of equanimous about a situation. But really what's happening is we don't care. It just doesn't get on our radar, it's not a thing. Equanimity is more about the ability to encounter any situation and have stabilization of mind. So yeah, not detachment. Detachment is disengaging from a situation.

Speaker 1 [00:21:31] As a practitioner, there's a physical metaphor in how we hold our bodies during meditation, that the spine is strong in the back holding us up, and the front is

soft and open. Things are allowed to touch us. We become sensitive, so, so sensitive that it's like your heart is completely open and you can feel the breeze in the room. Brush past your heart, that sensitive, that open hearted and caring to people and that brave and courageous to allow yourself to feel that much. And it can take time, you know, and you want to be gentle with how you do that with yourself. But that strength that gives rise out of your meditation and develops true equanimity that isn't just, I don't give a damn, sort of detached, so what? Because for each of these, loving kindness, compassion, and sympathetic joy, you want to have a stable base of equanimity. It is what allows you to give rise to those attitudes of loving kindness of compassion, of sympathetic joy. I feel like I've said a lot and presented a lot of material. And I'd like to see if there are questions. Yeah, we're a little early for the questions, but I think I'd like to start questions now because this material maps on, but sometimes it can get a little confusing in the delivery. And sometimes I talk quickly when I get excited about stuff. So let's do open mic. So Kathleen, are you able to recognize that people have their hand up and we could open up for them?

Speaker 2 [00:23:37] Yeah, and before we do that, Mary Lynn just wrote another question and it was something similar to something she'd written before, and it's at 7.08. Oh no, I'm sorry. Yes. Earlier in the talk, you mentioned that equanimity is the way, not boundaries. Can you explain this more thoroughly? So that might be a good place to start. What do you think?

Speaker 1 [00:24:04] Sure. So healthy boundaries are a gift. I think that's a really important starting point. You know, if you are in a relationship with someone and you know their confusion leads them to transgress in some way to establish a boundary as a healthy psychological phenomena and to have those in your and to understand this is what is acceptable to me. That's a very reasonable, very healthy thing. Expressing it clearly is a gift to another person. What I'm talking about, the difference between boundary and what was the question again, just to make sure. I have to go back, sorry.

Speaker 2 [00:24:51] Amen.

Speaker 1 [00:24:52] Equanimity not boundary.

Speaker 2 [00:24:54] Yeah. You mentioned that equanimity is the way, not boundaries. Can you explain more thoroughly? Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Speaker 1 [00:25:01] So this is the application of boundary in a different way, in confused boundaries, where the boundary serves to protect your ego. And again, ego is not an entity, ego is a sentient being, ego is set of processes that serve to solidify our sense of self. And they do it through certain mechanisms. I think I mentioned, they're called the three poisons. You can, if something is threatening your sense of your identity as being permanent, real, et cetera, you can try to ward it off aggressively, the energy of aggression to fight it off. If that doesn't work you can, try to seduce it into you so it supports your sense of identity and if that doesn't work you could try to just ignore it. So those would be examples of kinds of boundaries that are unhealthy boundaries. So not the healthy psychological boundaries, but the boundaries that limit your ability to perceive and to let the world touch you. Letting the world to touch you is necessary to really understand equanimity, because if the world isn't touching you, if you're not in communion with the world, there's nothing to be equanimous about. There's no threat, you're just sitting in yourself saying I am, I am I am and you're isolated.

Speaker 3 [00:26:35] Okay, is that clear?

Speaker 2 [00:26:40] Question for you. We've got a lot of comments and questions in the chat. Do you need to pose some of those to you? Or would you other people raise your hands and

Speaker 1 [00:26:53] That's fine, Kathleen. You've got more experience with this than I do. So if that feels right, then let's go with that. You can curate the questions.

Speaker 2 [00:27:01] All right, I'll do my best to do that. Okay, there's a question from Annie at 7-Eleven. What is the relationship between your explanation and the four immeasurable in Mahayana? May all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness. May all Beings be free of suffering and the causes of suffering. May all beings never be separated from the joy that is without suffering, and may all beings reside in equanimity.

Speaker 1 [00:27:35] Yeah, so that is the practice of developing that that actually is something we'll do next week and you start with wishing the best for yourself and Then you extend out in circles to those around you My golden retrievers right down here and it's super easy for me to wish him a really happy good life and then I extend it out into the neighborhood then I identify people that have pissed me off, you know, people that I think are harming the world and I keep extending the circle out and out and out and wishing them happiness and the root of happiness and that's a practice and then eventually you expand all the way out to all sentient beings in existence There's a question I saw that came to me privately that was just asking about even world leaders who committed terrible crimes. They're not evil, they're confused. And I would say evil is a concept. Evil is, it can be used in lots of ways. Any word has a definition and you develop your own vocabulary, your lexicon. What does evil mean to you? If you're solidifying evil is like a thing that you can hold, you know, there was that movie where there was time bandits and they found a lump of ultimate evil, you know, that doesn't exist. People get confused, they think they're going to be happy with a certain thing and that can be heinous acts or they think they're doing it out of a sense of some other value that transcends kindness, you know, miss mistaken, misunderstood duty.

[00:29:25] There can be all these different conceptual reasons that people solidify and then allow to guide their actions in ways that are deeply confused, that do not create joy, that did not create foster compassion or empathy, that cause people suffering and pain. So I would say it's an incredible exercise to pick the worst person you can think of. And extend this practice to them. You know, and you can build to that. Doesn't have to happen right away. I went through a painful divorce some years ago. And I'm not saying my ex was a terrible person, but I was really hurt and upset. And so I did the Tonglen practice for her for half an hour a day for months and months and month. And it was really painful and really hard, but you know, there was a result. That, you know, in keeping that in my practice, I eventually loved her. I can't say that I liked her, but I loved her, and that was an important part of my process of working through my divorce, my divorce and the pain that happened there.

Speaker 2 [00:30:42] Thank you for that personal share. Lisa, you may have just answered this, at least in part, but Lisa at 709 said, how do we achieve these four things, compassion, etc.? Do we meditate on each one at a time or fake it till you make it?

Speaker 1 [00:31:05] It's all of those things. We'll go over practices that support the development of these attributes, and some of them are things that you can do in the moment, and some are things you can practice on the cushion. I think the most important

thing is being gentle with yourself, Being kind to yourself. Doing the meditation practice so you develop strength of mind so that you can continue being kind to yourself so that can allow experience to actually arise so that really see what is going on in your mind. And how can you bring kindness and wisdom to what is doing on? And through doing that with yourself, then you can do it with other people. And these teachings, They broaden the spectrum of what that means, okay? In coaching, in some forms of coaching, there's this teaching around, you don't tell someone what they're missing, you help them see what they haven't seen by asking questions. It's called a break in transparency, something that was transparent to the person up until that point. And you walk them through their questions, through your questions until they see. What was happening. What we're trying to do for ourselves through meditation and then through studying and practicing these various teachings is we're allowing ourselves to see more deeply, to see, more richly in a more informed way that is informed by kindness and strength of mind.

Speaker 2 [00:32:55] Thank you. Michael, Jovian at 705, I think it is, makes a comment. And you might want to comment on this. Sympathetic joy is very antithetical to a lot of what we're taught in Western society to envy the successful and want what they have. Do you have a comment to that?

Speaker 1 [00:33:19] I think it's true, you know, I think there's, it's not antithetical to every virtue in the modern world or in the Western world or in any world. You know, wisdom will find its way to manifest, but there can be a lot of things that make it difficult to connect with that wisdom. There is something kind of problematic about having a society where one of the chief virtues is being able to extract something from the earth, make it into something, sell it, have it destroyed, throw it away, get another one. That's not a super great set of values to have as some of our pinnacle values that arise in a capitalist system. There's some really cool things that can happen in capitalism and some, you know, wonderful inventions and you know it's not, I don't want to throw the baby out with the bath water, but having that sense of extraction utilization and disposal is not the ultimate value, should not be the ultimate crowning achievement in a life. So yeah, there are problems with modern society, but it's workable, you know, we can work with it. We can change our minds and then, you know, through lighting that candle, we can help other people.

Speaker 2 [00:34:45] There was a question about how to help a practice that can help with self-doubt, Annette, at 7.18. Suggestions?

Speaker 3 [00:34:58] Mm-hmm, yeah, self-temp.

Speaker 1 [00:35:09] I think it depends a little bit on what you're doubting. To question things is great. If doubt means that you're questioning things, that's healthy. And to be respected and to follow the line of question of inquiry. If self-doubt is about, I think I'm just a bad person, or I think I'm not good enough, that warrants exploration to see where that's coming from. And, you know, depending on the strength of that self-doubt, some... Modern Western approaches to psychotherapy and counseling can be super helpful in just unpacking what's behind that, you know, why is that part of your function? If it's not such an overarching problem, you could do certain kinds of energy practice. They come out of Qigong or other things, raising wind horse practices, if you look those up. Those are ones where you kind of take your posture. It's very similar to the bowing that we did earlier. You, you know, take your seat. And in taking your seat before you bow, you're presenting all of you. You're fully saying, this is me. And then you offer that up as a worthy gift to the world. That's the act of bowing. You're giving everything of you, the things you like, the things that you don't like, the things to respect, the things your hide and feel terrible about. All of it is

worthy as a gift. To the world because it is your journey, it is the nutrients of your journey. And then you arise from that and what happened? You know, that's the exploration, that the question. When you valued your experience enough as the essence of your and the key fertilizer for your ability to be of benefit, you offer that up and give it to the world. And then you arise back up into your posture, ready to meditate or move on in your day. What is happening in your mind? You've raised that energy up. That's a moment to pay attention to in some kinds of doubt of, you're perfect. You've just got a few things to work on, you know. It's a really important thing to remember when doubt of that kind hits.

Speaker 2 [00:37:59] How about Kate at 718? And this is going back to Tanglin, and I think you said you're going to delve more deeply into Tanglin next week, but I'll share the question. Is Tanglin for oneself or for the person who may have wronged you and maybe doesn't deserve the white light? Yeah. There we go. We've all felt that.

[00:38:26] That's a loaded question. What does it mean to deserve anything? You know, and why would what someone deserves be the motivating or defining characteristic or attribute of your actions? Why would you give anyone else the power to affect how you express your love. You know You govern your love, you govern your care. People don't deserve to suffer. Hopefully they can come out of their confusion. There's a judgment implicit in what does someone deserve that is not about equanimity. A judgment is that's good, this is bad. And good and bad are primitive concepts that don't take into account the cycle of suffering that has created all the problems that we're experiencing. So try to hold to that notion that within every single being is a perfect seed, perfect jewel, and you may not be able to uncover it and they may be causing enormous suffering but it's still there. So with that view, Tonglen is about both. Tonglen as a practice and it has an impact on you. It has an effect. It's a good effect. If you practice it and you connect with the practice and you find that it helps you in these ways of developing these qualities, then it's definitely something to do for your benefit. But at heart, you keep giving that benefit away.

Speaker 1 [00:40:16] And... There are people who say that prayer and these other kinds of practices actually do have an effect on someone, on the person, the object of your meditation, of your tonglen. Be that as it may, maybe that's true to some degree, maybe it's not. What you're putting out in the world is of value. And the more that you put beneficial thoughts that are helpful to others and to yourself, you've met those people that do that. You're probably one of those people yourself. It's a different experience when you meet someone who's closed, feels threatened by the world, feels they have to push in and be angry and boss people around or whatever, or someone who's open and is generous with their heart. And that's the power you're developing with Tonglen is that generosity of heart and that essential kindness. And it's an incredible strength. It's an incredibly strength that makes such a difference in the world, and you know it when you meet it. You know, you see it in the people who do those kinds of practices or maybe just have that as Fortunate upbringing and that's how they are. And it's just like a cool person to be around So It's for both but Hold more to it's for the rest of the world. That's the motivation If something is feeling like, you know, I'm doing this for me too much. Just let that dwell Let it go away go back to being a benefit

Speaker 2 [00:41:48] Michael, because we're almost at the half hour, I'm going to ask a follow-up question, which maybe others are wondering. Are there times when one shouldn't do tonglin? I'm thinking if one is depleted, or does it actually create a positive energy within oneself, whatever the state is that I might be in?

Speaker 1 [00:42:14] Yeah, I think that's a great question Because there are definitely times where you know Trying to meditate of any kind is not you know, it's going to be counterproductive for whatever reason and Going for a walk could be much better medicine having a nap could be better medicine for you That's why you want to develop this subtle understanding of your mind. That's what you want, to have clarity that there's no good and no bad meditation session. There are meditation sessions and any kind of experience you have in meditation, and then by extension in your life, is an opportunity to become familiar with yourself and to learn how to be kind to yourself and clear and develop strengths of positive attributes. And then to be able to use that for other people. So absolutely, there are times where, you know, don't meditate, don't go to the cushion, do what you gotta do, you'll get back to the question, you'll go back to your practice. You're not giving it up just because sometimes you make a really informed choice and it's like, I just need to do this other thing. We have busy lives and you can trust yourself that you'll back to it. And more so, you can trust yourself if you don't go on the guilt trip of like, I'm a bad meditator. I should be spending more time on the cushion and blah, blah, blah. Um, you know, the kindness infuses and then inspires.

Speaker 2 [00:43:48] So, I can ask you one more question that somebody posed or, okay, how do you love someone that you don't like?

Speaker 1 [00:43:58] Uh, I think that's referring to my, uh, I think you're sharing. Yes. Um, it's deeply experiential. Um, I'll put some words to it, but whether they'll mean anything to anyone else, I don't know. Um, so I was very hurt after my divorce. And you know, in retrospect, blame, like I was hurt, you know. She was hurt. We were both hurt. And we were suffering. I took it personally and felt my pain personally and at first I was really angry and you know throughout I could still if I let myself I could generate irritation or anger about it. What the Tong Lin allowed me to do through exchanging self for other and I was so incredibly grateful for the practice and for the experience of being that angry and that hurt. And having something to do to use Tong Lin for, because it gave me an experience that I'd never been able to have with Tong Lin previously. I'd always felt kind of wooden with Tong Lin. The not liking her was, I fundamentally, I didn't want to see her. It's not like I wanted to hang out or get her advice or chat about something or share an experience or break bread. There was no sense of like, I'm drawn to her. But there was this glowing, radiant feeling of just love. Just care. It was inexpressibly delightful. And it was fragile, because I'd come out of a half hour session, and over the course of the day, I'd feel the effect diminish until my storylines started to beef up and I'd be like, how about it? Then drag myself on the cushion the next morning and do various practices and then have a half-hour tonglen session at the end and generate this love again. And that cycle of doing that over and over and over for months is just one of the most powerful dharmic experiences I've ever had of understanding how love and practice and care it doesn't give you something solid that you can then put in your pocket and say I've healed, I fixed that. You keep working at it but it becomes more natural, it becomes more instinctive and it grows and it permeates your life and your experience. As I said before, similar to like ink soaking into paper and gradually the paper fully absorbs that color. My paper hasn't fully absorbed the color, the color to be clear. But, you know, little bits and pieces.