

An Eightfold Path Leads to the End of Anxiety (Talk from 6/16/21)

Rick Hanson [00:00:00] So, as I mentioned at the beginning, I'm going to talk with you now about the fourth of the Buddha's primary teaching offering, summarized in these noble truths. And I'm going to apply that—as soon as I clear my throat—to anxiety. OK, so here we go. And I do hope to make room for comments and questions toward the end, and you're very welcome to send me comments in the chat sidebar. I tend to be able to glance out and see them along the way. All right. So, here we go. As you probably know, I've been exploring—I'm going to explore—the four noble truths this year. And I'm doing an overview introduction in the first four through the lens of anxiety. There are a lot of things to be worried about, right, in anybody's individual life and even in our society and world altogether. How can we apply these four truths that the Buddha offered to the various things that we have fears about or concerns about, including concerns on behalf of other people? So that's what I'm exploring here.

[00:01:25] The Buddha's four noble truths, essentially, is has very practical teaching about why we become stressed and unhappy and what we can do about it. That's really the whole point. Let's see. I have explored so far the truth that sometimes we're anxious. Sometimes there is suffering. The second truth, that craving in the broadest sense, can make us anxious. The third truth that there, in fact, can be a cessation, there can be an ending to our worries, our contraction, and other kinds of suffering. And as I said, you could take a look at the notes that I put in the chat just at 6:45 p.m., where you can listen to and or see those previous talks if you want.

[00:02:16] Tonight I'm going to focus on anxiety through the lens of the fourth noble truth: that there actually is a path, there is a medicine for our illness, there is a solution to our problem, there is something we can do that has eight key elements in it. And that is going to help us get to an ultimate liberation from anxiety and all forms of suffering with less and less anxiety along the way. I'm going to cover a lot of ground. I'm going to keep on going. I will try to take into account the comments and questions that have come in. Hopefully, there will be a chance to talk live with one or two of you before we're done tonight at 7:30. But fear not, we'll be coming back to these themes again and again. This is the work of a lifetime. And I hope you don't get anxious about not getting every little thing I'm saying about anxiety. Okeydoke.

[00:03:10] So, the Eightfold Path. The Buddha has been likened to a doctor who recognizes the illness, diagnosis it and its underlying basis, and then prescribes a cure. He's also been likened to a teacher, someone who helps us understand what afflicts us and teaches us different ways to deal with it. I think of him a lot, and I mean this with great respect, as a coach, as a coach who helps us become more skillful and is encouraging. Sometimes firm, hopefully celebrating our progress, cheering us on, and providing an example in his own being of what we can do ourselves. And I can think of other teachers and other traditions and certainly other teachers and people we may know in the Buddhist tradition in a similar way, as a physician, teacher, and coach.

[00:04:08] Now, the Eightfold Path is a path. And I want to make a contextualizing comment here. Last week, I drew on a metaphor that emerged several centuries after the Buddha passed away as Buddhism moved through Tibet into China and further into Asia. And it was a metaphor of awakening and the process of awakening is like a cart with two wheels. Each of the wheels has an important engine of awakening following two tracks. The first of these wheels involves what I call developmental change. Developmental change in which there is a gradual purification, a gradual training, a gradual cultivation in

which we release. We let go of those things inside ourselves that creates suffering and harm. And we create, we cultivate, we protect, we grow, we preserve those things in us that create happiness and welfare for ourselves and other people. This is a very important track.

[00:05:13] Additionally, the other wheel involves the recognition of the original nature, the deep underlying nature of ourselves individually as aware, wakeful, fundamentally seeing things, wise, calm, warm hearted, peaceful, and content. And by extension, more broadly in the second wheel that follows the second track, there's a recognition of that same original nature in everything and the ways in which we partake of all of it all of the time.

[00:05:54] These two wheels support each other. We might swing back and forth from one to the other, but both are good, certainly. And traditions that poo-poo one or the other, I think, are problematic. The Eightfold Path and practicing with the Eightfold Path primarily involves the first wheel. It's a process of developmental change over time. Therefore, it's important to balance yourself when you're working with the Eightfold Path to bring awareness again and again, as I'm trying to do increasingly in my own practice. I was really good at the first wheel. I'm now trying to learn more about the second one, to balance yourself and to draw on the resources of recognizing the ways in which you're already just fine, you're already whole, you're already enough. There is nothing to fix or improve in your fundamental being and you are already one with timeless mystery. That can really help you as you engage a process of appropriate developmental change.

[00:06:58] Second framing point, the elements of the Eightfold Path—which I'll get into in a moment—they work together and they can all be kept in mind in daily life. It's not like you start with number one and work your way to number eight in some kind of a sequence. I think of it more like a piece of music in which all the instruments are continuously playing, forming the whole of the music, the whole of the symphony, let's say, the whole of the song. Even though from time to time, one of those instruments, you know, the flute here, the drums there, comes forward more into the foreground from time to time. And in that way, one or more of the eight elements of the Eightfold Path can, you know, be your particular focus at a particular time.

[00:07:43] Third key point, kind of as an introduction here, the Eightfold Path or each of the elements in it are prefaced with the word in Pali, Samma, S-A-M-M-A, and that word is variously translated as what is right, what is proper, what is skillful, what is fitting, what is appropriate. Not in some kind of right equals I'm always right, I'm more right than you. Not in the sense of right as righteousness. No. More in the sense of, you know, that feeling like if something fits just right. Think of the Goldilocks, you know, place. You know, it's just right. Not too tall. Not too short. Not too hot. Not too cold. Just right. It has that feeling in it. If you like, you can use another word. Sometimes wise is used as the prefix to each of the eight elements. But I'll use right, here. OK?

[00:08:41] So, here are the eight elements of the Eightfold Path, which I think are best understood as activities, as things we do. They're verbs, not nouns. Fundamentally, these are practices and I'll name them now. Right view, so the practice of right view; right intention; right speech; right conduct; right livelihood; right effort; right mindfulness; and right concentration. So, we have view, intention, speech, conduct, livelihood, effort, mindfulness and concentration. In the months ahead, I will explore these—we'll be exploring these in great detail—so I'm not going to get into all the detail right now. But even just as I named them, maybe there's one of these that calls out to you, maybe two of these, as something to really focus on in your practice these days. I'm paying a lot of

attention to right speech these days. And one of the personal kind of admonitions I've taken upon myself is not to speak or act from contraction. It's not that I don't feel contracted sometimes. Not yet enlightened, you know, entirely in every cell of my body. There is some that contraction occurs from time to time, but not to speak from contraction, which sometimes involves pausing until I can find a way to say what there is to say or not say anything at all, but without a contraction in it. So, that's something I'm working on these days. And you might think of something among the eight that you'd like to foreground for yourself in particular these days.

[00:10:40] So, noting that I'll get into the details of these, you know, down the road, I will make a kind of a key point here in which these eight can be clustered into three major groups. And these three major groups correspond to what are called the three pillars of practice in the Buddhist tradition. And interestingly, for example, I had a conversation with a friend of mine, Professor Andy Dreitcer, a professor of Christian contemplative practice, who as he was learning about Buddhism actually, some years ago, we were talking about this one time, he said, "Oh yeah, in Christian contemplative practice, in certain key traditions, they have words that are almost like these three major clusters," which I'll get into right now.

[00:11:26] The first of these is called Sila. Sila is Pali for virtue, restraint, morality. And in this cluster, we find right speech, right conduct, right livelihood. Sila. The Sila cluster. Then we have the Samadhi cluster. Samadhi in Pal, it's very close to the word in Sanskrit as well, for concentration, meditation, healing your mind, healing it deeply down to the belly and bones, and forming deep, meditative absorption as well. So, in the Samadhi cluster, we have right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. And then we have Panna, translated typically as wisdom. Panna, wisdom, insight, recognition of impermanence, recognition of interbeing, recognition of what causes suffering and what causes it to come to an end. So, Sila, Samadhi, Panna, I'll say virtue, concentration, and wisdom.

[00:12:43] Now, while the path is a whole, as I said, you know, all the eight elements are involved in the, you know, along the way, still, often there's a kind of sequence, a natural developmental flow that occurs for a particular person that moves through those three clusters, with one being more emphasis than another at different times. And the kind of typical progression often is to begin with Sila, to begin with establishing a basic decency and non-harming in our behavior, including toward ourselves. We can lay a foundation. We cool our jets. We stop throwing so much gasoline on the fire. We kind of get more regulated, not uptight, not stiff, but more regulated. Metaphor, classically, is, you know, like the strings of the lute, of a guitar, not too tight nor too loose. We find that kind of Sila. And then progressively, we move into deepening stability of present moment awareness of training the mind. We move into purifying ourselves and even having illuminating non-ordinary moments of insight. Thus, Samadhi. From Sila to Samadhi and then to Panna, to wisdom, to liberating insights into the deep causes of suffering and into the empty nature of all phenomena. Sila, Samadhi, Panna.

[00:14:15] You might ask yourself of one of these clusters is particularly appropriate to focus on these days. One thing I'll say and that I've learned from my friend and teacher Leslie Booker, known as Booker, who has been a guest teacher here as well, is that sometimes people skip over the Sila step. They just want to jump into deep dharma, you know, deep Panna, deep wisdom. Give me the highest teachings. I want it now. But meanwhile, they don't really have their act together deeply. And in fact, we've seen numerous painful, painful, so harmful, unfortunate, and consequential situations in which teachers who have a lot of Panna, a lot of Samadhi, and a lot of Panna, deep wisdom,

deep concentration, even sometimes what can feel like almost mystical powers, their Sila is unregulated. It's not well-established enough, and they get into trouble abusing, molesting, deeply harming their clients or caught up in addictive intoxication of different kinds. So, it's very important, you might ask yourself, are there any loose ends, are there any flapping windows through which your life force is leaking or through which harms are invading your mind and remaining that have to do with not really establishing that basic platform, that basic foundation of right speech, right conduct, and right livelihood. OK.

[00:15:50] So, now to the meat of my presentation with that as the foundation, and I'm—great. Yeah. Maybe some of you—yeah, that was right. It was before the break. Wendy is putting in the links for the previous talks and you can, you know, kind of look back at that and read my notes if you want, and I'll post the notes for this talk as well at the same location, you know, in a day or so. OK.

[00:16:15] So, now I'd like to approach the Eightfold Path in a, I think, maybe a little innovative way. I don't know. In a kind of cross-sectional way. So, if we have eight, you know, elements, eight practices, let's say, things to do, I'm going to approach these building on what we did in the meditation in terms of what I consider to be the three fundamental modes of practice, the three ways to productively engage our own mind: letting be, letting go, and letting in. Now this will give us in—and my children, of course, are laughing at me right now—a three by eight matrix, which there are three ways to practice with each one of the eight elements of the Eightfold Path. That's a matrix, yikes, with 24 elements in it. I am not going to get into the detail of that. You might like to play around with this on your own if you want. Please don't send me a thousand or 10,000 word email about this. Publish it on your own. It's all good. But I think it's kind of cool to actually explore this possibility.

[00:17:27] It will help if you have something specific, maybe a particular anxiety, a particular focus that you have, a particular worry about a threat to your safety, or a frustration you have, or a loss of connection or fears about connection with other people. It'll help if you have something concrete in particular as I go through this right now. OK???

[00:17:50] I'll use the metaphor throughout as your mind like a garden. And let's say that there are some anxiety there, something you're worried about. Or maybe to avoid anxiety, to avoid the anxiety of risking the dreaded experience, you've hunkered down too much. You've locked yourself behind the bars of an invisible cage to avoid certain things that scare you. Hmm. Maybe that's something to explore here as well. So, see if you can find something particular. Here it is. There is anxiety. It's not bad. It may serve a useful purpose, hopefully. It may not. And still past its useful purpose there's suffering in it. Doesn't feel good. The anxiety, this may well crowd out other things that are beneficial for you. In effect, in the garden of your mind, it's a kind of weed. It's a kind of weed. Weeds are not bad. And there's a place for practicing with them. What can you do?

[00:18:59] The first of the three great ways to engage your mind to practice is simply to be with what's there. So, you can do this along with me, although I'll move along fairly briskly with regard to your own anxiety. And you might ask yourself with regard to something you're anxious about, can you step back from it to be with it, to witness it, to observe it? Not identifying with it. It's there, it's in your mind, you're not crazy. But you don't—you have it, but that's really different. It doesn't mean that you are it. It's over there. There's some spaciousness. You can stay calm and centered as you observe the anxiety, as you feel the feelings in it, as you recognize the thoughts in it. You're not fighting it. You're allowing it. You're centered, calm yourself, as you observe it over there. You're not criticizing yourself

for having it. You're not fighting with yourself about having it. You're with it. You could have compassion for yourself about that anxiety as you be with it. That can help you be with it. You might explore in a kind of neutral and interested, a curious way, it's different aspects. Oh, these are the body sensations of anxiety. Oh. These are the thoughts, the beliefs, the assumptions, the expectations. These are the feelings, the emotions, even the moods. Anxiety can stick around as a kind of mood in the background, always a little on edge, always sort of waiting for something bad to happen. You can be aware of that. You might, as you be with an experience such as anxiety, feel down into what is younger, what is deeper, what is more vulnerable, what is softer, what is at the heart of the anxiety. And overall, as you be with your mind, you're sitting on the banks of the stream of consciousness, observing some of the major flotsam and jetsam coming along, in this case the more anxious flotsam and jetsam in the streaming of consciousness passing through awareness. And as you see that flow, you can even recognize some of the things that cause anxiety to ebb and flow to rise and fall. And even sometimes you can recognize what anxiety causes, not just what causes it. And in these ways, very powerfully, you are letting the anxiety be as you explore it in a receptive spaciousness.

[00:22:36] Now, as you do this, the feelings of anxiety, the fear, the obsessive thinking, the ruminating, the worry, related feelings might change. They really might change. But you're not trying to deliberately nudge them one way or another. Most fundamentally, even if the anxiety itself does not change, you are changing your relationship to it, right? Even if the weed, as it were, remains in the garden of your mind, it doesn't bother you so much. There's a beautiful traditional metaphor you've probably heard me said in which let's say our anxiety or weed is like salt. And if you take a spoonful of salt, pour it in a small glass of water, stir it and drink it, yuck. It's too much. But if you take the same amount of salt, the same size weed, the same amount of anxiety and you put it in a big clean bucket of water, big bucket of clean water, stir it all round, mix it up and then take a cup and drink it, you'll hardly taste it at all. In much the same way, spacious, present moment awareness is like that big clean bucket of water, and it shifts your relationship to what is in it. This is the primary practice, being with your mind. It's the most fundamental. Letting be in the skillful ways I've described, not hijacked by, not identified with it, not glued to that movie, but able to step back and witness it with mindfulness and exploration and a sense of intactness here as you witness all that's, wow, intense, and painful, and overwhelming over there inside your own field of awareness. This is the most primary practice. It's where we begin, typically. It's often all we can do because we're just too flooded to do anything else. But minimally we can kind of step out of the torrent at least a little bit to stand on the banks and to witness it as it floods on by. And, as practice matures, very often—and I've experienced this in myself as well—very often as practice matures, more and more, you know you've practiced a lot of things and more and more, you're sort of being. Being with the arising moment in that freshness of the nowness, receiving it endlessly as it passes on by.

[00:24:54] But being what the mind is not the only way to practice. And I've known many people who overvalue it and can get kind of righteous and dogmatic about no need to do anything else. All right. Guess what? Longstanding negative patterns, hardwired into the body, particularly in the brain, don't just disappear because we witness them and understand them deeply. In fact, the brain has a negativity bias that makes it want to really hold on to negative learning.

[00:25:24] Further wholesome qualities of mind, you know, compassion, grit, resilience, skillfulness of various kinds, including skillfulness with right speech, how to actually talk with other people about something upsetting without being contracted, those are skills that don't just evolve or emerge in the mind simply because we're really good at open

choiceless spacious awareness. So, there's a place for working with the mind. I think of practice as like a great bird, you know, with two great wings: being with and working with. And they support each other.

[00:25:59] So, let's talk about how to work with the mind, which has two aspects to it, which interestingly are summarized as well by the Buddha in the right effort element of the Eightfold Path. So, the second great way to work with the mind is to let go. And here too, you can apply this to something that maybe you're anxious about. Can we release sensations, letting go, like exhaling, softening, easing, right? Can we release tensions, including subtle somatic markers, subtle patterns of tension or holding contraction or pressure inside us that anchor at the somatic level, different patterns of being different ways of being including patterns of suffering? Can we let it go? Can we let it go? Can we also let go of thoughts, of beliefs, assumptions, meanings, intentions we attribute to others, ways we appraise various situations? Can we let go of these things? Can we recognize exaggerated, catastrophizing, or simply wrong beliefs? Maybe we're overestimating threats. Maybe we just jump to the conclusion that we're stuck. We're screwed. There's nothing we can do. Do we just jump to that? Can you let that go instead? You know, there's a whole branch of psychotherapy called cognitive therapy, at least half of which is about letting go of what could be called sometimes quote unquote "pathogenic beliefs." Letting go. Can you let go of feelings, directly releasing apprehensiveness, uneasiness, fearfulness? That sense of alarm, can you let that go? And even let go of related feelings of sadness, frustration, hurt, or anger? And if they don't let go it's OK. You know, sometimes trying to let go is like trying to release something that's got an iron grip. It just won't release. OK. Look elsewhere. As we exhale, we can always let go of the air naturally and even further tensions in her body. There's always something you can let go of in any moment.

[00:28:36] How about letting go of desires, wishes, wants, aims, plans, drivenness, especially related to anxiety, such as for perfect certainty of safety in an inherently uncertain world. Can we let go of that desire? Natural in a young child, unrealistic in an adult. Can we let go of desires for unrealistic protection by others? Again, appropriate, perhaps in the minds of a child, especially a young one, but not really possible in the give and take of adult relationships. So, letting go. And can we let go of behaviors related to anxiety, such as withdrawing, freezing, huddling, obsessing, acting compulsively, or using problematic activities such as drinking too much to numb out the anxiety? Can we let go of those behaviors? Throughout, we are releasing, easing, making space. In this mode of practice—just one of three, but a very powerful one—we are in effect either pulling the weed, particularly as close to the tip of its root as we can get each time we go after it, or, minimally, we are pruning it. OK.

[00:30:01] Then third, we receive into the space that has been cleared by what we've released. We let in. In other words, as we clear more space in our garden, we can plant more flowers that will bear more fruit. Two major ways to do this. First, you could cultivate particular strengths that are known to help relieve anxiety. For example, particular strengths that I'm going to name right now. This is the first of two major ways to grow flowers in the garden of your mind. The first of these, for example, would be the strength of calming, relaxing your body. Many psychological treatments for anxiety are very much about bodily calming, easing, relaxing, soothing the body, and establishing both the capacity in the moment to relax at will, to calm the body at will and to develop over time greater resting state relaxation, including in terms of measures like the heart rate and heart rate variability. That's a strength, major strength for anxiety.

[00:31:18] Another major psychological resource, inner strength for anxiety, plant a flower that you can grow, is the recognition that in the present, when it's true and it usually is, it may not always be true, but usually it's true that you're basically all right in the present. You may not be all right in the future. You may not have been all right in the past. In the present, radically, again and again, feeling all right in the present. That's a tremendous refuge.

[00:31:45] Another major strength for anxiety is having the sense that others care about you and that you care about them. We're deeply social animals, profoundly social species. The sense of relatedness is a primal resource that eases fear in all of its forms. You can also grow the strength of realistic and accurate appraisals so that you are not overestimating threats or underestimating resources inside you and around you. And this is reasonable. It's logical. There is a place for it. Don't underestimate the power of seeing clearly. Not overestimating threats, not underestimating resources. Another major strength—the last of the ones I'll mention here and there are others. These are particular strengths we can grow over time inside ourself for anxiety, and the last one that I'm going to name is the feeling of your own grit, determination, moxie. You're gonna keep going. Yeah, you might get knocked down, you might need to take a break, you might need to take a long break, but in you is a determination, a spirit, a willfulness. You know, to feel that and to develop that sense about yourself that in this life, you are a hammer at least some of the time, not just a nail. Deep, deeply important.

[00:33:24] OK, so as I've said, you can have a sense of psychological resources, positive qualities, you can have experiences of the flowers in the garden of your mind in the moment as states and very valuably through internalization, through taking in the good, through what I call installation and through the power of positive neuroplasticity, you can increasingly hardwire these experiences as traits. And over time then states, as I've said, can be the basis for developing traits which then increasingly foster those experiences as states which give you a chance to reinforce them further as traits in a wonderful upward spiral. This is a fundamental process.

[00:34:14] In this way as you develop particular strengths, let's say, for managing anxiety and meeting your needs for safety, and satisfaction, and connection—challenges to which can be signaled by anxiety—you can increasingly meet your needs and help others to meet your needs without tipping into craving about it, without tipping into the red zone in the meeting of your needs, without tipping into a mind colored by fear, frustration, and heartache. This is, in effect, the kind of movement from the second noble truth of the Buddha to the third noble truth, from more craving to less craving. And this practice of cultivating inner strengths and inner resources is a major ally in this movement, from the second to the third noble truth, which in my view, is the fundamental fulcrum, it's the fundamental tipping point certainly of Buddhist practice. OK? The development of inner strength from states to traits.

[00:35:17] Second, very powerfully in terms of growing flowers in the garden of your own mind, you can repeatedly internalize the felt sense of needs met in the moment. In other words, anxiety is a natural response to the sense of needs unmet. Not safe enough, not satisfied enough, not connected enough. Therefore, you can look for and value and even promote authentic, genuine experiences—no fake it til you make it—genuine, real experiences, often quite mild, but still real ones of the sense of being safe enough in the moment, or satisfied enough in the moment, or connected enough in the moment. Needs met enough so the needle of your inner stressometer, your stress-o-meter starts coming out of the red zone. Needs met enough, needs met enough. Orange. Yellow. Go back to

orange. No, yellow. Needs met enough. Needs met enough for real. Chartreuse, on the road to green. And then, ah, resting in deep green. Needs met enough in the moment. So your mind increasingly is rested in the background feeling of peacefulness, contentment, and love in terms of these three major needs for safety, satisfaction, and connection. And in this way, especially as you internalize this again and again and again, you will feel increasingly rested in the green zone of very little craving, the green zone of resilient well-being as the challenges of life come, and it will be harder and harder to knock you out of this underlying sense of unconditional, resilient well-being hardwired into you as you deal with the hard things in life. That's a second major benefit of the cultivation of flowers in the Garden of the Mind.

[00:37:18] As I finish here, I'll just mention that there's often a natural sequence that moves from letting be, to letting go, to letting in as you deal with an upset. You can imagine applying this to any particular, you know, element of the Eightfold Path with regard to what I've said so far about my own example of, you know, not speaking from a sense of contraction. Maybe a sense of contraction arises, so initially I'll be with it and I'll see what it wants to say, which would be problematic and unskillful. I'll be with it for a while, and then maybe I'll gradually release some of the charge, some of the mistaken beliefs, some of the attachments I might have that are driving that sense of contraction and what I might say as a result, that would be unskillful. And then increasingly let in what would be useful words, what would be a useful attitude about the other person or the situation, letting it in, and having an enduring kind of learning from that. That would be an application, for example, of these three modes of practice, these three fundamental ways to practice with the mind applied to a particular element of the Eightfold Path. All right.

[00:38:27] So, I'd like to conclude here by saying first that mindfulness is to be present in all three modes of practice. Mindfulness is not restricted to just letting be. As we let go, we are mindful. As we let in, we are mindful. Mindfulness is not at odds with active forms of wise effort, right effort inside your own mind. Second, insight also is to be present in all three modes of practice. As we let be, we have insight into the transience of experiences. As we let go, we have insight into impermanence as well, obviously, and also we have insight into our own mental processes. And as we take in, we have insight into the processes of growing, and healing, and learning. And we can take in, in effect, the felt sense of increasingly, you know, feeling rested in that second wheel of the great cart of awakening, that second wheel of the recognition of our own underlying ground, our own original nature.

[00:39:35] It's also true that throughout all three, there is a place for warmheartedness, for compassion, for yourself and others, and frankly, for love in the broad sense and sometimes even in a very specific sense as well.

[00:39:51] Second point, as I conclude here, the well-being, broadly, that develops in the Eightfold Path is increasingly like our original nature. The well-being in which craving increasingly has less fuel and less places where it can sink its roots in and its teeth in. And increasingly were rested in that sense of okayness already. Therefore, well-being is both worth cultivating in its own right through the Eightfold Path, and because it helps us become increasingly accessible to the ultimate ground, increasingly permeable to the ultimate. But let's be clear, psychological well-being, as good as it is—and it's wonderful—consider the alternative. A mind, you know, filled with fear, frustration and heartache. Still, personal psychological well-being is not the ultimate liberation of mind and heart. And as the teacher, Joseph Goldstein, said to me once, and I'll pass along to you. Keep going. All righty.

[00:41:25] Well, I think we have about three minutes left to just, no big deal, talk about all of this. I'm seeing lots of great comments coming in. I think you've gotten what I've been talking about. Right? In a nutshell, there is a path. It's an eightfold path. I hope you'll join me in exploring these deep teachings in more detail in the weeks and months to come. Remember also that you can take refuge in these three great ways to practice with your mind. I think what I'll do is next week I'll open it up to questions and discussion in general, so we'll have more of a free for all, and I'll have a chance to talk with some of you in particular and maybe even walk through some of you in this process of letting be, letting go, letting in applied to a particular issue. That sequence can be really helpful sometimes, particularly if you're bothered by something. You know, over 20 minutes, or a meditation, or even more briefly, maybe with a little writing, maybe just some reflection, move through the whole process. And as you let in, then often you are more able to let be and be with your experience even more deeply and even more resourcefully. OK, good.

[00:42:54] So, let's see here, anybody have a key question I can speak to in the last moment? I think this was good. I think this was good. The point I want to make as to finish is that these three modes of practice letting be, letting go, letting in are not esoteric. They're not advanced. They are the birthright of everyone. They're natural. You know what they feel like, and there are refuge. It means really that we can always practice. Minimally, by simply being with what we're experiencing in the moment. We're never defeated. We're never defeatable, fundamentally. And just knowing that is a great refuge. And practicing more and more these three is also really useful. You might find that one in particular would be worth developing. I was really good at letting go and letting in. I've had to work over the last ten years on letting be, which has then helped me let in, you know, a more profound sense of the ultimate. So, you might ask yourself, what if any of these three would be potentially good to focus on these days?

[00:44:11] So, how about we sit together for a last minute? Then I'll formally end. We routinely have a breakout rooms managed by my co-host Tom Brown for those who stick around after the last minute or two after I finish. And Tom will sort you into small rooms with four or so people in them, if you want. It's all voluntary. And you can talk about what we've explored here, including if you like, in particular, how you might apply one or more of these three modes of practice to your own worries, your own suffering, your own contractions. OK, so let's just sit for a minute and then I'll ring the bell and we will end formally. Whatever's beneficial from today, you can let sink in for your own benefit and that of other beings. Thank you very much for hanging in there with me as I presented a lot of material tonight and next week, we'll really get into questions, discussion, nightmare scenarios, and all the rest of it. See you then.