

2005-01-09 Responding To Suffering

Thu, 7/16 4:20PM • 46:33

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, respond, tragedy, retreat, response, suffering, spiritual, life, feel, vega, world, horse, magnitude, earthquake, happened, impacted, important, moved, beach, human

SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

Two weeks ago was last time I spoke here. That was just around the time that people were learning about the earthquake in Tunisia. I don't think I heard about it until after the talk. I'm not sure exactly when I learned about it first. I went off on retreat that day and taught a retreat for seven days. Most of the people in the retreat were kind of like me, they just begun to learn wind of what had happened. Then they went into silence and they didn't read papers or watch television or anything for the week. Those of us who were teachers retreat, we tracked the news and learning as the days went along, went along the magnitude of what had happened there. One of the issues that teachers on retreat have to face occasionally is isn't necessarily tell people in retreat when there's been some major events in the world. And I know sometimes it's a three month retreat when there's presidential election. They'll they'll put a little note on bulletin board that's folded down. And so the no announcement is made about who won the election. But if you really need to know you can lift up that piece of paper and find out. And, and there was a little, some people, there was some some mention of it during the week that some people heard. But then at the end of the week, so we can go Sunday and of the retreat, the teachers had to find some way to tell people on the retreat, what had happened, and so that they wouldn't just go leave the retreat last Sunday and face the full magnitude of the news. And our thoughts on the retreat was that people leaving retreat are much more open or vulnerable sensitive than often people are just going to normal life. And to read some of these stories and to be impacted by it would have been quite overwhelming for some of them. As it was for people who were not on retreat, and I know People are people who've read accounts in the newspaper and watch the accounts on television and cried at what they encountered with the earthquake and the tsunami. I know it's spirit rock during the week we were there. There was a lot of anxiety among the staff there about individuals, staff, persons, people that people knew who had went India at that time, and wanting to know if they're okay and there was emails and telephone calls going out to different agencies to see if they can be tracked and found. And one of them in fact, France, who some of you may have encountered on retreats, he's been a manager on retreats and also now does teach us Qigong and many of the positive retreats. He was on the beach in India when they when the

earthquake hit, he was in Chico. And they saw it coming and he ran jumped up into a wall and up into a tree. Hold on. So we went over him and just sent a very brief kind of telegraph kind of email message about his experience. And he said that his mind got very clear in that process. And then there was another little telegraph part of the, you know, phrase of his email that said, something like, so many deaths dot.dot.we don't know exactly what he saw and what he experienced around him. But certainly you can imagine. And so last week, you know, it was we had to consider the teachers consider how to relate the events that people need to retreat. And also this week, it's been on my mind how to bring the topic up here on Sunday morning. Many people will go to their place of their spiritual center their religious location, for some kind of way of processing or dealing or some kind of way of responding to this kind of event in their lives. And, you know, it's, I think something of this magnitude touches the very deepest cores in people's lives. And so when something goes that deep in us, then people will turn towards spirituality religion as one of the ways to somehow understand or find meaning or find a way of coping or relating to something like this. There hasn't been a shortage of people who have been angry, or have wondered, you know, why has this happened? Why, you know, Superman people who are theists, why does God allow this to happen? And so people, and that's kind of periodically in history of humanity. When there's been big tragedies people have kind of been angry at God or had to struggle with, you know, with God and why this might happen. Buddhists certainly have their own attempts to try to explain why you find some Sri Lankan Buddhists or some Buddhist around who attributes that kind of everything to karma And so there's an explanation or this is why it happens. It's the karma. And with that sometimes that just doesn't work for people, you know, in this kind of magnitude of problems, you know, is is karma that all these children were washed out to see what's going on here? The so the question is, are some people coming here to IMC are coming to Buddhism? What is Buddhism have to offer in this kind of context? And what does he have to say that's helpful? It helps people. I read one, read one account of a there's a little newspaper article that I found somewhere that somewhat famous scholar of Theravada Buddhism, named Charlie Haley See, Elysee was responding to this crisis. And he was quoted in the article and he said well, Article a lot to do with how Sri Lankans were responding to the tragedy of dealing with it. And he said something a while You know, this magnitude of this kind of difficulty, the Eightfold Path doesn't seem to offer much guidance, much help. And it kind of struck me as a pretty powerful statement from a scholar of Theravada Buddhism. And if Theravada Buddhism or Buddhism doesn't have the resources somehow to help us meet and respond to the tragedies. So I was surprised surprised by that, and I somewhat disagree with him. I think that any spiritual tradition that's going to be worthwhile has to be able to help us at at whatever human experience that we are going to encounter, however deep it might be, or have a tragic it might be and then if it can't help us in times of greatest tragedy, then it's probably not worth its salt. If it's only about you know, calm and bliss and light and, and, you know, Harmony all the time, then maybe it's, you know, I don't know if it really is realistic. In the Buddhist tradition, in this terrible tradition, there's a word Pali word That's Vega, V GA. And Vega means, it comes from the root to tremble. And it also has the meaning of a force or impulse or speed, to be tremble with force perhaps. And depending on on, it's the prefix of the word. It has different meanings. The and the mean different meanings with different prefixes primarily refer to ways in which we are we tremble or we're moved or stirred inside, by our encounter with the world around us or experiences. And it said that,

when the when the Buddha for the first time in his life, it's kind of a strange story, but when he was 29, when he said the first time that maybe really some really profound way, existential way, encountered sickness, old age and death until then, He'd been protected from it, that he was stirred in a very profound way, his heart tremble and moved. And that stirring of his heart was called some Vega, with the prefix some, and this is, he was stirred it with a sense of urgency, and, and, and force around religious practice spiritual practice, to follow and look for some kind of response to the suffering that he perceived in greed, hate and delusion. And this word, some vague, become a becomes a become a very important word. In the Theravada tradition, the Buddhist tradition, sometimes translated as spiritual urgency, that somehow they contact with or with the tragedies of life, the difficulties of life is one of the places one of the ways that a person can be motivated down to the very core there being to engage in the kind of spiritual life spiritual practice. Another word another word with Vega at its root is, the bigger it's going to be becomes a B and this kind of when you put a u in front of it, but Vega and Vega can have two different meanings, depending on the context. And one meaning it means anxiety, anguish, right? And so it's kind of trembling or shaking or being stirred with anxiety and fear. The other meaning in different contexts means it translated into English is uplifting, uplifting rapture. So kind of a rapture or bliss or joy that somehow pervades and penetrates the whole being. It's very subtle and very satisfying. People feel like almost like their bodies being lifted off into the air like they can fly or something, that kind of joy and rapture, that kind of stirring of the heart. So depending on how so things happen in the world, can stare our hearts in different ways. And part of I think of any kind of mindfulness Life Life is based on mindfulness is a willingness to allow the world to stare hearts. If we allow it to stare hearts, then if a lot of stare, stare hearts into joy, uplifting joy requires us to have the same kind of openness that would allow us to be impacted. In some big, big trembled, we moved in the context of very deep ways, in the context of tragedy. The capacity to be open, in a sense, is what's required for joy. It's also but also it's what's required of what makes possible, that kind of deep compassionate steering or sense of urgency or sense of impulse and motivation that can come when we encounter tragedy. And that openness at times can also lead to anxiety and to fear and distress so is it is it just a matter of chance which you get, you know, if you if you encounter tragedy is just a matter of chance that some of us feel fear and anxiety and some of us feel some other very different emotion called some Vega. Some Vega is considered very healthy emotion in Theravada Buddhism, it's considered very appropriate to have. And it's a source of real source of spiritual motivation. And I would argue that it's not a matter of chance, but it has a lot to do with how well we've practiced how well we've worked on ourselves, understand ourselves, how we respond to different situations, different. One of the American the passionate teacher, Steve Smith, was in Thailand. The time of the earthquake, I don't know his story. I don't know where he was. But he, he teaches a retreat, apparently every year, in a place on the beach in Thailand, a place that was devastated. And I don't know if he was there at the time or he went there afterwards, but many of his people he ended He knew that he kind of get tends to get involved with local community wherever he is. So people supported the retreat perhaps. And many of the people that he knew he calls his friends died in the tsunami. So his response was to put down there and help. And other friends a woman here that we know it semi has talked for us here named Veronica bats, Nick was in Thailand, practicing there and her response also was was to go down to the beaches and to help with what was going on. So she was these people are

deeply stirred. And that steering of them led them to go down and try to offer help to do something about it. And I think this is this idea of some Vega is allowing ourselves to be moved alaric Celtic, let it come into us. Then gives motivation that gives birth to motivation that requires us to act in some way or other. And the stronger the, the impact the stronger the force of the tragedy, the more important it is for the To respond and act in some way. And if we don't act, then I think we do kind of violence to our own hearts. It's the nature of the human heart is my sense to respond. If someone trips next to you as you're walking down the sidewalk, I think it's human nature even without thinking about it, to offer your hand to help them up. And depending on the scale and magnitude of the, of the difficulty, the hearts an open heart will respond. And so how does it respond? What are the ways of responding? I like to think that there's two primary directions of the response. There's a response which is external and which response which is internal. Traditionally, in Buddhism, the internal response is what is pointed to by this word, some vague internal response in the sense that the inspiration to practice to clarify the roots of suffering the roots of existential issues in oneself. So There's a and certainly, certainly, major challenges and tragedies in human lives can be a tremendous source for people to want to clarify their spiritual life to really go take the spiritual life to its depth of possibility. It's been pointed out by some people that some of the great religious leaders of humanity had lost one or both of the parents when they were still children. And perhaps that kind of loss is, you know, one of the things that gives them the kind of impulse, the power, the strength or the motivation, then to really follow through all the way to what's possible in the spiritual life. If everything's kind of comfortable in our life, then perhaps not going to be the motivation there. I have teachers who were really passionate teachers in Hawaii. And I've been told by them by a number of them, that they'll offer one day retreats in Hawaii and nobody comes, or very few people come, because you could always go to the beach and so if you think Little bit off or suffering you know, you go to the beach and the beach helps a lot.

So

good, right, Richard? It's kind of like that there. You have to come to California to practice. Sorry. And then Hawaii. Why people came by Sunday. Yeah, I can imagine after a week after the earthquake, people come especially you don't worry about the beach then. Last week, my my son has a subscription to a magazine called Cricut kids magazine. And so the magazine cover my son's all excited when it comes in. My wife has sat down the couch to read his magazine. And coincidentally, the magazine was all about the beach and the titles and the waves coming And coming out, and my wife had a hard time reading it to my son. Because you know. And so then you know to be to be motivated. And so there's a story or a teaching of the Buddha gave about the four thoroughbreds, four horses. And one kind of horse is the kind of horse that sees this the shadow of the width of the rider and will, you know, do whatever it's told to do or ride fast. Another one has to actually feel the whip, likely touching his skin and then will will take off and other horses not so well trained, perhaps as to actually feel a little sting against in the skin in order to be able to take off and the third, the fourth kind of horse is the kind of horse that really needs to be struck hard and has the staying has could penetrate down into the bones for it to really want to take off. And so this is this is supposed to be an analogy for four kinds of people. And the Buddha said, some people hear about in a distant village

someone has gotten sick and died. And just hearing about that stirs them to such a such a strength, that they're motivated to penetrate deepest truths in themselves deeper spiritual or attain the highest level of spiritual realization. And that's like the person that's like the horse who just sees a shout out when other people have to go to another village and visit people they don't know. So if you see someone who's sick and someone who's dying, and that's, you know, gets them serious about life is serious matter. Does not waste anytime here lets someone else it has to be someone in their own village, someone in their own family, perhaps Who has to get sick and die before they feel all this is, you know, I can't waste my time here to get serious. And then the fourth kind of person is a person who has to get sick and start dying themselves. Before they finally kind of wake up and get serious, I think I got, you know, buckle down here and try to do something about this life of mine. So one of the ways of being impacted by tragedy is to allow the fullness of the depth of it to be to fuel a spiritual life. And I think I know a lot of people for whom they're the motivation for dedicating their whole lives to practice is because of the suffering they see in the world. And they feel that the practice is one of the ways to respond to suffering one of the ways to offer help around so in my own situation, I spent a lot When I was trying to decide how I was going to respond to the suffering of the world, and it was something that that's what seems to be what I wanted to do with my life, it just didn't seem to be any other thing to do. And, and I was very strongly impacted by some of the events that were happening around me when I was young. And they were had variety of choices of what to do. And at some point, when I was at the monastery, I decided that I wanted to, if I was gonna respond to the suffering, I wanted to be able to respond. And I wanted to be able to respond at the depth of a where human suffering depth to where you can make the most difference in human suffering. And when I was young, young Buddhist practitioner at the monastery, I felt that it was the attachment to self self clinging at the root of the human psyche, which is a suffering that really needs to be addressed, if somehow we're going to be able to restore To the deepest forms of suffering that humans have. And, and the way, the only way I knew how to do that was through Buddhist practice. And so I felt Well, if I can do this myself, and then be supportive of other people to practice they can do for themselves. That then, then at least I can know my life is dedicated to responding to suffering. And what I felt was the deepest roots of suffering in human life. And that became the motivating force in my life and all the decisions in my life after that, major decisions in my life were somehow oriented around that kind of response. In a sense, that's what's brought me here to IMC is because of that decision. And my my sincere hope is the practice we do here is a response to human suffering, and to try and make a difference for all the people who come but also all the people who we touch in the way that we act in the world from the way that we purify our hearts. Part of the motivation to practice and part of the value of practice is to be able to turn the Near around, to look at ourselves, to understand really well, how we tick, how we respond, how we react, so that when there are challenges, we know ourselves well enough to understand how we get anxious, how we get afraid, how we get horrified, and how that maybe limits us or how that is not so useful or how to work with that. How not to let her our own horror on fear. get in the way of our ability to respond to the situation. One of the common questions that people ask on retreat is because when people sit on meditation retreats, if you sit and meditate, hour after hour, day after day, sooner or later, and some people think it's sooner, their knees will hurt, or their back old hurts. And then people ask, why should I sit with painful knees? Why should I sit with the painful

backs? Why not, you know, get up and move or go do something else. And there's They need a lot of wisdom to know when to sit with physical pain or emotional pain on retreat and when to do something to change it. But if, if we only pull away from our difficulties or challenges of pain and the emotional difficulties, we turn it up louder. We turn it over here. Okay, everyone, I see one person coming here. So maybe maybe a little bit, we did a little bit. If, if we're only responding if we only learned how to be free, when we're comfortable, we're not really free. And so to have a situation where we're uncomfortable, and then to work with it, until we find our freedom or peace with the discomfort is part very important part of a realistic spiritual practice. If you're only trying to find your peace by getting rid of the discomfort, only when only when this is gone, then I'll have a spiritual life, then I think it's not realistic human life. We'll have discussion From the mild ones to the great tragic ones, and then knowing how to be free or how to be at peace or how to be not overwhelmed by those situations, is part of the function of learning is Part Part of what the practice is supposed to do for us. So as we sit on retreat or sit here, even, and our knee hurts, your back hurts, or we have a headache, or we feeling some kind of, you know, uncomfortable emotion, to alert to see that, that that's a very important arena for developing our spiritual life or developing our mind to really understand to be convinced about that, and have a willingness to face it and be present for it. Not to feel it's a mistake, not to feel like it's to get rid of it. But what is it like to be free in the presence of physical pain or emotional pain, it can happen. I think it's appropriate to feel heartfelt pain. When we encounter tragedy like the earthquake and the tsunami. I can't imagine that someone like the Buddha would not have felt pain. You know, you look at the Buddha and usually sitting there shining and peaceful and is a smile on his face and, you know, could you imagine someone like that? You know, sitting up in a tree on the beaches of Sri Lanka watching everything around him just sitting there with a smile on his face, feeling you know his peace and delight, bliss. I don't think it's I don't think it's human. It's unreal. It's it would be inhuman to do that. I think it breaks the heart. But how do we how do we allow the breaking of the hearts be useful? How do we allow the breaking of the heart to be something which then helps us motivate us to respond in a greater way? Michael learner who's a Jewish teacher, Jewish rabbi, I think his when people ask a question, Where is God? And cc's. Uh, you know, theists, that's the kind of you know, it's his department. He says, That's not a useful question. The important question is, is, where is humanity? That's the question you should be asking Where's humanity? And so where's our humanity and humanity means where's our response? Marco Lerner also says that his definition of God is it's the heel is the is the force. It's the, the healing is the forces of healing and transformation in human beings. That's that's got an interesting idea of God, I never heard of that before. You know, nobody thinks about that, but the regular calls God, the force of healing and transformation in the human psyche, or the in the universe comes to an end. So then you start getting closer to you know, some things that a Buddhist might say that in Buddhism, there's no God, but the forces of healing the force of transformation, the forces of goodness that reside in our into Visual hearts is where humanity result. Besides, it's not a matter of asking why tragedy happens, I don't think Buddhists are so interested in asking why, except in ways that are directly helpful, even when asked about God or karma and all that, but rather, the important question is how do we respond to it? Not Why did it happen? But how do we respond, given that it's happened? How do we respond? And if, as I said before, there is no response. I think there's no spiritual life, there's no way of taking care of our own hearts. And then one way is the

internal way of looking at our own hearts prone minds, and trying to clarify that to the hearts of the root target to try to find the deepest or the highest forms of spiritual truth that are possible. The other is the external response. And there's a different kind of stirring a trembling of the heart that motivates this external response. And then is called in Pāli *anukampa*. It's usually the word that was common word for compassion or for sympathy and *comm* compound means also kind of stirring, trembling. And when the heart is open and receptive, then there's sympathy. There's there's compassionate response in the natural heart and the open heart. And so then how do we respond? Do we allow ourselves to respond? Are we expecting other people to respond? Do we get angry because our president doesn't seem to respond well enough? You know, it's up to him to do something, I think to be looking externally to looking towards others, certainly important evaluations in the next election. Remember that? But but rather than looking externally, what are other people doing, and why aren't other people doing enough? I think the important question is are you doing enough? What can Do. I've been very inspired by the degree to which people all over the world individuals and corporations business have responded, I think last figure I saw was \$322 million had been contributed in the United States by non governmental sources. So he individuals and businesses and nonprofits, that's a lot of money. However, it's a lot of money. But it's also only 40% of what the same category of people donated after 911 which was a huge outpouring of support to that time. And maybe we felt it more at home you haven't happened to us much more closely. So it makes sense maybe to donate more, but doesn't make sense. Does what's happened to you long because it any less what happens to us than what happens in New York? can we can we take it in in a way that really makes us you know, want to respond? At least as much as 911 caused us to respond. Remember the story, the four the four way Support horses. You know, when it's in a distant village, the person who responds is like the well trained horse just use the width of the shadow of the width. In the last week, the United Nations came out from the report that every day 29,000 children die unnecessarily. That's 10 million children a year. And we have, you know, maybe a million people, hundreds of thousand people dying in Sudan, Uganda and all over the world. The scale of human tragedy is going on all the time. You know that the scale of what happened in the Indian Ocean is not something that's happening every once in a while. There's something that's happening constantly, all the time. What does it mean to take that in and allow oneself being moved by that or We'd rather not not be moved by that. We'd rather kind of shut off and not pay attention to it. My feeling is that to, to be free, which is freedom is one of the key lifts we liberate is one of the key motor, motivations for spirit, Buddhist practice. To be free is to have to be open to be moved by that. If you don't want to be moved, don't become free. You know, stay closed, stay resistant, stay hidden, stay afraid. But if you want to become free, then allow yourself to be moved take these things in. Part of the question in Buddhism is not whereas God, but where are you? And when you ask, Where are you in Buddhism, we ask the question, Who am I? And then as you most of you know, Buddhism says that there is no self. very simplistically, you can say, in a sense you're Nothing. very simplistically, you are nothing means that, that who we are, is someone who responds. Someone who doesn't hold themselves separate from or distinct from the needs of the world around them, whether it's the neighbors, immediate neighbors, or your family, or your community, or people far away. So allow oneself to be moved by what happened. Each of you moved in your own way. And I have no idea how individuals should be motivated or acting response to being

moved. I know that some people are moved to really understand themselves better because the degree of horror and anguish they feel is so strong, that they feel that this is really important to come to grips with this to deal with this. And so they may be turned to something like spiritual practice, or meditation practice in order to really clarify the nature of their own English. And that's really necessary for some people. Other people are moved in other ways. Maybe to also to practice internally, they clarify the nature of the self, who am I. Other people are moved, to respond to go to the beaches, or to send money, or to send whatever. Or perhaps we don't send money or support to people far away. But the impact of what's happened is far away, still motivates us. It motivates us to help in our local community more, I think I'll do a better job here to try to help. It's not possible to respond to every tragedy in the world. But it's possible to allow every tragedy in the world to motivate us to give strength to a ways in which we want to respond locally, and the ways we want to respond. So again, for myself, maybe it's so good Talk for myself here. But one of the things that I know I see the tragedies of the world. And there's a lot of things I don't choose to respond to. But I'm motivated by that it's really important for me that I'm impacted by that. And one of the ways I try to channel that is to try to do a better job teaching. Because I feel that my recent one other respond was respond to suffering for me, is to try to teach and offer practice opportunities for people in order to kind of deal with it. So I channel it in this way, the best I can. So to find a way of responding so that today, this talks, I'm gonna stop now, but it was really my attempt to try to say something that might be useful or helpful for our community here. I have no idea what I have succeeded because I don't know you know, I really don't know how to Respond to situation like it just went so big, you know, I don't know. And I don't know how it really impacts the depths of everybody's hearts and it's hard, really hard to know. It's such a big thing. I don't really I probably don't even know how it's impacted myself. In my own heart, let alone the rest of you. There's so much I feel I don't know about this and so but if any of you would like to say something, have comments to me, be nice. Yes.

I think is important to offer. The another interpretation of the four horses that it's, I guess it's the one that they give in Zen mind, beginner's mind. But in in, in that version, the fourth horse is is the one that goes to the village Because the fourth horse has been so penetrated by pain that when it happens even thousands of miles away they understand the perturbation in their spirit and so I only bring that up because I think it's like, well, a the people in the Indian Ocean are the fourth horse right now whether they like it or not they're, they're penetrated, right? And be for practitioners that have maybe have that way where they really have to get it beaten out of them before they're ready to get serious that it's okay that I mean, Suzuki Roshi, his story makes it okay that that you're the bad horse, the fourth horse that just was stubborn and won't learn but then it's it's easier to feel pain for other people.

So when we're the fourth horse when pain suffering comes close To us, that is a kind of that conditions us in a sense to be able to be understand other people better gives birth to us, you know, so this idea of spiritual, great spiritual leaders who lost their parents as a child. That's pretty, you know, that's like the fourth horse and that gives birth to a greater capacity for compassion, understanding, then understanding suffering in the abstract. Thank you. I think that some people, for some people, the magnitude of such a thing like this makes it impossible to respond for a while. Maybe for a long Time,

but rather they have to just kind of sit and kind of manage with their own feelings. Because they're so strong and sit with them and work with them and I wasn't on How's that? I was actually sitting last Sunday in Hawaii with those two teachers. And I think you're right, the magnitude of this filters down in different ways. One thing that came up in the, in the set afterward was, what does one do? You know what if one wants to donate money or do something like Steve was in Thailand, Steve Smith, and that came up in France and so forth, but Steve Armstrong knows somebody in Sri Lanka, a villager. And there's quite a bit of fishing, you know, people that lost their whole livelihoods and so forth and so on. And one thing that we did there was we put a bowl up to have people donate to buy one villager, one boat. And because there were connections there was we were able to get that money to that person and say, here, go buy a boat, you know?

Because

part of it is, well, where's this money going? You know, you donate the money and it goes administration or, you know, is it actually getting? I think part of the problem now is distribution, how does how do these things get to people in need? So it just I've been haven't been here for about a month. So I didn't know if anybody had created something like that or maybe through your connections or somebody in those parts of the country that has Somebody specifically locally that we can send a little donation from our Tsonga. That might we have we haven't I mean, I would forget to was here last Sunday, she put out a basket for servo Daya, right. And starboard is a Buddhist group in Sri Lanka that has a lot of good work right in. And I was wondering about that coming down here today whether we should do something. And it just seems to me it seemed to me that the, the, you know, I don't myself personally don't have a personal connection with any place. And, and the addresses and organizations are just all over everywhere. It's so easy to find good places to donate to. And my hope is that people will do it myself as people who want to easily find ways to do it themselves. It doesn't have to be channeled through IMC. But if that's a useful thing to do, and I'm really happy with that idea, too.

There's been quite a few suggestions put on the email list

too, which has been really nice. So an email list of suggestions for

For those of us who work in grief and death, I can just remind us that the first natural step that you can't intellectually prevent is shock and numb, numbness. And so, in for those who have had any other stressors in the last year or two, any other stressors, there's a cumulative effect. So I often ask myself, what's my response? When I'm in shock and numb, not that I shouldn't be there. It's just the natural human way. Maybe it's different if you're 100% enlightened. I don't know personally about that. And I remember the first two steps I'm just this weekend read about stress reduction, which fits in, in shock and numb. You need a lot of extra care and warmth and kindness and slow down until you can get out or shopping them and then you can act differently. But these first two steps I remember were move the

body so shocking, numb, we could just get so stuck and narrow the focus. So instead of trying to do something for the whole thing, you know, one boat fits into that. And I've been checking them and I forgot the third step. Work on the first two.

Not sure exactly what I want to say.

I guess I have trouble with this catastrophe and the huge response to it when there's so many other catastrophes that have no response, you know, and so that is very difficult for me with I guess you said 10 million children die all the time.

We have we have what happened in Rwanda. What happened in you know, in dark four, we have the deforestation, the you know, the clear cutting of the Sierra Nevada, we have the species that are disappearing, we have global warming. It just feels overwhelming to me that the terrible things that are happening, and then I think about all this outpouring for one event, when there's so many that go unanswered. So I guess that's my my feeling

So for me also, I think that one of the reflections I have is that it's important to remember this. All these tragedies, whether this one or others, actually continue a lot longer after they're out of the news. And it'll be many, many years that people are deeply impacted by the earthquake and tsunami. And that was initially my, my own family, you know, we're still impacted in very deep ways by what happened in World War 260 years ago. And so things go on for decades. And so the, the, I think it's very important that in taking care of ourselves, taking care of the world, taking care of situations, we're also preparing for the future. So it's not just simply taking care of the people right now. But also we're taking care of people in 1020 years depending on how well we, you know, we respond to all the different places that had children who grew up with this, with this with this poverty and the difficulties. You know, depending on how the world responds and the opportunities they have, is going to be very deeply affect the kind of person they grew up to become. And whether they become someone who are forces of good in the world are forces of increasing strife and conflict in the world depends a lot on their opportunities as they grow up, live in poverty produces a different kind of person that if you grew up, you know, without poverty. So I hope, you know, for me, it's always important to remember that it's important remember not to forget that these things go on and the world requires us to respond. And then as we

Work through

our own existential situation, that hopefully it'll make us a responder, people who respond. And that that becomes a source of refuge for us source of a part of our well being, is taking refuge in our ability to respond, independent and independent of how impossible it is situation. The in the Mahayana tradition they have the idea of the Bodhisattva and the bodhisatta. As someone who responds to suffering, even though it's impossible to help at all, there was one person who lived by the Bodhisattva ideal, who loved Frank Sinatra's long, the impossible, the impossible dream because it's impossible to

help completely, but to make the effort take refuge in our ability to respond rather than taking refuge in our, in our fear, I think it's really important.

So

you all know no a new Buddhist word, some big have your heart tremble and be stirred by the suffering of the world. So thank you all very much and please take good care of yourselves.