I can't remember a time that I sat in a chair and gave a Dharma talk in a chair here for sitting groups. So might be interested Know why? On Wednesday I had a bilateral hernia surgery. And so I'm sore and doing things slowly. So on Thursday while I was resting in bed, recovering in bed, I heard some various commotion in the living room of our house. And what had happened was that our four year old son had got this hands on this little craft kit. That is remake tie dye t-shirts and hats. two chords with a daizen I don't know how you use it, but it dies in the chords and he had put the die and he put the chord dispels and his mouth was all blue. And my wife noticed immediately and so she immediately took him to the bathroom him not swallow anything. And she felt pretty confident she had 98% of the dye on his mouth. But I was wondering about, you know, what the dye was. And we looked at the label of the craft kit. It didn't say we'll come with a dye was made out of but he did say twice so the kid do not put in the mouth. Call the doctor. And no contact with the eyes should wear gloves when use this stuff. So that was you know, so what I found out is apparently, in this kind of circumstance you call the Poison Control Center. So I call the Poison Control Center. And they tried to do some investigation but the manufacturer was closed by that time. And they couldn't really find anything about it. But his opinion that control center was closed, I basically are pretty safe. Chemicals might be a lot of salts or something that's like very little bit. But that, you know, unless my son started throwing up or nauseous in the next hour not to worry about it. So what's the advice? So, you know, okay, so he's fine. That's end of the story. But, you know, so Buddhism is, is kind of like a poison control center.

And I think people regularly get poisoned. And then you need to know what to do. So is it really poison? Is it? How dangerous is it? Is it fatal? Well, you'll get over it. And so part of the function of Buddhism is to deal with the poisons that affect our lives affect our hearts. And I think that Buddhism talks a lot about poison. And it can seem like a little bit of a downer to talk about poisons. But I think that the degree to which Buddhism talks about poison, poisons of the heart, poisons of the mind, mind, it does so I think with a very whole super positive view of the human heart, the human mind, the human heart. Beautiful, except when it's poisoned. And, and so it's helpful to know when you're poisoned. Sometimes it's hard to identify, to notice it's actually the case. Sometimes the effect of the poison is not evident until you know, many times, long later. But sometimes it's really obvious. And if you read some of the horrible, horrible things that can be read about the newspaper, be seen about about in our community. Buddhism says it all can be traced all the men made man cause human cost. Terrible things can be all be traced to three routes, the three root causes to greed, hate and delusion, and greed, hate and delusion are sometimes called the three routes for unwholesome behavior or sometimes for evil, for harm in the world. Sometimes, these three greed, hate and delusion are called the three poisons. Because they can cause poison They can actually have tremendous costs tremendous harm to
ourselves and to others. And sometimes they're fatal. And sometimes they're called the three fires. And they keep us agitated, keep the heart and mind kind of burning. So what I thought I would do today is talk a little bit about the third poison, which is the poison of delusion. And it said that delusion is the most dangerous of the poisons, and the most difficult to recognize. It's possible to clearly see greed as greed. It's possible to see, hate is hate. But it's not so easy to see delusion as delusion. Because one of the qualities of delusion is it believes it's true. And the sense of certitude This is the way things are, comes along with illusion.

And to some extent, delusion can be the underpinning or their support for greed and hate. You might have the delusion, about who you are some delusion, about self image of who you are. And in order to fulfill that self image, support and maintain it or defend it, in you might give rise to greed or hate some some manifestation of it, but it begins with this delusion of self image that this is who I am the and there's a whole range of intensities to delusion and it can happen in many different levels in the psyche in the mind. And it can happen in ways which are somewhat subconsciously the unconscious human beings Tremendous capacity at putting on blinders at denial. And so in Buddhism, there's a whole complex of terms or concepts related to delusion. There's ignorance, there's confusion, there's illusion, delusion, and what else those are pretty good. And Buddhist practice is, is meant to address the issue of delusion, confusion, ignorance, illusion. And the clearest antidote to it is what's called wisdom or insight pricing, to somehow be able to see clearly what is going on. And so as part of the reasons for mindfulness is to start seeing clearly to break through the shell of delusion. Extreme forms. delusion is a psychiatric condition. And so there are delusions of you know, some of the list in psychiatric world is like delusion of persecution, people are out to get you. And remember once when I was at living a green golf Student Center, I was told that I was kind of like that one other thing. I was, you know, it's kind of a director type. So I was told that there were these women up in the parking lot, who had put bedding around their Volkswagen van. And they were doing something unusual behind that curtain. Van and I should go up and look. So when clock then kind of, you know, knocked on the curtains and kind of peeked in and they were taking taking everything out Volkswagen then and when the engines underneath, and they were absolutely convinced that the FBI had planted a bomb in their van and they were there to kind of find it, take care of it. So not I suppose it's not impossible. The FBI would do that. But I think that pretty unlikely. And when I started hearing more of the story, it seemed more and more unlikely that was the case. Example of delusion, you know, kind of delusion of persecution. The illusion of grander that some people fall under, and delusions of grandeur cast as all kinds of expressions but somehow feeling that I'm really the best, I'm the greatest as opposed to the negative side of that delusion of anti Grindr You know, I'm the worst, you know, no one else could be as bad as me. And it can be such a powerful delusion that you know that it really, you know, affects the way people see the world and see themselves and becomes a psychiatric condition. And I feel certainly that maybe he also can be much milder in a psychiatric condition. I feel like I proteolytically delusions of grandeur. I remember when I was relatively new Buddhist student, I would sit listening to my teachers Dharma talks, and think, like, give a much better talk in that. You know, if I could, you know, that would kind of lose touch with her talking about, you know, as I go off on my wonderful, profound talk, in my mind, kind of the delusion of grander delusions of being as Savior, you know that I'm going to say people that can be extreme but also could be kind of mild were kind of delusions of being the helper, you know, I'm going to help. There's delusions of thought transmission, all kinds of directions. Feeling that we're projecting thoughts into other people's minds, delusions that people are projecting to my mind that somehow we're communicating mind to mind. It's a pretty well recognized psychiatric condition. It happens sometimes around Buddhist circles, I don't know maybe happens a lot of different places, but a lot of Buddhist teachers I've known have had some occurrence of some person thinking, Oh, you know, blaming the teacher for Oh, you're getting into my mind, leave me alone.
There's delusions. It is called Eero mania. It was called some of you might know better than me. But it has to do with delusions of thinking that someone loves you. Who doesn't completely convinced this is the case. And then, you know, doing behaving as if that's the case getting into trouble and can happen in extreme levels with a police are needed. And then it can happen in pretty mild levels. And probably all of us sort of succumb to it. Eero mania? And told here sometimes the story of sitting a three month retreat at IMS, and it's a silent retreats, you know, talking to anyone but there was this woman sitting near me and you know, she was the one and three months is a long time to let the Fed To see build up. And so there was the, you know, the first contact and the first date and the first, you know, goes on and on in their marriage and kids, and divorce. A lot can happen in three months. And I didn't, I didn't take it that seriously with you, I could see every once in a while the mind would wander off into staticy of this woman. And then at the end of the retreat, the silence was broken. And she spoke and she had a very thick French accent. And when I heard that accent, the delusion was popped. Because I had spent three months assuming she was an American. And the whole image of you know, being relationship with her and everything. It was all based on her being a certain kind of person, American person. And it was all illusion. And suddenly, like I felt like I felt like I was Woke up. I hope we're alive did what was that about?

I don't know why human beings are prone to having to illusion. There's probably many different reasons. Sometimes it's clear reasons. Sometimes it's maybe just what the human mind does. Sometimes you just make some meaning and stories and projections. But sometimes it's very clear it's a strategy. And sometimes the illusion is a strategy to avoid feeling uncomfortable, or feeling defeated some difficulty in one's life. Or sometimes, delusion is a strategy for trying to get something done. Otherwise we can't get most of the kind of reality we can't get it but we delude ourselves as if it's going to happen. They're kind of denial I think that there are people who sometimes don't go to the doctor when they should, because they're kind of in denial. It's this isn't this is not really an issue, that really big thing. And to the family in denial about that, or people who do the opposite, every single inch, they go running through a doctor, this is really significant. Remember having a little itch on retreat in Burma. I looked, and there was a little something on the skin. So there happened to be a dermatologist at the heart of the monastery. When asked asked him if he would look at it. And he was great sincerity, looked at it and when he looked at it, basically he looked at me and said, Are you crazy? Nothing, you know. And somehow, in my mind, you know, some of you Those of you who've been on retreat, know that there's something called Yogi mind and somehow that intensity of the concentration and silence of the retreat. Sometimes the delusions of the mind appear much more strong than you can normal life. So it's a little thinner my skin, you know, big. There are social delusions, that whole society can have delusions. Families can have delusions, delusions of denial, pretending things are not what they're not pretending that things are not as they actually are. One of the great delusions or is a whole class of delusions that are connected to being self centered, self image, selfish. And as if the world kind of circles around us, it's all about us. Everything's about us. And it can be quite interesting to spend some time doing an inventory of the kinds of phones That goes through your mind. And part of the value of doing mental noting we note is you start seeing sometimes the patterns in your thinking that normally wouldn't see because you're kind of caught up in the moment to moment experience of thinking. But you step back and look, well what am I actually thinking? And it might be that primary themes or desire at primary themes or aversion or hate, are the primary themes might be self preoccupation. How does this relate to me? Me, Myself and mine? And if you find that you have a lot of thoughts that are self referential to you about you, then you can start asking the question is this really based on reality? Is this true? Is their delusion operating here in the self image, self thoughts, self ideas, the whole idea of needs the whole idea of how we how other people see us whether people are doing towards us they are delusional of blame. When things are not going well. Some people have very easy tendency to blame others to get angry to others outwardly directed. Some people still illusions, delusive mind tends
to focus the blame inwardly and ourselves. Some people, the mind goes off into fantasy, when things
are not going well, and some people in defensive place. So I think one of the great studies and
developing insight is to look at the whole light, whole complex of things having to do with self image.
And I think it's very difficult to do. But if you get a handle on that, you get a handle into the world of kind
of the other side of the illusion. It's hard to do because sometimes our society and friends and family
support certain delusions, certain erroneous ideas. But who we are. When I first started meditating, I
was living with a couple of friends meditating regularly every morning. And I'd come down to breakfast
after meditating. And the usual sense of Gil was not reading I wasn't had no motivation to kind of
present myself a certain way or be seen a certain way. I mean, particular happen. So I showed up with
breakfast and a very common kind of feeling somewhat calm, maybe empty. And over the next
mornings, my friends got more and more uncomfortable. And I realized because of the lack of skill that I
had, at that point, that either I had to stop meditating or lose my friends. So I chose my friends at that
point over meditation. And so I stopped meditating, and started behaving as usual, Gil as they
expected. It was kind of like, you know, going back to a delusion that was comfortable.

There's a delusion around self when the self has particular needs. So I need a need X, Y and Z need all
kinds of things in our society kind of as powerful messages of what the self needs, what you need will
be needs. And it's very easy to internalize that. So you know, last month I was in retreat in a cabin
solitary retreat by myself. And one of the one of the things that struck me during this time was how little
I consumed how little I needed. They gave us very, very little food every day he brought food to the
cabinet basically, once a day, in the first couple of days of the This is very little in how can I manage.
But by the third or fourth day at the beginning me too much food. Very rarely, you know, my way I work
on retreat, I tend to eat very little. And I didn't need a television, I didn't need a computer, I didn't need a
telephone. I didn't need any books. I didn't need those, you know, basically, all I needed was my
cushions to sit on, and I needed a bed to sleep on and there was very little that I needed. And then I
come back here to society. And it's so easy to have the desires coming up. And it's one thing to have
desires, oh, I would like to have this and that, but the desires and come along with delusion, this is
going to fulfill me. If I can have this then everything will be okay. So the delusion of externalizing our
happiness, if somehow the world can provide certain thing, the world can be a certain way or I can get
a certain things I can acquire certain things, then I can be happy And I remember, maybe all of you had
this experience, but I remember what comes to mind is when I was about this age of my nine year old
son. I really wanted to remember wanting some things for Christmas. Once I wanted a toy machine gun
and it was beautiful kind of plastic machine gun. And then my parents weren't that into giving it to me.
But I really wanted it was so important, you know, it's like and so they succumbed. I guess. They gave
me this beautiful You know, in ornate, you know, state of the art toy plastic machine guns where they
could make them in the 1960s. And as soon as I had it, I lost interest in it. I thought it was going to fulfill
me, but then I you know, once I had it, too have no meaning at all.

And people can spend you know, decades pursuing certain delusions, illusions that this is going to do it
for me. I can have this thing. If I can have a house if I can have the perfect relationship there is a
perfect relationship out there to be had. This isn't a bulldozer Dean's story I'm sorry I can't remember so
well maybe some of you remember better but we're moolah says you know, oh, I never been able to
have a really find the right woman for me. You know, I went to Damascus and I heard there's this
beautiful woman there who had all these qualities that would be perfect, perfect for me. When I saw
her, I found out that she couldn't cook. And then I heard that in Cairo there was a woman who was
perfect for me and I went there but her eyes weren't blue. And then I went to Baghdad and he almost
had it right but you know, almost but she had it with the wrong accent. And then finally, just the more I
found the perfect woman, it was just everything I could have wanted a woman was there. Oh, great. So
you married her and we're happily ever after. No, she wasn't interested in me can cause a lot of pain in

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relationships, the idea that the whole someone up, partner up so my ideal, this is what a person should be like.

Part of the approach in Buddhism is to have a very deep respect for how things actually are, how a person is how you are, what the situation is, and I use the word respect carefully. It doesn't get the same thing as appreciation. It's not the same thing as, as acceptance. Respect means that you're willing to look at it more carefully. The etymology of the word is respect is to look again, to look more carefully, to respect and respect this look more carefully, what is really here. Try to understand what is this? Can you see through the veil of our opinions, interpretations or ideas? What is really going on here? And same thing with ourselves, to look at ourselves to look at ourselves. Now, I think it's very hard for most people to be honest about themselves. If it was easy to be honest about ourselves, I think we would all get enlightened a lot faster. Be pretty easy. I think it's easy to be honest with ourselves, it would be a lot easier to get concentrated get really settled in meditation pretty quickly. And I think that you know, the synonym. I think honesty is a synonym for mindfulness. And it's easy to be diluted about how honest we are. It's easy to be deluded about how wise we are. Easy be deluded about how our buyer behavior for why it's okay to do certain things. Oh, it's okay. You know, I'm wising up I can handle this. I can negotiate this particular difficulty, this particular awkwardness and so one of the so Buddhist practice, you know, offers a whole, rich approach to the spiritual life. That's much more than just sitting down to meditate and being mindful. And I would say that probably mindfulness is not enough by itself for most people, if everyone. So one of the one of the things is, is Buddhism has a whole bunch of lists, which somehow aren't always so inspiring to go through the lists. But part of the function of these lists is to help us make inventory of ourselves to help us look at ourselves more carefully.

And I use the word inventory because of how it's used, I think in 12 step recovery programs. I think it's a very powerful Four phenomenon, the 12 step. And in four things you do in 12 step is you do, I think it's the fifth step, is it right? Or the four step four step, where you do a moral inventory of your life. And you go through your life, you know, you go back and earliest memories you have sometimes and kind of go through very carefully and try to kind of really take in what it is you've done if you harmed anyone through your life. And for some people who do this, it's a shock to actually go through it because they've never done that to be like, wow, I had no idea this adds up. You know, it's one thing to remember here or there I did you notice one thing some point, but this says up, boy, I had no idea. Somebody say that up. But there's a real pattern here. It looks like over and over and over again. I get angry with people. And that seems to be of course, they're to blame. Of course. But you know, this is a real pattern. Or pursuing desire harming some people because of our just wanting to preserve our desire. So I think it's a very, very powerful to do some legacy inventory thing. And even if you feel like you don't need it, I think it's very helpful to do things that test you. Part of the reason to go and retreat in Buddhism, if you haven't been if you do if you do meditation for a while, you've been on retreats for a while, and then you have then you think I'm great, everything's wonderful life is kind of smooth. Nice. Then Then I tell people that you should go and retreat. Try it, you know, go for a week long if you can a retreat to see what goes on. Let it be a test. And sometimes the retreat goes beautifully, but sometimes the function of retreat is to highlight or show or reveal aspects of our life which we've been ignoring, not paying attention to deluded about certain tendencies which kind of kind of our work in daily life, we think or explore working. When we do on retreat, it becomes clear just doesn't work. Things become really the tweet reveals the problems or difficulties or the self delusion or life quite powerfully. And so part of the function of these lists in Buddhism, like the five precepts, or the five hindrances, or the three poisons, is to use them as as an aid to doing an inventory to take them seriously. And so, what are the ways? How does how does it relate to these precepts? Are they developed in my life, how they lived out in my life in the past? Do I really live by them not as a way of kind of moralistic judgments about oneself, but rather as a kind of a weird You're a tool to help kind of break open the phenomenally
creative ways which human mind can fool itself for what's going on. And then another aspect of
Buddhist practice that helps with delusion is to practice in a community of people who have other
people who share your practice with and it's very easy to be included in doing his spiritual practice to be
diluted about level of your attainment when you're alone and but when you're living with other people
you know, it's quite humbling have children. I mean, I've been humbled so much and certain ideas that I
had about My level of attainment or how calm I could stay or how, you know, little I could really I would
really succumb to anger. I'd overcome my anger long ago, thank you. But then I had children. And that
shortly wasn't the case. or living community, I found it very, very helpful to, to be part of various
communities, I find it helpful to be part of this community. But I've been part of many Buddhist
communities. And instead of living together, like rubbing up against each other, having things not go the
way that I want them to go in a situation where you have to kind of talk about things and work things
out, not just walk away that or ignore people that actually helped reveal and show aspects of myself
that I didn't know. So one thing I've mentioned here a few times is when I was living at the Buddhist
monks 30 Tassajara I was in various work situations that are quite intense, for example, in the kitchen,
the kitchen manager. And when I became the kitchen manager it became really clear to me in a way
that I had no idea I didn't even know was an issue for me Until then, that I was driven by the desire to
that people like me, it's okay that people like you, it's okay to kind of, you know, be kind to they'd like
you, within reason, right? But you can be driven by it. And I would do amazing social gymnastics. So
they try to get people to kind of like me in the kitchen. It was a very hard place to have people like you.
And because if you told them because, you know, Someone once told me who worked under me in the
kitchen. He said, kill If you weren't so sincere, I punch you out. That's kind of mixed. Mixed praise. So I
suffered a lot because this desire to want people to like me, and when I suffer it because we have so
many chances in the kitchen. You know, it happened so often this need, and we will be working
together so closely, I got to see it in the ways that I couldn't see it elsewhere in my life. And so I had to
really confront this issue in my life and really deal with it. And it was a very important turning point for
me. Because as long as you're kind of caught by this hook of wanting to be liked by people want to be
seen a certain way. They have control over you the power over you, or you give them power or
something you lose your own power, your own autonomy. But then there's the illusion of autonomy
right? I'm going to be Control, I can be anonymous. And that doesn't work sometimes, you know, that
could cause tremendous amount of suffering as well. It's up to me. I think part of the great aspect of
being in a Buddhist community or a spiritual community is the feeling the ability to get support and help
get feedback that people we can be honest with. And hopefully, hopefully, that people we can share
some of what we think is our darkest or deepest secrets or shadows or things that are most
uncomfortable revealed to anybody else. Both Buddhism and 12 step have the understanding that
certain kinds of behavior that we do certain kind of tendencies are very hard to overcome or atone from,
unless there's some kind of way we tell someone else about it. May be kind of like confession, but you
tell someone else you tell someone else be a witness. That you are no longer going to do this witness
that you've actually acknowledging this to yourself, you're acknowledging This is something I've done,
I'm not going to stand by this anymore, I'm not going to participate in this. If you don't tell someone else,
what you've done, then it's very easy sometimes to get into for oneself. Oh, I really dealt with us, you
know, I can manage I can, you know, whatever. And so to have people to talk to about these things. So
I think the whole package of Buddhist practice is, is both is a way to help us get into underneath
through illusions. So you can see them as illusion break through them, these illusions. And it's also and
also the whole package is kind of a safeguard and a test for ourselves. So that when we think that
everything's going well, we're willing to put us in situations where we get tested and be challenged. If
you're never willing to be challenged in a deep way, then the chances are that there's delusion. So one
of the one of the aspects of Chinese Zen is still the case but in ancient times, was after a Buddhist
monk or nun, it's been years of practice. They were sent out to wander around the different monasteries
of China to visit some of the great teachers in order to test their understanding. And they would, you
know, they've come and challenge the great teacher, or they present themselves or their
understanding. And the great teacher would say, you know, respond in some way to challenge them
back or poke a hole in the understanding or do something. So they go around and give other teachers
you know, find teachers and give them a chance to kind of poke holes if you will, or pull the rug from
under you.

Maybe they won't. Maybe your understanding is impeccable. Your realization is superb. But maybe it's
not. Sometimes it means nothing wrong with your understanding that you fooled yourself into how
deeply you've integrated into your life. And so the teacher might say was very good your understanding
Thank you. It's really good, really good. But I think that what you need to do is go get a job in a
kindergarten and come back in a year and we'll talk about what happened or you know, or just get a
job. I think we need to get a job. Now let's see how that how that is. or baby you need to do is travel. I
love to impress, quote, If you can't meditate, travel. Sometimes traveling is a relief. But sometimes
check traveling is a great challenge. If you've always lived a certain way Challenge yourself live a
different way for a while, even if it's a week, if you've always lived together with people, live alone for a
while and pick the wrong. People mostly live alone all the time, find some circumstance where you can
live together with people. You know, and see what that does what reveals about yourself. delusion,
delusion is really common. And one of the I think, for me, one of the great perspectives that Buddhism
gives to this issue of delusion is that you don't have to take delusion as a personal as a personal failing.
We can think of the illusion as it comes with being a human being human minds, somehow, are
designed to be to be delusive. Some people are more elusive than others. But it's kind of what the mind
does, maybe has evolutionary advantage to be elusive. But you know, that part of evolution history For
us, so now we can wake up. And so doesn't take it personally, I take it as a personal failing, but rather,
not something you have to hide or be embarrassed about. But rather, you know, be willing to talk about
it. You want to be transparent. Through the time in my practice, at Buddha, when I was living at Zen
Center, where in order to help with all this delusion and everything, I kind of made a commitment for a
period of time to be an open book to people. If anybody anything people asked me, I was going to tell
them, I wasn't going to volunteer of the blue, because that's when people get oppressed, right. You
know, let me tell you about myself. But if anybody asked me anything about myself, I was going to tell
them as transparently as I could, this is how it is. And it was a very interesting experiment or time, my
life to try to do that to have a transparency, to see you know, to have come out and have other people
witness it. wasn't always easy to do with that that way. It was very freeing to do that.

So to appreciate that some of these activities illusion can also be a poison and a fire that can cause
tremendous harm. And to be motivated to live a life, which doesn't cause harm, to be motivated to have
a life that actually pays for the welfare and happiness of all beings. And that motivation to you the
motivation to help us to be really to find ways to be really clear and honest about delusion in your life.
Use our community, use the teachings, use our friends, use the teachers to help us and be willing to be
challenged in this regard. Just as I didn't need it, so I needed so little on my retreat. It's remarkable how
little The human heart needs in order to be happy. It's okay to give your delusions away. It's really okay.
You can be happy without them. So thank you very much. And give me I say one more thing. Maybe it's
too brief, but to really get the point across in some schools of Buddhism, they teach that Zen master
Dogon said, Something like to be deluded about enlightenment is delusion. To be enlightened about the
illusion is enlightenment, something like that. So maybe you don't want to one of the illusions and one
of the hang ups is the idea that you have to be rid of all your illusions and delusions. Only then can be a
good person liked by everybody. I don't think it necessarily get rid of your illusions, illusions. But there's,
there's a kind of way of waking up when you see them for what they are. There's a way there are that is
an illusion. That's an illusion. I see it. Still there. It's lingering there, but I know I see it. I'm not fooled by
it. So don't fall under the illusion that you have to get rid of all these things. Whether you have to sift
through them and thereby find some freedom Thank you and I hope somebody will stay for tea and we can shuffle the floor.