

2007-07-29 Where We Sit

Fri, 7/31 7:26AM • 46:15

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, person, dharma, imc, buddhism, brahman, discrimination, buddha, important, community, life, mind, empty, sitting, kinds, tensions, feel, fear, palo alto, traveling

SPEAKERS

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My first Zen teacher gave a teaching once that the Buddha, his contribution to humanity is the importance of sitting, meditating, being present waking up. And Gandhi's contribution contribution to humanity is it makes a difference where you sit. So, you know, it's one thing to sit in the comfort of your own home, or in the comfort of your own community. If that's the case, it's another thing to sit in a place where the injustice of society is quite evident, we have to face it and deal with it and work with it. So I don't know if it's myth or how much reality is to it, but it's been said that Suzuki Roshi when Zen master came to San Francisco when they saw the video Building on 300 page street thinking about buying it. Part of the reason to buying it right there was in kind of the inner city of San Francisco run the housing projects there was that it was felt was very important to have Buddhism where you sit is important, very important to have Buddhism somehow, right in the middle of places where there's tremendous suffering in our society, as opposed to someplace that's, you know, comfortably far away in the suburbs. And where you can kind of easily avoid some of the great tensions that exist in our society. So where you sit is important to remember some 15 years ago or so there were people who did their meditation on the train tracks going in and out of Livermore labs over there, because they're protesting the research was being done there for atomic bombs. So you know, they're just sitting meditating, right, just like we were today. But they were sitting in a very strategic place and so the people noticed

So this question, you know, this issue of where we sit, I think is a shorthand for how do we relate to the various issues of suffering of pain of tensions and justice that exists in our society, both in your own neighborhood and the wider community in our society? Do we live oblivious of it? Or do we live somehow mindful of it? We live, pretending it's not us. It's over there. Or do we take it in? This is us. This includes us and we should somehow take it in for a long time to stop now for the last couple of months. But you know, for a long time and Thursday and Friday, Friday mornings here at IMC. There was this very graphic anti abortion protest right here in our street corner, literally in our street corner. And because there's Planned Parenthood across the street, and so it's a big fault line of American culture, to have this abortion, anti abortion kind of debate or pain. So it was happening right here. And not in many ways I didn't, I didn't want it there. But it's one way I did want it there. And that was that was good to be reminded, you know, rather than, oh, it's way over there, you know, it's way over there. Wherever there is the problem. It's actually happening to us here. So closest that's something we can ignore. And when the Buddha was in ancient times in India, he didn't just sit in one place. He often wandered around the country. And he in fact, he instructed the first group of mature practitioners, the first group of enlightened people that he had his students. And when he had enough of them, he said, Go for it. No two of you follow the same road and, and go out for the benefit of others. Those instructions that go forth and travel and as a As a traveling group, the Buddha and his monastics, his teachers, his lineage, you know, they moved into all kinds of different communities in and out of different communities. And you see in the discourse of the survive of the Buddha, how freely he

seemed to have moved between different classes and castes and circumstances of his time in ancient India, he seems to have really has spent time talking to the poorest of the poor, the so called outcasts class, as he did talking to kings and queens, talking to the two people who were sick, you know, any circumstance in life, because he was traveling and wandering around. He came across all kinds of people. And so that was one way, you know, moving around here at IMC, you know, we're not going to pick up the building and carry it on wheels and carry it around. So we can move into different communities. However, you know, we did do one move our community used to be in Palo Alto. And, and then we moved to Redwood City to buy this building here. And one of the benefits of that move is, I feel is that Redwood City is a demographically much more diverse community than what I was what I saw in Palo Alto. And, and I was just delighted to be in a more diverse environment. And it was also felt that for hopefully, the kind of environment this year is more comfortable for a wider range of people to come into. Sometimes follow up, though, is actually uncomfortable for some people to come into. It's not their community. It's kind of frightening for some people to come in to that kind of community that's that is relatively homogenous compared to other places. I've known people who lived across the freeway from Palo Alto, in East Palo Alto, who felt very comfortable coming into Palo Alto police officer was mutual right. This free way to divided. And so this is where we ended up here. And so suddenly we have happy with that greater diversity that's here. And we know we don't travel now that we're here exactly, except through this internet. And but one, you know, hopefully we're set up in such a way that it's, you know, it's hard to know, but relatively easy to come, come here. You know, we don't charge for anything. So now charging is one way to lower the barriers. It's easy to come. We used to have seven doors here in the building to the outside world. We took one away. And with this, I like to work seven because it's simple, kind of maybe symbolic of something. I don't know what better than six.

And so, the idea that we have seven and seven doors to the outdoor outdoor world meant it was really Easy to come and go either symbolically and feeling calm, they can go it's kind of nothing's asked for the no money, very little is asked of people. We have no membership here. And part of the advantage of not having membership is that we don't have a bounded community that then creates a bounded community identity. You know, this is a reliance on me, I'm part of that part of that I'm an IMC person, you know, you have big, you know, the who we actually are is quite fluid. And, you know, no sharp boundaries between inside and outside. I like to say to anybody who wants to be a member, anybody who wants to be a member is a member. Or if you don't, if you don't want to be a member, that's fine. There's no need to because we don't have membership. And, and so there are people who feel part of our community very far away like the volunteers who are far away you know, all over the world now people feel better. To us, people come here and tell me that they've been listening to the talks and following what's going on in our community from the talks and the announcements and stuff. And the questions and answers, maybe closer, watching this close to some of you are because maybe some of you take for granted and when it's so close, people take it for granted. So the sense of who we are as a community is quite expansive and open and hopefully somewhat inclusive. And, and I think it's in the spirit of Buddhism, the Buddhist teaching, at least, to be inclusive. And not to have boundaries, but who is it and who is out, but to make the teachings and opportunities and the whole thing available to anybody who would like to receive them. It certainly hasn't always been the case in Buddhism. Buddhism certainly has its history of institutional and cultural and various forms of prejudice and discrimination. Some of it quite painful in its own way, in the comments by the Dalai Lama perhaps represent some of that. I think it's important for people to realize that the Dalai Lama is really the head of one particular order of Tibetan Buddhism. He's not the head of Tibetan Buddhism, even though he's the head of Tibet, the state. And there's lots of Tibetan Buddhist teachers who are happy to listen to what the Dalai Lama has to say. And he doesn't have any authority over them. And so he's so what he has to say people here in the West often look to the dialog was kind of like the Buddhist Pope. And so with the Dalai Lama says about Buddhism, this is what Buddhism teaches. It's one particular thread of

Buddhism. And here at IMC, we're a different thread. And so there's these different threads. So it's helpful to just differentiate between different strengths and different threads and strands. So we don't take, you know what one person says is being what Buddhism says. And so you know, and I go, you know, when I go back and read the teachings of the Buddha, I found it finding the teachings and way of life that is meant to be quite inclusive. And that's represented one way it's represented is not only the widows for freely teaching anybody, but also in creating the monastic orders, order monastic males and females. It broke down the, the caste differences that existed in India at that time as it goes today. So, once you enter into the Bruce order, the caste differences have no meaning. And so, you know, whereas in the old times, it was still it was very important, which caste you're in. And there's a great story of some royalty group of royal men royalty expenses are something who decided to become Buddhist monks. But they had a, an attendant, a servant, who's kind of a lower caste, class, lower caste person. And they all decided to become monks at the same time. And but then the Royal princes whatever, asked for the servant, to be ordained just before them, you know, like, you know, a few minutes before them or something, because once you're in the monastic order, caste has no meaning. However, seniority does. So they want to be sure that the person who was you know, had been lower than before, would now be higher than them in order to kind of somehow break the old. The old habits, the old customs, which are sometimes hard to break, right.

And then it was very painful when I was in Japanese monastery to see how the senioritis is And Buddhism somehow is misused. And I was the person who discriminated against the most in the monastery, there was the person who better enter the monastery a few days before me, just before the person before me. And he was just awful to me. And so the Buddhist, you know, ancient monks, you know, Buddha, disciples wander around India. And there's a story of Nanda, the Buddha's disciple and under coming to a village and being thirsty and going up to a woman at a well and asking for some water. And the woman at the well said, No, no, I'm an outcast, lower caste, the untouchables kind of and, and you buy bearings look like someone who belongs to an upper class a Brahmin class or the class warrior caste. And it's not proper for you to drink from our well because you would be polluted by that. And, and there's a special was another wellness out of the village for for the upper class. If you go over there and Amanda said water doesn't discriminate between people. What he said is this sister, just as water does not discriminate by whom it is drunk or used. So to show the heart discriminate between people of different backgrounds, races, customs or social stations. These are mere conventions of our own human creation. They are not the Dharma. Please let me have some water.

So she probably provide him with the water The story goes on and He fell in love with him. And so she followed him and wanted to marry him. And, and so she came to where the Buddha was in Sydney I'm looking for this guy and trying to marry him. And then the Buddha asked her what it was she loved so much about Ananda. And she replied, It was as peaceful radiance is purity and his impartiality that had really water hearts. Within a few words, the Buddha was able to help her realize that it was not so much nundah as a person that she was attracted to. It was more of the qualities of Dharma that he embodied purity, radiance and peacefulness. And whereas the lives of people were fickle and fleeting, certain to be separated by distance or death, at some point, taking Dharma as a refuge was infinitely more rewarding and secure. Her eyes were opened Yet again, and she there and then asked for going forth as a nun. It was not a long after that, that she realized awakening. So they did the Dharma doesn't discriminate between people by race or ethnicity or sexual orientation or, you know, size or hell, or whether you're introverted or extroverted. You know, it doesn't discriminate. The Dharma is here they are with everybody. And so, this is an important principle. So how is the institution? Do we make that clear, make that available, make that the case, so that people anybody who's interested, can feel comfortable coming here and receive what's here.

It's been important for me that we demonstrated that this to some degree, maybe not enough, by having all kinds of different teachers come and teach the Dharma here. And there's a lot of women who come here. Do I don't know what it is now, but 10 15 years ago was a more touchy issue by women in Buddhism. And, and, and we have a lot of women when, you know, unfortunately, I can't do much about it, but myself, but I'm stuck being a man for now. And so, you know, but, but I tried to invite many women to come and speak. I've, I've invited people who are gay to speak, I have invited people of various colors to people of different ethnicities, and people from different Buddhist backgrounds some and, and partly because I think it's very rich that way and very important to hear different voices and different expressions of the Dharma but also so a little part of the agenda has been to try to make it clear that all that all these different way no matter who human beings are, that they're all welcome to practice, the Dharma is for anybody at all. I think that it's kind of kind of obviously comes naturally hope out of sitting practice meditation practice. When you sit and meditate in the mind become somewhat still or calm or peaceful, the mind isn't going to hold on to conventions and concepts, not going to cling to, you know, I'm this way and she or he is that way or, you know, separation and hate and discrimination and you can't hold on to it doesn't make sense. And so the empty kind of the emptying of the mind of concepts and ideas that happens meditation provides a very important vantage point reference point, then for opening the eyes afterwards and be willing to start See the world to see others in a fresh new way. So, I mean, all of us have had experience of think of being seen in a partial way. We're seeing based on it, we've done something in the past, once upon a time, far Long, long ago. You know, you know what, he did something. And that's someone that's all they remember of us that thing you did. So you're that kind of person. Or you're someone's spouse, you're seen as, as a person, spouse or seen as a person of a particular ethnicity or a particular orientation or something or all kinds of ways you're seeing and, and just kind of feels kind of yucky to feel kind of limited in that way. So in sitting, we kind of hopefully, with deep sitting or mature sitting, the eyes are clarified and the mind is empty. From being stuck in the old ways of seeing things unhappy, we have the opportunity to see someone fresh see someone new. And it's very much how I operate. When I do interviews with people. That as almost as a policy, I try to remember what happened before to some degree. But, but also try to see someone who comes in for interview a second or third time or whatever times they come as if I'm seeing them for the first time. As if what happened we talked about before, you know, doesn't exist, you know, doesn't, you know, and somewhere like to see people fresh and new. And I think that comes out of the sitting I think comes to the empty. But then the important question is issue is, once the mind has been emptied, to some degree, where do we sit with empty mind? Where do we direct that empty mind? If we go back into life as it used to be, they might come back easily those concepts and ideas discrimination Or it might be that we, we we've had bought we put on blinders we choose not to direct it to certain directions. And so we are not going to, you know, look, I'm not going to look at that kind of person.

I find it very interesting with an empty mind or relaxed body to notice how I react would encounter different people in you know, walking around the streets or whatever, and how sometimes I'll tighten up when I'm around some people certain kinds of, you know, something happens and I tighten up. And, and the vantage point of a relaxed body, more relaxed, you are the mind and body, the more you notice a subtlety of the tensions that pick up to happen. And I think that discrimination is very hard to discriminate against anyone if you're really relaxed. I think it's a sign of some kind of tension in the system. So I feel attention and then I pay attention to that. I stop and look at that. What's going hang with me right now. What's going on here with me, and this is how I want to relate to this person passing on the street, they're sitting next to one, you know, on the bus or whatever it might be. And, and I look for where can I find the record and come back to the place of being relaxed and open again. And, and if, if I sometimes if I felt uncomfortable with someone, I'll try to relax and open again. And then if it's appropriate. I'll try to actually because if I was a little bit tense, I'll try to make contact because

sometimes making contact for me is a way of relaxing, ensuring that the openness is there. The directness is there some years ago here in Sequoia istation Shopping Center nearby.

There was a homeless man who has a surplus of money and I was going with my son to get a burrito And I found a little attention. It wasn't much but a little bit because, you know, what else is going to want from me? How much will this person want from me? The person said he was hungry. So I said, you know, what can you change? I'll buy you a burrito by you come with me. And so we went in together and bought him, whatever you wanted in there. And then he chose to eat outside, back outside to eat. And it was kind of a little bit taken aback how modest his menu his order was. I thought he certainly didn't want for food, but he took what he wanted. And then when I suddenly came out, he was there waiting for us. And he said, I'm a poet. And I would like to read you one of my poems specifically for you, dedicated to you. And he took out this, you know, he had this probably, you know, shopping bag paper. And he had this is his corpus, all these different poems that he has He read this beautiful poem that really moved me about compassion. And it was just so great. So I could have given into my little bit of tension and looked down, gone in and ignored him. That's one option. And instead, I turned towards him. And in doing that, receive this beautiful poem and reply. For the time, and I do the same thing in Palo Alto many years ago. Someone asked me for money for food. I said all by you know, I'll buy you something by using you know, you wanted McDonald's right now go ahead and buy it for you. And he looked at me and he said, Okay, I trust you

Great, put me in my place, any kind of way in which I was kind of maybe patronizing whatever No, no, no.

The Buddha was quite critical of the caste system of his time. And he had variety of teachings critical. The Brahmins who were the top of the, of the caste system, critical of Not, not them, but a critical of the view, the philosophy, the understanding, that allowed them to be there on the top and kind of turning the tables in the middle of it. The Buddha said he was happy to use the word Brahman, but he would often didn't. We simulated things rather than rejecting things, interesting approach. So rather than rejecting the concept of Brahman He maintained it but he assimilated into his own way. So he said, a real Brahman is someone who lives with loving kindness, compassion, equanimity, that's a real Brahman or real Brahman is someone who lives with the freedom and the heart, someone who's open and present with freedom. We brought Brahman as someone who lives ethically. And so, in so doing, he defined Brahman not by caste, not by skin color, not by birth, not by who you are in that kind of way, but rather by how you behaved. You are in the world. So if you are in the world with compassion and love, and friendship, if you are in the world with some kind of freedom, from hate and greed, if you are in the world, with those kinds of qualities, those kinds of that kind of behavior, then you are Brahman and nonpunitive What is not a Brahmin by birth? So in this way, the emphasis is not on, you know, what we are, in a sense, it's not hard to fast difference but what we are, but, but rather, how we are what we do. Our actions are more important than how who we were born as. So, no matter how we were born as is not really our, our value or our, the way that we should be seen should not be measured by how we were born so much as how we choose to act. And, and so the hope is that IMC as an institution can act with enough wisdom and friendship that we are a welcoming community that no matter who someone is If what they want to do is to practice the Dharma to engage in the Dharma practice. This is a place that is comfortable. And not only comfortable, but more innovative as part of comfortable, but but safe. And it's not always so obvious that a community feels unsafe to people. And, you know, just an introvert might feel uncomfortable here. Even though extreme introverts might feel uncomfortable sitting room for people or assignment you know, because it's all kinds of things can make someone feel unsafe. There's always a story I'm not sure it wasn't important inquiring mind at the spirit blog newsletter of an African American men who went to sit retreat at spirit rock. And he grew up in the 50s or 60s in the south, USL

and, in the course of the retreat, he started getting any kind of things I remember the article and kind of a panic attack really Get it really got really anxious. And he said the reason was that it was mostly for him his his perspective, mostly white people. He was with a spirit rock. And he was living in a place we couldn't lock his door because there's no locks on the door, the spirit rock. And the it reminded him very strongly of almost being lynched by a mob of white people in the south during the 50s, or 60s or whatever it was. So, spirit rock seems like you know, people have talked about how safe it can seem as pure rock or the safest places. One person said one woman wrote, disturbed rock said is the first time in my life where I felt safe to sleep with the door's unlocked, and to walk around, now out of nature, you know, up in the hills there with, you know, by myself, first time in my life, I felt that kind of safety because some people feel unsafe, you know in the life, they live so for many people, spirit rock has been a very safe place. But even though it tries to be safe, you know, because of people's life experiences, even that kind of environment could feel not safe. So even IMC, you know, can feel not safe to some people are not comfortable for a variety of different reasons. And

so, so the one of the important issues that as an institution, I think we need to explore is how is it that we can make our community feel safer and more comfortable for the people who would like to be here, but for whatever reason at all, and maybe it doesn't feel so comfortable and safe to come here.

So maybe that's enough for me. So we have some minutes now. So now it's your turn. Would you like to say, following what I've just talked about?

Hi, my name is Rick. And I guess one of the things I'd like to hear more about because I know it's a big struggle in my life is striking that balance between being very open I understand that philosophy of empty mind and you know, treating all people as equals, and yet at the other end of the extreme, needing to really discern things, situations or people that might not be good for me that I have to say, I just have to be apart from that and finding that balances is really tricky.

Yeah, I think that often often enough, there's gonna be some balance involved between it. And, you know, in certain situations, it's, it'd be foolish to be have an empty mind undiscerning about what's going on around you because They can be dangerous in some situations. And unless you have your eyes open and take it into account, you can get in harm's way. So I think that a few things. One is that I think it's very important to be aware of the choices you're making, regardless of which choice you decide to do to be conscious, you're making the choice. Okay, I'm choosing not to do that not to talk to that person. So and then why am I making that choice, as opposed to be unconscious about it or make it kind of subconsciously? and really be conscious and take responsibility for the choice I'm making one and making a desert out of wisdom? Or is that a fear? And then look at it even more deeply what you know, is it if you're afraid or if you're disliking someone, or if you feel tense in some way, that's the place for you to practice. Sometimes, sometimes the wise thing to do is to pull away from the situation. So you have have the ability to go in and look really what's going on. Sometimes, you bet you're better off learning but situation by going towards the difficulty. So that's that's where you clarify it. Different people have different strategies, different ways, depending on what's going on. What you don't want to do is to decide, this is not the time and place to look at it. This is what's going on. So I'm going to go away, and then ignore it. Because then it's not an issue. It's out of sight, out of mind kind of thing. And that's not a healthy thing. So how to be discerning I don't think I think being open and being discerning are two different things. And one of the ways to be discerning is to recognize what are the projections what are the assumptions we have about someone else that we might be, we might be carrying. And so it's not just simply being discerning of the other person but also what's going on inside of us and this is where the empty mind. So from Conte the empty mind is very important because the mind is empty or Enough, can watch the production of a concept of an assumption to watch the production of the

judgment of someone else. And so even something as innocent as, Oh, that's a man. You can watch the creation is a thought in the mind, that's a man. And, and often that's a man doesn't come just with man, it comes with a magnet for other associations when we see a man. So you can watch that happen. And if you can watch that happen, you can take more responsibility for it. If normally, people who don't have a clear don't have a strong mindfulness of their own mind. Can you know that the ideas or concepts we're carrying in our minds we're living through are so thick and so pervasive? We don't even know they're happening. We don't even see the fish doesn't see the water it swims in. We don't see the concepts we swim in. And part of the advantage of meditation is we can start seeing some of the concepts we switch within so I think a big part of the responsibility and all this is courses to look at oneself. And so we have the tools of mindfulness to do that. And both because of the mindfulness and also because of the degree to which we start having some inner well being or peace or calm, that gives us a better understanding of to watch how this stuff arises. So part of the discernment, so being open and empty, doesn't mean we have to not be discerning. So, in fact, you don't probably keep your discernment going. With this being empty means you don't have being empty means you have beginner's mind. You're willing to look things fresh and new. In an afternoon as you use your discernment you have to purchase everything to what's going on. So make sense is a reply. satisfying enough. satisfying enough, okay. Yes.

Well, I use the word fear

and I always like to look at things for duality. It's just my nature. And the two ways I look at fears a false evaluation of actual reality

or setting in place, a false

evaluation of actual reality. And then the other side is face everything

the real

and that balance that you spoke

of, is like, if I have a feeling like that tells me that there's something amiss here and I run with that feeling. And if there's something that can be gained, like you know the benefit or the harm of it, either towards me or the other individual, and then I act on that.

And you know, sometimes fear can be like okay, red light.

Stop be aware, or fear can be yellow light,

cautious caution for you proceed or verify Be green light, go ahead, go forward. And in those kinds of colors, I can see something like in a person tells me that maybe it's better to avoid the person. And other times maybe it's better to kind of embrace the person and a part of that is facing my fear, you know, face everything can be real. And the more I do that, intuitively, the better off I am, I find out kind of conquering some fears that are preconceptions. And at the same time, I find sometimes that that the series of real I should listen. So it's kind of like a hit and miss thing and the experience

understanding that

sometimes I could be wrong.

And that's part of growing up

is being able to take a responsibility towards what is

The best thing

for me to do, you know, even though it may not seem, sometimes it's the most compassionate thing to me and to the other person to just let it, let it go and not even deal with it. Other times, it's better to embrace it and deal with it just depends on where I'm sitting at the moment, inside myself.

I agree and extend that a little further. what's right, what's appropriate for one person to do? It can be very different from someone else in the same situation. Part of the sermon is to understand oneself and one's own situation. So everyone brings different skills, different abilities, different things to the table. And so there isn't like one right or wrong way, in this kind of discernment, this kind of issues. So, I mean, someone who's six foot six, you know, and it's been a body, body, body, weight lifter for decades. You know, and looks intimidating. might be able to turn towards challenging situations very differently than someone who's four foot four. And, you know, and you know, has health problems, you know, just somehow they can face different two different choices have to be made. So I think they mean being aware of one's own skills is very important. But having skills developing one skills, who we are is not fixed. And so we can develop skills, we can develop capacities, abilities, that allow us to move into situations that in the past we weren't comfortable moving into. And so I think part of this thing about learning to be open to what more people in different situations and not to succumb to fear to hate isn't is also a matter of developing skills and abilities. So developing skillful ways of communicating for example, the story I like to tell of many years ago in Palo Alto A woman coming up, come up came up to me and said, Sometimes I park at night in Palo Alto, about myself, and I feel that's afraid there goes dangerous to me. And I'm thinking of getting a gun. What do you think? So I didn't want to tell her where I thought, you know, everything I thought I said if I want to be I don't want to be involved in recommending you know, whether someone does or does not get a gun. However, I think it's said it's the first line of defense is to get a gun. And without doing the work of the alternative ways, there are other forms of self defense that person can use takes more work, right, a gun is pretty easy to get. But taking a self defense class, it takes time and effort and money, a different kind of, you know, and maybe more money than a gun. And so, but you have developed certain abilities to be able to fend off an attacker without without guns. Some people have done you know, chosen background or develop skills and In communication skills that can defuse problems when I was a kind of a long haired hippie I was hitchhiking or not fishing, traveling through the USL. And number of times, there was a tremendous amount of hostility towards me from white men. And there was one situation that it looked like was going to be really violent because it was horribly discrimination right. And I still really strong and palpable near thick. And, and luckily for me, for us, one of the people I was traveling with was a amazingly talented natural comedian. And he was able to turn the situation around by through humor, and everyone was laughing and then they let us go and so if you have a lot of fewer than that ability that helps. I think that, you know, it's interesting for people to reflect, I believe, it's interesting to reflect that probably discrimination is something everyone has been a recipient of one form or the other, or another.

The

you know, it's kind of, you know, it's a kind of a rampant thing in human society. Seemingly, I've traveled a lot part of the advantage of traveling or living in different cultures, is to see the way in which discrimination, racism occurred, you know, across the board, you know, all kinds of ways. I experienced it.

You know, kinds of all over the world, you know, all kinds of everybody, you know, everybody has their own kind of trauma or difficulty. I was sexually abused when I was six. So that's what is that sexual discrimination, sexual harassment. I was when I was 10 or 11 I wasn't living in Italy, and religion our in class. And so the first day religion our the priest asked me to come to the front of the class, introduce myself. He said, what religion are you? And I said, I'm Lutheran. He said, what religion are you? Again? I was dismissed, he never talked to me again. So that was you know, and then and then you know, the number of times my life be threatened with violence, for who I was in Italy as well. be seen as a foreigner and only only avoided getting my face. Not punched out by ducking and then ducking under the guy's arms and running away. You know, being hippies or kind of, you know, maybe hippies with matter of choice, but seemingly, but boy was not always comfortable being hippie going around, you know, as I told you, the south and other places and living in Asia and living in Hawaii. It's interesting for a white person to live in Hawaii, because there's a kind of racism against White's in Hawaii, that I was very uncomfortable uncomfortable for me to experience like taking a class class in the University of Hawaii and being the only Caucasian in the class Anyway, when people are going to break into groups, being being shunned by everyone else, because I was, you know, or being in being in cultures where someone because being a white person trying to talk to someone, and they pretend I didn't exist. They wouldn't respond, they wouldn't answer. And that happens, this culture in America towards other people and white people have it kind of more or less relatively easy here in the mainland or in Asia, you know, seeing seeing discrimination in Asia, between different Asians different groups there. And so what I'm trying to say is that i think it's it's a kind of, I suspect that I kind of operating assumption that everyone if they you scratch the surface of people have been somehow rather the recipients of some kind discrimination. And rather than seeing that as an I choose to see that as a way to find what we have in common, the way that brings us together, arouses more sympathy and understanding and a willingness enthusiasm for not perpetuating that kind of behavior to find some way to free us from that, and my sincere hope is that something like Buddhist practice or mind This practice is an anti discrimination tool effort that somehow in the practice itself, will help free us from the forces of discrimination that we're, that we might succumb to, but also, and also for some people very importantly, it's a way of, of, of healing, some of the trauma and pain that people carry that from past discrimination, which many people carry with them. So I hope that IMC is a safe place for people. If it isn't, then my hope is, is that people let me know. You know, that's my sincere hope and I hope that it's comfortable enough or safe enough to bring it up. If you can't bring it up Directly bring it up anonymously, something. I hope because that's really the this. The great intention here is to try to make it a place where anybody feels comfortable and safe. Who wants to practice