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SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

I'd like this morning to touch on the topic of karma, the Buddhist idea of karma. And it's been said that understanding of karma is very central to be very socially important for people engaged in Buddhist practice. It's one of the key articles that Buddhist practitioners are meant to have confidence in or faith in. Hearing that they can be a little bit turned off. Oh, no, it's like this metaphysical belief system that I'm not supposed to believe it. But it isn't meant to be that way. I believe in a variety of teachers down through the ages, including most recently the Dalai Lama has said things like that. An understanding of karma is more important than understanding of emptiness in the Mahayana tradition that dilemmas part of emptiness is sometimes considered to be one of the most fundamentally important and difficult concepts and realizations in practice. And he says more important than this, is to understand karma. Then there's a famous Zen story of the Zen teacher, who, you know, periodically gives his Dharma talks. And in the back of the room in the monastery, back of the hall, there comes a old man came in have quietly come in this new talk, they leave capital over and over and over again. And then one day after the talk was over. Rather than leaving the old man came over to the abbot and said, formally, in a past life, I was the abbot of this monastery. And someone asked me, if an enlightened person is free of karma And I said yes, it is a consequence of the karma of my answer. I have been reborn for 500 years as a flux. And, and tomorrow if you go behind this boulder behind the mountains such as a place, you'll find it's a first season. So now I've come to ask you is enlightened person free of karma? And the abbot said, an enlightened person does not ignore karma. With that the old man bowed and thanked and he said, Good. Now if you go behind this boulder and the side of the mountain there, tomorrow morning, you'll find the body of a fox. And can you please give it the monk's burial. And so in fact, the next morning they found the fox there and they buried it like the work and the habit terms. Somehow I'd settled in after 500 years of the five He came back as an old man and got the answer he needed to have. So karma is not to be ignored. He didn't say, you know, are you free of it? He said, No, it shouldn't be ignored, need to pay attention to it, it's important to notice. So, as a further introduction to the topic of karma, I wanted to highlight a difference between the beginning of Jewish and Christian scripture, which I think conventionally begins with the book of Genesis. It begins with the doings of God. God is like the, you know, starts at all going. And there's no set beginning for Buddhist scriptures. But kind of as a convention, probably the most danger the strong one of the strongest candidates for the beginning of the project scriptures is the opening to revert to verses and demo pata. And there these verses say, all experience is preceded by mind, led by mind, made by mind, speak or act with a corrupted mind. And suffering follows, like the wagon wheel follows the hoofs of the ox. All experience is preceded by mind, led by mind, made made by mind, Speaker act with a peaceful mind. And happiness follows like a never departing shadow.

And so here, this is the beginning of the Buddhist scriptures, the emphasis here is the mind. So, that's a huge difference, beginning with God and beginning with the mind, where do you start and what So, I've

made this comparison mostly to make the point that in Buddhism, the mind is very centrally important importance. It's really important with what you do with your inner mental world, that gives birth to your impulses to your perceptions, to your desires, to your intentions, your motivation, your reactions, that inner world is really central to the whole enterprise of Buddhism. And, and because your suffering, or your happiness is dependent on how your mind functions, what you do with your mind, what you do with this inner world. So there has to be this sensitivity to that inner world connection to it.

And so the teaching and karma is pointing back to some things right here. And if I may kind of mimic almost like it's just there's a kind of a cliché that sometimes taught that In Buddhism, you are not punished for your sins. You're punished by your sins.

And so when you're punished for your sins, then you know, there's some, maybe some idea of, you know, I don't know, that could be the arbitrator up in the sky who's going to say, Well, you know, you go over there. But, but by your sins means the Buddhist idea of karma of cause and effect, in the Buddhist point of view is a natural law. It's just how things unfold the cause and effect. So it's not any more difficult to understand then. Then if I cling to the striker, and I cling to it really hard, I can desperately important all my hope and aspiration status is tied to having this this striker so I hold it really tight and that clinging if I pay Tension hurts we hold it hurts physically. And what we say if you notice, if you look inside, that the impulse to cling there, you know, it doesn't start doesn't start in the fist, it starts in the mind and the movement to cling hurts. And so clinging is, you know, if we take it very likely as being kind of a sin, then the clinging hurts. And so we're we're punished by the cleaning and doing it. So it's, we can see that many of the impulses that people do that many impulses that people do that we could we consider to be considered to be unethical. Often, if you analyze or look carefully, you see there's some quality within that, that probably the person is hurting or suffering behind that impulse. And so there's kind of Instant Karma in the very acting and in an angry angry way, or in a greedy way or hateful a, the greed and the hate itself is painful. Sometimes people are blind ended by the object of desire the object of hate. So they don't see the consequences, the effect, greed or hate has on them. But if you are mindful and sensitive, you'll see that to be caught up in greed. Caught up in hate is painful for the person who's caught up. This is Instant Karma. So in that sense, you know, we're punished by what's going on. But karma that's just about punishment if we use that kind of, like sound, really Buddhist word, but we're also received the beneficial consequences of our impulses or actions as well. And so if we speak with with kindness and the impulses of kindness, then that also has a beneficial good feeling in the present moment. We're softer, were lighter would be he'll have happier and so there's Instant Karma that goes on with that as well. If you're generous in a genuine way, hopefully that Gen generosity has a nice feeling to it as you do it into this Instant Karma feeling. Good. Karma is not just about how you feel in the moment, that's a very important guide for all this to Carmel, so is very much about that our actions or behavior has consequences. And that's kind of the bottom line for teaching of karma are the actions we'd have through body, speech and mind. They have consequences. And we were asked to have faith in karma. We're asked to have faith or trust or have confidence that we that our actions can make a difference that we can choose actions that have beneficial consequences, we can differentiate between those actions which are helpful for us, those which are not we can choose those consequences are the health the health producing and those which are not. And it's a kind of common sensical things like a difficult metaphysical principle, being asked to be used all the time in our daily life this principle, you're not going to learn a new skill. You're not going to learn a musical instrument or new accounting program or a, you know, you're not going to learn how to learn new recipe, cooking some food, unless you have some confidence in your ability, that your actions will have consequences, beneficial consequences, that by repeated practice, you'll learn that skill, you'll change and develop. And if you didn't, if you had no confidence at all, that what your actions have consequences, then perhaps you wouldn't bother with doing anything to make any difference. And so

when you learn like an instrument, musical instrument, it's not just simply the joy of the moment that we do it for. Some people do it also with anticipation for the proficiency that's going to come into the future. And so we keep practicing practice. Sometimes it's quite boring to practice. But we have some sense we're learning a skill, it's beneficial, and the benefits are going to come in a few, you know, in some time in the future.

So same thing with karma. It's not just about the Instant Karma, the instant consequences, but it's also taking into account that there are consequences into the future that we have. And, and so how do we lay the groundwork for behavior for actions, actions of speech and of mind, that create beneficial consequences are a good foundation for what we want to accomplish. And so if what we want to do is, if we want to accomplish if what we want to accomplish in Buddhist practice is to become freer, more liberated or more loving, more compassionate, and more peaceful? What are the conditions that support that? And so and so we look then in our life here now, what supports that possibility? What supports is becomes more likely in the future? I'm pretty stressed out right now. So I know that what I'm doing now it is not working so well. So what is it going to work? What will work in the future so one ability as some people are going to have to learn that they have to stop being so busy or so involved in activities that brings them a lot of stress. Stress is not doesn't bring the consequences of peace or well being. So, it has to be some changes in our behavior when we do certain kind of certain behavior like you know, gossip creates conditions which are very different than, than talking kindly about people, or not talking about people behind their back. So Buddhists tend to look at their speech speech patterns, because not just because it has to do with ethics here and now. But it also is laying the seeds the foundation for our mind, our behavior, our happiness into the future. So in that sense, what are the meanings of karma or the concerns of karma is how we're being conditioned. And as we know, I think the human mind is a is a conditional Oregon so the mind is not a thing, like a brain, which is kind of like a thing, the mind is quite malleable that activity in mind is a series of activities that work together processes. And those processes of the mind can be shaped. And there are conditioned. And so whatever we do in a repeated way, conditions in particular ways. And so if you have, if a person's always being angry, or always speaking bitterly about people, if conditions, a certain kind of bitterness in the mind, which you're more likely to act on that in the future, if we, if we act that agreed, that conditions it, and so we're more likely to act that agreed in the future. I've known people who just had greed without knowing what they wanted. You know, just had a principle is they should want and then they'll find something to fill the blank I want, you know, just so powerful, doesn't really matter. You know, just finding something. That conditioning is there so strongly.

So there's so far conditioning, some of the consequences of our actions have to do with memory. And, and memory gets stored. Who knows where it gets stored, stored some deep insider psyche or body or mind. And, and that comes back sometimes, either to benefit or sort of bite us. And I've had satin meditation, and then suddenly, seemingly out of the blue. Oh, no, what did I do? What did I do? And, you know, it hadn't occurred to me or somehow I thought I had gotten away with it. No noticed. But the, you know, the inner psyche had noticed. And so and so there's a magic way of just kind of special way in which they, as as meditation practice deepens uncovers the layers of memory layers and where we hold things and they bubble up and things need to be bubbled up for that for a benefit or for harm, depending on what's stored there. My teacher in Burma he loved for whatever reason, or liked a lot to tell the stories of some of the horrific some of the people who are some of soldier Burmese soldiers or Burmese guerrilla fighters fighting the government. They would spend years in the jungle fighting each other. And then they retire. And then they'd go become monks and come to the monastery to meditate. And, and he loved like telling stories of what their meditation was like. And he would talk about these people they tortured, you know, other people that killed other people. And, and he would talk about how tremendous barrier they were up against, they come to a certain point in the meditation practice, and

they couldn't go any farther further because of the these memories these concerns or the consequences that they were stored in the body of this kind of the same way that some people store trauma in their body. So at some point that trauma, you know, might not be noticeable in daily life. But then if you get quiet still, sometimes those layers of the psyche show themselves. But they're also good memories that bubble up. And it's not uncommon for some people when they meditate, especially newer meditators is to remember pleasant memories or pleasant feelings from much earlier in life that they've lost touch with or forgotten. And for me, when I started meditating on a regular basis, I remember feelings of well being that I had as a child going to bed sleep at night, or in a variety of different places that I had forgotten about from that point, you know, for 15 years or so. And, and they came back these wonderful memories, and they kind of were there to kind of boy me up and kind of show them help me and support me as I meditated. And that was unexpected. Or my friend James Perez. I like a story he tells often about receiving He was on a three month retreat. And he you know, it's a kind of a little bit Spartan kind of diet. There's not a lot of ice cream and cake and parsley retreat. And so halfway at some point to the retreat, someone gave him a gift of a slice of cheesecake that he loves cheesecake. So there was you know, James was it was just for him and no one else got cheesecake. And, and so somehow, you know, I don't know how it happened but and so he he's pretty excited love cheesecake and imagine all the pleasure of eating the cheesecake. And looking forward to it, you know, after being deprived this kid for two months. And then I guess he thought about it for a while and what he did instead of eating it was he cut it into small little slices. And to put a nice slice on a little plate, I guess, and then put them out for other people to have. If he had more slice himself, I don't know. But he put them all out. And then he sat in the dining room in the quarter. And watch people came and they took them a slice. You know how many people could take a slice as he had with took it. And he just felt so happy that he could do that. The point I'm telling you here is that James says that the happiness he felt from offering those slices of cheesecake that lingered for decades. And I'm telling you the story now. Whereas if he'd had the cheese cake by himself and just had the pleasure in the moment, he probably wouldn't have remembered. Hardly, it wouldn't have to say. So he was laying that act of generosity was laying the foundation of a good memory that continues to this day in some ways to bring happiness or a different kind of feeling. They just have the pleasure, a little so our actions have consequences.

And and so part of Buddhist practice is to look at that, and know a little bit about how we act is going to have consequences, but also how we did Act has consequences today. And so, what happens to us today is partly the result of past choices we made. And so part of Buddhist practice is to be mature and responsible for the consequences we're living with. So to to bear, you know, or be wise or patient or accepting of, you know, of the consequences that we have created through our actions. And I want to give you a very kind of subtle, maybe subtle example this is maybe doesn't wouldn't occur to someone unless they were kind of sensitive to the teachings of karma years ago, I was driving to Monday night, give a Dharma talk on Monday night. And for whatever reason, I was driving a little bit faster than they usually do. I wasn't driving, you know, particularly fast, but more than I would normally do. So I was kind of pushing the gas pedal a little bit, a little bit impatient or hurry to get there to teach about being present.

And I came off 280. On the way back in Palo Alto, I came off 280 freeway there on Page Mill, and you come off there and there's a stop sign to the four way stop sign there. And so I stopped, and there was a car coming my left but he had a stop sign too. So I stopped, he was kind of far away. So I stopped, and I was gonna keep going. My turn to go. And I figured he would stop but I guess he didn't see the Stop sign. So he just kept going. And we missed each other by a centimeter. I mean, as far as I could tell, just like, miracle we didn't hit each other, he's right in front of me. Now, if he hit me legally, he was responsible. Right? He ran the stop sign. And it would have been quite normal to say, Well, look, we

What were you doing? You just ran the light and bumped into me. From a karmic analysis, the responsibility or you know, legal responsibility stays with him. And the bulk of the, you know, blame, I guess stays with that person. But the karmic analysis is I would look and say what was my karma that caused it? And the karma I would say that the like my karma, the part that I contributed to that accident would have been that I was going a bit faster than you normally do. I was pushing had a little kind of greed or desire. impatience that it was acting on. Because if I hadn't been acting on that, I would have been 10 feet further back, or 20 feet further back or whatever, I wouldn't have been there that that particular moment, as it was my karma was just a centimeter right. To avoid that accident, but I reflected afterwards about had there been an accident that, that I couldn't have gotten my left myself off the hook. And what was instructive to me was how easy it would have been to assign blame to that guy. And never looked at myself. Because it was obvious that person is responsible that that no good lousy driver. And because I was angry, I would have all you know, started everything on that person. But because maybe because it didn't have the accident, I took the time to look myself as Oh, you know, if we had an accident, that was really honest. There was some contribution from me. And the contribution for me has to do with karma. contribution from him is his karma, his choices, whatever, or whatever. But my contribution based on my how I chosen to live would have chosen the impulses have chosen to act on. That's my, that's my karma. And those choices have consequences. Sometimes they have consequences in the physical world, bang. And sometimes they don't. And sometimes the physical things in the world have nothing to do with my karma. I mean, it's possible I could have been driving really slow and, you know, really, really present in Why's my driving, but for whatever reason that they that that big, slow semi hadn't been there on the freeway. And so I wasn't delayed by 30 yards. And I would have been where I was where I had the accident at that time. And it wouldn't have been my camera because I was driving really carefully and well and by had that accident because that truck slogan, you know, you're standing pricey. So it's very complicated the cause and effect in the world. And so we don't so we say I like to say that karma tends our karmic behavior tends to certain kind of results in the physical world. But we don't know there's no guarantee what happens out there. And we don't want to be careful not to assign everything that happens to us as a result of our karma. However, the Buddhist teachings on karma is that there's an inevitable consequence, with our karmic behavior. There's not always in the physical world, and part of that might be in our inner world. You know, So some people I know I've heard of some people develop frozen shoulders, from how they work in the computer for days and years at a time. And

because it has to do with their behavior, how they held themselves and how they engage in their work. The Buddhist analysis is that their actions and their repeated actions helped create that frozen shoulder. So that's a that's, you know, it's kind of an inner thing for myself rather than out in the world. Or it might be that we're creating a habit, strong habit, or like I said earlier conditioning, or we create a memory that's stored up that somehow comes back and bites us. Who knows how it comes back. And the Buddha said, You can't figure out all the natural avenues in which this kind of network of cause and effect works. But there is a feeling in Buddhism that one way or the other, the, your karma will come back and either support you or hinder you depending on what kind of karma you make for yourself. So another way of saying this, is that whatever you act on, whether it's physically, verbally or mentally you create more of the same create more of the same as the source of your action. So, whatever the impulse or the motivation or the intention, there was a source for that action. That source, you get more of that if you act on it. So if you act on greed if you act on hate, if that's the motivation, then you create more of something more in the same line or character as that. So, you create more suffering, because that has suffering as a source. If you act on things which have happiness or well being or generosity or wisdom as a source of the impulse intention, you create more of that you reinforced more of that. So somehow that comes back. Now, some of this is quite challenging, because

some people find that it can be very easy to hack on unethical in poses an act of greed, hate and delusion, or severe strong desires of greed, or whatever kind. And it just, you know, it just kind of but isn't really ready to just kind of like occur, triggers set, and we're just ready to eat or get or buy or do whatever, just so easy. And we feel frustrated or angry that anybody should stand in our way. And it just seems so easy to act sometimes on, on hate, on anger, on greed, on fear. And, and to not do that to restrain ourselves. That's the real challenge. And sometimes for some people like there, people have addiction problems or all kinds of things, anger problems. It takes a lot of resolve a lot of mindfulness, sometimes a lot of inner strength, to restrain from acting in ways which are going to cause bad karma, bad results. And sometimes to act you know, in beneficial ways, to be generous to be loving to be. Sometimes is, is not easily available for people. And sometimes it takes a lot of effort and work to kind of take the initiative to be generous and go that extra step. And you can feel like, well, this is a lot of work. So in the moment, for some people, people are untrained, it can be a lot easier sometimes to act on the unhealthy impulses, the easy, and it can be really difficult to act on the healthy impulses. So if to the degree where that's the case for some people, what we're trying to do in Buddhist practice is to reverse that is to change that so that it becomes difficult to act on the unhealthy impulses and easy to act on the healthy ones. And so part of Buddhist of inner development is to make that shift within and so there's a variety of things that it takes to make that shift. One is restraint is a very important aspect of Buddhist practice to restrain oneself from acting on those impulses which don't seem very healthy. And, and sometimes restraining oneself with the impulses are strong and addictions are strong or the anchor is strong is harder than writing a bronco in the rodeo, you know, they can be so powerful and all the lawyers of the mind come up, and to argue the fact that you know you're justified or if you should, or you need to yell, or be angry or punch that guy out. So it takes a lot of a lot of effort sometimes to put the act of restraint, but hopeful. And But hopefully, with time, and wisdom and understanding, those impulses become weaker, and we're less likely to act on them. And eventually they begin to atrophy. And so they might bubble up that angry thought, but the thought is not tied to all the strong emotional impulse. It's behind it. Just Just a thought that comes up. Let it go. And then it's replaced. Hopefully, practice is good, with almost a natural tendency to be open hearted, to be generous to be kind. And some of this can be understood. Almost mechanic mechanistically I think the results of being relaxed, the contrast between being stressed, or tense versus being relaxed. When we're tense. It's a lot, there's a kind of a certain kind of charge or behind certain impulses that are easy to act on. That when you're relaxed, it's hard to act on those. When you relax, there's a whole other set of things which are easy to act on. So when it when you're tense, it might be really easy to say something unkind, even to a good friend. Because you're impatient, you kind of you know, you kind of tense or whatever. But if you're really relaxed you can Are you not going to say the unkind thing because you're not going to have things spilling out of your mouth kind of in a mindful way from that kind of place. So part of, of practice is learning restraint and restraint. The word restraints, I think, to some people is an oppressive word. Because it's oppressive. You're You're oppressing, you're holding back certain kind of impulse. But I would suggest that it's that can be done in a very healthy way, when you understand how it's beneficial for you, and how it's beneficial for others as well. To hold back at times.

And one of the places of restraint, the holding back has to do with when we is taking the consequences of our past actions. So when we've acted in certain ways in the past, that have certain results, maybe they're harmful, you know, then be willing to take those results and have a certain degree of forbearance surrounded restraint. So for example, I've had people ask With me, sometimes I don't think they were justified. But sometimes they did. And, and sometimes their response was off the scale of appropriateness. Remember, once I, I said I was teaching a retreat, and I set up a special interview with someone outside the regular interview schedule. And I know it's like before, three o'clock in the afternoon, and I was gonna give the Dharma talk that evening. So I was in my cabin, preparing my talk. And at four o'clock, I said, Oh, no, I missed my appointment. I missed that, you know, the interview with

that person. So, it goes like this to anything anywhere else to go or anything else to do, but, but still, I missed it right. So I went and found her and she was livid and So, this is partly partly partly my karma, partly my consequence, but also, you know, she's creating a lot of karma herself. So what I did was, we met the next hour. And I sat there like, I'm sitting here with her room. And she proceeded to be angry yell at me for an hour. And I got a really curious little bit, I thought a little too, you know, to a small degree, I felt like it was my responsibility to to be present. It was, you know, I blown it, you know, the consequences by blowing it was admitting it, I'm sorry, I did this. Take the consequences within reason. But there's also the teacher so there's a whole different dynamic there. What was appropriate for me to do in response, and he felt the appropriate thing for me to do is just sit there and be curious, how long can a person have a monologue without anything coming from me? And, you know, and there's certainly something going on deep in there. Key that needed to be addressed but, but she yelled at me for an hour. And you might think the appropriate thing to do was to stop her or protect myself. But I had the ability for my practice of healthy forbearance healthy just sitting there. I wasn't preparing. I wasn't restraining or just kind of empty. It's okay. You kind of like went right through. So that ability to kind of stay zero is a very powerful one in relationship to karma and consequences and ability to just be there with things and not to act and react. What's going on? The next day, is it five o'clock the bell rang for tea. And then I said, Oh, the bell, you know it's time to go. So I had never excuse to leave. In the next day she said that was so helpful.

In the past, everyone is so afraid of my anger. They You run away, and you stay present. And so I don't know how big a consequence how big change made for her. But for her that was really helpful for her that somehow she could be with herself in a certain kind of way because I could deal with it as well rather than run away or attack and return or something. So to take the consequences, and be willing to do that, and not run away, not be embarrassed and just be there for this important part of this as well. Who knows what the consequences will be. Sometimes the consequences are stored in your body, intention in your mind. So people only sometimes when it comes to meditate, they have to be able to stay that take that consequence, that store there's a tension that's held there. And, and so part of it is learn how to be present for all that and not react not to run away just they work through you. And sometimes it's in your mind. There were the consequences are. Sometimes it's in the world out there because you've set in motion certain cause and effect in the world and who knows what direction How it's gonna go.

So, the Buddhist teaching on karma is meant to be an alternative understanding of what brings us alternative from the existing Indian ideas at the time. What are the causes for happiness and suffering freedom and bondage. And at the Indian time of the Buddha, there were some people believe that all your happiness and suffering was dependent on the gods. To appease the gods makes perfect sacrifice to the gods, it's just up to the gods. So that's, that's where it came from. There are others who believed that it was all predetermined. Somehow or other it's predetermined variety of predetermined understandings of your happiness, nothing you can do. One predetermine idea was that was all based on your past karma completely. And Past karma, whatever happiness you have today, what you're going to have already suffering is completely preset by how you behave in the past. The third one was theory was that your happiness and suffering is just random. You know, life just throws in dice. You wake up in the morning and the dice has been thrown, knows how you're going to feel. But it just kind of accident. How you feel nothing you can do about it, just throw the dice next day. So those are kind of some existing ideas. In the Buddhist ideas counters each of those with an alternative. It's not about the gods. It's about you your own mind. Taking responsibility. You're everything you need to do to for creating liberation, happiness is found in your own mind. Not somewhere else, you don't assign it somewhere else. And some people assign it not to Gods but to their spouse or their whatever, you know, they also do stuff to them. They're going to do it for me. There was fun And the Buddhist thing to

do is not assign the responsibility of our happiness or suffering to anybody but ourselves. There might be real world things to take care of things to deal with it difficult deal with people with people. So to deny that people are, you know, miss their stop signs. But, but in order to assign happiness and unhappiness to others, is the Miss never really golden opportunity, which Buddhism is pointing to. And then it's all pre determined. The Buddha said, That's not good, because that's not true. Because if it's all predetermined, you would have no chance to spiritual life. There'd be no practice. And part of the function of practice is to free you from having to suffer from the pre existing cause and effect karmic conditions have set in motion. So it's not a it's not a it's not It's a mechanical thing that has to always unfold in a certain way. But we can change the flow, we can step outside of the flow of the karma, to some degree, by how we you know how liberated we are how we change that string. There's a famous karma story in the Buddhist tradition from ongole Mala. And the short story is that he was a murderer at the time of the Buddha, and became a monk and then became enlightened. And after he was enlightened, he went back to a village where he'd murdered someone for arms. And people recognized him. And they, understandably threw stones at him. And he came back to the Buddha bruised up and cut and bloody and he said, You know, these people beat me up. And he said, Yes, that's your karma. That's the consequences. And your job is just that He's just Barrett. He says Barrick has to deal with that you have to kind of be before it. However, because you practiced in this way so if you hadn't practiced and attained some degree of liberation change that stream you would have been reborn for many, many, many lifetimes in Buddhist hell there's very bad consequences from killing people. So there are Buddhist tells gives you 100 So, like whether the metaphorical hills tells their own mind or hills, you know, I don't who knows but in case the but all he had to do was suffer being beat up a little bit. So that was peanuts a pretty good you know, he got he, you know, he cleaned it up pretty well. So the idea of burying it, being with what is there taking the consequences, is a part of a mature human life. The Buddhist theory of karma

as I understand it, is not a theory of justice. Even though it lends itself to that some people are really attached in one, one a world of justice. They want to know that person is going to get hurt, just deserves just desserts. It's really important to know that person might get away with the terrible behavior they did. And it's when they hear karma theory. Oh, yes. Oh, thank god, yes, then, at least the next lifetime. It's really I don't think that's the purpose of karma theory in Buddhism common idea is to have a theory of justice, regardless of how satisfying might feel that my understanding is the central purpose of the karma theory is to help us do two things, two primary or three things one, one is to encourage us encourages us to be in the present moment. It's a very, you know, that's like the one of the main purposes of hold this complicated karma thing is stay present. to what's happening here now, stay present enough so that you can notice what your intentions are the quality of your intentions because of the quality of the intentions, which triggers which which sets in motion the karma wheel. And from the vantage point of the present moment, don't just stay in the present moment also anticipate little bit what the consequences are going to be in the future. So we're not just kind of blindly naively just staying present present present, we also have some sense of the potential that we can grow into. And then from that, some some sense of that, then how can I behave now. So I can grow into that potential. So I can support that. And at the very heart of what supports us is looking at our intentions and our our intentions Based on greed, hate and delusion, or are they based on generosity, love, or wisdom. So part of people are interested in looking at their life, their point of view of karma. What they're doing is not assigning blame, not looking for justice in the world. They're looking at themselves, and trying to understand the quality of this thing of just really close to her the essence of our hearts, the quality, the characteristics of the impulses, the motivations, the volitions intentions, upon which we build all our actions and activity in this world. What are those intentions like what are the qualities like were the characteristics like to look at that to measure it to look at that to look at it to evaluate it, and then to make choices to restrain or let go of those which are caused harm and pick up and encourage those

that are beneficial for ourselves and for others. So it's very important to have confidence or faith in the theory of karma. Because without that, you won't feel that your actions make a difference and you're actually actions to make a difference.