So in exploring the topic of letting go mindful letting go. To appreciate there are many different kinds of letting go. And I'm using letting go is kind of an umbrella term for the many different types. And today, I want to introduce the idea of release. In the way I use the word at least, there's a distinction between the act of letting go, that we do, versus the release, that happens, independent of our doing.

So, if we feel tense in the shoulders, if we're tight, shoulders are up by the ears. And someone comes along and says, you might want to relax your shoulders. And then you feel and you say, Oh, yeah, I can do that. And then we kind of relax the shoulders. And it's pretty straightforward. We do it. But sometimes which shoulders are really up by the ears, and we just know it. And as soon as we know it, someone might say, Look, your shoulders are tense. So Oh, and then before we even have to do anything, something releases just an unknowing of it. Sometimes just the space of leaving things alone, allow something to release. And partly, that's because when we're able to leave things alone, let them be, we're not fueling them, we're not feeding it, we're not actively involved in continuing it.

And one of the principles of Buddhist practice in psychology is that, I think it's well supported by modern understanding, is that we are constantly renewing our grip on things are resistant to things, our compulsivity is not constant, just like we grab on, and then we're not gonna let go, which is a constant in the mind, kind of having to redo it, redo it, redo it. And some of you have done this exercise with me, where I asked people to make a tight fist with their hand. And so those of you who haven't done this, you might do it, make your fist your hand really, really tight, tight fist, really, so almost hurts really keep it there. And I really try hard to keep it there while I tell the story, but remember to keep tight.
So in India, there's a way in which apparently, maybe in ancient times, they caught monkeys. And that was they tied a they made a hole in a coconut. And they would tie a rope to the coconut in the hole, they put a piece of sweet candy. And the hole was so that the monkey could put its hand in flat, now are you holding your fist tight, still, be sure to keep it still tight, put their hand in, and then they would grab the candy when doing so they a bunch of their hand. And then when they try to pull the hand out, it wouldn't go out to the out of that slit. And so that monkeys are greedy, they don't want to let go of the sweet. And then the hunters would come along and just grab the monkey. So that's a story and you can let go of your fist now. The lesson for this in this exercise, is that chances are that you had to keep reasserting your grip. And since this story was so gripping in itself, you probably kind of would you know that the story versus gripping was probably a little conflict there. And so something would begin releasing and then you'd remember to hopefully remember to tighten up again, the natural movement of the fist of a tight fist is to relax. It's kind of like the calling the longing of a tight fist is to release sooner or later. Because it's a lot of work and tension and effort to keep it if it's like that. And so the same thing with any clinging within us, it's a work. It's a lot of effort, and the natural calling, the movement, the direction and wants to flow is to release and is to let go. And so if that's the natural kind of tendency, unless we feed it, then when we just allow things to be we're no longer feeding it, no longer reasserting it and something has a chance to let go.

The lesson of that, that kind of release letting go which is release, there is that we are not the agent doing the letting go this system releases itself. And it turns out that when we are the agent, we are the doer that itself represents, in some kind of way, a very subtle form of clinging, grasping, wanting interfering, we still want something. And it's innocent enough to want that it's actually healthy at times. And it's healthy to be the doer of letting go, when it's easy to do so. But to some people are over emphasized their responsibility and letting go, it's up to me, and I have to do it, and why can't I do it. And then as practice gets stiller, stiller, deeper and deeper. That movement of being the agent of change agitates the mind. So even though an ordinary everyday life, that's far from agitating, because we're so agitated to begin with, in deep meditation, it's too much to be the doer.

And so this idea of just holding experience, just being with it, permissively, allowingly that's all we do. And so in this example of me holding that my hands, in a cupping my hands this way, I love this image of just holding my feelings, my fear, my anger, my pain, whatever it might be, just hold it this way. And I'm not doing anything or wanting anything, I'm just allowing it to be, and little bit that begins their best, it's kind of like having a tight fist, and someone comes along, it just supports the fist the way to the hand, and then the fist can begin to relax. So we come along and just hold it there. But at some point, even this wonderful way of just holding experiences too much. And so we're just they're just there holding is allowing to be, and then we also let go of that, that or that releases itself, even the holding of experience gets released.

So this idea of release, we don't do, but the letting be of mindfulness allows. And we don't always know what it is that we need to release or let go of. And so this allowing awareness, just there with
experience, helps what helps the inner life the find its way so it, it knows what to release. And we thought maybe that idea was to relax, some deep physical tension. And turned out that was really useful, helpful and had long term implications, was releasing our resistance, our judgments, our negative view of ourselves and the tension in the body, release all this reactivity and thoughts we have about it, release that. And attention might remain in the body. But that is what's released and where we feel free is in the mind. And then we're more okay with the tension in the body. Ultimately, what we want what gets released in Buddhist practice, as we go deeper and deeper, is releasing greed, hatred and delusion, clinging and grasping.

And it we're not really letting go in the depths of our hearts and minds of things which are wholesome, we're not letting go of love and compassion and generosity and wisdom. We're letting go of that which is problematic and a source of suffering. We're not asked to let go of the things of the world, the people of the world, that you need to have wisdom to know whether what to do about what's in the world. But the deep letting go, is really, that put a call like the call of the fish to relax, the call of the heart, to release to be released, is to be released from what greed, hate, greed, hate and delusion released from all different forms of ways in which the heart is contracted and the inner life is tight or clinging. And those are the things that are causing suffering. So that's what gets released. And it's phenomenal how thorough that can be. It's so thorough, that even when the full release is there, there is a phenomenal absence of suffering, phenomenal absence of clinging, absence of coagulation, of bunching up of pressure of tightness, just a lot of release a lot of peace, happiness, and all the wholesome things the good things are can still be there. Our wisdom, our love, our compassion, generosity. Patience, equanimity, and dedication to serve can be there as well. And it's a beautiful thing, wonderful thing. It's a profound thing to serve the world. Whether it's the smallest possible ways of your family, not that's not small, it's significant. Your family or your neighbors, your friends, your neighborhood, your community. And to do it without any of that coagulation of obligation, or the heaviness of responsibility or duty. That is just kind of an expression of release expression of freedom, and it's done freely. And all we do everything we do can be offered freely, with a happy and relaxed and peaceful heart.

May it be contagious, may we learn how to live in service of the world freely happily. So there are others realize the blessings of doing so. They are release be a blessing for all. Thank you.