

Tricycle Talks

“I’m Mindful, Now What?”

Episode #110 with Andrew Holecek

September 11, 2024



Note: Transcripts are generated using a combination of speech recognition software and human transcribers. Please check the corresponding audio before quoting in print.

Andrew Holecek: You do not need to have any special experience to be free. Hard stop. You just need to relate 100 percent fully with whatever you're experiencing, the good, the bad, and the ugly. That's a spiritual experience. And so this is amazingly empowering. It's like, hey, wait a second, I've already got it. It's all right here. If I'm in a heap of hurt, and I relate to that heap of hurt, physical or psychological, properly, there's liberation right here, right now. So this is, I think, a fantastically empowering set of teachings that has a lot of traction in this day and age.

James Shaheen: Hello, and welcome to *Tricycle Talks*. I'm James Shaheen, and you just heard Andrew Holecek. Andrew is a teacher in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition who leads workshops on meditation, dream yoga, and preparing for death. In his new book, *I'm Mindful, Now What?: Moving Beyond Mindfulness to Meet the Modern World*, he lays out the limitations of mindfulness and offers an overview of a variety of meditation techniques that can lead to deeper transformation, including the esoteric practices of reverse meditation and bardo yoga. In my conversation with Andrew, we talk about why mindfulness is not enough to help us meet the challenges of the modern world, why meditation is the most natural thing we can do, how we can learn to nurture our meditation by destroying it, and the importance of “waking down” into the messiness of embodied life. So here's my conversation with Andrew Holecek.

James Shaheen: So, I'm here with meditation teacher and longtime *Tricycle* contributor Andrew Holecek. Hi, Andrew, it's great to be with you.

Andrew Holecek: Hey, James, lovely to spend time with you. Thanks for the opportunity.



James Shaheen: So, Andrew, we're here to talk about your new book, *I'm Mindful, Now What?: Moving Beyond Mindfulness to Meet the Modern World*. So to start, can you tell us a little bit about the book and what inspired you to write it?

Andrew Holecek: Yeah, for sure. Well, I've been a longtime practitioner. When I look back over these decades, it's a little scary how long I've been practicing meditation. And as fantastically brilliant as mindfulness is, the mindfulness revolution is an extraordinary contribution, there are limitations. As I summarize in the book, even at its apex, mindfulness sedates. This is a slightly extreme comment: Mindfulness sedates; it doesn't liberate. And with a world that's on fire, sedation is actually a good thing. Chilling out is a good thing. But because I've done so many different practices, including a traditional Tibetan Buddhist three-year retreat, I've had the great luxury of being exposed to a ton of post-mindfulness meditations. I wanted to basically situate mindfulness. 17,000 studies have been done on it. It's just an amazing field with so many contributions, but there's so much more. There are so many practices that transcend but include mindfulness. And I wanted to situate the practice and put it in a larger context and show people how many other ways for exploring the wonders of the mind are available to them and share the richness of the wisdom traditions and exploring this terrain.

James Shaheen: Alright, you mentioned the three-year retreat. Can you tell us a bit about how that experience opened you to a variety of experiences and practices that go beyond basic mindfulness?

Andrew Holecek: Yeah. That was huge for me, I mean, truly the most transformative before-and-after event of my life. And so, yeah, during this time, it was an extraordinary opportunity to really engage in a kind of meditation university. Usually, when people think of meditation, they usually think of mindfulness, but it's a multivalent term. It's a little bit like the use of the word “sports” or “sport.” When you say “sport,” well, there are hundreds of them, so which one are you talking about? So people tend to throw the default into mindfulness, which is appropriate. But the three-year retreat for me was just this unbelievable opportunity for so much



continuous time to explore 50–60+ different types of practices. Many of these are not only in the kind of what are called causal vehicle sutra tradition in Buddhist language but also in the more elevated dare we say tantric tradition. And so the great gift was, wow, look at all these practices for sleeping and dreaming and dying and you name it—if there's a state of consciousness, there's a practice for it. And the three-year retreat was just an extraordinary opportunity to really soak in so many of these practices.

James Shaheen: You know, you talk about two ways of looking at meditation, training and discovery. Can you say something about that distinction? What are these two?

Andrew Holecek: Yeah, this is a big deal. Thanks for bringing that up. You know, it echoes a little bit what Plato talked about with his notion of anamnesis, this journey of recollection. And so how it relates to this, James, is that we can look at meditation in a more conventional, traditional way, just like learning how to play the piano or golf: The more you do it, the better you get at it. You acquire certain skill sets, and you achieve and accomplish. That's a very conventional, provisional way of looking at it. I think it's entirely valid. Well, a more radical way, in the spirit of Plato and also in the spirit of nondual wisdom traditions, is that we already have, in relationship to meditation, we have these meditative capacities within us. They've just been buried under the sedimentation of what's referred to as adventitious defilements, all this dust, all the strata of obscurations and distractions, fundamentally. And so this is wonderful and important because the fruition of meditation, in my experience, is really brought about by complete openness and relaxation. And so, in conventional standards, well, where does the achievement come from there? I'm a pianist, and I can sit in front of my piano and do absolutely nothing, and nothing's really going to happen. I'm not going to get good at it. But if I sit and do nothing—and I think this is one way to talk about what meditation is: It's the art of doing nothing but doing it well, at least on some levels. And in so doing one literally discovers or uncovers all these natural qualities of the mind. And so I think this is important for us, especially in the West because of our overachieving mentalities: *I can accomplish this, I can get this next practice.* And this



narrative of relaxation, openness, and discovery is really a compelling one. And I can't remember who said it, but there's a wonderful line in the nondual traditions that goes so far as to say one actually never attains enlightenment; one simply ceases to be deluded.

So this is important because the essence of the path at the highest levels is in fact one of negation and cessation. When we talk about nonduality, that's a term of negation. Nirvana, extinction, is a term of negation. *Nirodha*, *nisprapancha*, all the terms are terms of negation. So this is I think quite helpful for us in the West because otherwise we get in this overachieving, striving kind of mode when fundamentally at the deepest levels if we simply open and relax, the natural treasures within just reveal themselves.

James Shaheen: Yeah, speaking of striving, you say that meditation is far from contrived. In fact, it's the most natural thing we can do. I think that's what you're getting at. Is that right?

Andrew Holecek: Oh, for sure, yes, it's like it's as green and organic as you can possibly get. One reason I believe it's difficult for us in the West is because we're human doings more than we are human beings: We just have to do, do, do. We wake up in the middle of the night with our “gotta dos,” all the stuff I have to accomplish. Well, what do they say in the Taoist tradition? It's so powerful: By doing nothing, nothing is left undone. So really, just to put an exclamation point on this, the deepest levels of practice come from doing what Hindus referred to as the path of *anupaya*, the path of no path, which is simply opening, relaxing, and then quite literally discovering what's already hiding in plain sight right in front of you.

James Shaheen: So, you do start with mindfulness, and it's become a ubiquitous term, and there are many ways of defining and understanding it. So how do you define it?

Andrew Holecek: Well, I do a tiny bit of heavy lifting at the beginning of the book where I go through some exhaustive etymology of what is the origin, where does it come from? There are so many ways to define it, but fundamentally I think most people have a fairly deep intuition of it.



It's just the capacity to maintain the mind one-pointedly on a particular object, whether it's a breath, a candle, and then of course by extension, the present moment. And this is an extraordinary practice, and it leads to extraordinary levels of pacification. But a near enemy of this pacification really is sedation. In my language, it leads to the penthouse of samsara. In other words, the very loftiest dimensions of mindfulness, as spectacular as they are in the *jhana* states and what's called *nirodha-samapatti*, I mean, these are extraordinarily refined, highly concentrated states of mind, but they're still in the realm of conditioned, confused suffering, the realm of samsara.

And so I'll pause there because the book itself goes through all the different ways to tease out the importance of understanding this word and how it's different from attention, its role as a great contribution, a platform really for all the post-mindfulness meditations, so once again, pointing out its extraordinary contributions and strengths, but at the same time saying, well, there's just so much more. In other words, moving beyond mindfulness to meet the modern world.

James Shaheen: So the book is very much about mindfulness, now what, and the now what are ever subtler, meditations. So why is mindfulness not enough? I think you explained that, because it's still samsaric. I mean, you're still in these samsaric states. But what are the dangers of trying to extract it from its larger ethical and religious context?

Andrew Holecek: Well, yeah, this is a good one, because as far as I can tell on the historical records, mindfulness did not come about, and by the way, this is worth throwing into the mix. Every single scholar I've been able to track down, and I've tracked down a lot here, this is important, is that the Buddha did not invent mindfulness. He inherited this from the developing Brahmanical tradition. What he really invented, so to speak, is Vipassana insight meditation, and that is in fact what led to his enlightenment. So, my understanding was, as he studied with the Brahmin priests and the high adepts in the developing Hindu tradition, he realized perhaps, close but no cigar, that this is really, really great, it's super lofty, but you know, not quite there. So the reason we have to put it in this kind of larger context is this practice of mindfulness really wasn't



that interested in health benefits. I'm not dissing this at all. The extraordinary benefits that have been scientifically studied. Mindfulness didn't really arise in that arena. It arose as a form of, the big word is soteriology. It arose as an ingredient for spiritual practice, as a way to reduce and eventually transcend all suffering. And so I think it's important to do that because otherwise, you can finger pick, you can cherry pick out, you can extract this practice from its cultural, social, and religious milieu. And I think that does a disservice to it. Some scholars, you've heard this term, refer to it as McM mindfulness in that regard, that if you pull it out of that context and the orchestra in which mindfulness is situated, that does a disservice to it. And it's interesting because in a certain way, science almost has to do that. In order to remove the variables and create studies based on reproducibility and replicability, they have to do this kind of extractive approach. And so as long as we understand that that's part and parcel of their approach to studies, perhaps we can also realize the limitations in doing that. Like in an orchestra, mindfulness never plays solo. It's always in an orchestra. And so even in the book, I make an important point of this. We can tease out for teaching purposes mindfulness from Vipassana, from awareness, from analytic meditation, from *metta*, from all the different practices that I mentioned. We can silo those out for purposes of teaching pedagogy. But we always have to remember that we're dealing with probability waves. We're dealing with dimensions of the mind that obviously have traffic with each other. They're cross-pollinating all the time. So that's also really important because otherwise you have this kind of facile, overly articulate understanding of the processes of the mind. They're always working in conjunction with each other. I think that's also important to keep in mind.

James Shaheen: OK, so you say that the fruition of mindfulness is meditative absorption, or *samadhi*, which is both a blessing and a curse. So what is meditative absorption, and what are the dangers of getting stuck there?

Andrew Holecek: Yeah, boy, this is a good one. Meditative absorption, or *samadhi* or the jhana states is, like what it sounds like. It's when a practitioner becomes so single-pointedly present,



their awareness is so focused on the object that they become one pointed with it. And then as you progress further and further in this refinement, you actually unite more and more with it. And so the classic description of this, of course, comes from the Theravada traditions. They're extraordinarily elegant. These states are, by definition, they're states, and states always have a beginning and an end. They're extraordinarily delicious. I mean, for me, I like to look at them as mental or psychospiritual candy. These are meditative sweets. I mean, they are just the best. They taste so good. They're so delicious. And they can be so ecstatic in contradistinction. I mean, when you experience a fully pacified tranquil mind in contrast to a runaway speedy mind, the contrast can be so dramatic that you can very easily mistake that for enlightenment because it's just like, wow, there can't be anything more subtle and refined than this.

But you see, of course there is. And so what happens with these is if we don't understand the promise and the peril of these states, using the analogy of sweet states of mind, mental candy can give you truth decay, right? They can bring about a type of quality of mind that I often refer to as you become a state junkie. In other words, you become attached to particular delicious states of mind. The Sufi tradition talks about it as the golden cage. We can refer to it as a kind of a golden chain. These states are so wondrous in relationship to our confused states that we want more of them.

Now, this doesn't mean we can't aspire to those states. I mean, once they're pointed out, they can point out profound alternative states and dimensions of experiences, like, “Wow, I really want more of that.” Well, the very near enemy of wanting that, of course, is what? Grasping. And the minute you grasp, what are you doing? You've just replaced a chain made of lead with one made of gold.

And so my meditation teacher, one of my main teachers, Khenpo Rinpoche, had this amazing line around this where he says you nurture your meditation by destroying it. Now, that's a really



interesting statement. And what of course he means is you don't destroy your meditation, you destroy, i.e., let go of, release your fixation on it, your attachment to it.

And so this is super important in the so-called New Age circles where basically states of consciousness are kind of the goal that you want to achieve these particular states. So, in technical scientific language, they talk about it as a conversion of states, fleeting states into enduring traits. I love Huston Smith when he put it as the process of the path is to transform flashes of illumination into abiding light. That's really beautiful. And so therefore, just one last comment on this one way to do that, because this may seem a little armchair philosophizing, is what you want to do with these delicious states of mind is, first of all, recognize them for what they are. This is where it's helpful to understand. There's a classic list of bliss, clarity, and non-thought. These are the classic states. You can pat yourself on the back and say, “Wow, wonderful, wonderful, congratulations,” but then reinstate the conditions that brought about those states to begin with, and by that what I mean, if you look behind every spiritual experience, in fact, an experience to which you would append the label meditative or spiritual, I promise you, you're going to find some quality of openness. And so what happens if you don't remain open, if you don't reinstate the conditions that brought about that state of openness? You contract on it, you grasp on it. And that's when these states can become really problematic because in the worst case scenarios, you start talking about it. People start believing it. People start wanting to have your experience. And before you know it, you've got a cult going on. So this is why one has to basically nurture these experiences that are delivered in silence and then allow them to mature by remaining in silence because otherwise these various levels of inappropriate relationships can be really sticky. And so I speak from a very personal experience on this. I mean, I've had these extraordinarily delicious states of mind. And it was like, “Whoa, there can't be anything more than this.” And so I just kept wanting to go back. I set these bars, these self-imposed metrics that then became somewhat tortuous for me. And so one reason to write this book is to realize, well,



you know what, there is more. So whatever arises, let it come, let it go, receive it. Don't repress it, don't indulge it, and then your path will mature.

James Shaheen: Yeah, you just quoted your teacher, Khenpo Rinpoche, who said, nurture your meditation by destroying it, and I thought you did a very nice job of explaining what that meant. And I also want to point out that the role of the teacher is so important because when one does become attached to those states, they kick you right out of it.

Andrew Holecek: Oh, James, you are hitting the key issues here. This is so important. And again, just to point out some extremes, I won't name names, but I could, of alleged Western masters, quote unquote, who have legitimate, 100 percent legitimate spiritual experiences. They're not even stable. They're not even realizations yet. That's another distinction. And so what they do is they go to their teacher, a legitimate teacher. The teacher actually will bust their chops and try to bring them back around, and some of these teachers, well, what do they do? They reject the teacher. “Well, the teacher doesn't understand my experience.” And so this is a really important part, and I write about it, the importance of community, the importance of a teacher, because as Feynman, the great physicist, said, we are the easiest people to fool. We fool ourselves all the time. And so again, ego comes in, right? You got the spiritual bypassing thing, the spiritual materialism thing. Ego comes in, and gloms onto this. “Look at me. I'm getting enlightened.” And wow, this incredible opportunity transforms into an obstacle. So one brief word on this. I write a lot about transforming obstacles into opportunity, like pain, hardship, old age, sickness, and death. Well, this is a two-way street. This is bidirectional. You can just as easily transform opportunity into obstacle. And this is one very simple example, a common and very insidious way that this happens on the spiritual path. So, this is a booby trap everybody should be aware of.

James Shaheen: Now, sometimes meditation can be described in terms of transcendence, but here's something interesting. You suggest that it's equally about subsistence, which you also



describe as waking down into the messiness of embodied life. So can you say more about the power of subsidence and waking down into the wisdom of our body?

Andrew Holecek: I love your questions. These are so great. So, this circumambulates, this will tie into, actually, a little, a clip I wrote for you guys at *Tricycle* maybe a year or so ago. This ties in very beautifully to this little rant I've had for the last couple of years about the two biggest problems with spiritual path. Number one: the use of the word *spiritual*. Why is that a problem? Well, it's so easy to use spiritual not merely in contradistinction to material but in opposition to it. And so therefore what do you do? You centrifuge out the spiritual from the material, wanting to get away from the material and to enter the spiritual. And so this is classic spiritual bypassing. Second issue with spiritual path: the use of the word *path*. Outside of that is perfect, right? And so, path to where, right? Where are you going? Seeking denotes the absence of that which you seek. And so at the more refined levels of the so-called spiritual path, even the notion of spiritual path becomes counterproductive, kind of contraindicated. And so, the notion of subsidence here, waking down, boy, this ties into the highest levels of Buddhist tantra and nondual Shaivism, the work of Abhinavagupta and others, incredible parallels there. This ties into what we talked about 15 minutes ago. According to these nondual traditions, you already have everything you could possibly want. Don't try to go out into some place that is other than right here. Don't try to have an experience other than what you're having right now. Simply experience what you're experiencing fully, 100 percent. This is Dzogchen or great perfection experience. You will discover that's right there. And so, another, really radical teacher, Trungpa Rinpoche, nails this in an amazing line when he says, “The absolute experience of duality is the experience of nonduality.” This is a colossal statement. So what it simply means is that open your eyes, what you're looking for is hiding in plain sight. As they say in the lofty Mahamudra tradition, it's so obvious you don't see it, it's so simple you don't believe it, it's so easy you don't trust it. And so if we understand this, this ties back into this narrative. How do you actualize something you already have? You can't. Actually, trying to achieve it prevents you from achieving it. So what do you do? It's like trying to achieve your feet. You already have them. What do you have to do?



You just open, relax. That's it. And then what happens? The mind falls into itself. The mind subsconds. It drops into the nature of its being. And right there, then you have what T. S. Eliot says: to arrive where you started in this and see it as if for the first time. So I think this is really important because again, it releases this insatiable Western appetite to achieve and acquire and the next practice and the next thing. Hey, I'm not dissing this. I did a three-year retreat. And provisionally, that is so incredibly important. But underneath it all, you know this maxim very well, James, self-liberate the antidote. Let go even of that which professes to bring you to these truths. This is taking a high-altitude approach to it, but I think it's important because this view of trickle-down spirituality informs all the practices and the overarching trajectory of the path, quote unquote, at least as I've come to understand it. And it just makes it so, so simple: Do nothing, just do it well.

James Shaheen: Yeah, it's funny, you mentioned a therapist in the book who said, “Meditators are the most disembodied people I know.” So, in other words, you say tapping into somatic wisdom is another way of moving beyond mindfulness. But how is that? I mean, that is funny, and I think we've all been there. But why would meditators fall into the trap of disembodiment?

Andrew Holecek: Well, because, have you noticed, James? Your body gets sick, it gets old, it falls apart, and it dies. How can that be spiritual? How can that be meditative? So most of us in the West are subscribers to the Abrahamic traditions, which are theistic, and these really are about getting up and out. And so for us, and this is where I write about in the book the practice of reverse meditation. I think this is a really important one because this is kind of a reverse strategy. It's a strategy of complete, utter embodiment. And so for many people, especially as we age, we start falling apart. And because we have our own hopes, feelings, and aspirations about what liberation and spirituality could actually entail, well, it can't entail me being in a heap of hurt. It can't entail me with my body crumbling. Well, of course it can. You just have to go as deeply as you possibly can into your body to actually see what it's made of to realize that the body that we



identify with is just one dimension of the bodies that are within us. And so I'm not sure how far down that rabbit hole we want to go, but something like that. Does that make sense?

James Shaheen: Yeah, absolutely. This notion of wanting to get out of this body that ages and falls apart and dies is something I found really helpful because once, many years ago, before I had a Buddhist practice, I had a terrible toothache and somebody said, “Be with the toothache,” and I nearly slugged them. But you have a very good question that piques my curiosity and it's, “What am I feeling right now that I just don't want to feel?”

Andrew Holecek: Oh yeah, that's a good one. This is the anti-complaint meditation. Again, just to come back very briefly to the master of the one-liner again, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, he said something that really ties into this whole narrative where he said, “There is no way out. The magic is to discover that there's a way in.” This one's been colossal for me. I'll just mention it very briefly. This is this notion of embodiment and disembodiment taking place all the time. And so, just to tie this into what I do in the book, and maybe of some note, is in addition to the fifteen or so formal practices that I do introduce, I also pepper the book with a number of these kind of meditative snacks, these so-called little brief emergency meditations, ways to just use the maximum of short sessions repeated often. And so the anti-complaint meditation is one of my favorites. And so if I just explained it in 30 seconds, you'll get a sense of what it's about.

The idea here is whenever you feel the urge to complain, and perhaps, maybe notice there's no shortage of grist for this mill. The invitation is, before you have to express your discontent, pause for a second, turn the lens of your mind in, this is a form of analytic meditation, and take a brief inquiry. What am I feeling? Again, it's a somatic invitation, waking down. What am I feeling right now that I just don't want to feel? And so you go in there and you go, “Whoa, yes, indeed.” I invite people to look just with the invitation to find openness. Under every experience we have tended to tie spiritual to, in any moment of duress, discontent, anything that will result in a complaint, you will find some level of contraction. And so the invitation is to drop in and realize, “Whoa, there it is again. There it is again. There it is again.” And so then what do you do? The



practice is stay with it, be with it. Simply being with it starts to transform it. And then using the previous maxim, absolute experience of duality is the experience of nonduality, well, go even further. Go into that contraction 100 percent. Stay embodied, because every time you contract and do, in fact, express it, you're having a type of out-of-body experience. It's like James Joyce said of one of his characters. I love it. “Mr. Duffy lived a short distance from his body.” Well, we spend our lives having out-of-body experiences. Why? Because somatic experience is gritty. It's messy. It's boring. It's no fun. So, this is a reverse strategy again. The anti-complaint meditation is a reverse meditation. Turn the lens of your mind and heart back in. Stay with whatever you're feeling. Again, this is the genius of mindfulness, so we're not dissing it. Stay with it. Be mindful of that. And then go into it very fully and guess what? The contraction will self-liberate. It will open, and you will actually find the openness within the contraction. And this is colossal because it circumambulates back to what we said earlier, the importance of which cannot be overstated: You do not need to have any special experience to be free. Hard stop. You just need to relate 100 percent fully with whatever you're experiencing, the good, the bad, and the ugly. That's a spiritual experience. And so this is amazingly empowering. This is an incredible, peaceful transfer of power, right? Amazing empowerment. It's like, hey, wait a second, I've already got it. It's all right here. If I'm in a heap of hurt, and I relate to that heap of hurt, physical or psychological, properly, there's liberation right here, right now. So this is, I think, a fantastically empowering set of teachings that has a lot of traction in this day and age.

James Shaheen: Well, you mentioned contraction a few times. So as we become more established in our meditation practice, we may begin practicing open awareness, or nonreferential shamatha (shamatha is tranquility or calm abiding). So what is open awareness, and how can it help us reveal and ultimately release our contraction?

Andrew Holecek: Yeah, massive. Thanks for these super questions, James. Just spot on. This is such a genius meditation, one of the absolute penultimate post-mindfulness practices that, of course, then builds on mindfulness but transcends it. And so this practice, like you mentioned, is



called nonreferential awareness, nonreferential shamatha, shamatha without a sign. There are a number of names for it. Here's one way to look at it. It's the invitation to create a type of contrast medium that allows you to actually determine for yourself how contracted you actually are. So let me say a little bit about this and then what the aspirations are.

We don't realize how contracted we are. We don't realize that the very sense of self is indeed a type of contraction. And until we have a set of contrast mediums, and this is what meditation has done for me over the years—so many of these practices, not all of them, but so many of these practices create a canvas, a new contrast medium that simply allows me to see and feel things I've never seen and felt before. So for instance, my practice of mindfulness, the invitation to be quiet and stay fully embodied, allows me to see how frequently my mind moves and how distracted I am. And this is often why beginning meditators say, “Oh, meditation is making things worse. I've never had this many thoughts before.” Well, yes, you have. You just never saw them before. So the practice is simultaneously diagnostic and prescriptive. Open awareness takes that same narrative and amps it up even further. So by creating an environment through your meditation that invites you to be open, this radical acceptance, radical open equanimity to whatever arises, you're basically creating a new contrast medium that allows you to see how contracted we always are, already are, always are, how we're always referring experiences back to ourselves. We're always distracted. That's a form of contraction. We're always grasping. That's a form of contraction. And so with this practice, now it's not merely, “Geez, I never realized how distracted I was.” Now it's like, “Wow, I had no idea I was this contracted.” And so this is super important because how can you solve a problem you don't even know you have? And so by doing this, then what happens is there's this narrative openness again, right? The mind opens, it relaxes, and as it relaxes, you're really working, in the most colloquial sense, you're learning how to say yes to whatever arises, this kind of radical, unconditional equanimity and acceptance. And I'll pause here for a second because there's so much to say, but the quote that really substantiates this for me was this legendary statement by Krishnamurti. After some sixty, seventy years of teaching, someone allegedly asked him, “What's the secret to your unflappable contentment?”



And he said something really beautifully disarming. He said, “I don't mind what happens.” And so this capacity to receive, to accommodate the contents of our mind, the contents of our worldly experience, is enormous. Because then once we can do that, James, then we have the opportunity to what? To change our relationship to it. Instead of relating from everything, we start to relate to it. And so that is a game changer, because relating from it, that's no relationship at all. That's the usual conventional samsaric agenda, life lived with reactivity or from reactivity. So this practice, it's a fantastic post-mindfulness meditation, and it's also a brilliant preparatory practice to the one that comes right after this, which in fact are these reverse meditations.

James Shaheen: Yeah, so anyway, you say that open awareness mixes the mind with space, and you write that a lack of space is at the heart of all suffering. So what do you mean by that?

Andrew Holecek: Well here again, I would just say look at your experience. Look at your own experience. Look at those instances when you're feeling a sense of levity, and, again, I invite you, you will almost always find some quality of openness, some quality of acceptance. And so that strategy falls away, and we start to contract away from our experience. The quality of spaciousness is lost. The mind becomes congested, contracted. I would argue, and look at your experience, we suffer in direct proportion to that. And so the notion of mixing your mind with space, this is why the medium of the breath is used so beautifully, using the relationship literally of inner space to outer space.

I also introduce one of my favorite meditations in the book, the one-breath meditation session, where literally during the course of one inhalation and one exhalation, take a sip of space. That's it. And so simply test it. So the next time you're starting to feel a little contracted, a little congested, a little speedy, a little reactive, pause for a second and take a little sip of space.

By taking a brief one-breath meditation session, see what happens to your relationship to the contents of your mind and the contents of your experience. You're going to create a heightened



sense of perspective. You're going to create a heightened sense of accommodation and receptivity.

In the book I also talk about the five nocturnal meditations. Central to those is, of course, the practice of lucid dreaming. Well, what we're talking about here, this is archetypal lucidity, where lucidity is a code word for awareness. So I wanted to bring a set of practices that I talk about in the book and how they tie in here. We suffer in that languaging when we go nonlucid to the contents of our experience, just like in a nonlucid dream. That's why when we have a nightmare, we're suffering, because we mistake that to be so real, because we're excessively involved in it. That's what defines nonlucidity. So you mix your mind with space, and this is like sneaking in lucidity practice, because that brings you back, that creates a sense of distance, perspective, differentiation from the contents of your mind. That's lucidity. And from that, then, hey, the contents are still there. Everything's still there. But once again, your relationship is radically altered. Everything now is much more spacious and accommodating, and from that is born responsibility, not reactivity, and kindness, love, and compassion, because you're basically more open, sensitive to others, touching into others. So, yeah, this is an important narrative.

James Shaheen: You've mentioned, Andrew, the practices of reverse meditation and nocturnal meditation. So first, what exactly is reverse meditation, and how does it turn what we might think we know about meditation and ourselves, as you say, upside down and inside out?

Andrew Holecek: Yeah, this is great. So I learned this one in my three-year retreat. To contextualize it, I'm not making most of these practices up. Some of them are adaptations, cultural translations, but I try to pay homage to the tradition. So I'm not just pulling this stuff out of the air, so to speak. But it comes from the Mahamudra tradition. I learned it in the second year of my retreat. And I was just so blown away when I was introduced to these practices. They were really succinct and I said, “Boy, when I come out of retreat, I'm going to work with this a lot,” because I'm a retired dental surgeon. I work a lot with pain. And so I became really interested in extrapolating some of the insights from this traditional practice into all kinds of unwanted



experiences in life. And so this ties in beautifully to what we were talking about earlier, that these practices are designed to enhance your meditation by destroying your conventional understandings of it.

Meditation isn't about feeling good, unless you're talking about basic goodness. It's about getting real. And getting real includes things that we would conventionally call not feeling so great. So these are reverse strategies, because you do the reverse of what you're normally conditioned to do.

Let's just take pain. When you feel pain, you want out. I mean, that's just built into our DNA, into our biological conditioning, this exit strategy from unwanted experiences. Well, these practices invite you to take these obstacles, these unwanted emotional experiences, unwanted physical experiences, and transform those into opportunities.

So, it's alchemical in nature, using Western approaches, it's tantric in nature, using Eastern approaches, where that which previously obscured or obstructed your path is now used to accelerate it. Because just like in the practice of open awareness, nothing can interrupt these practices because interruption becomes your practice. Nothing can distract you from these practices because distraction becomes your practice. This is a big deal.

And so you take experiences that you would previously have run away from, you reverse your strategies by going directly into them, and then using analytic meditations, which I talk about in the book, and the four stages of the reverse meditations that I unpack in some detail, you radically deconstruct your understanding of both pain and suffering.

And one brief interjection here, I love this equation and see if it works for you. More important than $E=mc^2$, $S=P*R$, suffering equals pain times resistance. Contraction. Do a little math. Drop the resistance, what happens? You drop this thing called suffering. Suffering is deconstructed back into this thing called pain. Suffering is not the same as pain. Suffering is an inappropriate



relationship to pain. So by dropping the resistance through a practice like this, you can basically let suffering fall back down into pain. And then even pain itself, whether it's emotional or psychological, even that can be further deconstructed into what it truly is, which is nothing more than raw, intense sensory awareness, hard stop, to which we then append the label pain, and then all the commentary that transforms simple pain into complex suffering.

So to me, this has been a really big deal. I've used it in my clinical work. I've actually been involved in scientific studies around these sorts of things. In my own experience dealing with kidney stones and prostate cancer that I had a couple years ago, these reverse meditations were at my side the entire time, game changer for me, and also in terms of emotional duress. So I'll pause there, James, because there's so many directions I can run with this one. But this, this baby, I mean, I'm passionate about it because the book prior to the one we're talking about is in fact about reverse meditation, so this one's really big for me.

James Shaheen: Right, about getting real. I like how you say, “Reverse meditations join heaven and hell, mix dirt with divinity, and vastly upgrade our relationship to the hardships of life.” So could you walk us through how to actually do reverse practice meditation?

Andrew Holecek: There are four steps. These are my steps. So I'm not editing here; I'm just unpacking because as you probably know in these traditional texts, it can be pretty steep training. The reverse meditation, it was like one paragraph, and so it was super concentrated. I, so to speak, added some water not to dilute it but to make it more workable.

So I have four stages here. There's a wonderful acronym that ties them all together, as you'll see. So the first stage is the observational stage. And that basically means whenever, let's just take physical pain again. Again, it can be any unwanted experience. It just doesn't matter. This truly is a one-size-fits all practice. So let's say you're having some pain. This step is basically a



provisional differentiation, not dissociation, which is the near enemy, stepping back to gain a slightly new perspective, slightly new bead on it.

With each one of these four steps, James, you can stop at any one. Each one in itself can be a profound alteration of your relationship to unwanted experience. You distance yourself, you step back from it, you get a beat on it, you're basically looking at it. Very helpful initial step.

But if you basically do that too much, you're just going to FedEx your awareness out from that experience, and then you're back to usual dissociative approaches. So the second step, you pull a U-turn, you start to be with it. So now you sidle up next to it. You come next to the discomfort and you start to establish a somatic relationship to it.

So here again is this invitation for waking down, for embodiment, because now you're going to start to establish a more embodied somatic relationship. And the image I have here, and I think it's a good one, is of two boxers in the ring. If the boxers are five or six feet apart, boy, they can throw a haymaker and just clock you right out of the ring, right? Well, when those boxers get tangled up on the ropes, they're so close to each other that the best they can do is just throw a few little taps on the ribs. They can't really hurt each other because they're so close.

So step two, being with it, is just starting to establish a more embodied somatic relationship to it. All four of these steps are about changing your relationship. The third and the fourth are where they really get cool. So you observe it, you be with it. The third one is now you start to examine it. You start to look at it. So again, analytic meditation slash vipassana comes into play here. But the investigation here is more somatic than cognitive. In other words, you're not doing psychoanalysis on your pain. You're basically using your body through a set of questions like, what exactly is this pain, right? I mean, have you ever spent time getting to know this inevitable lifetime partner? You can ask traditional questions like, what color is it? Where does it come from? Does it have a texture? That kind of thing. And so what are you doing? You're starting to deconstruct the sensation, the pain. You're starting to take it apart by looking at it very, very



closely. The last of these questions that transitions beautifully into the fourth stage is you start, instead of questioning and analyzing and investigating the pain, the last question is not what is this pain but who is experiencing it?

So now you're switching to the fourth, you're starting to go from the experience to the experiencer, and you're starting to actually head toward a nondual relationship, which is where it culminates on the fourth stage. So the fourth stage is the unification stage or the yoking stage. And so the idea here is, tying into the quotation from Trungpa earlier, you do the exact opposite of what you normally do and you go into the pain as fully as you possibly can. And so, oh, this is beautiful. T. S. Eliot says this about music that I love. He said, “Music heard so deeply it is not heard at all.” You become the music while the music lasts. And so this investigation, this is a rapid-fire course through quite a profound set of steps. This leads you to this most profound insight that—and again, don't take my word for it; try it—by becoming one with your pain, there's no one to hurt. There's just this sensation to which we append the label “pain.” So the acronym for all four, and then I'll pause, observe it, be with it, examine it, yoke is what? Obey. Obey a new order of relationship to unwanted experience. And what arises from this, James, it ties in beautifully to the practice of open awareness, is by mixing your mind with space, that's a preparatory practice, you have a holding environment, a crucible.

Space is indestructible. Outside space, external space has amazing properties. On one level, it's the softest thing in the world; on another level, it's the most indestructible. You can't cut it. You can't bomb it. You can't hurt it. And so by mixing your mind with space through open awareness practice, transitioning that into the reverse meditation practices, you develop this kind of industrial-strength meditation, industrial-strength mind that has the capacity, not through a concretized tough guy approach, but by the indestructibility of space itself. You develop this kind of indestructible armor that allows you to handle anything that arises. And so it's amazing, even that is a reverse strategy, right? You become indestructible by using the softest thing in the



cosmos, which is space. So there's so much more to say on this, you can tell how jazzed I am about it. I use these all the time.

James Shaheen: Moving on, you say that the next set of practices you explore are nocturnal meditations, which open us to the wonders of the nocturnal mind. So what are nocturnal meditations?

Andrew Holecek: This is obviously a huge passion of mine. I have a number of books on this topic and the nocturnal meditations. This is my languaging. This is my neologism. So I coined this term. This is a set of five practices that basically expands meditation, especially mindfulness, into entirely new different dimensions of being, opening up what I playfully talk about as interstate commerce. Because usually we have the waking state, then we have the sleeping and dreaming state, never the twain or the three shall meet. Well, no, they can totally meet. They can cross-pollinate. You can open this interstate commerce and trafficking between all these different states of consciousness where they mutually support each other and lift each other up. And, again, boy, to take advantage of this short precious life in meditating, there's nothing more effective than learning how to meditate in your sleep.

And so the five meditations, the first one is liminal dreaming. The word liminal literally means threshold. It refers to this kind of plasma dimension of mind when your head first hits the pillow and before you fully fall asleep and you're not quite here, you're not quite there, you're drifting all over the place. And if you bring your mindfulness, this is a fantastic way to use your mindful gifts. You take your mindfulness in this dimension of sleep, you set what's called an observational intent. This is connected to the witness awareness of step one in the reverse meditations, this observational thing, and you start to see, wow, this is bloody interesting. Look at how my mind goes offline every night when I fall asleep and how it comes back online every morning. And so this practice, I emphasize a lot because it's rarely taught. I emphasize it because it's relatively easy and it's a practice in its own right, but it also greases the skids for the remaining four, which, by the way, I'll go through rather quickly. You start to deconstruct the



actual narrative structure of the self sense. In other words, you start to see through liminal dreaming that who you really are is nothing more than a storyline that has to be told constantly to maintain the sense of self. That storyline comes undone every night when you fall asleep. If it didn't, that's called insomnia. It kicks back online every morning. So the sense of self has to be reconstructed, remade, moment to moment to moment, and liminal dreaming shows you how to do that. Super interesting dimension.

With some facility, that transitions into lucid dreaming. Most people are familiar with this. It's the beautiful state of consciousness where you're dreaming, you realize that you're dreaming, you still remain awake in the dream. It's used primarily for psychological purposes. This is the way I map it in contradistinction to dream yoga, which is the next one. It's basically psychological in nature and deals with self-fulfillment. And you can use this for so many different things: physical benefits, psychological benefits, spiritual benefits.

That matures into dream yoga. That's the third practice. This is where the practice is more spiritual than psychological, more about self-transcendence than self-fulfillment, and this is where you use the nocturnal mind to prepare for death, for deep, deep spiritual work, for profound opportunities for transformation. And each one of these practices, there's two more to go, which I'll go very quickly, each one of these practices follows the narrative of transcend but include, which I mentioned earlier. In other words, lucid dreaming transcends but includes liminal dreaming, dream yoga transcends but includes all two, I should say.

And so, with some facility, you can then transition into the fourth practice. This is a little bit more graduate school. I sometimes refer to these five literally as a type of night school. There's some really interesting data from the neuroscientific community, including a statement from Matthew Walker, who is a neuroscientist out of UC Berkeley, where he says, in terms of lucidity in the dream state, he says it is entirely possible that lucid dreamers represent the next iteration in *Homo sapiens*'s evolution. So this is no small statement. And there's some, probably beyond our paygrade here today, but there's some really interesting neural anatomical and neuroscientific



data to support that outrageous claim. So sleep yoga, that's the fourth one, is deeply connected to what's called yoga nidra. Believe it or not, this is where you maintain lucidity and deep dreamless sleep. It's being actively studied. It hasn't been scientifically proven yet, but a number of scientists I know are working on it.

This then matures into the last step in the following ways. So the last step is bardo yoga. This is where you use the dimensions of sleep and dream, in fact, to prepare for the dream at the end of time, which is death, and the logic is as follows: Sleep yoga deals with formless dimensions of the nocturnal mind. Formless means deathless. And so therefore with some facility in sleep yoga, you can transition into bardo yoga, which is where, again, you can use these extraordinary practices to help you prepare for the end of life.

James Shaheen: I mean, your book goes into this. We also have a Dream Yoga course with Andrew. If you go to tricycle.org/learn, you can see exactly how it's done. But the book really does explain these in more detail. But I'd like to ask something about bardo yoga, which is what you say is the culmination or the very apex of these practices. And it is, as you say, the ultimate preparation for death. So how does bardo yoga prepare us for dying?

Andrew Holecek: So, bardo yoga in itself is another kind of multivalent term. On one level, and let me make it quite applicable and exoteric at first, and then I'll take a very deep dive just briefly into the esoteric aspect, but what bardo yoga does is, again, it allows you to sensitize yourself to the small deaths that take place all the time. Bardo is a Tibetan word that means gap, transitional process in between. In the Tibetan tradition, allegedly, it refers to the gap between lives, if you believe in that sort of thing. Well, you don't have to believe in that to realize that your experience throughout the day is constantly filled with gaps. You're always between two different states of experience and two different states of consciousness. And so by becoming familiar with the exoteric aspects of bardo yoga, this ties in directly to the anti-complaint meditation and the pause that I recommended.



So let's just briefly tie it into that. So you're having an unwanted experience, and you're about to complain. Pause. That's bardo yoga. Right there. Pause. And by pausing, basically what's happening, you can say this overtly, or it can be implied overtly. You can say, “Hey, wait a second. Do I really need to take birth in this next state of mind?,” which in this case would be a complaining, moaning, griping state of mind. It's a type of birth control. I sensitize myself to the kind of quantized nature, the gaps that take place in my experience all the time. The physicists will tell you this when they talk about quantum theory. That's what quantum means.

Neuroscientists will tell you that perception is more pixelated. The entire manifest world is in fact just that. It's pointillistic, it's pixelated. Bardo yoga applies that dimension. And so the exoteric aspect here doesn't mean it isn't subtle. It's beautifully subtle. It means if you take a very close look at your experience, your experience, including you and your world, is very porous. It's not nearly as solid and real as you think it is. So this practice allows you to ventilate your experience by seeing all the gaps or borders between them. And then in deep conjunction with that, you start to see, like I mentioned earlier, that we're always going through rebirth processes. The self is being reborn and remade physically, biologically, psychologically, moment to moment to moment. And so you start to realize, whoa, the end of this relationship is a bardo. The end of my job is a bardo. The end of anything, the end of a night of sleep is a type of bardo. So bardo yoga in relation to that ties very directly to what happens every night when we fall asleep, dream, and then wake up every morning. These are concordant experiences, in fact, of the three death bardos.

So this gets super interesting. It starts to show you how these kinds of processes, phenomenology of mind, takes place at all these iterative levels of reality, that we're basically experiencing these bardos between every thought, between every day, between every life. You start to see that here. And then ever so briefly, because again, this is another beautifully rich topic, bardo yoga reaches its culmination in the tantra traditions with the dark retreat practices. I didn't mention much about that in this book, even though I'm writing about it now. This is the 49-day dark retreat where you go into an intense sensory deprived environment as a way to create a similitude of what takes



place allegedly when you go through this journey at the end of life. So that's a shoot toward the deeper end of the pool. I'm happy to go there if you want, but that's for a different book.

James Shaheen: You'll have to come back to talk about that since we have limited time and this topic is so rich, we want to hear more about that. So you said earlier that in Tibetan Buddhism, death is referred to as the dream at the end of time. Can you say more about this connection between sleeping and dying?

Andrew Holecek: Thank you for bringing it up. So even in Greek intellectual theory, thought, and mythology, Hypnos and Thanatos, Hypnos is the god of sleep and Thanatos is the god of death. They're not just brothers; they're twins. And so there's a very deep East-West connection between the small sleep and the big sleep. And in particular, in terms of dream, this is where it gets really interesting, dream is code language. At least this is the way I relate to it. The word dream is code language for a manifestation of mind. And basically what this implies, therefore, is we're always in a dream.

This is what the Buddha discovered. The Buddha, the Awakened One, arguably the ultimate lucid dreamer, woke up to this discovery that we're always in a dream. And so the Buddhist tradition so elegantly talks about three types of dream, and the languaging here is cool. So, the first type of dream is the nighttime dream, and this is called the double delusion, or the example dream. Now, how interesting is that? So what it implies is, well, the double illusion, the example dream, what's the real delusion? What's the real dream? Well, this. Our so-called waking reality. That's the second type of dream. And in fact, this is really interesting. So the Buddha is the awakened one, right? Well, what did he wake up from? What did he wake up to? Well, he woke up from the dominance of wakecentricity, the dominance of the wakecentric state. He woke up from the nightmare of reification, from the nightmare of a solid, lasting, independent, dualistic world. That's what he woke up from. What did he wake up to that constituted his liberation? A dreamlike reality, a reality in Buddhist languaging that is empty in nature, that is nondual, that is fleeting and permanent and transient. That's the nature of reality. So by studying the double



delusion within nocturnal meditations, you extrapolate those insights back into the primary delusion using this interstate trafficking thing, and therefore the insights of the night cross-pollinate, paying into your awareness to bring about lucidity during the day.

So this is where it gets so cool. So lucid dreaming and dream yoga work in a bidirectional way: To bring about lucid dreaming brings about lucid living. So the nighttime dream, waking up in that wakes you up and from the daytime dream. But wait, if you order in the next twenty minutes, it gets even better! Lucid dreaming also pings forward. So it pings back to bring about lucid living; it pings forward to bring about lucid dying. That's the dream at the end of time. That's where it transitions into bardo yoga. And so the implications here are so cool. Basically what it means, we're always cascading through one dream into the next, like nested Russian dolls. And so when people ask, “Oh, where do you go when you die?” Well, according to this languaging, you just transitioned from one dream to the next. And by becoming familiar with the dream yoga, which by the way, in both Buddhism and Hinduism, when you're in contact, when you're lucid in the dream state, you're more in contact with reality than in the waking state. When you're lucid in the deep dreamless state, as Ramana Maharshi said, “That which does not exist in deep dreamless sleep is not real.” You're the most in contact with reality. So these practices are just absolutely brilliant in terms of triangulating, working back and forth between all these different states of consciousness to basically lift you up into ultimate lucidity, which means the equivalent.

So in the mind of a Buddha, there's absolutely no difference between waking, dreaming, sleeping, and dying. It's this ultimate democracy of consciousness, the great one taste in Tantric language, the great equanimity, where all states of consciousness, all states of consciousness are in fact seen as states, and they're all related to in an equivalent fashion. So I think you get some sense of just how deep this stuff goes. It's pretty cool.

James Shaheen: OK, Andrew, I'm going to take you back to the beginning. So, in the introduction to the book you pose a question, “What's the point of meditative practice? To self



improve out of reality? To follow your bliss into heavenly states while the rest of the world goes to hell?” So I'd like to turn that question back to you. What is the point of meditation, particularly when it does feel like the world is going to hell?

Andrew Holecek: So this is really great. This is super important. It's the one part that we haven't touched on yet in the book that's key. And that's the importance of the heart, the importance of dealing with compassion. So the point of meditation, to summarize it, is to wake up and to help others to wake up. I write about it in the book when I talk about the chapter on the heart, the practices of metta, bodhicitta, compassion, and love. This is so important in this day and age, James, because one of my rants these days is that if what I'm doing with my teaching and my writing isn't of benefit to this world, it's irrelevant. And I really mean that. If I'm just sitting here spewing out all this stuff as a talking head, what's the point?

So if you can't take this, it's like what scientists do, they call it translational research. It's what the Dalai Lama has been really exhorting the Mind and Life scientists to do: Get it out of the lab, you guys, and use it to help the world. So this, to me, is translational spirituality, where if you're not doing this, if this isn't really engaged in the service of others, at least from my perspective, it's irrelevant. And especially in this age, this is like, this is all hands on deck. Have you noticed, James? I mean, this world is in a heap of hurt. And so the way of working with these meditations is to come to understand your own mind, and so the journey of meditation is to get to know your mind and heart. It's the same word in Sanskrit, *citta*, mind and heart. Get to know your mind and heart. This is then where everything becomes wondrous. This is truly the wonders of the natural mind. And then by coming to know your mind and heart so deeply, you come to know the mind and hearts of all sentient beings. This is no small thing. This is the true basis of compassion, the ability to literally suffer with others, to feel their pain as if it was your own.

And then through that level of openness. So this ties into open awareness. This is what allows you to do that. When you allow your mind and heart to become so, so, so open, as you mix your mind with space, you're actually eventually mixing your mind with reality itself and all the



beings that inhabit it. And from that come all the bounties of infinite empathy and compassion, the skillful means that arises naturally from being in contact with others. And so then what happens, the fruition of this is you become, in a certain way, you become a representative of a reality, you become a servant of peace, and you act on reality's behalf because you're so in tune with it, you're so in one with it, that basically it leads to this magnificent nondualistic realization that we really are all the same.

I do this little example that speaks to me. So if you close your right eye, close your right eye, look out at the world through your left eye, close your left eye, look out at the world through your right eye, pretty similar but also a little bit different. Now, just imagine if you had a head with sixteen billion eyes. That's how many humans there are on this planet. There are basically sixteen billion perspectives on reality. Underneath it all, if you believe in these nondual traditions, is this radical, quantum nature of the unity of the human condition. All the great masters tell you this: We are unified at this dimension.

So the meditative journey takes us to that ultimate unity also intimated in the reverse meditations. And then from that ultimate unity, we spontaneously, effortlessly act on behalf of others. And so again, I'll pause in a second, but Suzuki Roshi said it so beautifully when he said, “Strictly speaking, there are no enlightened beings. There's only enlightened activity.” So the fruition of these practices is not what comes out of your talking head. The fruition of these practices is what you do with your life, and there's that waking down vector again, right? Now it's fully incorporated. You've ingested it, digested it, metabolized it. You live and breathe the teachings. They're in your system. And so to me, that's the fruition.

James Shaheen: Andrew Holecek, thanks so much for joining. It's been a pleasure.

Andrew Holecek: James, as always, such a delight and I really appreciate the quality of your questions.

Tricycle Talks

“I’m Mindful, Now What?”

Episode #110 with Andrew Holecek

September 11, 2024



James Shaheen: Great. So, for our listeners, be sure to pick up a copy of *I'm Mindful, Now What?*, available now. Thanks again, Andrew.

Andrew Holecek: Ciao. Take care, James.

James Shaheen: You've been listening to *Tricycle Talks* with Andrew Holecek. To learn more about Andrew's courses on dream yoga and bardo yoga, visit learn.tricycle.org. Tricycle is a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to making Buddhist teachings and practices broadly available. We are pleased to offer our podcasts freely. If you would like to support the podcast, please consider subscribing to Tricycle or making a donation at tricycle.org/donate. We'd love to hear your thoughts about the podcast, so write us at feedback@tricycle.org to let us know what you think. If you enjoyed this episode, please consider leaving a review on Apple Podcasts. To keep up with the show, you can follow *Tricycle Talks* wherever you listen to podcasts. *Tricycle Talks* is produced by Sarah Fleming and the Podglomerate. I'm James Shaheen, editor-in-chief of *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*. Thanks for listening!