



1  
00:00:14,140 --> 00:00:11,830  
on this episode of skeptic ow part of

2  
00:00:16,450 --> 00:00:14,150  
the Buddhist dogma that initially kinda

3  
00:00:19,210 --> 00:00:16,460  
I think turned you off was the idea of

4  
00:00:22,150 --> 00:00:19,220  
reincarnation again that's another area

5  
00:00:23,920 --> 00:00:22,160  
that back in those days wasn't anything

6  
00:00:27,040 --> 00:00:23,930  
we're close to being studied

7  
00:00:29,769 --> 00:00:27,050  
scientifically but since then it has

8  
00:00:33,100 --> 00:00:29,779  
been studied scientifically and they

9  
00:00:35,560 --> 00:00:33,110  
offer rather compelling evidence highly

10  
00:00:39,280 --> 00:00:35,570  
suggestive that something like

11  
00:00:41,830 --> 00:00:39,290  
reincarnation is really happening so are

12  
00:00:46,029 --> 00:00:41,840  
you trying to fit that back into a

13  
00:00:48,430 --> 00:00:46,039

secular orientation that may not hold up

14

00:00:50,860 --> 00:00:48,440

when we really look at the science well

15

00:00:56,139 --> 00:00:50,870

again I'm not a scientist and so I can

16

00:00:58,900 --> 00:00:56,149

only as it were you know I if evidence

17

00:01:01,830 --> 00:00:58,910

appears through scientific study and so

18

00:01:04,630 --> 00:01:01,840

forth of the possibility of a non

19

00:01:07,900 --> 00:01:04,640

material consciousness that floats free

20

00:01:10,660 --> 00:01:07,910

of the material world if evidence can be

21

00:01:13,330 --> 00:01:10,670

compiled that illustrate that indicates

22

00:01:14,620 --> 00:01:13,340

that reincarnation is a possibility then

23

00:01:17,410 --> 00:01:14,630

that's fine I don't have a problem with

24

00:01:20,499 --> 00:01:17,420

that and I just don't think that those

25

00:01:22,660 --> 00:01:20,509

issues are actually central to what the

26

00:01:25,179 --> 00:01:22,670

Buddha was trying to do follow through

27

00:01:26,800 --> 00:01:25,189

with that thought why do you think

28

00:01:29,590 --> 00:01:26,810

because I think this is an area where

29

00:01:31,719 --> 00:01:29,600

you're probably at odds with a number of

30

00:01:36,460 --> 00:01:31,729

people when you don't think that this

31

00:01:38,050 --> 00:01:36,470

was central to what the Buddha was even

32

00:01:40,840 --> 00:01:38,060

if he wasn't teaching it as you said

33

00:01:43,630 --> 00:01:40,850

what was his realization or was the

34

00:01:44,770 --> 00:01:43,640

realization of thousands and thousands

35

00:01:46,960 --> 00:01:44,780

of people who follow it I mean that's

36

00:01:49,810 --> 00:01:46,970

what I read out of it is that they went

37

00:01:51,429 --> 00:01:49,820

they looked inside in the same way that

38

00:01:54,730 --> 00:01:51,439

you have and they came to the conclusion

39

00:01:58,510 --> 00:01:54,740

ah consciousness is fundamental ah

40

00:02:00,940 --> 00:01:58,520

reincarnation is real and can't we maybe

41

00:02:03,819 --> 00:02:00,950

assume that the Buddha did come to that

42

00:02:05,920 --> 00:02:03,829

same conclusion well again it depends in

43

00:02:07,740 --> 00:02:05,930

which which text you look at the

44

00:02:10,539 --> 00:02:07,750

accounts of the Buddha's Awakening and

45

00:02:12,550 --> 00:02:10,549

do not actual there's one account that

46

00:02:16,689 --> 00:02:12,560

talks of him remembering all of his past

47

00:02:18,610 --> 00:02:16,699

lifetimes and so on but the the accounts

48

00:02:20,020 --> 00:02:18,620

that I find the most compelling

49

00:02:22,420 --> 00:02:20,030

I have nothing to do with reincarnation

50

00:02:37,030 --> 00:02:22,430

or the nature of consciousness

51  
00:02:38,199 --> 00:02:37,040  
stay with us for skeptic Oh welcome to

52  
00:02:39,550 --> 00:02:38,209  
skeptic Oh where we explore

53  
00:02:42,399 --> 00:02:39,560  
controversial science but leading

54  
00:02:45,460 --> 00:02:42,409  
researchers thinkers and their critics

55  
00:02:47,589 --> 00:02:45,470  
I'm your host Alex Karras and I remember

56  
00:02:49,780 --> 00:02:47,599  
the first time I tried meditation I

57  
00:02:51,910 --> 00:02:49,790  
remember because the anxiety caused me

58  
00:02:53,289 --> 00:02:51,920  
came his stomachache and when sitting

59  
00:02:55,690 --> 00:02:53,299  
meditation didn't work for me

60  
00:02:59,020 --> 00:02:55,700  
I tried walking meditation as taught by

61  
00:03:00,759 --> 00:02:59,030  
Zen master tick not Han and that didn't

62  
00:03:02,410 --> 00:03:00,769  
work very well either too confining too

63  
00:03:04,569 --> 00:03:02,420

restrictive too many rules it felt like

64

00:03:06,399 --> 00:03:04,579

church but like millions of other

65

00:03:09,190 --> 00:03:06,409

Westerners I couldn't escape feeling

66

00:03:12,190 --> 00:03:09,200

that there was something to this

67

00:03:15,460 --> 00:03:12,200

Buddhist practice of quietly looking

68

00:03:18,009 --> 00:03:15,470

within now today's guest on skeptical

69

00:03:20,530 --> 00:03:18,019

Buddhist teacher and author Stephen

70

00:03:22,960 --> 00:03:20,540

Bachelor has probably done more than

71

00:03:26,409 --> 00:03:22,970

anyone else in the last 20 years to

72

00:03:29,379 --> 00:03:26,419

change how Westerners approach Buddhist

73

00:03:31,659 --> 00:03:29,389

meditation his books Buddhism without

74

00:03:34,330 --> 00:03:31,669

beliefs confessions of a Buddhist

75

00:03:37,180 --> 00:03:34,340

atheist and his latest after Buddhism

76

00:03:39,009 --> 00:03:37,190

stripped Buddhism of its robes and

77

00:03:41,890 --> 00:03:39,019

prayer wheels and offered us the

78

00:03:44,909 --> 00:03:41,900

opportunity to consider meditation from

79

00:03:47,470 --> 00:03:44,919

a Western scientific reductionistic

80

00:03:49,539 --> 00:03:47,480

perspective and while as you can imagine

81

00:03:52,479 --> 00:03:49,549

this approach has met with a lot of

82

00:03:55,210 --> 00:03:52,489

resistance from Buddhists it's also been

83

00:03:57,900 --> 00:03:55,220

a tremendous boon to millions who wish

84

00:04:00,270 --> 00:03:57,910

to explore the well-documented

85

00:04:02,909 --> 00:04:00,280

scientific benefits of meditation

86

00:04:06,099 --> 00:04:02,919

without giving up their modern-day

87

00:04:07,809 --> 00:04:06,109

secular worldview ik Bachelor even made

88

00:04:09,550 --> 00:04:07,819

it ok for atheists like Christopher

89

00:04:12,250 --> 00:04:09,560

Hitchens and Sam Harris to give

90

00:04:14,080 --> 00:04:12,260

meditation a try now I love a good

91

00:04:16,180 --> 00:04:14,090

account of classed as well as the next

92

00:04:18,879 --> 00:04:16,190

guy probably because I often find myself

93

00:04:20,770 --> 00:04:18,889

in that camp and Stephen bachelor

94

00:04:22,480 --> 00:04:20,780

deserves a ton of credit for blazing a

95

00:04:24,610 --> 00:04:22,490

new path towards understanding not only

96

00:04:27,070 --> 00:04:24,620

Buddhism but consciousness science in

97

00:04:29,260 --> 00:04:27,080

general but that's not why I wanted to

98

00:04:31,999 --> 00:04:29,270

talk to him on skeptic oh because you

99

00:04:34,549 --> 00:04:32,009

see in his reductionistic stripping away

100

00:04:37,420 --> 00:04:34,559

Buddhist Dogma bachelor has found

101  
00:04:40,549 --> 00:04:37,430  
himself in the no man's land of

102  
00:04:43,730 --> 00:04:40,559  
scientific materialism let me play this

103  
00:04:46,700 --> 00:04:43,740  
brief clip from his 2010 interview with

104  
00:04:50,600 --> 00:04:46,710  
ABC News reporter in former guest on

105  
00:04:53,679 --> 00:04:50,610  
skeptic Oh Dan Harris my Buddhism is an

106  
00:04:56,480 --> 00:04:53,689  
entirely natural one I'm I'm a

107  
00:04:58,909 --> 00:04:56,490  
naturalist I'm probably a materialist at

108  
00:05:01,219 --> 00:04:58,919  
some level I don't that I feel that this

109  
00:05:03,649 --> 00:05:01,229  
world this experience that is ideated

110  
00:05:09,019 --> 00:05:03,659  
through this body in this brain but that

111  
00:05:13,010 --> 00:05:09,029  
we with that so how can this be how can

112  
00:05:15,019 --> 00:05:13,020  
a material purely physical brain do

113  
00:05:17,149 --> 00:05:15,029

everything that meditation has shown it

114

00:05:19,339 --> 00:05:17,159

can do in well-documented laboratory

115

00:05:21,459 --> 00:05:19,349

experiments don't the physical

116

00:05:24,139 --> 00:05:21,469

measurable effects of meditation

117

00:05:26,869 --> 00:05:24,149

contradict bachelors materialistic

118

00:05:29,629 --> 00:05:26,879

understanding of consciousness or over

119

00:05:31,869 --> 00:05:29,639

how can anyone who's had any excess at

120

00:05:35,149 --> 00:05:31,879

all with meditation really believe that

121

00:05:37,939 --> 00:05:35,159

consciousness is an illusion and at the

122

00:05:40,279 --> 00:05:37,949

phenomena of biological robots which is

123

00:05:43,279 --> 00:05:40,289

the only position that scientific

124

00:05:46,399 --> 00:05:43,289

materialism leads to and what about

125

00:05:48,439 --> 00:05:46,409

reincarnation doesn't the best and only

126

00:05:50,959 --> 00:05:48,449

science we have regarding the question

127

00:05:53,629 --> 00:05:50,969

of reincarnation that is the work at

128

00:05:55,489 --> 00:05:53,639

University of Virginia Ian Stevenson dr.

129

00:05:58,339 --> 00:05:55,499

Jim Tucker doesn't that seem to support

130

00:06:00,529 --> 00:05:58,349

the reality of consciousness surviving

131

00:06:03,170 --> 00:06:00,539

death these are some of the questions

132

00:06:05,839 --> 00:06:03,180

for today's guest Stephen bachelor and

133

00:06:07,850 --> 00:06:05,849

why I was so delighted that he agreed to

134

00:06:09,649 --> 00:06:07,860

join me to have what turned out to be a

135

00:06:12,829 --> 00:06:09,659

great conversation about his new book

136

00:06:16,629 --> 00:06:12,839

after Buddhism so here goes I hope you

137

00:06:19,219 --> 00:06:16,639

enjoy my dialogue with Stephen bachelor

138

00:06:21,709 --> 00:06:19,229

today we welcome well-known Buddhist

139

00:06:24,170 --> 00:06:21,719

teacher and author Stephen bachelor -

140

00:06:26,329 --> 00:06:24,180

skeptic Oh Stephen is best known for his

141

00:06:28,939 --> 00:06:26,339

secular and sometimes controversial

142

00:06:31,519 --> 00:06:28,949

approach to Buddhism in 2010 he

143

00:06:33,769 --> 00:06:31,529

published confession of a Buddhist

144

00:06:37,459 --> 00:06:33,779

atheist a book that caused quite a stir

145

00:06:40,309 --> 00:06:37,469

but also a book that inspired many many

146

00:06:43,759 --> 00:06:40,319

many people to take a fresh contemporary

147

00:06:45,860 --> 00:06:43,769

look at Buddhism and meditation Stevens

148

00:06:48,080 --> 00:06:45,870

new book after Buddhism

149

00:06:50,360 --> 00:06:48,090

rethinking the dharma for a secular age

150

00:06:52,520 --> 00:06:50,370

has been out only a month but it's

151

00:06:55,190 --> 00:06:52,530

already climbed to the top of many

152

00:06:57,620 --> 00:06:55,200

Amazon rankings and received extremely

153

00:07:00,050 --> 00:06:57,630

high praise from a number of folks

154

00:07:01,670 --> 00:07:00,060

inside and outside of the Buddhist

155

00:07:04,070 --> 00:07:01,680

community were delighted to have him

156

00:07:05,060 --> 00:07:04,080

here today Steven welcome and thanks so

157

00:07:07,160 --> 00:07:05,070

much for joining me

158

00:07:10,220 --> 00:07:07,170

well I'm really glad to be here at --ax

159

00:07:12,890 --> 00:07:10,230

it's it's it's real privilege well thank

160

00:07:14,450 --> 00:07:12,900

you the privileges really ours so Steven

161

00:07:16,910 --> 00:07:14,460

since skeptic Oh is a show that

162

00:07:19,520 --> 00:07:16,920

primarily focuses on consciousness

163

00:07:22,520 --> 00:07:19,530

science I suspect that there will be

164

00:07:26,180 --> 00:07:22,530

many listeners who are not familiar with

165

00:07:28,280 --> 00:07:26,190

the whole story and the rather amazing

166

00:07:30,710 --> 00:07:28,290

journey that you've taken in your life

167

00:07:32,720 --> 00:07:30,720

through Buddhism so I know it's a story

168

00:07:34,490 --> 00:07:32,730

you've told many times before but if you

169

00:07:37,360 --> 00:07:34,500

can give people a thumbnail sketch of

170

00:07:42,230 --> 00:07:37,370

you know your immersion into Buddhism

171

00:07:46,520 --> 00:07:42,240

okay and I went to high school in New

172

00:07:50,120 --> 00:07:46,530

London in England and on completing that

173

00:07:52,370 --> 00:07:50,130

at the age of 18 I went off to India on

174

00:07:56,930 --> 00:07:52,380

what was called the hippie trail in

175

00:07:59,150 --> 00:07:56,940

search of probably some meaning or some

176

00:08:01,940 --> 00:07:59,160

oriental wisdom or whatever it was I I

177

00:08:06,530 --> 00:08:01,950

don't really know in any case I went

178

00:08:08,200 --> 00:08:06,540

overland I've arrived in India beginning

179

00:08:11,390 --> 00:08:08,210

of 1972

180

00:08:14,240 --> 00:08:11,400

fana myself in the community around the

181

00:08:16,310 --> 00:08:14,250

Dalai Lama the Tibetan refugees who had

182

00:08:18,860 --> 00:08:16,320

just come out of Tibet but 10 or 12

183

00:08:23,800 --> 00:08:18,870

years before just to highlight that this

184

00:08:27,410 --> 00:08:23,810

is 1972 I mean the Dalai Lama wasn't the

185

00:08:29,810 --> 00:08:27,420

International super mega star that he is

186

00:08:32,840 --> 00:08:29,820

and I mean what was that like I mean

187

00:08:34,040 --> 00:08:32,850

talk about culture shock I know you kind

188

00:08:36,140 --> 00:08:34,050

of say you know I'm on the hippie trail

189

00:08:39,200 --> 00:08:36,150

and stuff but I mean that had to just be

190

00:08:40,700 --> 00:08:39,210

mind-blowing just to be there I think it

191

00:08:42,890 --> 00:08:40,710

was but of course we look at it from the

192

00:08:44,600 --> 00:08:42,900

perspective of what we now know about

193

00:08:46,340 --> 00:08:44,610

all these things at the time as you say

194

00:08:48,290 --> 00:08:46,350

the Dalai Lama had not even been out of

195

00:08:49,970 --> 00:08:48,300

India a bit out of Tibet obviously he'd

196

00:08:52,910 --> 00:08:49,980

never been to the West he was actually

197

00:08:54,200 --> 00:08:52,920

be barred from America by Nixon and

198

00:08:56,360 --> 00:08:54,210

Kissinger who were playing the China

199

00:08:57,460 --> 00:08:56,370

China card then he wasn't even he was

200

00:09:00,960 --> 00:08:57,470

unknown

201  
00:09:04,449 --> 00:09:00,970  
and so there was a small community of

202  
00:09:06,970 --> 00:09:04,459  
Western people Americans Europeans

203  
00:09:09,970 --> 00:09:06,980  
Australians who had ended up in

204  
00:09:12,939 --> 00:09:09,980  
Dharamsala where he lived and he had

205  
00:09:16,119 --> 00:09:12,949  
just started at that time to offer

206  
00:09:19,660 --> 00:09:16,129  
courses in an institute he created and

207  
00:09:21,759 --> 00:09:19,670  
in Dharamsala and I enrolled in that

208  
00:09:24,579 --> 00:09:21,769  
with their few days of arriving there

209  
00:09:27,160 --> 00:09:24,589  
and I've never effectively done anything

210  
00:09:31,600 --> 00:09:27,170  
else since except study and practice

211  
00:09:33,160 --> 00:09:31,610  
Buddhism and I started the my interest

212  
00:09:35,829 --> 00:09:33,170  
obviously with the Tibetan Buddhist

213  
00:09:37,780 --> 00:09:35,839

approach around the Dalai Lama that

214

00:09:39,699 --> 00:09:37,790

lasted for about six or seven years both

215

00:09:42,189 --> 00:09:39,709

in India and then subsequently in

216

00:09:45,249 --> 00:09:42,199

Switzerland and Germany where I was a

217

00:09:48,579 --> 00:09:45,259

translator for Tibetan Lamas I followed

218

00:09:51,790 --> 00:09:48,589

that with um a stay in a Korean Zen

219

00:09:54,309 --> 00:09:51,800

monastery for four years in in the

220

00:09:57,670 --> 00:09:54,319

southwest corner of the Republic of

221

00:10:00,040 --> 00:09:57,680

Korea North Korea obviously again I love

222

00:10:01,900 --> 00:10:00,050

the way that you say that but for most

223

00:10:05,079 --> 00:10:01,910

folks think of that I mean so you

224

00:10:08,110 --> 00:10:05,089

totally immersed yourself again into a

225

00:10:09,999 --> 00:10:08,120

monastic life this time in the Zen

226

00:10:13,269 --> 00:10:10,009

tradition in another foreign country so

227

00:10:17,079 --> 00:10:13,279

I mean there's something about your

228

00:10:18,910 --> 00:10:17,089

drive in your spirit for your openness

229

00:10:21,040 --> 00:10:18,920

forward for just kind of immersing

230

00:10:23,499 --> 00:10:21,050

yourself going native I think was that

231

00:10:26,439 --> 00:10:23,509

the term that I pulled out of the book I

232

00:10:30,370 --> 00:10:26,449

mean what is it about you that that just

233

00:10:32,110 --> 00:10:30,380

allows you to leap into these things in

234

00:10:36,280 --> 00:10:32,120

that way to have you thought about that

235

00:10:39,519 --> 00:10:36,290

much um well to be honest uh I had

236

00:10:41,199 --> 00:10:39,529

thought about it obviously the remember

237

00:10:43,900 --> 00:10:41,209

that the period in which this happened

238

00:10:45,790 --> 00:10:43,910

was at the very end of the 1960s and so

239

00:10:48,730 --> 00:10:45,800

I came out of this countercultural

240

00:10:51,819 --> 00:10:48,740

movement at a period when there was

241

00:10:55,809 --> 00:10:51,829

suddenly a kind of possibilities there

242

00:10:58,329 --> 00:10:55,819

was a degree of prosperity in the West

243

00:11:00,790 --> 00:10:58,339

after the lean years following the

244

00:11:03,460 --> 00:11:00,800

Second World War and we had this serve

245

00:11:07,150 --> 00:11:03,470

period this opening that so I grew up

246

00:11:09,730 --> 00:11:07,160

very much as a child of the 1960s and we

247

00:11:11,290 --> 00:11:09,740

really had the sense that you know life

248

00:11:13,810 --> 00:11:11,300

had opportunities and possibility

249

00:11:16,449 --> 00:11:13,820

is that we could follow and perhaps

250

00:11:20,829 --> 00:11:16,459

really make a difference many of us were

251  
00:11:23,070 --> 00:11:20,839  
fairly alienated about our own cultures

252  
00:11:27,100 --> 00:11:23,080  
our own religious traditions our own

253  
00:11:30,940 --> 00:11:27,110  
education system and we were drawn you

254  
00:11:32,949 --> 00:11:30,950  
know very compelling lately to engage

255  
00:11:36,250 --> 00:11:32,959  
with forms of thought forms of practice

256  
00:11:39,340 --> 00:11:36,260  
that were not familiar to is not part of

257  
00:11:41,800 --> 00:11:39,350  
our culture no doubt we also projected a

258  
00:11:44,139 --> 00:11:41,810  
lot of romantic idealism onto these

259  
00:11:46,990 --> 00:11:44,149  
people about which we knew so little and

260  
00:11:50,319 --> 00:11:47,000  
yet it exerted an enormous fascination

261  
00:11:52,389 --> 00:11:50,329  
upon us and I got drawn into that world

262  
00:11:55,420 --> 00:11:52,399  
not it wasn't just myself obviously

263  
00:11:57,790 --> 00:11:55,430

there were a whole generation of us who

264

00:12:02,230 --> 00:11:57,800

were in that part of India or in

265

00:12:05,579 --> 00:12:02,240

Thailand or Japan and it's that it's

266

00:12:08,680 --> 00:12:05,589

that sort of community that that

267

00:12:11,620 --> 00:12:08,690

generation of those of us who went out

268

00:12:14,050 --> 00:12:11,630

to the east in the 60s and 70s who now

269

00:12:16,000 --> 00:12:14,060

find ourselves basically very much

270

00:12:18,190 --> 00:12:16,010

involved in the teaching and the

271

00:12:20,740 --> 00:12:18,200

interpreting of Buddhist thought and

272

00:12:23,260 --> 00:12:20,750

practice in the modern world and I

273

00:12:25,389 --> 00:12:23,270

figured a very privileged to have taken

274

00:12:28,180 --> 00:12:25,399

those risks to have not followed a

275

00:12:31,900 --> 00:12:28,190

conventional career um and in the end

276

00:12:34,630 --> 00:12:31,910

actually to found myself you know

277

00:12:37,090 --> 00:12:34,640

engaged with modernity engaged with our

278

00:12:39,819 --> 00:12:37,100

secular world particularly I don't think

279

00:12:41,440 --> 00:12:39,829

of myself as a terribly religious person

280

00:12:44,980 --> 00:12:41,450

in the conventional sense of that word

281

00:12:46,720 --> 00:12:44,990

and I found that to be you know I'm very

282

00:12:49,000 --> 00:12:46,730

very grateful I made those choices and

283

00:12:51,310 --> 00:12:49,010

took those risks at that time absolutely

284

00:12:53,079 --> 00:12:51,320

and I think many of us are very grateful

285

00:12:57,250 --> 00:12:53,089

that you did as well tell us how that

286

00:12:59,380 --> 00:12:57,260

then leads into your latest book after

287

00:13:01,569 --> 00:12:59,390

Buddhism rethinking the Dharma for a

288

00:13:03,430 --> 00:13:01,579

secular age and because it's somewhat of

289

00:13:05,439 --> 00:13:03,440

a capstone of that journey isn't it but

290

00:13:08,079 --> 00:13:05,449

but orient it for us if you will yes

291

00:13:11,920 --> 00:13:08,089

after Buddhism I think of in many ways

292

00:13:15,280 --> 00:13:11,930

as the culmination of much of my life's

293

00:13:18,490 --> 00:13:15,290

work since I was now going back 40 odd

294

00:13:20,980 --> 00:13:18,500

years to when I first started in

295

00:13:22,900 --> 00:13:20,990

Dharamsala and I've written a number of

296

00:13:24,200 --> 00:13:22,910

books along with others

297

00:13:26,210 --> 00:13:24,210

Buddhism without belief

298

00:13:29,870 --> 00:13:26,220

confessional Buddhist atheist all of

299

00:13:34,010 --> 00:13:29,880

which are are in a sense exploring the

300

00:13:37,180 --> 00:13:34,020

same basic question namely how does the

301

00:13:40,220 --> 00:13:37,190

teaching of Buddhism or the Dharma

302

00:13:46,519 --> 00:13:40,230

speaking to their condition of humanity

303

00:13:49,880 --> 00:13:46,529

in a post religious world to me each

304

00:13:53,540 --> 00:13:49,890

book has been an attempt to answer that

305

00:13:57,590 --> 00:13:53,550

question to articulate these ideas in

306

00:14:00,380 --> 00:13:57,600

ways that are divested of maybe the more

307

00:14:02,630 --> 00:14:00,390

supernatural istic or the I will

308

00:14:04,579 --> 00:14:02,640

consider rather superstitious views that

309

00:14:06,860 --> 00:14:04,589

of course also we can find in Buddhism

310

00:14:10,130 --> 00:14:06,870

and trying to get down to the very core

311

00:14:13,130 --> 00:14:10,140

of these teachings which speak primarily

312

00:14:15,800 --> 00:14:13,140

to the human condition whoever we are in

313

00:14:18,560 --> 00:14:15,810

whatever culture we have grown up and I

314

00:14:21,380 --> 00:14:18,570

do feel that there is an awful lot that

315

00:14:23,480 --> 00:14:21,390

remains pertinent and relevant in our

316

00:14:26,780 --> 00:14:23,490

time Buddhism of course is not a

317

00:14:29,540 --> 00:14:26,790

theistic tradition and one could even

318

00:14:31,490 --> 00:14:29,550

argue whether it really is a religion in

319

00:14:35,540 --> 00:14:31,500

the way that we normally understand that

320

00:14:39,340 --> 00:14:35,550

term and so after Buddhism I think of

321

00:14:42,920 --> 00:14:39,350

really as the culmination of a whole

322

00:14:45,680 --> 00:14:42,930

lifetime really of thought and inquiry

323

00:14:47,870 --> 00:14:45,690

and I'm quite happy with the way in

324

00:14:49,579 --> 00:14:47,880

which I managed in this book to pull

325

00:14:51,949 --> 00:14:49,589

together threads that I've been

326

00:14:55,000 --> 00:14:51,959

following for many years and have

327

00:14:59,720 --> 00:14:55,010

arrived hopefully a compelling and

328

00:15:02,210 --> 00:14:59,730

coherent synthesis of my thinking and so

329

00:15:04,460 --> 00:15:02,220

that's kind of where how I see that book

330

00:15:07,910 --> 00:15:04,470

I mean someone called it my magnum opus

331

00:15:09,620 --> 00:15:07,920

which is a rather brand but it might

332

00:15:11,720 --> 00:15:09,630

actually be the case I can't ever

333

00:15:13,910 --> 00:15:11,730

imagine writing anything of that scale

334

00:15:16,340 --> 00:15:13,920

or scope again well it's quite an

335

00:15:18,530 --> 00:15:16,350

accomplishment let me shift focus for a

336

00:15:21,319 --> 00:15:18,540

minute because I want to bring it into

337

00:15:24,889 --> 00:15:21,329

the skeptic Oh consciousness science

338

00:15:26,569 --> 00:15:24,899

world if you will I had a chance to been

339

00:15:29,060 --> 00:15:26,579

preparing for this interview watch the

340

00:15:31,670 --> 00:15:29,070

interview you gave with Dan Harris of

341

00:15:33,140 --> 00:15:31,680

ABC News oh yes and Dan Harris is quite

342

00:15:35,690 --> 00:15:33,150

a guy he's been on this show and he

343

00:15:37,730 --> 00:15:35,700

Lloyd him and enjoyed his book 10%

344

00:15:39,440 --> 00:15:37,740

happier play in that inner

345

00:15:41,810 --> 00:15:39,450

you and I think this was for confessions

346

00:15:44,150 --> 00:15:41,820

of a Buddhist atheist you said I'm a

347

00:15:47,180 --> 00:15:44,160

naturalist a materialist I believe that

348

00:15:50,090 --> 00:15:47,190

this world is mediated through this body

349

00:15:52,280 --> 00:15:50,100

in this brain and that's all there is

350

00:15:56,180 --> 00:15:52,290

would you say that's pretty accurate of

351  
00:15:58,730 --> 00:15:56,190  
the conclusion you've come to yes with

352  
00:16:00,680 --> 00:15:58,740  
the qualifier that I also believe that

353  
00:16:02,600 --> 00:16:00,690  
this naturalistic world is profoundly

354  
00:16:04,430 --> 00:16:02,610  
strange and mysterious and we probably

355  
00:16:07,040 --> 00:16:04,440  
only scratched the surface of what is

356  
00:16:09,170 --> 00:16:07,050  
actually going on I think we have to

357  
00:16:11,300 --> 00:16:09,180  
also take into account the limitations

358  
00:16:13,160 --> 00:16:11,310  
of our human brain the limitations of

359  
00:16:16,360 --> 00:16:13,170  
our of our understanding of our

360  
00:16:19,190 --> 00:16:16,370  
knowledge but I see no reason at all to

361  
00:16:21,530 --> 00:16:19,200  
introduce an element let's save some

362  
00:16:25,400 --> 00:16:21,540  
free-floating consciousness or spirit or

363  
00:16:28,250 --> 00:16:25,410

some divine powers to operate behind the

364

00:16:30,800 --> 00:16:28,260

scenes to me that simply doesn't I just

365

00:16:32,030 --> 00:16:30,810

don't think that's necessary and and I

366

00:16:34,940 --> 00:16:32,040

don't think there's really any

367

00:16:37,820 --> 00:16:34,950

compelling evidence to support such a

368

00:16:39,620 --> 00:16:37,830

view and at the same time I feel that

369

00:16:42,350 --> 00:16:39,630

when we go back to the particularly the

370

00:16:44,210 --> 00:16:42,360

earliest teachings of the Buddha I don't

371

00:16:46,310 --> 00:16:44,220

think the Buddha saw his teaching really

372

00:16:49,040 --> 00:16:46,320

as offering a kind of definitive

373

00:16:50,510 --> 00:16:49,050

description of how reality works I think

374

00:16:52,700 --> 00:16:50,520

he was he was a pragmatist

375

00:16:56,030 --> 00:16:52,710

and I think he was a skeptic I I think

376

00:16:58,880 --> 00:16:56,040

he had he was interested in how do we

377

00:17:02,000 --> 00:16:58,890

come to terms with birth sickness aging

378

00:17:07,250 --> 00:17:02,010

and death how do we live as human beings

379

00:17:09,280 --> 00:17:07,260

and in a way that fulfills our potential

380

00:17:14,030 --> 00:17:09,290

as human beings enables us to flourish

381

00:17:16,850 --> 00:17:14,040

and not just spiritually but in terms of

382

00:17:21,800 --> 00:17:16,860

our our philosophical life our ethical

383

00:17:24,200 --> 00:17:21,810

life our contemplative life and how do

384

00:17:27,470 --> 00:17:24,210

we engage with the actual issues of our

385

00:17:29,350 --> 00:17:27,480

time and our world and and there's a

386

00:17:32,090 --> 00:17:29,360

again an interesting passage the Buddha

387

00:17:34,370 --> 00:17:32,100

uses it's cited in the book somewhere he

388

00:17:37,010 --> 00:17:34,380

says that you know I don't dispute with

389

00:17:40,190 --> 00:17:37,020

the world it says what the wise in the

390

00:17:42,170 --> 00:17:40,200

why what the wise in the world believe

391

00:17:44,870 --> 00:17:42,180

is existing I accept that that's what's

392

00:17:47,600 --> 00:17:44,880

exist what the wise in the world that

393

00:17:50,300 --> 00:17:47,610

agree upon is not existing I accept that

394

00:17:51,440 --> 00:17:50,310

as the case in other words team if he

395

00:17:53,720 --> 00:17:51,450

were here

396

00:17:55,940 --> 00:17:53,730

today if we follow that little thought

397

00:17:58,519 --> 00:17:55,950

experiment and I didn't think he would

398

00:18:02,690 --> 00:17:58,529

have taken issue with anything the act

399

00:18:04,370 --> 00:18:02,700

is presented by the Natural Sciences he

400

00:18:06,110 --> 00:18:04,380

would have just taken that to be the

401

00:18:08,180 --> 00:18:06,120

conditions of knowledge and

402

00:18:11,139 --> 00:18:08,190

understanding the characterize our age

403

00:18:13,580 --> 00:18:11,149

and his teaching of the Dharma of

404

00:18:15,889 --> 00:18:13,590

meditation of ethics of philosophy and

405

00:18:18,710 --> 00:18:15,899

so on would have accommodated itself to

406

00:18:21,560 --> 00:18:18,720

that view it doesn't require that we

407

00:18:24,019 --> 00:18:21,570

adopt another kind of you know oriental

408

00:18:26,539 --> 00:18:24,029

metaphysics of rebirth and different

409

00:18:29,000 --> 00:18:26,549

realms of existence and so on and that

410

00:18:32,480 --> 00:18:29,010

is entirely second secondary you find it

411

00:18:34,850 --> 00:18:32,490

in traditional Buddhism because that

412

00:18:37,549 --> 00:18:34,860

described the sort of world that people

413

00:18:39,799 --> 00:18:37,559

took for granted at that time and I feel

414

00:18:42,200 --> 00:18:39,809

the Buddhism I don't even like the word

415

00:18:45,620 --> 00:18:42,210

Buddhism to be quite frank the Dharma

416

00:18:50,450 --> 00:18:45,630

the teachings whatever and are speaking

417

00:18:57,110 --> 00:18:50,460

to the question of of of meaning of

418

00:19:00,110 --> 00:18:57,120

suffering and seek a way to live in in

419

00:19:02,690 --> 00:19:00,120

an authentic and in a in a compassionate

420

00:19:06,500 --> 00:19:02,700

in a wise way in the world they offer us

421

00:19:10,159 --> 00:19:06,510

a range of strategies that can enable a

422

00:19:11,840 --> 00:19:10,169

much more flourishing life very good and

423

00:19:16,250 --> 00:19:11,850

I think you've captured their the

424

00:19:18,139 --> 00:19:16,260

essence of what folks will find in not

425

00:19:20,299 --> 00:19:18,149

only this book after Buddhism but in

426

00:19:22,330 --> 00:19:20,309

your prior work but particularly in this

427

00:19:25,820 --> 00:19:22,340

book it's a kind of thorough

428

00:19:28,610 --> 00:19:25,830

re-examination of some of these texts to

429

00:19:31,070 --> 00:19:28,620

more or less strip away the religious

430

00:19:33,710 --> 00:19:31,080

dogma to try and get back and put it in

431

00:19:35,870 --> 00:19:33,720

a modern-day context but I have to tell

432

00:19:37,970 --> 00:19:35,880

you it strikes me as just kind of

433

00:19:40,039 --> 00:19:37,980

interesting and strange if you will

434

00:19:43,210 --> 00:19:40,049

because at the same time that you're

435

00:19:45,950 --> 00:19:43,220

trying to pull Buddhism away from Dogma

436

00:19:48,740 --> 00:19:45,960

there are a number of researchers who

437

00:19:50,450 --> 00:19:48,750

have taken their own personal experience

438

00:19:54,289 --> 00:19:50,460

with Buddhism and in particular

439

00:19:55,700 --> 00:19:54,299

meditation and have gone in the other

440

00:19:58,779 --> 00:19:55,710

direction and that they've gone into the

441

00:20:02,450 --> 00:19:58,789

lab and they've said okay since this is

442

00:20:04,730 --> 00:20:02,460

really essentially a form of science let

443

00:20:07,130 --> 00:20:04,740

me take and see if I can test these

444

00:20:09,470 --> 00:20:07,140

principles scientifically of course

445

00:20:14,230 --> 00:20:09,480

what's emerged from that is a large body

446

00:20:17,299 --> 00:20:14,240

of research on mindfulness and on even

447

00:20:20,960 --> 00:20:17,309

neuroplasticity I benefited from this

448

00:20:23,570 --> 00:20:20,970

new look at mindfulness are you aware of

449

00:20:26,600 --> 00:20:23,580

that research in what do you make of it

450

00:20:28,970 --> 00:20:26,610

these are the materialism because I

451

00:20:31,460 --> 00:20:28,980

think in a lot of ways it really does

452

00:20:34,669 --> 00:20:31,470

directly challenge many of our ideas

453

00:20:37,789 --> 00:20:34,679

about materialism and consciousness

454

00:20:39,590 --> 00:20:37,799

being this purely a byproduct of the

455

00:20:42,799 --> 00:20:39,600

brain and epiphenomena the brain

456

00:20:44,510 --> 00:20:42,809

generated by biological robots what do

457

00:20:47,029 --> 00:20:44,520

you think of the mindfulness research I

458

00:20:50,360 --> 00:20:47,039

think it's extraordinarily interesting

459

00:20:52,130 --> 00:20:50,370

and I I'm not scientist I don't have a

460

00:20:56,090 --> 00:20:52,140

scientific background so I don't always

461

00:20:58,880 --> 00:20:56,100

understand the more technical language

462

00:21:03,380 --> 00:20:58,890

that is employed but what I think has

463

00:21:07,340 --> 00:21:03,390

been shown in these clinical studies is

464

00:21:10,789 --> 00:21:07,350

that it appears that if one applies

465

00:21:12,919 --> 00:21:10,799

oneself to be more mindful and to engage

466

00:21:16,399 --> 00:21:12,929

in these disciplines and practices and

467

00:21:19,700 --> 00:21:16,409

it has a measurable results and these

468

00:21:21,680 --> 00:21:19,710

results can be measured in terms of the

469

00:21:23,899 --> 00:21:21,690

changes within the neural structure of

470

00:21:26,950 --> 00:21:23,909

the brain and so forth and so on and and

471

00:21:30,620 --> 00:21:26,960

I find that quite extraordinary and if

472

00:21:33,380 --> 00:21:30,630

the fact that the Buddha seems to have

473

00:21:37,940 --> 00:21:33,390

come developed or stumbled across who

474

00:21:41,210 --> 00:21:37,950

knows a methodology that he applied in

475

00:21:43,610 --> 00:21:41,220

the fourth century BC that has been

476

00:21:44,810 --> 00:21:43,620

continued as a living practice within

477

00:21:46,850 --> 00:21:44,820

Buddhist traditions for the last

478

00:21:49,549 --> 00:21:46,860

two-and-a-half thousand years and now we

479

00:21:53,779 --> 00:21:49,559

find that when we apply it in modernity

480

00:21:55,460 --> 00:21:53,789

that it had measurable results and

481

00:21:57,620 --> 00:21:55,470

effects I can't think of any other

482

00:22:00,289 --> 00:21:57,630

religious practice that same

483

00:22:02,630 --> 00:22:00,299

Christianity or Judaism or Islam that

484

00:22:06,590 --> 00:22:02,640

would be able to yield comparable

485

00:22:08,330 --> 00:22:06,600

results measurable effects and this

486

00:22:12,200 --> 00:22:08,340

really raises the question as to whether

487

00:22:14,560 --> 00:22:12,210

Buddhism is best described as a religion

488

00:22:17,180 --> 00:22:14,570

in other words you know belief system

489

00:22:18,140 --> 00:22:17,190

based in faith and so on here we

490

00:22:22,040 --> 00:22:18,150

actually have something

491

00:22:23,750 --> 00:22:22,050

testable and the Buddha too I think saw

492

00:22:25,700 --> 00:22:23,760

his practice very much in those terms it

493

00:22:27,050 --> 00:22:25,710

was about you know come here check this

494

00:22:29,200 --> 00:22:27,060

out see if it works

495

00:22:32,750 --> 00:22:29,210

it's a pragmatism and if it is not

496

00:22:35,150 --> 00:22:32,760

making a concrete observable difference

497

00:22:38,210 --> 00:22:35,160

in the quality of your own life then

498

00:22:40,370 --> 00:22:38,220

drop it it's not actually there's

499

00:22:44,810 --> 00:22:40,380

nothing special or sacred about it that

500

00:22:48,050 --> 00:22:44,820

needs to be upheld just because of some

501  
00:22:50,080 --> 00:22:48,060  
religious faith you have and so yes I

502  
00:22:52,100 --> 00:22:50,090  
think this is an extraordinarily

503  
00:22:55,720 --> 00:22:52,110  
extraordinary period we find ourselves

504  
00:22:59,900 --> 00:22:55,730  
in for example a couple of weeks ago the

505  
00:23:02,620 --> 00:22:59,910  
cross-party Parliamentary Committee on

506  
00:23:05,000 --> 00:23:02,630  
mindfulness in the British Parliament

507  
00:23:06,860 --> 00:23:05,010  
it's such a thing does exist it has a

508  
00:23:09,530 --> 00:23:06,870  
website and it's been the last year

509  
00:23:12,470 --> 00:23:09,540  
developing a policy proposal which has

510  
00:23:15,170 --> 00:23:12,480  
now been given to the government of the

511  
00:23:18,320 --> 00:23:15,180  
United Kingdom to consider the use of

512  
00:23:20,600 --> 00:23:18,330  
mindfulness in education in health care

513  
00:23:22,610 --> 00:23:20,610

in the workplace and in the military and

514

00:23:25,790 --> 00:23:22,620

these ideas are now going to be taken

515

00:23:27,740 --> 00:23:25,800

forward for consideration that might

516

00:23:29,240 --> 00:23:27,750

lead I mean we don't know how the

517

00:23:31,430 --> 00:23:29,250

government will deal with this that

518

00:23:33,410 --> 00:23:31,440

might lead to mindfulness now being

519

00:23:35,150 --> 00:23:33,420

available on the British natural and

520

00:23:37,990 --> 00:23:35,160

that National Curriculum and so forth

521

00:23:41,990 --> 00:23:38,000

and so on now if somebody had told me in

522

00:23:44,600 --> 00:23:42,000

1972 in Dharamsala that in 40 years time

523

00:23:46,430 --> 00:23:44,610

the mindfulness or Buddhist meditation

524

00:23:47,930 --> 00:23:46,440

would be available on in the National

525

00:23:51,170 --> 00:23:47,940

Health Service in England I would have

526

00:23:53,570 --> 00:23:51,180

written them off as a fantasist it would

527

00:23:57,110 --> 00:23:53,580

be was just so inconceivable that that

528

00:23:59,630 --> 00:23:57,120

could have happened and yet it has and I

529

00:24:01,940 --> 00:23:59,640

feel greatly privileged in a way to have

530

00:24:04,880 --> 00:24:01,950

been witness to that and to have

531

00:24:06,800 --> 00:24:04,890

actually again engaged in these very

532

00:24:09,730 --> 00:24:06,810

practices of mindfulness which frankly

533

00:24:12,710 --> 00:24:09,740

were the practices that I came across

534

00:24:14,120 --> 00:24:12,720

while I was a Tibetan Buddhist monk the

535

00:24:17,000 --> 00:24:14,130

Tibetans don't actually teach these

536

00:24:19,580 --> 00:24:17,010

things as essentially as they're found

537

00:24:21,320 --> 00:24:19,590

in the other forms of Buddhism but when

538

00:24:24,170 --> 00:24:21,330

I first started practicing mindfulness

539

00:24:25,700 --> 00:24:24,180

when I was about 21 this was the

540

00:24:28,700 --> 00:24:25,710

practice that really made a difference

541

00:24:31,190 --> 00:24:28,710

not the reciting of mantras and the

542

00:24:32,000 --> 00:24:31,200

visualization of mandalas and what we

543

00:24:34,160 --> 00:24:32,010

find in Tibetan

544

00:24:36,680 --> 00:24:34,170

Buddhism it was the simple act of paying

545

00:24:40,670 --> 00:24:36,690

attention and the disciplines of

546

00:24:44,660 --> 00:24:40,680

attention had an enormous impact on my

547

00:24:46,970 --> 00:24:44,670

own life and I like also to feel that

548

00:24:48,920 --> 00:24:46,980

I've been part of the process of trying

549

00:24:51,530 --> 00:24:48,930

to articulate these Buddhist practices

550

00:24:54,200 --> 00:24:51,540

in a way that does speak to the sec in

551  
00:24:56,360 --> 00:24:54,210  
the world through my books and so on and

552  
00:24:58,640 --> 00:24:56,370  
so i find this enormous li confirming of

553  
00:25:01,310 --> 00:24:58,650  
those risks I took when I was a young

554  
00:25:02,810 --> 00:25:01,320  
person I think you should and I don't

555  
00:25:05,600 --> 00:25:02,820  
think there's many people who would

556  
00:25:08,480 --> 00:25:05,610  
argue with you on that point pardon me

557  
00:25:11,420 --> 00:25:08,490  
on that point I think your orientation

558  
00:25:14,900 --> 00:25:11,430  
your secular atheist orientation has

559  
00:25:17,660 --> 00:25:14,910  
been a great fit for the the social

560  
00:25:19,910 --> 00:25:17,670  
movement that's going on in terms of as

561  
00:25:21,950 --> 00:25:19,920  
you said a post religious kind of

562  
00:25:24,380 --> 00:25:21,960  
Western culture I guess what I was

563  
00:25:26,090 --> 00:25:24,390

driving at and maybe it's too fine of a

564

00:25:28,100 --> 00:25:26,100

point but I don't really think it is

565

00:25:30,140 --> 00:25:28,110

because I think kind of what we're doing

566

00:25:32,600 --> 00:25:30,150

is a little bit of shutup and calculate

567

00:25:35,660 --> 00:25:32,610

here in it we're skipping over the

568

00:25:37,880 --> 00:25:35,670

deeper philosophical implications of

569

00:25:41,300 --> 00:25:37,890

what this mindfulness really means

570

00:25:43,610 --> 00:25:41,310

because it does stand to undermine the

571

00:25:47,710 --> 00:25:43,620

very materialism that you're talking

572

00:25:51,230 --> 00:25:47,720

about materialism doesn't sit well with

573

00:25:55,150 --> 00:25:51,240

immaterial thoughts being able to change

574

00:25:58,220 --> 00:25:55,160

the physical structure of a brain the

575

00:26:00,020 --> 00:25:58,230

our understanding of materialism as it

576  
00:26:02,480 --> 00:26:00,030  
relates to consciousness would suggest

577  
00:26:05,150 --> 00:26:02,490  
that essentially consciousness is an

578  
00:26:07,640 --> 00:26:05,160  
illusion consciousness can do no work so

579  
00:26:09,860 --> 00:26:07,650  
Daniel Dennett that new atheist author

580  
00:26:11,830 --> 00:26:09,870  
and figurehead Daniel Dennett as famous

581  
00:26:14,330 --> 00:26:11,840  
for saying consciousness is an illusion

582  
00:26:16,850 --> 00:26:14,340  
Richard Dawkins is famous for saying

583  
00:26:18,680 --> 00:26:16,860  
that we are essentially biological

584  
00:26:21,340 --> 00:26:18,690  
robots they're kind of saying the same

585  
00:26:24,080 --> 00:26:21,350  
thing and the consciousness research

586  
00:26:27,020 --> 00:26:24,090  
mindfulness undermines that and it

587  
00:26:29,270 --> 00:26:27,030  
undermines it in a way that is subtle

588  
00:26:31,160 --> 00:26:29,280

and people are still coming to grips

589

00:26:33,740 --> 00:26:31,170

with but when you really dig into it it

590

00:26:35,750 --> 00:26:33,750

does undermine it but I can even shift

591

00:26:38,000 --> 00:26:35,760

over to another area where it's even

592

00:26:39,800 --> 00:26:38,010

more clear because part of the Buddhist

593

00:26:41,840 --> 00:26:39,810

dogma that initially kind of think

594

00:26:43,370 --> 00:26:41,850

turned you off was the idea of

595

00:26:45,470 --> 00:26:43,380

reincarnation

596

00:26:47,930 --> 00:26:45,480

yeah and that's another area that back

597

00:26:50,000 --> 00:26:47,940

in those days wasn't anything we're

598

00:26:53,240 --> 00:26:50,010

close to being studied scientifically

599

00:26:56,090 --> 00:26:53,250

but since then it has been studied

600

00:26:58,760 --> 00:26:56,100

scientifically and some buddhist

601  
00:27:00,500 --> 00:26:58,770  
oriented researchers have been involved

602  
00:27:02,510 --> 00:27:00,510  
in part of that but for the most part it

603  
00:27:05,240 --> 00:27:02,520  
was a group at the University of

604  
00:27:08,180 --> 00:27:05,250  
Virginia initially in Stevenson and now

605  
00:27:11,090 --> 00:27:08,190  
Jim Tucker and they offer rather

606  
00:27:14,450 --> 00:27:11,100  
compelling evidence highly suggestive

607  
00:27:18,980 --> 00:27:14,460  
that something like reincarnation is

608  
00:27:23,210 --> 00:27:18,990  
really happening so again where are you

609  
00:27:26,560 --> 00:27:23,220  
with it with all that stuff and are you

610  
00:27:29,990 --> 00:27:26,570  
trying to fit that back into a secular

611  
00:27:32,270 --> 00:27:30,000  
orientation that may not hold up when we

612  
00:27:34,850 --> 00:27:32,280  
really look at the science well again

613  
00:27:40,130 --> 00:27:34,860

I'm not a scientist and so I can only as

614

00:27:42,620 --> 00:27:40,140

it were you know I if evidence appears

615

00:27:45,850 --> 00:27:42,630

through scientific study and so forth of

616

00:27:48,350 --> 00:27:45,860

the possibility of a non-material

617

00:27:51,140 --> 00:27:48,360

consciousness that floats free of the

618

00:27:53,900 --> 00:27:51,150

material world if evidence can be

619

00:27:56,570 --> 00:27:53,910

compiled that illustrate that indicates

620

00:27:57,860 --> 00:27:56,580

that reincarnation is a possibility then

621

00:28:00,620 --> 00:27:57,870

that's fine I don't have a problem with

622

00:28:03,740 --> 00:28:00,630

that and I just don't think that those

623

00:28:05,990 --> 00:28:03,750

issues are actually central to what the

624

00:28:08,600 --> 00:28:06,000

Buddha was trying to do I think these

625

00:28:10,220 --> 00:28:08,610

are fascinating areas and I'm fully

626

00:28:12,920 --> 00:28:10,230

supportive of all of this kind of

627

00:28:15,920 --> 00:28:12,930

research and follow through with that

628

00:28:18,380 --> 00:28:15,930

thought why do you think because I think

629

00:28:20,270 --> 00:28:18,390

this is an area where you're probably at

630

00:28:23,570 --> 00:28:20,280

odds with a number of people when you

631

00:28:26,990 --> 00:28:23,580

don't think that this was central to

632

00:28:29,210 --> 00:28:27,000

what the Buddha was even if he wasn't

633

00:28:32,140 --> 00:28:29,220

teaching it as you said what was his

634

00:28:34,130 --> 00:28:32,150

realization or was the realization of

635

00:28:35,540 --> 00:28:34,140

thousands and thousands of people who

636

00:28:38,480 --> 00:28:35,550

followed I mean that's what I read out

637

00:28:40,730 --> 00:28:38,490

of it is that they when they looked

638

00:28:43,190 --> 00:28:40,740

inside in the same way that you have and

639

00:28:46,790 --> 00:28:43,200

they came to conclusion ah consciousness

640

00:28:49,940 --> 00:28:46,800

is fundamental ah reincarnation is real

641

00:28:51,640 --> 00:28:49,950

and can't we maybe assume that the

642

00:28:54,560 --> 00:28:51,650

Buddha did come to that same conclusion

643

00:28:55,830 --> 00:28:54,570

well again it depends in which which

644

00:28:58,560 --> 00:28:55,840

text you look at the

645

00:29:00,390 --> 00:28:58,570

accounts of the Buddha's awakening do

646

00:29:02,370 --> 00:29:00,400

not actual there is one account that

647

00:29:05,700 --> 00:29:02,380

talks of him remembering all of his past

648

00:29:07,470 --> 00:29:05,710

life times and so on but the the

649

00:29:09,510 --> 00:29:07,480

accounts that I find the most in

650

00:29:11,010 --> 00:29:09,520

compelling have nothing to do with

651

00:29:13,230 --> 00:29:11,020

reincarnation or the nature of

652

00:29:15,390 --> 00:29:13,240

consciousness in fact there's a text

653

00:29:17,010 --> 00:29:15,400

type in the Pali Canon where the Buddha

654

00:29:19,620 --> 00:29:17,020

says quite clearly the consciousness

655

00:29:22,919 --> 00:29:19,630

emerges out of the interactions between

656

00:29:24,960 --> 00:29:22,929

an organism and its environment that you

657

00:29:28,980 --> 00:29:24,970

have a sense organ and that when that

658

00:29:32,100 --> 00:29:28,990

meets encounters a color shape of sound

659

00:29:34,590 --> 00:29:32,110

or smell or or an ocean bubbling up

660

00:29:36,659 --> 00:29:34,600

inside you those that encounter is what

661

00:29:39,080 --> 00:29:36,669

gives rise to consciousness

662

00:29:42,450 --> 00:29:39,090

consciousness is something that emerges

663

00:29:44,580 --> 00:29:42,460

contingently a palpable an organism

664

00:29:46,649 --> 00:29:44,590

encountering an environment now that

665

00:29:47,940 --> 00:29:46,659

consciousness we need not think of to go

666

00:29:49,919 --> 00:29:47,950

back to your earlier point is of

667

00:29:53,100 --> 00:29:49,929

material in the sense that it's made of

668

00:29:54,149 --> 00:29:53,110

atoms or something but it's still part

669

00:29:56,490 --> 00:29:54,159

of the physical world

670

00:29:58,289 --> 00:29:56,500

philosophers I think now I'm not so

671

00:30:00,510 --> 00:29:58,299

comfortable with the word materialism

672

00:30:03,690 --> 00:30:00,520

they prefer something like physicalism

673

00:30:04,950 --> 00:30:03,700

in other words that although these these

674

00:30:07,610 --> 00:30:04,960

things may not be strictly speaking

675

00:30:09,930 --> 00:30:07,620

material they are nonetheless only

676

00:30:12,360 --> 00:30:09,940

possible within the context of a

677

00:30:13,590 --> 00:30:12,370

physical environment modality is very

678

00:30:16,380 --> 00:30:13,600

close to actually what the early

679

00:30:17,940 --> 00:30:16,390

Buddhist teachings taught now the whole

680

00:30:19,710 --> 00:30:17,950

business of reincarnation and

681

00:30:21,990 --> 00:30:19,720

consciousness of some kind of in dublin

682

00:30:24,090 --> 00:30:22,000

system dependently of a physical

683

00:30:27,000 --> 00:30:24,100

organism this is not an exclusively

684

00:30:29,190 --> 00:30:27,010

Buddhist idea this is a common view that

685

00:30:31,980 --> 00:30:29,200

you'll find in Hinduism in Jainism and

686

00:30:36,830 --> 00:30:31,990

pretty much all the major Indian

687

00:30:40,950 --> 00:30:36,840

traditions of thoughts it it reprobation

688

00:30:43,260 --> 00:30:40,960

ecology and metaphysics of ancient india

689

00:30:45,810 --> 00:30:43,270

than it does about what is specific to

690

00:30:47,399 --> 00:30:45,820

buddhism and when you compare the

691

00:30:49,740 --> 00:30:47,409

Buddhist teaching particularly as we

692

00:30:52,880 --> 00:30:49,750

find in the earliest historical texts

693

00:30:55,260 --> 00:30:52,890

and we find that actually he seems to be

694

00:30:59,460 --> 00:30:55,270

articulating something that is not

695

00:31:01,830 --> 00:30:59,470

primarily based upon the notion of

696

00:31:02,789 --> 00:31:01,840

reincarnation or this separate existence

697

00:31:05,399 --> 00:31:02,799

of consciousness which he actually

698

00:31:07,020 --> 00:31:05,409

denies there's a passage in the song

699

00:31:09,090 --> 00:31:07,030

eternity I for example where he's

700

00:31:12,120 --> 00:31:09,100

there's the idea that

701  
00:31:14,070 --> 00:31:12,130  
can exist independently of the physical

702  
00:31:16,230 --> 00:31:14,080  
environment is impossible it says that

703  
00:31:20,129 --> 00:31:16,240  
in black and white and okay it's an

704  
00:31:22,139 --> 00:31:20,139  
exceptional text but that actually makes

705  
00:31:24,029 --> 00:31:22,149  
it more likely to go back to the Buddha

706  
00:31:27,360 --> 00:31:24,039  
because it's unlikely to have been added

707  
00:31:29,879 --> 00:31:27,370  
at a later date so that are there's a

708  
00:31:31,909 --> 00:31:29,889  
great deal of I I think quite strong

709  
00:31:34,529 --> 00:31:31,919  
evidence that the Buddha was not

710  
00:31:37,230 --> 00:31:34,539  
primarily concerned with these

711  
00:31:39,269 --> 00:31:37,240  
particular doctrines and teachings in

712  
00:31:41,369 --> 00:31:39,279  
later Buddhism particularly Tibetan

713  
00:31:43,560 --> 00:31:41,379

Buddhism and Tarot either Buddhism then

714

00:31:46,110 --> 00:31:43,570

yes they developed very sophisticated

715

00:31:49,860 --> 00:31:46,120

theories of the nature of consciousness

716

00:31:52,019 --> 00:31:49,870

and how it comes into the body at birth

717

00:31:54,060 --> 00:31:52,029

and so forth and so on and go to dr.

718

00:31:56,220 --> 00:31:54,070

Stevenson's work which I think if we are

719

00:31:58,049 --> 00:31:56,230

to explore the possibility of

720

00:32:00,990 --> 00:31:58,059

reincarnation we need to do so

721

00:32:02,580 --> 00:32:01,000

empirically by the study of cases in the

722

00:32:06,360 --> 00:32:02,590

way that he and his followers have done

723

00:32:09,049 --> 00:32:06,370

and now another scientist dr. Charles

724

00:32:12,480 --> 00:32:09,059

talked has taken on this work and is

725

00:32:15,149 --> 00:32:12,490

continuing to compile a case studies of

726

00:32:18,210 --> 00:32:15,159

these kids usually from Asia but not

727

00:32:19,769 --> 00:32:18,220

exclusively even children from Christian

728

00:32:22,379 --> 00:32:19,779

cultures Western cultures have also

729

00:32:25,110 --> 00:32:22,389

reported memories quite compelling

730

00:32:27,720 --> 00:32:25,120

memories of remembering past lives but

731

00:32:30,590 --> 00:32:27,730

there are enormous philosophical

732

00:32:33,450 --> 00:32:30,600

problems with this work you cannot draw

733

00:32:35,580 --> 00:32:33,460

I think a lot of people particularly

734

00:32:38,039 --> 00:32:35,590

Buddhists who want proof of

735

00:32:40,769 --> 00:32:38,049

reincarnation will take these studies

736

00:32:43,139 --> 00:32:40,779

and basically say are you see this child

737

00:32:44,450 --> 00:32:43,149

remembered X Y Z therefore there is

738

00:32:48,659 --> 00:32:44,460

reincarnation

739

00:32:50,999 --> 00:32:48,669

now that is drawing what is to me a

740

00:32:52,560 --> 00:32:51,009

highly isn't it that's inductive

741

00:32:56,249 --> 00:32:52,570

reasoning your take your drawing a very

742

00:32:59,190 --> 00:32:56,259

general conclusion from very limited

743

00:33:01,560 --> 00:32:59,200

pieces of evidence you could just as

744

00:33:02,970 --> 00:33:01,570

well conclude as some early book Indian

745

00:33:05,669 --> 00:33:02,980

falafel esophagus

746

00:33:10,560 --> 00:33:05,679

schools concluded that we have two or

747

00:33:13,560 --> 00:33:10,570

three lifetimes that we may just because

748

00:33:16,950 --> 00:33:13,570

a child has access to information about

749

00:33:18,899 --> 00:33:16,960

a previous existence and can turn and

750

00:33:21,590 --> 00:33:18,909

offer some quite you know compelling

751

00:33:23,570 --> 00:33:21,600

evidence for that that in itself is no

752

00:33:25,279 --> 00:33:23,580

proof that that child will be reborn

753

00:33:27,529 --> 00:33:25,289

again it could be like it's a butterfly

754

00:33:29,750 --> 00:33:27,539

in a crystal it's a to life thing you

755

00:33:31,580 --> 00:33:29,760

have to be very careful to draw these

756

00:33:33,470 --> 00:33:31,590

these generalize conclusions

757

00:33:35,659 --> 00:33:33,480

particularly if they happen to support

758

00:33:38,120 --> 00:33:35,669

your religious beliefs I agree and I

759

00:33:40,760 --> 00:33:38,130

think that's an important important part

760

00:33:43,130 --> 00:33:40,770

of your work is no matter if someone

761

00:33:46,360 --> 00:33:43,140

agrees with everything that you're

762

00:33:49,400 --> 00:33:46,370

tearing down or not I love the

763

00:33:51,830 --> 00:33:49,410

iconoclastic approach that you take is

764

00:33:54,560 --> 00:33:51,840

if let's strip it all down and see where

765

00:33:56,690 --> 00:33:54,570

the data leads I don't follow your

766

00:33:58,940 --> 00:33:56,700

reasoning on reincarnation because I

767

00:34:01,220 --> 00:33:58,950

think in the same way that we have to

768

00:34:04,490 --> 00:34:01,230

strip away the religious dogma we also

769

00:34:06,909 --> 00:34:04,500

have to strip away the the science dogma

770

00:34:09,800 --> 00:34:06,919

in the shadow of materialism thymine

771

00:34:11,359 --> 00:34:09,810

materialism is so ingrained in our

772

00:34:13,849 --> 00:34:11,369

education system in our scientific

773

00:34:15,470 --> 00:34:13,859

system that as soon as someone begins to

774

00:34:18,230 --> 00:34:15,480

think outside of the box and even

775

00:34:19,609 --> 00:34:18,240

contemplate reincarnation I think the

776

00:34:22,040 --> 00:34:19,619

kind of challenges that you're making

777

00:34:23,810 --> 00:34:22,050

are immediately thrown on the table

778

00:34:24,260 --> 00:34:23,820

without the thought of well wait a

779

00:34:26,570 --> 00:34:24,270

minute

780

00:34:29,240 --> 00:34:26,580

in those challenges I am still

781

00:34:32,629 --> 00:34:29,250

undermining everything that I thought I

782

00:34:36,379 --> 00:34:32,639

knew about science about the physical

783

00:34:38,270 --> 00:34:36,389

world but again you've laid bare the

784

00:34:39,649 --> 00:34:38,280

field there and I think people can do

785

00:34:41,960 --> 00:34:39,659

with it what they will

786

00:34:43,930 --> 00:34:41,970

and I think you show an openness to

787

00:34:46,070 --> 00:34:43,940

looking at the science that is

788

00:34:48,590 --> 00:34:46,080

refreshing and I think that's all we can

789

00:34:51,500 --> 00:34:48,600

do is keep digging through that and

790

00:34:53,450 --> 00:34:51,510

digging through that so I think you're

791

00:34:56,510 --> 00:34:53,460

to be committed for doing that I do

792

00:34:57,950 --> 00:34:56,520

think that the the science does take us

793

00:34:59,840 --> 00:34:57,960

in a new in a different direction as

794

00:35:01,940 --> 00:34:59,850

does the near-death experience science

795

00:35:02,960 --> 00:35:01,950

but there's no need to I guess I will

796

00:35:04,640 --> 00:35:02,970

throw that on the table

797

00:35:07,099 --> 00:35:04,650

I think the near-death experience

798

00:35:10,130 --> 00:35:07,109

science is another whole area that again

799

00:35:13,970 --> 00:35:10,140

pulls us in that same direction away

800

00:35:16,480 --> 00:35:13,980

from materialism and I think it's highly

801  
00:35:19,490 --> 00:35:16,490  
suggestive on a higher maybe

802  
00:35:22,849 --> 00:35:19,500  
philosophical sense of the idea of karma

803  
00:35:25,640 --> 00:35:22,859  
I mean that is another area I guess

804  
00:35:28,790 --> 00:35:25,650  
where your views kind of butt up against

805  
00:35:32,780 --> 00:35:28,800  
some Buddhist orthodoxy so if you have

806  
00:35:35,210 --> 00:35:32,790  
any thoughts on karma and this idea of a

807  
00:35:37,339 --> 00:35:35,220  
hierarchical consciousness

808  
00:35:40,870 --> 00:35:37,349  
something more like a god that people

809  
00:35:43,010 --> 00:35:40,880  
experience in these after after death

810  
00:35:45,260 --> 00:35:43,020  
situations I'd love to hear it

811  
00:35:47,000 --> 00:35:45,270  
okay well I think I really have to come

812  
00:35:49,040 --> 00:35:47,010  
back to the what to me is the primary

813  
00:35:51,770 --> 00:35:49,050

issue the buddha describes his teaching

814

00:35:53,990 --> 00:35:51,780

as that of coming to terms with dukkha

815

00:35:56,599 --> 00:35:54,000

with the suffering of life and seeking

816

00:35:59,059 --> 00:35:56,609

to find an authentic response to that

817

00:36:01,579 --> 00:35:59,069

suffering the he presents his teaching

818

00:36:03,650 --> 00:36:01,589

much as we find the Hellenistic

819

00:36:07,010 --> 00:36:03,660

philosophers presented their teaching as

820

00:36:09,260 --> 00:36:07,020

primarily a kind of therapy it has to do

821

00:36:11,240 --> 00:36:09,270

with human flourishing as the Greeks

822

00:36:14,420 --> 00:36:11,250

would call it it has to do with learning

823

00:36:18,020 --> 00:36:14,430

to live a life to the full to the utmost

824

00:36:20,210 --> 00:36:18,030

of our potential and frankly I think

825

00:36:22,640 --> 00:36:20,220

whether we believe in reincarnation or

826

00:36:23,780 --> 00:36:22,650

we don't believe in reincarnation if we

827

00:36:26,180 --> 00:36:23,790

believe in higher states of

828

00:36:28,339 --> 00:36:26,190

consciousness or not I think that's a

829

00:36:30,530 --> 00:36:28,349

secondary issue I don't think it makes

830

00:36:32,390 --> 00:36:30,540

much of a difference to how we actually

831

00:36:35,780 --> 00:36:32,400

live from moment to moment in this world

832

00:36:38,450 --> 00:36:35,790

in a in a sensitive and a wise and in a

833

00:36:40,280 --> 00:36:38,460

compassionate way in that sense the

834

00:36:43,430 --> 00:36:40,290

Buddhist description of himself as a

835

00:36:46,460 --> 00:36:43,440

doctor rather than as a Mehta physician

836

00:36:49,490 --> 00:36:46,470

is vitally important and what I feel is

837

00:36:52,220 --> 00:36:49,500

again born out with the practice of

838

00:36:56,300 --> 00:36:52,230

mindfulness is that its effectiveness is

839

00:36:57,770 --> 00:36:56,310

not because it reveals some you know

840

00:36:59,720 --> 00:36:57,780

some higher truths about the nature of

841

00:37:03,559 --> 00:36:59,730

reality is that it actually enables

842

00:37:07,400 --> 00:37:03,569

people to live a fuller richer less

843

00:37:09,589 --> 00:37:07,410

neurotic less frustrated lives that's to

844

00:37:12,710 --> 00:37:09,599

me the key Buddhism for me is

845

00:37:15,530 --> 00:37:12,720

essentially an ethics it's about how we

846

00:37:17,720 --> 00:37:15,540

can practice how we can live in this

847

00:37:21,380 --> 00:37:17,730

world in relation with other people in

848

00:37:23,750 --> 00:37:21,390

relation with the the environment with

849

00:37:26,000 --> 00:37:23,760

the the other forms of life that we

850

00:37:28,940 --> 00:37:26,010

share this planet with that to me is

851

00:37:31,250 --> 00:37:28,950

what matters most the metaphysical

852

00:37:33,770 --> 00:37:31,260

issues the philosophical issues that

853

00:37:36,440 --> 00:37:33,780

we've been discussing are of course a

854

00:37:38,599 --> 00:37:36,450

great interest and I do feel that people

855

00:37:40,700 --> 00:37:38,609

working in these fields may bring us to

856

00:37:42,470 --> 00:37:40,710

understandings about our understanding

857

00:37:44,900 --> 00:37:42,480

of reality that conflict both with

858

00:37:46,510 --> 00:37:44,910

Buddhism and with materialistic science

859

00:37:48,920 --> 00:37:46,520

I've got no problem with that whatsoever

860

00:37:51,970 --> 00:37:48,930

but it's not my

861

00:37:55,580 --> 00:37:51,980

area of special specialization or

862

00:37:58,610 --> 00:37:55,590

expertise I see I see I see myself

863

00:38:02,810 --> 00:37:58,620

really as an ethicist and it's about the

864

00:38:05,030 --> 00:38:02,820

quality of life of human life in our

865

00:38:07,010 --> 00:38:05,040

world as it exists today that matters

866

00:38:10,340 --> 00:38:07,020

most that's a great point and maybe a

867

00:38:13,520 --> 00:38:10,350

lead-in for who specifically you see

868

00:38:16,550 --> 00:38:13,530

getting the most benefit from this book

869

00:38:18,380 --> 00:38:16,560

after Buddhism I see the people who may

870

00:38:20,510 --> 00:38:18,390

most benefit from this book will be

871

00:38:22,550 --> 00:38:20,520

people who are drawn to Buddhist

872

00:38:24,410 --> 00:38:22,560

practices let's say by mindfulness

873

00:38:29,390 --> 00:38:24,420

meditation is the obvious example and

874

00:38:31,130 --> 00:38:29,400

yet they find that just the the simple

875

00:38:33,040 --> 00:38:31,140

practice of paying attention as you

876

00:38:36,800 --> 00:38:33,050

might be taught on an eight-week MBSR

877

00:38:40,760 --> 00:38:36,810

course for example and does perhaps

878

00:38:42,980 --> 00:38:40,770

resolve certain pathological problems

879

00:38:45,860 --> 00:38:42,990

they have or stress-related issues that

880

00:38:49,610 --> 00:38:45,870

they have but what I find in my work is

881

00:38:52,190 --> 00:38:49,620

the sorta considerable percentage of

882

00:38:55,160 --> 00:38:52,200

people who practice mindfulness totally

883

00:38:58,580 --> 00:38:55,170

outside the Buddhist world find that

884

00:39:02,960 --> 00:38:58,590

although it resolves certain problems

885

00:39:05,800 --> 00:39:02,970

that they are trying to - - - it resolve

886

00:39:08,210 --> 00:39:05,810

certain problems in their lives it also

887

00:39:11,660 --> 00:39:08,220

provides them with another perspective

888

00:39:13,580 --> 00:39:11,670

on their life as a whole and it affords

889

00:39:16,160 --> 00:39:13,590

them the opportunity often for the very

890

00:39:20,360 --> 00:39:16,170

first time to have had the freedom just

891

00:39:22,460 --> 00:39:20,370

to stop and to look and to attend and to

892

00:39:24,980 --> 00:39:22,470

recognize that their thoughts are just

893

00:39:27,230 --> 00:39:24,990

thoughts they don't necessarily need to

894

00:39:30,470 --> 00:39:27,240

be identified with as my thoughts or my

895

00:39:33,530 --> 00:39:30,480

feelings that you open up a kind of

896

00:39:36,650 --> 00:39:33,540

nonreactive space of awareness and that

897

00:39:39,080 --> 00:39:36,660

affords you a kind of freedom to begin

898

00:39:42,020 --> 00:39:39,090

asking ethical questions namely well

899

00:39:43,840 --> 00:39:42,030

what is the purpose of living at all

900

00:39:47,570 --> 00:39:43,850

what is the purpose of human existence

901  
00:39:49,520 --> 00:39:47,580  
how can I lead a good life and you begin

902  
00:39:51,560 --> 00:39:49,530  
to see that a lot of the stuff in your

903  
00:39:55,480 --> 00:39:51,570  
life that had been causing you distress

904  
00:39:59,990 --> 00:39:55,490  
or stress was largely these kind of

905  
00:40:01,670 --> 00:40:00,000  
impulsive reactive patterns of mind that

906  
00:40:02,330 --> 00:40:01,680  
have come from our society or probably

907  
00:40:05,690 --> 00:40:02,340  
after one

908  
00:40:08,480 --> 00:40:05,700  
neurobiology that it never had not

909  
00:40:10,490 --> 00:40:08,490  
allowed you the freedom to really take

910  
00:40:14,210 --> 00:40:10,500  
responsibility for your own existence

911  
00:40:15,980 --> 00:40:14,220  
and so these people then google

912  
00:40:18,170 --> 00:40:15,990  
mindfulness and they find out that it's

913  
00:40:20,690 --> 00:40:18,180

a Buddhist meditation practice they then

914

00:40:24,200 --> 00:40:20,700

seek out either Buddhist philosophy

915

00:40:26,120 --> 00:40:24,210

books or for most of them they then want

916

00:40:27,980 --> 00:40:26,130

to deepen that practice by coming on a

917

00:40:30,740 --> 00:40:27,990

Buddhist meditation course or something

918

00:40:33,440 --> 00:40:30,750

like that and then they realize that

919

00:40:37,550 --> 00:40:33,450

what they need for mindfulness to be a

920

00:40:39,890 --> 00:40:37,560

fully humanized activity is that it

921

00:40:42,230 --> 00:40:39,900

needs to be rooted in a clearer sense of

922

00:40:45,820 --> 00:40:42,240

ethics a clearer sense of a philosophy

923

00:40:48,710 --> 00:40:45,830

of life and that I feel is what my book

924

00:40:50,990 --> 00:40:48,720

it's these sorts of people that I'm

925

00:40:54,130 --> 00:40:51,000

addressing in this book people who are

926  
00:40:56,210 --> 00:40:54,140  
looking to is a sense take a

927  
00:40:59,210 --> 00:40:56,220  
one-dimensional practice of mindfulness

928  
00:41:02,510 --> 00:40:59,220  
and translate it into a three

929  
00:41:05,780 --> 00:41:02,520  
dimensional way of life mindful is being

930  
00:41:07,820 --> 00:41:05,790  
just an element a central element I I do

931  
00:41:09,680 --> 00:41:07,830  
feel very strongly it's a very central

932  
00:41:13,310 --> 00:41:09,690  
element of the Buddhist practice but

933  
00:41:16,910 --> 00:41:13,320  
it's not really meaningful in a deeper

934  
00:41:19,100 --> 00:41:16,920  
sense unless it is incorporated into an

935  
00:41:21,470 --> 00:41:19,110  
ethical vision and I would say a

936  
00:41:24,680 --> 00:41:21,480  
philosophical vision of what a human

937  
00:41:27,380 --> 00:41:24,690  
life could be and this involves very

938  
00:41:30,110 --> 00:41:27,390

much a much more deeper coming to terms

939

00:41:33,020 --> 00:41:30,120

with our our birth our death and also

940

00:41:35,570 --> 00:41:33,030

the suffering that we and others and the

941

00:41:38,330 --> 00:41:35,580

planet experience here and that and in

942

00:41:41,420 --> 00:41:38,340

that sense it leads to I think a kind of

943

00:41:43,280 --> 00:41:41,430

pragmatic and ethical a philosophy of

944

00:41:45,320 --> 00:41:43,290

life and what I tried to do in after

945

00:41:47,930 --> 00:41:45,330

Buddhism is to at least sketch an

946

00:41:50,420 --> 00:41:47,940

outline of what such an ethics might be

947

00:41:53,270 --> 00:41:50,430

what such a philosophy might be and

948

00:41:55,670 --> 00:41:53,280

having divested it as you've already

949

00:41:58,250 --> 00:41:55,680

pointed out of of the more overtly

950

00:42:01,130 --> 00:41:58,260

religious elements of Buddhism I'm not

951  
00:42:03,890 --> 00:42:01,140  
rejecting reincarnation I actually have

952  
00:42:06,020 --> 00:42:03,900  
no idea what happens after death and I

953  
00:42:09,590 --> 00:42:06,030  
wish to approach my own death with a

954  
00:42:13,100 --> 00:42:09,600  
totally open mind whatever may occur but

955  
00:42:15,569 --> 00:42:13,110  
the the point at the heart of this

956  
00:42:18,209 --> 00:42:15,579  
practice is one that has to

957  
00:42:21,299 --> 00:42:18,219  
with living here and now living in this

958  
00:42:24,989 --> 00:42:21,309  
time in this world in our history in our

959  
00:42:27,539 --> 00:42:24,999  
culture in a scientific world but

960  
00:42:30,059 --> 00:42:27,549  
open-mindedly but also with a degree

961  
00:42:32,400 --> 00:42:30,069  
passion and commitment to what it is

962  
00:42:34,170 --> 00:42:32,410  
that matters most versus in this life in

963  
00:42:36,420 --> 00:42:34,180

this world you know the other thing I

964

00:42:38,670 --> 00:42:36,430

think your book does and your work in

965

00:42:40,529 --> 00:42:38,680

general does you kind of touched on it

966

00:42:42,809 --> 00:42:40,539

but I think that anyone who goes through

967

00:42:45,769 --> 00:42:42,819

this experience that you just talked

968

00:42:48,299 --> 00:42:45,779

about of encountering meditation and

969

00:42:51,209 --> 00:42:48,309

seeing the changes that it might bring

970

00:42:53,699 --> 00:42:51,219

to them does just as you said I mean the

971

00:42:55,199 --> 00:42:53,709

next step is to Google well what is this

972

00:42:56,579 --> 00:42:55,209

you know what it because we're curious

973

00:42:58,920 --> 00:42:56,589

especially in the West and were

974

00:43:01,349 --> 00:42:58,930

knowledge driven and we go to that next

975

00:43:04,859 --> 00:43:01,359

step and we encounter this rather

976

00:43:08,400 --> 00:43:04,869

jolting culture clash don't we and I

977

00:43:10,680 --> 00:43:08,410

think you do a great service of helping

978

00:43:12,959 --> 00:43:10,690

people navigate that culture clash and

979

00:43:16,319 --> 00:43:12,969

again even if one doesn't agree with

980

00:43:20,039 --> 00:43:16,329

everything that you say it is refreshing

981

00:43:21,660 --> 00:43:20,049

to say hey here's someone who has had

982

00:43:25,739 --> 00:43:21,670

the same kind of questions had the same

983

00:43:27,809 --> 00:43:25,749

kind of cultural a kind of anxiety over

984

00:43:30,180 --> 00:43:27,819

the differences and has found a path

985

00:43:32,130 --> 00:43:30,190

through it can you speak to that at all

986

00:43:35,219 --> 00:43:32,140

yeah I think that's true I mean I get a

987

00:43:37,499 --> 00:43:35,229

lot of feedback from readers of books

988

00:43:40,349 --> 00:43:37,509

and people who listen to my audio talks

989

00:43:42,959 --> 00:43:40,359

and so on and a very common thing they

990

00:43:46,410 --> 00:43:42,969

say is ah someone is putting into words

991

00:43:49,380 --> 00:43:46,420

what I'd be feeling all a lot and a lot

992

00:43:50,819 --> 00:43:49,390

of people do Buddhist practice sometimes

993

00:43:52,620 --> 00:43:50,829

they're part of Buddhist communities but

994

00:43:55,019 --> 00:43:52,630

at a certain point they just simply

995

00:43:57,900 --> 00:43:55,029

can't accept the dogmas or they can't

996

00:43:59,849 --> 00:43:57,910

accept the authoritarian hierarchies of

997

00:44:01,499 --> 00:43:59,859

these institutions starts to feel like

998

00:44:04,049 --> 00:44:01,509

church again it starts to feel like

999

00:44:05,969 --> 00:44:04,059

church again but that doesn't mean that

1000

00:44:08,029 --> 00:44:05,979

they feel that what they've been

1001  
00:44:10,499 --> 00:44:08,039  
practicing in their meditation or in

1002  
00:44:13,529 --> 00:44:10,509  
their thinking and their ethical lives

1003  
00:44:15,449 --> 00:44:13,539  
and that's not something they are

1004  
00:44:17,099 --> 00:44:15,459  
willing to reject they're not willing to

1005  
00:44:20,609 --> 00:44:17,109  
throw that baby out with the bathwater

1006  
00:44:24,900 --> 00:44:20,619  
as one says and so they're looking for a

1007  
00:44:27,720 --> 00:44:24,910  
language that is that is honest and that

1008  
00:44:30,870 --> 00:44:27,730  
is in you know is rude

1009  
00:44:32,670 --> 00:44:30,880  
in the Buddhist tradition because they

1010  
00:44:36,540 --> 00:44:32,680  
do feel an affinity with this philosophy

1011  
00:44:39,660 --> 00:44:36,550  
with this ethos and yet they find a lot

1012  
00:44:41,730 --> 00:44:39,670  
of the the apparatus of Buddhism gets in

1013  
00:44:44,310 --> 00:44:41,740

the way it requires of them to believe

1014

00:44:47,430 --> 00:44:44,320

things that they just mean own good

1015

00:44:49,530 --> 00:44:47,440

faith cannot really take on board so my

1016

00:44:53,130 --> 00:44:49,540

books have served I think as a kind of a

1017

00:44:55,680 --> 00:44:53,140

life raft for people who who wish to

1018

00:44:58,349 --> 00:44:55,690

pursue this practice wish to pursue this

1019

00:45:01,410 --> 00:44:58,359

philosophy but in a way that is in

1020

00:45:03,720 --> 00:45:01,420

accord with their secular existence in

1021

00:45:05,310 --> 00:45:03,730

accord with how they understand the

1022

00:45:08,010 --> 00:45:05,320

world from what they've learned from the

1023

00:45:12,240 --> 00:45:08,020

Natural Sciences and so on and they're

1024

00:45:15,300 --> 00:45:12,250

my audience really and and I get a lot

1025

00:45:17,760 --> 00:45:15,310

of affirmation from these emails I get

1026

00:45:20,160 --> 00:45:17,770

fairly regular regular regularly from

1027

00:45:22,950 --> 00:45:20,170

people who's who found that my work

1028

00:45:26,640 --> 00:45:22,960

enables them to continue and to deeper

1029

00:45:29,220 --> 00:45:26,650

their meditation practice but within a

1030

00:45:31,890 --> 00:45:29,230

framework that doesn't require religious

1031

00:45:34,080 --> 00:45:31,900

and dogmatic belief so Stephen how can

1032

00:45:36,000 --> 00:45:34,090

folks connect with you obviously this

1033

00:45:38,400 --> 00:45:36,010

book after Buddhism rethinking the

1034

00:45:40,170 --> 00:45:38,410

Dharma for a secular age is new it's out

1035

00:45:42,510 --> 00:45:40,180

people will want to check that out

1036

00:45:44,280 --> 00:45:42,520

you also do trainings on a regular basis

1037

00:45:46,050 --> 00:45:44,290

and I know you're kind of moving around

1038

00:45:48,450 --> 00:45:46,060

a lot how do people get in touch with

1039

00:45:50,370 --> 00:45:48,460

you well the best way to get in touch

1040

00:46:08,120 --> 00:45:50,380

with me is through my website which is

1041

00:46:12,109 --> 00:46:08,130

www.hyken.com times go further afield

1042

00:46:15,960 --> 00:46:12,119

together with my wife I offer several

1043

00:46:19,380 --> 00:46:15,970

week-long meditation retreats often with

1044

00:46:22,800 --> 00:46:19,390

quite pronounced study or philosophical

1045

00:46:26,510 --> 00:46:22,810

component built in of course people can

1046

00:46:29,460 --> 00:46:26,520

also look at my other writings and

1047

00:46:31,320 --> 00:46:29,470

there's a huge number of audio talks

1048

00:46:33,900 --> 00:46:31,330

that I've given over the years there can

1049

00:46:36,690 --> 00:46:33,910

be evaded their can be downloaded and

1050

00:46:41,080 --> 00:46:36,700

listen to his podcast and those can be

1051

00:46:44,170 --> 00:46:41,090

acquired from www

1052

00:46:47,320 --> 00:46:44,180

edan one word org which is an audio

1053

00:46:49,630 --> 00:46:47,330

resource based in Massachusetts that's

1054

00:46:51,940 --> 00:46:49,640

the best way to get in touch I'm very

1055

00:46:54,520 --> 00:46:51,950

happy to respond to questions and

1056

00:46:58,780 --> 00:46:54,530

queries through emails you can contact

1057

00:47:00,340 --> 00:46:58,790

me also through the website and yeah

1058

00:47:02,530 --> 00:47:00,350

that's about it really I don't have an

1059

00:47:06,670 --> 00:47:02,540

institution or an organization of any

1060

00:47:11,260 --> 00:47:06,680

kind but I work in different areas in

1061

00:47:13,720 --> 00:47:11,270

mainly retreat centers mainly been in

1062

00:47:16,210 --> 00:47:13,730

the so called Vipassana world that's my

1063

00:47:18,460 --> 00:47:16,220

name teaching environment well great

1064

00:47:20,560 --> 00:47:18,470

it's been great having you on and I wish

1065

00:47:22,450 --> 00:47:20,570

you the best of luck with after Buddhism

1066

00:47:24,730 --> 00:47:22,460

and just thanks again for joining me

1067

00:47:30,040 --> 00:47:24,740

thank you very much Alex it's been a

1068

00:47:31,750 --> 00:47:30,050

pleasure thanks again to Steven bachelor

1069

00:47:33,880 --> 00:47:31,760

for joining me today on skeptic Oh

1070

00:47:35,950 --> 00:47:33,890

the one question I tee up from this

1071

00:47:38,320 --> 00:47:35,960

interview is the one that I've been

1072

00:47:41,520 --> 00:47:38,330

pounding on over and over again our

1073

00:47:44,440 --> 00:47:41,530

secular Buddhists slash atheists

1074

00:47:47,380 --> 00:47:44,450

sidestepping philosophical and

1075

00:47:49,510 --> 00:47:47,390

scientific implications that the

1076

00:47:51,490 --> 00:47:49,520

meditation revolution have brought I

1077

00:47:54,370 --> 00:47:51,500

mean it's clear that shut up and

1078

00:47:56,410 --> 00:47:54,380

meditate might make you feel better but

1079

00:47:59,860 --> 00:47:56,420

does it really get it the question of

1080

00:48:01,690 --> 00:47:59,870

Who am I why am I here okay I snuck that

1081

00:48:03,220 --> 00:48:01,700

second question in on you there it's

1082

00:48:04,870 --> 00:48:03,230

kind of a leading question but if you've

1083

00:48:06,700 --> 00:48:04,880

listened to a lot of skeptical you know

1084

00:48:08,170 --> 00:48:06,710

the direction I'm heading on all this so

1085

00:48:09,640 --> 00:48:08,180

you gotta expect a little bit of that

1086

00:48:11,650 --> 00:48:09,650

I'd love to hear from you about your

1087

00:48:13,420 --> 00:48:11,660

answers to those questions or your

1088

00:48:16,690 --> 00:48:13,430

feelings in general about this interview

1089

00:48:21,190 --> 00:48:16,700

the place to do it is at skeptic Oh calm

1090

00:48:23,770 --> 00:48:21,200

that's s ke PTI ke o calm there you can

1091

00:48:26,560 --> 00:48:23,780

find our almost 300 previous shows all

1092

00:48:28,600 --> 00:48:26,570

available for free download you can also

1093

00:48:30,970 --> 00:48:28,610

subscribe to us there through iTunes or

1094

00:48:33,220 --> 00:48:30,980

stitcher and you can join us on the

1095

00:48:34,900 --> 00:48:33,230

forum or leave a comment they are on the

1096

00:48:37,420 --> 00:48:34,910

website I do have a number of

1097

00:48:39,610 --> 00:48:37,430

interesting shows coming up I can't wait

1098

00:48:41,380 --> 00:48:39,620

to bring it all to you to do stick

1099

00:48:43,060 --> 00:48:41,390

around and do share the show with your

1100

00:48:46,240 --> 00:48:43,070

friends and others who you think benefit

