

2002-01-24 Introduction to Meditation: Emotions (Week 3)

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SPEAKERS

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The third week of our introductory course. And today, I'm going to, at some point talk about how to include emotions or emotional life as part of mindfulness practice. Our emotions are an important part of our lives. And for some people, they're more important than others. And some people are less important. Some people have manifestos that they were ready to publish broadly, but their beliefs about emotions and what emotions mean and what we're supposed to do about them. And so in a sense, I'm going to tell you something else to do about them today. And how to include them as part of mindfulness practice, which perhaps for some of you will be a very different approach, how to relate to emotions, than perhaps the way you usually are, relating to them. The ultimate aim of Buddhist practice is to become free or liberated. And what that means in Buddhist spiritual life is a little bit of subject in its own right. But the simplest definition of what is freedom means it's freedom from clinging, freedom from any kind of clinging or resistance or fear, or hatred, but any kind of movement of the mind for or against anything is understood in Buddhism to be a form of bondage. If you are compelled or driven by your emotions or your reactions, your desires for your clinging, then you're not free. To have emotions, to have desires is just human human thing to have happen, but to be driven by them, to be forced to act on them, to act habitually without any kind of consideration, is in Buddhist language is used very strong language to say, a person is in bondage. Liberation is to be free from that bondage, free from any kind of compulsion, or any kind of givenness any kind of attachment we might have to acting or behaving or speaking or thinking or feeling or emoting in any kind of fixed way. The freedom in Buddhism is a freedom from compulsion. And one of the aims of this is to have us we're no longer in conflict with ourselves and in a particular kind of Buddhist way of understanding this, no longer in conflict with the world around us. But certainly no longer to be at war and conflict with ourselves and for people. People often maybe understand two very general ways of ending conflict with oneself. One is, is to give free rein to whatever your desires are, whenever your wants are, whatever your aversions

might be, you still you know longer be inhibited. You know, I was shy for a long time about, you know, expressing my desires. And now I'm not shy anymore, I'm just free to kind of express my desires and act on them. And kind of a parody of this kind of approach would be the American ideal or dream of, you know, shop to drop. You know, free, free to shop, free to kind of consume as much as you want. And if you can have that kind of freedom just to act on every whim and every desire, there's a kind of ease that can come kind of happiness that can come where you no longer in conflict with your desires. But it's not very realistic to expect that you can follow through and every desire that you possibly can think of, or every resistance or aversion you have but how things are and sooner or later you run into reality, which is going to cause problems. So you can't have that or you can't follow through on that or so the freedom of Buddhism is not the freedom to act in any way you want. But it's a freedom from I'm having to act compulsively. The freedom the freedom that can be into, we find our sense of sense of independence in this independent presence in an independent sense of well being. That's independent of whether it desires fulfilled or not this fulfilled, whether a, whether a fear is present or not present, can you be in Buddhism is to be fearless means, not necessarily to be without fear. But to not be influenced by that fear to be able to abide within yourself independent of the fear that might bubble up. And what this requires in part, as you follow a Buddhist path, is a shift of center set shift of identity, a shift of where we put our priorities where we put where we put our kind of where we hang our hat.

If we put our value Our priority our center inner desires, then we're likely to be felt would be carried along by the whims of our desires. If we put our center of gravity interfere, then we're liable to be carried away by our fears or influenced by them. But if we can shift our identity slightly and have our identity reside, be someplace independent of fear of desire of thoughts, feelings of body sensations, then we can allow those things to be there without being that without those kind of driving a circle forcing us to be compelled to act in a certain way. So in relationship to emotions, in Buddhism, the idea is in no way are you supposed to be an unemotional person. The meditation practice is supposed to help you to free up your emotional life. Within the help you have uncomplicated emotions they would like to see is a meditation practice sitting in meditation is hopefully should be one of the safest places you'll ever encounter. Where it's fine to emote anyway that is happening to let any emotion bubble up within you, is appropriate and fine. There's no need to censor or inhibit or judge or evaluate the presence of any emotion that's bubbling up. In this meditation posture is kind of a kind of very special place where we give ourselves unconditioned permission to let our emotions flow through us as they wish. In the same time, what this means is what we've learned how also It's same time, not to be caught by them hooked by them. Now to see the world through the filter of those emotions, not to be influenced by those emotions so that we, we run away We grasp or we hate or we get involved. All kinds of fantasies and thoughts and judgments about people and ourselves. So can you allow anger to arise within you freely in addition, if that's what wants to come up, but without any kind of criticism or that, that anger, or without any tendency to see the world through the filter of anger, and many of us are familiar, you know that we often can see the world through the filter of the emotions we have. And sometimes if we're filled with anger, irritation or annoyance, then the world around us is a very annoying place. And if we believe our emotions, emotional glasses were wearing, we don't think it's us

that's causing the irritation that we're leading. That's the world out there. There's people out there which are the problem. on a different day, we feel filled with calm or delight or peace or love, and we were very different kind of glasses for how we see the world. To be free in Buddhism is to be free to let the emotions move through us. I discovered a capacity of attention of awareness, which is not influenced by the emotions that are there. So freedom means both getting out of the way of what's moving within us. So we can move freely. At the same time, having our center of gravity or center of identity, not tied up in those things. So there's a kind of independent presence that can see things clearly, in spite of whatever is moving through us. So important part of mindfulness practice, then is the investigation of our emotions, learning how to be present for emotions, learning to develop a capacity of independent presence, independent attention, in the midst of our emotional life. And you can only only develop that kind of independent presence, independent seeing of emotions, if you're willing to look at them, if you're willing to include them as part of the meditation practice. When I first started doing meditation practice, I had no idea that the emotions were had anything to do with meditation at all. And I basically just ignored them. And I found that was very painful to do that because certain emotions like anger, when they were ignored, not paid attention to then would have this tremendous influence on me in my life. I would see the world around me through a filter of anger, I would, I would be in conflict with myself and be angry with myself frustrated, and it would get in the way of the meditation practice. But I wasn't paying attention to it. I was noticing that I was angry.

So part of meditation practices a willingness to recognize and acknowledge emotions when they come up, so that we can develop an independent presence, independent freedom in the midst of those emotions while they're happening. So hopefully that was clear enough If it wasn't then I apologize. So, let's start with the short sitting. And if for some reason my voice is not caring to the back of the room then raise your hands and at any point and I will adjust. So sit up right in an alert but relaxed manner. gently close your eyes and then straight out as we begin here. What is the emotion or mood? mental state which is most present for you? What's happening emotionally for you as you sit here?

Are you calm or tense? impatient relax. happy, sad, irritated, contented, perplexed. There's always some mood or emotional state that's present, though it might be very subtle. And then as you become aware of your emotional state, see if you can find out what is your relationship to that being there. What's your attitude towards this emotion or to your emotions in general? Could you imagine yourself or could you actually manage to simplify your relationship to the emotional state that you have somehow given permission to be as it is?

allowing yourself to be as you are, while you stay feeling or staying aware of what's happening for you

what happens to your mood or your emotional state as you acknowledge it and recognize it

and then letting go of that. To begin the regular meditation period, take a few long slow, deep breaths as you exhale, letting go of your thoughts and concerns.

And then letting your breathing returned to normal. And it can be helpful in the beginning of a session of meditation to scan through your body to see if there's any muscles that can be softened or relaxed. Sometimes the forehead can be softened. Eyes, corner of the eyes. Sometimes it can be a loosening of the jaw, relaxing of the shoulders and it can be very helpful to soften your belly let your belly hang forward perhaps you're breathing drops deeper into your torso

and then becoming aware of how your body experiences the breathing the sensations within your body that let you know that now you're breathing, sensations of movement, pressure, relaxation, tingling, vibration, warmth, coolness.

And in practicing mindfulness of the breathing, there are two aspects. One is connecting yourself to breathing. discovering what the breath feels like discovering where you feel in your body, letting the attention settle or move or connect to your breathing. And the second aspect is sustaining the attention over time, letting there be a steadiness of attention with a breath.

If the mind wanders off in thought, then gently let go of the thought relax the thinking mind. And begin again with your breathing, connect with a breathing and then make some effort to sustain the attention with one breath after the other, kind of getting into the rhythm of the breath of the breathing

Sometimes it can help to have the attitude that you're resting in the breathing or relaxing into the breathing. One breath after the other.

And then sometimes instead of relaxing into the breathing, it can be helpful to establish a kind of a firm dedication with a breath firm, firm kind of a firmness to staying with one breath after the other. Sometimes being very firm and dedicated. With a breathing, holding on to it in a sense, not letting the mind waver from the breath. Sometimes that'll allow all the tendencies to be distracted. theater wander off into thought to relax to let go to give up.

Now for the last few minutes of the sitting, stop paying attention to the breathing and instead, notice once again what is the basic emotion or mood mental state that is present for you.

If you can recognize some mood or mental state emotion clearly name it to yourself a few times. Sometimes naming something emotion helps us not be entangled with it.

noticing what your emotional state is. See if you can feel your way into it. What is the what is the felt sense within your body or your mind or your head? Your heart? What is the felt sense of the mood or mental state that's present for you?

And then what is your attitude? What is your relationship to the presence of whatever emotion is present? However subtle it might be

And then take a couple of deep breaths. And when you're ready, can open your eyes.

So in practicing mindfulness, there are two aspects of the present moment which are very interesting to be aware of. Since mindfulness practices and awareness practice, paying attention to what's going on in the present, it's helpful to have some guidelines of what it is that we're paying attention to. And very generally, you can see there's two two areas we're paying attention to. One is, in a sense, what's actually happening. And the second is, what is our relationship to what's happening? So we could have the car alarm going going off she did a few moments ago. And that's what's happening. And then there could be all these relations relationship, we have two that could be, oh, I want to fear that my car or irritation or anger, you know, those cars and how could people you know, or all kinds of, you know, or all kinds of relationships we might have to what's happening. We're following the breath and meditation. And the breath is what it is, and then we relate to it in some way. Oh, that was a good breath. That was a bad breath. Or we're distracted in our meditation or we're very concentrated in our meditation. And what's your relationship to that? Oh, I really hate it when I'm distracted. Oh, I must be God's gift to Buddhism. I'm so concentrated. And we enter into a relationship all the time with what's going on. And so part of what we do pay attention to in mindfulness practice is what is that relationship you have with what's going on? So with an emotion, for example, and emotion can arise, and then What's your relationship to the presence of that emotion? And most of us don't ask that question. Most of us go along with their emotions. You know, but what's the relationship we have to it? Can we believe it? Do we condemn it? Do we praise it? Do we hold on to it? Do we cling to it? What's the relationship we have? Do we assign meaning to its presence? Oh, this is here. That means that we get caught up in the mental world of meaning. and that in turn, feeds back creating more emotions. I had A little less than than this last night. I went to bed around 11 o'clock. And around midnight, I noticed that I wasn't falling asleep. And I thought, well, gee, this is not so good. I thought, you know, I should probably get some good rest and be rested for the day for tomorrow, today. And then and then Oh, if not, if I'm not rested, then I'll be really sleepy for things I have to do. And then I won't be able to do them well, and then people will be angry with me or they won't like me or, you know, I'll just be a mess. It's not good. And then I started feeling a little bit sad or a little bit upset or a little bit irritated because of what I thought was going to happen the next day. But then if I noticed all this, and then I asked myself, What am I actually feeling right now? independent Oh, My meeting, I'm assigning to this. Well, I felt actually quite happy and great. I had no problems I was comfortable, you know, it's basically very peaceful and nicely there. And the what was happening was that I was overlooking the fact that I was quite peaceful and happy to be there. And even though I was awake, a little bit energized, but these thoughts were creeping in this relationship to that, to what was happening crept in, and was beginning to get the upper hand so that if I hadn't paid attention, I could have easily spiraled into being you know, quite upset and depressed and angry. And, and, and then energized because of that. And a much harder to fall asleep. But I knew to pay attention to my relationship to my relationship to not falling asleep. Oh, and now and I saw Oh, this is actually causing more suffering

than is actually present here in the present moment. The answer A patient what this might mean in the future. And in fact, it didn't mean what I thought it might mean. I was quite for the most part today quite energized and awake and until I took a nap at four o'clock. But until that point, I was fine. Took a 10 minute nap. So what is the relationship you have to your emotions as they're as they arise

or to anything? So what was it like for some of you to do that meditation. Those are like to check in the beginning about your emotional state to be with your breathing for the middle section and then the end to go back to your emotion where you can notice feeling a lot of tenseness. The effort is always to get rid of that tenseness. So, my thought about is it to get rid of it, just notice it. Still feel it? It's there. That's generally pleased to be here. noticing your tendencies. Thanks. Question for you is whether to try to continue getting rid of the tension or just let it be there. Yeah. It's a good question. Someone else? Yes.

Yes. Was that okay? And what did you feel instead? Yes. start feeling emotions either anger or sadness, I start getting pain in the when the emotions come up, the pain starts and then I can ignore the emotion and start focusing on the pain and thinking that stop do we really do that? I see. You're very lucky to see that relationship because some people don't see it. And they have all kinds of physical pain and they don't really know what the sources are. And sometimes it's emotional. And one of the things we do that in mindfulness practice is to not shift our posture and relieve the pain. But if you really think that pain is an emotional base is in bring your attention, very careful to the physicality of that emotion, actually feel very carefully what's going on there in your body at that place. And it might open up in a very interesting way. If you do that. Because you're intellectualized ah. So intellectualizing means thinking about them or analyzing them.

And could you shift into feeling instead of intellectualizing when you might see, if you if you if your tendency is to intellectualize about your feelings is to try shifting to feeling them instead, and hang out with them as if you're feeling them as if they have permission to be there and see how to change if you're feeling your way into them, rather than thinking your way into them.

Some of you are confused. That's a feeling.

So this spirit or the approach of mindfulness is a kind of a that are being discovers kind of being investigator. Investigators are very experienced kind of noticing what's going on here. So many people associate meditation with becoming calm or centered, or there's a lot of things people associate meditation as being the point of meditation. And what I suggest to you that the the, the transformative power of mindfulness meditation does not come from some special kind of feeling you're going to have calm or joy or whatever, but rather comes from the noticing what's actually happening in your experience right now. Right now, what is your experience right now? What What is your experience? What's this? What's going on here? And it's a constant kind of very gentle, very peaceful, asking yourself or looking at what's happening now what's happening now will bring you a lot greater peace,

then leaning into or trying to, into becoming calm or relaxed or energized, or whatever the intention is. That's different than simply noticing what's happening now. In Buddhism, the ultimate liberation that Buddhism teaches comes from the simple practice of keep noticing what's happening now what's happening now. And one of the things to notice is the relationship you have to what's happening now. So you relationship so they can become simpler and simpler, less and less complicated or less entangled. So you can have a feeling and emotion for example, and you're no way influenced or entangled by that emotion. Yeah. emotion and insights as a part of the emotion you make

You try, in a sense, you're being more with the observer, but you're letting the observer be very intimate with experience. So you don't want to be you don't wanna be aloof or detached from the experience, but you also don't want be entangled with it. No, absolutely not. Ever one of the internet's was a muzzleloader trying to inhibit it or stop it or getting anything go away or hold on to it or however, what happens with certain class of emotions. only exists through time because we feed them and fuel them. So anger for example, the only if we stay anger, anger through time, and we get really big burst of anger. Then there's a Kind of suddenly because energy in the system for a while, it continues a little bit through time because it's as it dissipates. But the all emotions dissipate through time, unless we reignite them or we fuel them. And so like for resentment is anger, which is kind of his frozen anger that's constantly being refueled by clinging and holding or resistance to something. So, once we saw a certain class of emotions, which only exists by our continual refueling of them, getting entangled with them and feeding them and get engaged with them, will tend to dissipate. When we have this non evaluative awareness, this entangled awareness of the experience. There's another class of those kind of emotions sometimes called in Buddhism, afflictive emotions afflictive because they're painful. There's another class of emotions in Buddhism and Buddhist psychology. which arise in a sense more from that kind of a natural being of who we are. Things like love and joy and delight when they're when they're on. When they're in no way mixed up with lust or desire or wanting or aversion, just then they kind of bubble up from the core of who we are in a sense. And those emotions don't get fueled. By our recognizing and being and being connected to them. It actually gets stronger, the more we're mindful of them. It's kind of like this. That Wait wait is blue psychology teaches is that the afflictive emotions those which causes suffering, thrive in darkness, in unawareness, not ignorance, not paying attend to them but they fade away as we bring mindfulness to them. The beneficial that emotions thrive in the light of awareness and get starved in the darkness of unawareness. So it's kind of like if you go if you have a greenhouse and you put to kind of a big curtain over the greenhouse so no light comes in. And what grows then I guess suppose there's the mold and the algae and stuff. And these wonderful roses, you're trying to go in the greenhouse they kind of wither up. But then if you pull the curtain away from the greenhouse in the sunlight comes in, and the moral of the algae kind of shrivels up and disappears, and the and the roses blossom. So there's certain class of emotions which gets fueled by our continued continued involvement with them. At the same time, we're not paying careful attention to them. So anger, irritation, hate, greed, lust, ambition, confusion, ignorance, all come from all gets all gets kind of fed both by ignorance by not paying careful attention to them. But also when we do pay attention to them, they get fed by our indulging in them or feeding or in getting tangled with them. And part of what we're trying to do with mindfulness practice is to see things directly as they are, bring that

light of awareness to things without continuing to refuel them. And then certain things then will dissipate. And certain things will come into burthen. So I'm continually amazed, even after all these years, that just sitting quietly and peacefully, very deep feelings of love and delight and joy can kind of just bubble up for no reason at all. Whereas most of us are For most of our emotional most of our emotional lives, I venture to say most of us, I don't know how it is for everyone. But it has a lot to do with what's actually happening to us. There's a reason for why we feel a certain way.

We win the lottery, we feel pretty happy. We get a raise, we feel happy. We meet some wonderful person, we feel happy. There's a reason for it, or we get fired or all kinds of terrible things happen. And because of those things, we feel depressed and sad. There's a reason for why we feel certain things. There's a whole other class of emotions and feelings that don't have to have a reason. But get born when we kind of get out of the way. It's almost as if, inside inner core. There's all these great feelings that are ready to kind of bubble up if the surface gets cleared of our preoccupation With the reasons with what you know, if we if we stopped being entangled by relating to things always because most of what our mind does, it's always relating to something relating to something, I like this, I don't like this, I want this, I don't want that. And if we start really having a mind, which is always relating to things, then the mind becomes freed up to for something new to happen. And that new thing that can happen is some deep feelings, deep sense of presence or joy or happiness or peace, ultimate liberation, and kind of bubble up from the core of who we are, in a sense. So it makes some sense. I'm saying, When I teach mindfulness to kids, I hold the bell like this. And I hold it tight. I grasp it, because I'm relating to it didn't. I want it I want this barrel I really wanted really desperately. And this SP mine like a Give it to you. And as long as I hold that way, you know, it doesn't make a nice sound. But then if I if I released my holding of it, and no longer relating to it's like grasping and wanting it and you know, doing all this, if I'm no longer about it, just kind of let it be there and it's open hand and relaxed way. It makes it nice. So the mindfulness practice is a practice of noticing what's going on in the process of doing that. Learning how to no longer be entangled with the way things actually are in our life. I'm making some sense tonight. Do you have other comments? Yes. Could you say something about pleasant and unpleasant in relation to emotion. So Allison one Please say something about the feeling tone. In Buddhist psychology they teach, it's taught that every experience we have, has a either pleasant quality, unpleasant quality to it, or both pleasant or neither kind of neutral sometimes. And what's very, very interesting is that we often relate to experiences by whether they're pleasant or unpleasant. So as we pay attention to emotions, and feelings and mental states, you notice how there's a kind of sometimes an amoeba alike kind of reaction. We go towards the grass, things that are pleasant, and we pull away from or push away things which are unpleasant. If you can see this happen, operating can see how a pleasant experience arises and they're leaning towards it. an unpleasant experience arises in a cringing back. If you can actually see that happening, then that very seeing of it helps establish ourselves independent of that process. So there's a marvelous thing about mindfulness is that they're very seeing of what's happening. The process of seeing or recognizing and being aware of, is in a sense stepping outside of the game. stepping outside of that particular thing that we're watching, so that we were in a sense, independent are no longer entangled with it. That makes sense. Yeah, you follow that? So are their concerns or questions? Please, any anything at all that seems

relevant here? Before I go on objections Yeah. How does love for one's children? As I understand it, you're asking for my children

well, I'm just kind of I don't feel like I'm anywhere qualified to talk about this yet is yet in about 12 years maybe my son is four now. But what what? What seems to sort of seem to notice myself is that the love of children or my child I can relate to my child to attachment to clinging to word attachment in English is a little problematic because we have we have good associations for attachment Buddhist use Buddhists use the word attachment. It's negative connotations. And so then we can miss each other because we're kind of talking about slightly different things. But there's ways in which I suffer because I'm attached or cling to that relationship or how I want him to be or how I want him to be or how I want the relationship to be or how I want him to grow up or you know, all kinds of things, I can suffer a lot, I could love him a lot, that love can give energy to that clinging, I want things to be a certain way. And a lot of parents, you know, have to deal with their clinging around the children. At the same time, I recognize that I there's a kind of what I call a bonding that happens with my child, which I don't want to call attachment or clinging, but it seems to be almost kind of a kind of biological sense of responsibility for that person. That that seemed to have almost a life of its own. So for example, once I was in Palo Alto when he was maybe a year and a half or so. And so he was walking around a little bit, we were on the sidewalk, and I stopped to talk to someone. And suddenly, I noticed that he wasn't I had my back to the street. And suddenly, I noticed that he wasn't next to me. And what what afterwards, what was really remarkable to me was the fact that as soon as I noticed that he wasn't there. It was almost like instinct, like, I wasn't with the thought that seemingly involved, I knew where the street was. And I just pivoted around to make sure that he wasn't walking into the street. In fact, he wasn't that direction. But you know, so I stopped him in and, and I felt there's kind of like a biological connection to that child. That was kind of, you know, might be one of my attachment to that child, where I was so you know, how I related to him was so bonded But in that bond that moment on the sidewalk, there was no clinging, no attachment. Is this distinction helpful? To me, it's very helpful because if if my attaches my clinging to my child is something I can free myself of, and become much more peaceful ground my relationship to my child. But my bonding, missions responsibility and connection and empathy that comes from that seems to me is something that is inherent in the relationship. And that has a hole that has a whole life of its own. That is still a little bit of mystery to me, I don't quite understand. And I also don't quite understand where the differences between the two, there's a gray area sometimes that I don't quite understand. Sometimes it's very clear that I'm clinging, sometimes very clear, there's more bonded kind of thing. But sometimes there's a gray area, and that's, you know, area for me to study as far as Mindfulness mindfulness practice. That makes some sense to you. Not yet. Well, as I said, I don't know what I'm talking about 10 to 12 years into it in 12 years, I might have some understanding of this process. And some of you already raised children, so maybe be more qualified to talk about this. Let me say a few more things here. The basic practice of mindfulness is to notice what's happening in the present moment. We sit down to meditate, we use the breathing as an anchor. Probably many of you recognize me sit down to meditate. There's a very strong tendency for the mind to wander off into thought, to be distracted. And to have an anchor is very helpful. We anchor the attention to the breathing,

kind of commit the attention to the breathing, and that there's a couple of things. On one hand, it develops to build concentration. It strengthens the concentration muscle. And the other thing it does is it tends to weaken the compulsive forces within us to be caught up in thoughts. There's a tremendous momentum within us sometimes to run off into the thoughts and think about them and engage in them and analyze them. And it's like a force. And as we, when we stopped getting into that force, that force becomes weaker, falls away, it gives up or whatever relaxes. So by anchoring ourselves to the breathing, coming back to the breathing as much as we can, staying with the breath, the compulsive force of distraction, distractibility, over time weakens. And one of the reasons why people relax meditation is that they're no longer chasing after their thoughts. And often chasing after thoughts is what makes people tense so we use the breath as an anchor stabilizer. At some point, something in our experience will become more compelling than our ability to stay with a breathing, some strong bodily experience, physical experience will arise. And then the instruction is let go of the breathing. And take up this physical experience as the meditation practice. Whether it's pleasant or unpleasant, doesn't matter. And see if you can establish a mindfulness and non evaluative allowing awareness of this physical thing is going on. And allowing awareness is really a key word allowing is very important here. Because many of us have this, we relate to what's happening all the time. We're for it, we're against everyone different we want to keep hold on to it, we want to make it better. We're always trying to be often trying to manipulate and change and do something with our experience. The allowing part of mindfulness is to give is to rest all that in allowed To be as they are. So strong physical experience arises, just to learn to train yourself to learn how to rest with it with that experience, to develop a meditative awareness on that physical sensation, as we talked about last week. When an emotion becomes predominant, when that becomes a strongest thing, and your experience more compelling than your breathing, or your physical experience, then the emotion becomes the focus of the meditation. And we do emotion meditation. And that is we recognize the emotion and try to see it as clearly as we can, without any extra entanglement, judgment, evaluation, criticism, holding on or anything to its presence. So as I said earlier, we want to give it its freedom, the emotion its freedom to be as it is, there's no need to censor it or feel that it's wrong. are bad, you're welcome to have the most horrific emotions, feelings, or the most beatific. That's right. in meditation, what you're asked to do is not to censor it, not to resist it, but rather let it flow. And in and the same time see it clearly for what it is. And by seeing it clearly for what it is, find some way to be independent of it. So they do have a way to do that with emotions. There's a four different aspects of mindfulness of emotions, which I think are useful to talk about. The first is it's very important to recognize the emotion as it's occurring. I've had very powerful emotions, my early years of practice, which I ignored, because I just wasn't tuned into my emotions that much. And I felt like I'd blind On. And for me a big part of this my early practice was learning simply to recognize when a strong emotion was happening, that I was having emotions. The second aspect is to accept it is the allowing part. Acceptance doesn't mean we condone it or justifies presence just means that we're not going to push it away or hold on to it or censor it or resist it. We're going to allow it to be there in our experience as we meditate. The third aspect is to name it. Naming is very helpful practice to name our experience in the ancient folk tales of our many cultures. If you name the dragon or the monster, it loses its power.

Or in some cultures, you weren't supposed to tell people your birth name. You had a nickname you told people you didn't tell them your birth name because The understanding was is that they would have some kind of power over you over you if they knew your name. by naming the emotion, the emotion loses a certain kind of power. And the power that it loses is really power we invest in it, by our identifying with it by our defining ourselves or getting involved or entangled with it. And if we simply naming it kind of matter of factly and theorists is happy, happy, sad, sad, sad. It kind of separates us little bit from it. So we're not so invested or entangled. We can see it more clearly. In my early practice, I saw this very clearly once when I was feeling kind of off. Feeling not so you know, kind of off. I didn't, I didn't. I didn't know quite how I was feeling. I knew I was kind of off and off sort out of sorts. In fact, my room and down. And since I was practitioner of mindfulness, I started paying attention to that I didn't turn on the television or take a shower or do something to kind of pull myself out of it. or ignore it. I said, Okay, I'm going to be here with it and really feel it. And I could feel tension in my chest. And I felt that every time I exhaled, my breathing didn't relax all the way. Like I couldn't really exhale completely, like my chest was extended out. So I hung out with that just felt that in my body, getting to know it better, exploring it, feeling it. And then at some point, I recognized that what I was feeling was I was depressed. And I named it I'm depressed, depressed. And as soon as I named it, the chest relaxed, released. So that was one very quick happy story. It often is not quick but the naming of it sometimes helps us not to identify so strongly with it. And it often is identification, which is the fuel that keeps it going. And remember there was a I've read a number of different clinical studies that people use mindfulness in kind of psycho therapeutic kind of settings, where they have people who have very severe psychological difficulties are told to name what they're doing while they're doing it. And it seems to help tremendously in keeping them in the present. And by keeping them in the present, their mind is less available to fantasize and wander off and cause problems. an idle mind causes a lot of problems. So this this morning, 12 o'clock when I was found myself not falling asleep. If I hadn't been mindful of that what was going on for me, my mind would have taken And over, and I would have gotten probably quite upset and discouraged and afraid. Because of all the thoughts My mind was making about the meaning what what it was the consequences were, I thought were going to be about not getting enough sleep. But if I just stayed in the present moment, stay and stay and stay, then did my tendency to kind of fantasize and get caught up and interpretation is less than to some degree. So naming is very helpful. Then the fourth aspect, so recognition, acceptance, naming, and the fourth thing is to investigate the emotion. And this is really one of the most interesting things you can do in practice is to begin investigating more carefully getting to know it better, what's actually going on. So what is a particular emotion? What does it feel like? What is it we're in the body do you feel it? What's your relationship to it when it arises? in particularly, it's very helpful to feel the emotion physically, the felt sense of the emotion. Where in your body is that, that that emotion manifested. Almost all emotions show themselves someplace in the body. Whereas that anger could be in the stomach fear and the shoulders, tension in the jaw, different places in your body. And then to bring your attention very carefully and hang out there in that part of your body. simply hang out in the tension, shoulders are in a tight stomach, hang out and hang out and hang out.

For as long as that thing is predominant, and see what happens as a result. Continue to ask yourself periodically, how are you relating to this experience? How are you relating to this tense in your stomach, how you're relating to it? To investigate and explore there's all kinds of interesting exercises you can do to help you with investigation, especially in daily life. One of them that I like I call writing out in emotion, writing out the desire for example, some of us are compelled to act in certain ways, or do certain things when certain emotions are present. For example, a desire desires can be very compelling. I have to have it right now. But do the exercise of if you have some kind of regular emotion, it's very strong for you and tends to overpower you or trying to cause you to do certain things. When it begins happening, do your absolute best not to give into it not to follow through like there's a desire for example, don't go out and buy what your desire says to do or don't say what the desire says. You should say. But write it out, hang out with it. Don't get Don't act on it. But just kind of be still and composed. And write it out it can be sometimes can be very dramatic. It's like being in the rodeo, because it's so strong, but write it out and feel we feel really precisely as best you can. What happens if you write out an emotion and see if you see it to see it through all the way to the other side. If you have an emotion that you never see to the other side because you always act on it, or when away from it or change it or fix it or do something about it, you really shortchanging yourself. But if you hang out with it and see it to the other side, you might feel tremendous confidence in your ability to remain free and independent of your emotions in the future. You no longer feel compelled to act in any kind of way because of the presence of how you're feeling. So the freedom from compulsion is a lot of what Buddhist practice is about. And the path to that is mindfulness investigation. So it makes some sense to follow that well enough. Hold everything of course to put it into practice. So let's do another short sitting. And if you'd like to stand for a few seconds, just even sitting for a long time.

So take a comfortable alert posture and gently close your eyes.

Some people think of meditation as a process of homecoming. Coming home to oneself in the present moment, feeling at home in the present moment with a way things actually are.

So taking a couple of long deep breaths and as you exhale settle into Your body into your place here.

Sometimes the thinking mind can feel like a muscle that's tense, exhausted. See if you can relax the thinking mind. soften it and then settle your attention in this simplicity of breathing in and breathing out

When your mind is caught up in your thinking relax the thinking mind and begin again with the breathing

What is it in your experience that needs to be accepted so that you can be more fully at home or present here and now

So

So now there's three aspects to the mindfulness practice that I've taught so far. anchoring yourself in the breathing and then If they're compelling, predominant, bring your meditative awareness to your physical body. And then today, if they're compelling or predominant, bring your attention to your emotions, your meditative awareness, your accepting awareness of what's happening emotionally. As you do this as a meditation practice, those of you who are relatively new to this continue with 20 minutes of meditation a day, incorporating these three aspects of the meditation. And you might also do is in the course of your daily life, begin looking little bit more in a new way, perhaps, on your emotions, how they work for you, and in particular, what your relationship is to your emotions. When certain emotions arise, how do you relate to them? Do you? Do you believe them? Or do they do get caught? How do you get caught by them or How do they shape? influence how you see the world or see other people? How do you relate to them? How do you relate to the presence of an emotion. And then while you do all this, have a good time doing it. It's really fun. It's really, really interesting and enjoyable process. So I wish you all a happy week and see you next week. Thank you