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SPEAKERS
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Last week's talk, I didn't know if anybody would come back this week. And the a few few days ago, I went to my son's preschool during the middle of the day, to take him out of the school for something we had to do. And I never showed up at his preschool during the middle of the day, like, you know, dropping them off picking him up and running once but once before I'd been there, but I don't really know much. What goes on there once before was he was sick and had to hit a fever. I think we had to go pull him out of school. And we showed up at a preschool at naptime. And that was such a sweet thing. Only three four year olds napping. It was so peaceful

and I'm sorry. So some days ago, I came to pick him up. And this time I showed up, and they were having their lunch. And again, it was very sweet, His four year old sort of sitting around the pool tables, good tables and kids shares kind of eating little, very serious, peacefully, very civilized, you know, very quietly kind of eating their food and talking to each other a little bit and doing whatever they do with their food. And so I showed up and they continued for a little while, and then my son kind of got up and just come and see me and then the kid started getting up and, and starting to kind of get more active and more engaged and kind of running around again. And so I said to the preschool teacher, I'm sorry, it's my showing up in the middle of lunch, kind of, you know, stirred things up, and now they're up and running already, you know? And he said, his response was, Oh, it's okay. I've come to understand that everything is a teachable moment. And it used to be that when I was in, when I started here, he said, if there was a siren, you know, you know, firecracker was rushing down the street outside the school, and all the kids would rush out to see the fire engine, I would feel it was a competition against what I was trying to do with them. And now Now I go with it. I go with whatever they're doing, I see it as a teachable moment. Let's go out and look at the fire engine and talk about it or whatever. And I thought it was such a great expression, you know, everything's a teachable moment. And so, what's been on my mind this week is the factor of investigation, which is a very important factor in Buddhist spirituality. And investigation is that capacity of the mind to look more carefully to study to investigate gate to
discover more carefully. More precisely, what's really going on in our experience. And it's been said by some people, that everything you wanted everything you need to learn about Buddhism or freedom, you can discover through your own powers of observation. Your own powers of observing and investigating seeing is really the kind of one of the heart aspect, a core aspect of Vipassana practice. The factor investigation is one of the is enshrined in a sense in the Buddhist tradition, in a list called the seven factors of awakening. And these are the seven mental qualities that get developed to a very high pitch in the process of a person approaching the awakening experience Nirvana experience of the Buddha and so to understand Neither of those factors are conducive towards liberation. And also some people understand the seven factors of awakening as those seven kind of qualities that characterize perhaps a person who's liberated. Those those factors are kind of strong. The second of the seven factors is the factor investigation, investigating the Dharma as the expression, the factor of investigation. And the other factors are mindfulness, investigation, effort, joy, concentration, tranquility, tranquility, and equanimity. And I mentioned this the seven factors not that you have to remember memorize them right now, but they're very good to kind of memorize if you've been involved this practice for some time to really have them down. But that is the factual investigation occurs together with other factors and these other factors exist together in a balanced fashion. And the factor investigation is best I think it is, in my own kind of experience is best balanced with a factor of concentration. At least that's how often works for me, then when I first sit down to meditate, it often is not that useful for me to investigate, because my mind is often fairly busy when I first sit down, and I'm gonna kind of stream and flow with different thoughts and ideas. And if I try to apply the investigative capacity of the mind, in that stream of thinking, then investigation becomes comfortable, becomes more like analysis thinking about what's there. And it's kind of like the amount that the it's kind of like if you look through a telescope, and there's maybe a haze or clouds or something or I don't know what the right expression is. That's kind of covering over the lens you can't see very clearly. And so in my mind is thinking is fair amount. I can't really see that clearly. The factor that is most useful then is to cultivate concentration, stillness. And I do that through practice of acceptance of allowing it to be there and not to be troubled by the fact that thinking is there. But then in a very simple, straightforward way to cultivate some stability of mind concentration. Once there's some modicum of concentration and stability in the mind, and the surface chatter, the mind has quieted down. That's when I find that investigation comes to the fore. And I think of investigation as a really innate capacity of the mind and beautiful quality of the mind. It isn't like a lot of work if you try to investigate this investigative reporter or something. But it's rather it's, it's a natural capacity of the mind that sometimes it's like into the brilliance of the mind and luminous quality of the mind. You turn on the light and you see clearly what's there. I think of my four year old son, and you see I see it and sometimes that he is very interested in what's going on is beautiful. Kind of intent investigation, what's this? And sometimes he kind of he could see his investigation involves his entire little four year old body, he kind of curls up, you know, and kind of huddled over, it's really gonna get into it and see what's exactly what's there. Sometimes it's a much more open kind of sense of all. That occasionally happens there. I think of the investigation as a natural Faculty of mind, when it's a lot easier for that to come to the fore, when the mind has become still required to some degree. And then
it's easier to understand an investigation is an activity of the quiet mind, not the discursive mind. So it's kind of like having the question What is this and then allowing something to appear like turning on the light and then allowing the room to appear to you? Like what is this experience of having now? The fundamental question would be apostatize, what is this? What is this? Oh, you know, what is this number? And you never settle for an answer. What is this? What is this What is this? So, as the mind becomes quieter this quality of investigation, this clarity of mind can be applied to look at different things. And then the question is, what do you look at? What do you apply the mind to look at it. It can be almost anything in your experience. Some people find it's very much a lot of fun kind of playful, when there's ability to concentrate, to have concentration investigation, to use to look at different aspects of our life in ways that usually aren't so accessible. So for example, one question would be one interesting investigation is, where's the origin of your thoughts? Where do your thoughts begin? There's a thought begin, give a scene where a thought begins, the origin of it, they never encourage you. That's interesting. Your thoughts are interesting, right? I mean, they're fascinating. You probably enthralled by them. But what's the beginning of a thought? Where does it begin from where does it arise out of its stimulated What is to investigate, for example, a reaction you might have to something. So if you're sitting in here and you're trying to stay settled on your breath and being with your breathing, and someone slams the door shut, or someone coughs, there's various responses that you might have one response is to be irritated. You know, this person and that person slammed the door. And now, my meditations been upset, I've been distracted, and I need to get back on track. And I hope that they figure out something to do about the doors in the center. There's nothing there's not a lot of investigation in that kind of response. Right, rather, with the investigative response, we want to kind of interest What is this experience? Not what's the, you know, not not to analyze, you know, what kind of person could do that. That that kind of investigation, but rather, let's investigate the qualities that goes on inside of me the qualities of mind the reactions, the thoughts, the responses that I have in relationship to that. So take it as a teachable moment. Oh, what's what happens to me in response to that door slamming then then the door slam is not a distraction. It's just an other area to practice in. And there's a lot you can learn from various reactions. So once you have the ability to investigate your turn, investigate what is going on now, in me what's happening here.

The expression in the seven factors of awakening for investigation is dhamma-vicaya and be vicaya usually translates as investigation and dhamma means dharma. Some people take it to mean investigating Dharma as the teachings investigating the teachings. But I think it's more likely that in this formulation, Dharma here Dhamma here refers to the mental qualities, the mental states, the state of mind, the quality of the mind, the mental qualities and factors that arise in you. Moment by moment. That investigation is not investigating, you know, stuff like this. scientists studying you know, things out in the world, but rather your scientists studying what is happening inside of you with your reactions, your responses, your mental states, your qualities of mind, and to actually investigate those very carefully was now the word vicaya in dhamma-vicaya, also seems to have the connotation in Pali of sorting things out, or distinguishing between things. That has a little bit different meaning then investigation. sorting things out and distinguishing maybe can be likened to in the old world. Maybe still in some places in the world. When they would harvest rice, they would have to separate out I
guess the was it called the kernel from the chaff the wheat from the chaff or the polish the rice into the brand of the rice epi separator, the bad the bad rice would have to be separated from the good rice. And it was a sorting process. that people would do the villagers would do. And various ways of sorting. And these sort sorted out to separate the good from the bad. And then they keep the good and the bad down or they give to the animals or do something with it. So dhamma-vicaya has the same kind of connotations of there's a kind of a sorting process, a distinguishing process that goes on in the mind, to sort out what's actually going on in the mind and investigate and see it clearly for what it is, but also to distinguish between that which is useful to have in your mind, and that which is not useful, that which is wholesome to have in the mind and that which is not wholesome, that which is skillful or conducive for the further development of your practice, and that which is not. So this is kind of, to use your intelligence in a sense to be discerning about what your experiences are, and this is a very, this is a kind of like a, like a basic, very basic Buddhist practice, sorting out the hosts of the unwholesome states of mind that you have, and then then somehow be able to select out Abandon the unwholesome and cultivate the wholesome. It's so basic in Buddhism that it's hardly ever taught to be possible, because we personalize like the advanced practice. And so and paying attention to the wholesome qualities and unwholesome quality is like the, you know, the elementary practice. And no one wants to do low elementary practice, and raise we know it wants to do the advanced practice. And, but it's very useful to have some sense that where you have some controls and ability to choose between what arises in your mind, so you don't have to be the victim of everything that arises in your mind. And all you have, all you supposed to do is kind of somehow be graceful and accepting of what's there. It's appropriate to some degree to sort it out and choose one from the other. So we use mindfulness to help with a sorting process. So for example, say that you know, we just did the extreme version. I mean, say that you You spend your days you know raping and pillaging. And at some point you sit down and study the quality of your mind. And you might see the quality of mind is not so good. You know, I think I'll do less of that might be good for me to do less of that. Maybe do none of it at all is even better. And to kind of, you know, if you think that person was really healthy, if they could kind of sort through that kind of basic stuff and see that it kind of activity is not so good for me. I think, you know, not do that for a while. Or say that someone is, you know, really ambitious, filled with all kinds of ambition for various things, and they go to work and they work, you know, 1213 hour days, seven days a week, and they're just their mind is kind of, you know, tight into a kind of tight device of effort in trying and pushing in. greed and ambition, and they pay attention the quality of their mind. This is, you know, this is painful to have this mind. And like maybe I should kind of let go of this, maybe I shouldn't, you know, maybe just sort through my mind that we'll make and not base my life on greed and ambition, the way that I'm doing to sort through like this is part of the function investigation, abandoned, like that kind of activity, if that's not really supportive and helpful for you.

And then, you know, so none of you could do that kind of activity, probably, but I'm trying to I try to chose the extreme. To give you the idea, this is maybe acceptable thing to do to sort through the quality of your mind there are times when it's appropriate to do this. And perhaps, so, there are certain activities like you go to certain movies, for example, you go to a really violent movies, is that what kind of quality of mind is that producing you? certain activities have kind of leave around a traces in the
mind that predict up to speed To be agitated or to go along this track. So if you hang out with a lot of angry people and spend a lot of time being angry and bitching and moaning, but everyone left and right, then that's probably not very good for the quality of your mind. If you pay attention to that, you might find that your quality of your mind and heart is better served by not being engaged in that kind of discussion or talk or those kinds of movies, those kinds of books or certain kind of activities are not very conducive to you, your own inner health and well being. And the Buddha said, it's very healthy to consider that and sort through that. So that's kind of the urban kind of the unskillful unwholesome side. And then it's also considered healthy then to cultivate that which is wholesome to sort through and with the good and the bad and kind of choose the good. And you know how to do that in a way that's not pollyannish. But that kind of overlaying some, you know, positive thinking and artificial way is very important. issue. But there are ways that we can cultivate the good cultivate, which which is what is wholesome, if you see a little, little kernel of desire to be generous. And you notice that, oh, generosity is a good thing, maybe I'll cultivate that. Let's see if I can kind of water that seed of generosity and let it grow within me, or of kindness, or a wisdom or a mindfulness, you see, the mindfulness arises, you know, miraculously in middle of your day, where the mindfulness Where'd that come from? You know, and then oh, this is a good thing. I'll try to nurture them try to support them develop that other qualities of mind which are helpful to develop, for you to recognize there are such things or do you let the quality of your mind states of your mind the thoughts that you follow, kind of have a life of their own, and you somehow have to kind of navigate whatever's there without you know, kind of be, you know, changing the direction of The streams of your mind, it's possible to stretch change the streams of your mind, even this subtle thing is as your thoughts. And I didn't know that growing up that I could actually choose which thoughts I have, there was a period of time, I just thought my thoughts were just, you know, they're given, you take it for granted, you have your thoughts, and then you kind of try to live your life the best you can given them. But from the mindfulness practice, I've learned that I could, I can select my thinking, thinking thinking, I couldn't go along. And I can recognize that I'm not thinking along very useful tracks. Isn't that helpful for me? Okay, I'll think about something else. I'll think about something which is easiest for sometimes I'm driving here to give a talk. And I say, you know, I think I should think about giving this talk that's useful that these people probably think be very useful. I thought about it before. And so I'll turn my attention and focus on that, or are focused on loving kindness and your loving kindness. Practice you'll do indeed And thoughts of kindness actually take it on. So other ways in which we can condition or change the mind stream, so that it's more for our benefit investigation is that which allows us to do that. So it's a sorting out process is more than just mindfulness is a nonreactive. Awareness just sees things as they are investigations sorts through what it sees there just discriminates or distinguish. There's something about that. And it's in particular distinguishes that which is useful or not useful, to help you abandon or cultivate, that we should be bad into that that should be cultivated. It's very helpful. So we don't take things for granted. I think a lot of us take our much of our life for granted. Maybe our thoughts or feelings or mind states investigation is a quality of mine, which helps us not to take things for granted anymore, and actually see it clearly. And not to take things for granted is very important because when we take things for granted more often Now I think we get stuck in things. I think of investigation as the as one of the lubricator is of the mind, that helps us to get unstuck to
loosen up the mind. And I saw that in myself some days ago, I went through no period of feeling discouraged.

And, and you know, and then what if, you know, you probably all know kind of the thought trains around discouragement that might happen, you know, things like Oh, poor me. Why is this happening to me, you know, this, you know, what am I going to do? And this is so discouraging and I don't know what to do and oh, someone should help me and all you know, something like that.

Something you know, I don't remember exactly what went on but

and because I noticed this was going on, and didn't seem like a very useful state to be in and they've all been mindful of this and investigate this, this experience. And so I investigated how it felt my body kind of tightened. attractions and kind of heaviness, kind of a darkness. I investigated my mind and my thoughts and how they feel kind of tight and kind of very rapid and heavy. And it felt the kind of stickiness in my mind kind of like kind of like, like, there was this like sticky putty, you know, somewhere and I was kind of like, into this kind of self pity and discouragement, you know. And it was the investigation that allowed me to see that that was the case. If I hadn't paid attention to it, which kind of went kind of along wallowing in this kind of discouragement. I wouldn't have noticed how there was a sticky kind of quality in the mind and body in relationship to feeling this way. And then I continued investigating and investigation was very accepting and allowing it wasn't like I was trying to get rid of it. I was just interested. What is this experience like? And what's fascinating is that as soon as you bring interest, you've changed the ecology. It's a different terrain. It's a different world you're living in. If you're not interested in what that is. Is it this a teachable moment? So, what is it what is it and so, that itself is bringing a wholesome quality to that experience. And then as I investigated it, two things happen, one is the quality investigation got stronger and other got stronger, it again changed the ecology of my mind. One thing that happens is investigation becomes more something you both appreciate and equality gets stronger within you. Is it the place where you identify with can switch from some of the unwholesome places identify with you can instead you can identify yourself with the factor of investigation. Who are you know, which which, which with thoughts with feelings with mental states? Do you kind of suddenly take this as who I am. We all take something is who I am. And often it's a burden on us to take it as this is who I am. But you shift your identity. You're supposed to have entity be attached to the enemy and Buddhism. But if you shift your identity to that factor of investigation, I think you'll find yourself feeling much more lighter and buoyant. You're not going to take yourself so seriously. And so one thing was I noticed that I kind of investigation became stronger and I found like, kind of happier just being there in that place. But also the as I investigated, the, the stickiness between the thoughts, the stickiness between the state of mind my body that was there started to dissolve in the thoughts of discouragement, and then some of the body sensations discouragement, didn't go away, but the stickiness went away. That's why I called the lubricator kind of went in there kind of cleared, lubricated around, you know, took away the stickiness. And then we've been retraction once the stickiness was gone, then, very quickly, the discouragement went away completely. So turn to
bring investigate or interest, what is his experience changes ecology is to be willing to take on the possibility that this is a teachable moment right now. And to take on that possibility changes the whole situation. And are you willing to make that change? Are you willing to change situation to bring? What is this experience right now? What can I learn from it? What is what's really going on here? One exercise that I, I taught a group some years ago was that I recommended to you I teach at GQ is in the next week, find yourself in a situation. Notice if you find a situation where it's kind of regular situation, normal situation you often find yourself in. And maybe a situation where sometimes you react in a way to what happens in a way that's not so helpful or done. It suddenly makes you feel kind of, you know, to some kind of betrayal wave you have you have reacting in response to And don't act in your habitual way. Rather, stay really quiet and study the situation, what's going on here. And I thought this one I thought as a group some years ago, there was a husband and wife in the class. And they went to some kind of party. And something happened to the party that really usually just really ticked off the wife set her off. So it happened again, one more time. And the husband leaned over to the wife and said, Remember that exercise you're supposed to do this week. This is, this is a good time.

And it was, it was a great time for her. And she thought it was really useful not to kind of just to kind of settle back It's okay, let's pay attention to what's going on here. So to investigate, you know, to see this as a teachable moment, to be interested in that all the time. Because Buddhists they're not supposed to settle for anything, you know, in terms of having answers, but because because the time is always moving ahead into the future, or the future is coming to us. So I don't know which way we're going. But in any case, if you settled on something, then you already missed the boat because something new is happening. So to keep the interest in investigation, always investigate what is this what is this is a very, very key aspect of the development of practice and then investigation. The last thing I want to say is that the investigation should be done without clinging or greed. In a sense, investigation, investigation with clinging, wanting to be a certain way is some of my teachers. Use the word curiosity as the word to represent interest or investigation with clinging. So I don't know if that works in your vocabulary. But the point is not to have kind of lean forward to grab or to wanted to be a certain way to want to find out. But rather there's kind of natural luminosity which is kind of in a relaxed way. Interesting. What is this? What is this? What is this not expecting anything? Not wanting anything? We're just what is this? I said it was last thing to say but I'll say one more thing. And that is so investigation is is a you know, huge topic as many ways investigating. And I find it very much fun to be playful about it in various circumstances and investigate different things and different aspects and my experience. And sometimes it's useful to investigate with questions. And there's various questions we pass in the questions which are useful to kind of pop at various times in your practice. And to them thinking about tonight or one is The question What am I avoiding right now? You know, ask yourself that what am i avoiding right now? That's a great investigating investigatory theme. And then the other is what needs acceptance right now. What is it that needs my acceptance as opposed to resistance or condemnation or whatever it might be? So investigation factor of Dhamma v Jaya. So, that's probably enough. Now it's your turn. We have about 10 minutes. So some of you have some thoughts or questions like to ask. Yes, please. arrogance.
It seems like

more practice more I find ways of practicing to feeling that sense of self that

somehow

keeping me safe. Like, my mindfulness is something I can use

this practice for that

seems very difficult to to

avoid. It feels

authentic. To be arrogant. Yeah.

To feel like Yeah.

That's great.

Great. That's a lovely question. And the beautiful things about mindfulness practices that it's self correcting. So that's what's happening now you're beginning to look to correct some You don't like. But the various things I thought of in response, as you were speaking, the strongest one, which maybe, maybe it was particular for you, I don't know if it's relevant just came to my mind. And that is to encourage you don't be bothered so much by your arrogance, that's giving you too much authority are giving it you know, it's kind of arrogant to give us you know, and just, you know, recognize it's there and, you know, just don't be bothered, but just trust the practice, you know, and eventually, you know, that'll pass. And sometimes some things are better not just not to engage in too much, just recognize there and continue on along with your practice. Another thing you can do is to do what you're doing now, and then as to practice, practice mindfulness out loud, which means tell people confess. So you know, if you find that, you know, suitable circumstances, to tell someone you know, I'm feeling really arrogant. You know, you know what, I think I'm so much better than you.

That's my cure you pretty quickly.

But I'm serious, you know, find ways of talking about to people and get your friends to help you, you know, as pointed out, you know, and speaking it sometimes can take some of the power away from it, too. So it's not just sitting inside of your own mind. And the third thing occurred is to say that often,
when arrogant can arise, not always, but sometimes arrogance arise, basically out of some root of fear. And so if you can identify the fear that's underneath the arrogance, and then hang out there and bring your mindfulness to that, then eventually there won't be any need for the arrogance because the fear has been tended to. Speaker Sure, tell me how you see it related from time to time,
your thoughts
so a lot of it has to do with the mind and sometimes time you have also taught us the effect of meditation involving the body, relax the body.
And there's also our talk from you and from other visitors as to how you should not take the pain especially in the initial process, and then watch it go away.
I have always been in this weird dilemma.
From a from my mind one way but I just because I suffer from chronic pain from time to time I have really serious I have to go back to doing just before the meditation is because it is what I mean I don't rely on anything
I feel guilty you know innocence because of this emphasis on much more on the investigative quality and the simple that's supposed to get me over. I'm supposed to be going faster but I know that I know that kills because this is what I need. And I say there is something serious to be said about being compassionate to your own body and for you believe is compassion right now. So never mind like spiritually interesting thing, happens. Sometimes months on end, that's all I can do online.

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It does change and when I do change, I mean, they’re just on fire. I am unable to see the whole situation, I'm able to see my own motivation. Motivation is somebody I’m talking to all the things that have to do with the quality of the mind also.

And I wonder why is more emphasized more and there might be only people like me, who have struggled with their mind certain field that

I would guess that 75 to 80% of my own meditation practice is mindfulness of the body.

Don't feel guilty.

Is that the most useful thing I could say?

Yes, please.

investigation to the really beautiful and powerful thing that sometimes is especially an uncomfortable interactions with other people. The situation is moving along so fast that I don't have time to.

Not if it not so much. I mean the mean so sometimes things don't have to be the way that you think they have to be. So tempted. Sometimes things are going very fast, but they don't have to go fast. So you can say you can say so let's stop for a moment. Or you stop for a moment, or if you have any conversations going very fast. You know, you just sit quiet for two seconds or three seconds, checking in with the body. And I think the body is really the foundations of mindfulness practice. Having a habit of checking in with your body is very helpful. Having a regular practice, that's building a strength of mindfulness, then you'll bring it with you into situations which are much more challenging. If you don't have that foundation of a regular practice. You won't have that as a resource in challenging situations. Sometimes investigation happens after the fact. See, oh, yeah, that was a teachable moment. What can I learn if I review it? The investigations really beautiful quality. I love it, that part of the mind. And again, as I said, in my own practice, I think of Ignace is something I balanced Gather with concentration, and they go back and forth, you know, so sometimes I, you know, there's concentration needs to be developed. And then after a while, investigation comes to the fore, but sooner or later as an investigator present for things, I'll notice that I needed further development concentrations like and then aleko investigation for develop great more concentration, it's kind of like that, you know, I don't know the right analogy is but it's kind of like, you know, you go two steps forward one, and then allows you take two steps forward, the other three steps forward with investigation and then you realize that concentration lags and so you take two steps with concentration. And then so that, so it goes back and forth and makes sense. So the balance those two factors, so the investigation doesn't become discursive or agitating. And, and until the concentration, so it's also the concentration becomes more
useful to you. Yeah, that's what we do with your mind that's calm, because we want to do something with it periodically too.

So

I hope that this was a helpful talk and help you to kind of realize the teachable momentness of life and that you can change the ecology, ecology of your heart in your mind, and such a way that you're freer and happier and kinder to each other. And you will cultivate that mental quality of kindness. Thank you.