In the world of Buddhist psychology and the teachings of Buddhist psychology, they teach that in order to get really well concentrated with the mind. There's something like 35, or 38, different mental functionings, or factors that come into play. Now, don't get discouraged by that. You don't have to know those, even engage all of those. But it's interesting in so many different things come into place if you don't get activated in order for this process to develop and happen. To have the ones that are important to this, and among the many that I've talked about so far, are what's called the initial application of mind, the initial application of attention, and then the sustained application of attention. That's kind of technical language but first, applying yourself to the object concentration like the graphic, I'm going to play myself. Then once you're there, sustaining the attention, hang in there. Two different mental qualities or factors, the initial attention and the sustained attention. Some people are really good at one and not the other. Some people are really good at, okay, I can connect to the breath. But as soon as they connect to the breath of minds ready to go off again, something else, they kind of drift away very quickly. Some people don't have the ability to really even be, you know, the motivation or the strength, something to really make the initial application some, but some people once they get there, finally, can stay there. But they have trouble getting there. And if they do wander away, takes a long time to come back. But both qualities are needed. And it might be a little bit interesting for you to give you two images or some analogies for this, these two factors in mind. One is this one of the polishing the bowl, which I gave you that there's a placing the cloth on the bowl, and then there's the rubbing of it. If you rub too hard, I'm probably not good for the bowl. I don't know. But, but you know who we're up to lightly, nothing happens music, I'm just the right pressure you to keep it there. If you kind of lose contact with the ball and you keep rubbing the cloth or nothing happens, right, you have to maintain that connection, another image and that of a bird taking off the flight for flight, maybe you've seen these big ducks or goose or something, you know, and they're pretty clumsy and big, you know, and they're getting off the water right? running along the water. They're flapping like crazy. But once they kind of are up and get the lifted, they can soar and they can let their their arms out and just let the updrafts carry them. So the initial application is the effort it takes to kind of be there.
arrive there. And then the hang in there the sustaining attention said to be like the bird, which is kind of caught the updraft and you're kind of soaring. And the last one is that of a, b, and b approaches a flower is the kind of applicant. Attention. And then once it's near the flower begins circling the flower stays right there the flower smelling it flying around the stick, the analogy has given us a fly around the Flower Flower. So it's going towards the breath. And then once you're there at the breath is staying and it's in your environment, it's staying with it being present for it, studying it being with it. So hang in there takes a lot of wisdom to hang in there and wisdom. But it's important to do it's useful is that it's worthwhile to let go of the other concerns you might have temporarily at least while you're doing this particular thing. It takes a lot of wisdom about how to be patient and forgiving and accepting of how difficult it is. It takes a lot of understanding about the tricks of the mind has about how it gets tricked and gets pulled away into other things or into judgments or into aversions or criticisms or into lethargy or resistance or doubt. They might arise so requires some monitoring of all this what's going on. So you can't just kind of lock on to the breath and think that's it, because you kind of put the attention there and then begin monitoring to see what is it it's supportive and helpful to kind of corral it sits right at corral but what if the Cowboys are gathering all the cattle up to corral them before they put them in the corral right they kind of they kind of hurting them together, maybe hurting together. So you're beginning to kind of lovingly hurting together all the different factors of your mind you know, to get them all lined up and kind of engaged in the same thing. Sometimes I say that trying to get the kids ready for school in the morning is like, you know, you got other people have said this too, but you know, herding cats sometimes our mind is like trying to herd cats. but so did Middlemiss. Some comments about that meditations. session, anybody? What do you notice when you learn about your mind and how it functions and how to engage it and how to relax it, get a balance of these different factors. That's a thing you'll learn there anybody with your mind is like trying to herd cats. so did Middlemiss. Some
there that point they can relax in the breath, for example a little bit more. I also found that the monitoring really helpful I helped me also notice that when I that I tended to start to wander when when the breath when like the rhythm of the breath would become uncomfortable. Or there would be like a tightness in my throat or you know, I could feel my brow getting really tight. That when it when I started that when I get uncomfortable that my I'm less motivated to want to stay with it. I'm not sure if the right thing is to kind of kind of trudge through that uncomfortableness or not. Stop and trying to stop watching the breath and, and to more try and like breathe in such a way to bring that comfort back. I think that in different circumstances both either one is one or the other might be the appropriate thing. And you could always try to it could be a symptom just trying too hard, for example, you need to relax and maybe by just kind of trying to relax the breath, you kind of relax. So you could experiment the kind of coming back finding a comfortable breath again. But if it keeps reoccurring, then maybe something else you need to understand and look at. And sometimes if there's something uncomfortable happening, you have to be patient with it. This process is not always comfortable. So sometimes when it's uncomfortable part of it just persistence and patience and hanging in there even when it's uncomfortable. And as long as you can stay there, you're developing concentration. Another thing is that if there's some kind of difficulty that's arising, sometimes you need to understand what that is. And so if you let go Better change your state to quit too quickly. You might not understand why it's there in the first place. So you might, you know, so you have a number of options. And hopefully, you're going to meditate long enough that you can try the different options at different times. Thank you. Anybody else want to say something? Yes, please. I just noticed that applying a little bit of effort to keeping my mind on track made a very big difference for me, was very different thing. Very big difference for me. I remember the first week you had said, you'd mentioned letting go and I guess I was really hung up on that and was really trying to let go and hope that it would all just come effortlessly, but applying a little bit of effort. And sometimes you have to apply a lot of effort. I mean, sometimes the mind is like a wild Bronco. I mean, you know, some even noticed that already. And you know, if you're gonna stay on the Bronco, you have to you know, you have to put in a lot of effort. And it's appropriate sometimes to put a lot of effort. And to really stay there. When you know, you have to kind of meet the energy of the mind with the mind sometimes, sometimes it's more useful to relax in the bronco. Sometimes it's really, okay, I'm going to hang on there. Some people who have associated meditation so strong will be just relaxing and letting go, that they don't feel like it's not okay to kind of really try hard to really, you know, engage. Occasionally, it's really useful to engage very, very like a bronco, you know, and it's until it's tamed a wild stallion or something. So part of all this is learning a variety of skills, a variety, different approaches, and then learning, learning to use it in different ways. Use different approaches use it, to begin getting a sense of what's useful in different times. There's not a one approach fits all situations kind of thing. So you're learning, you're learning a series of skills, you're learning skills, how to work with different things, just like a someone working with wood. may say something like carving wood. You don't just learn one thing about wood. carve away, you have to learn different kinds of wood different kinds of densities and strengths require different kind of put strength of pushing and chiming or whatever, or different knots you have to work around that you have to kind of work with what you have and the different techniques and tools, you know, to do the concentration. Sometimes it's good effort. The more more scattered the mind is, in a sense, the more
effort we have to make at times, as a concentration develops, it said that the arts the effort becomes effortless, and is a wonderful way in which it switches from being effortful effort to being effortless effort. But because at some point, it can be effortless. Doesn't mean that you jumped the gun. It was supposed to be effortless. I'm just gonna sit here and let something happen. You know, you have to kind of get that Running Start, you know, the bird has to flap its wings enough to get up there to get the, you know, to get the updraft. And then it's effortless in a sense, right? So don't try to be, you know, don't try to get the updraft and you're still standing on the ground. Anybody else? Yes.

It took you a long time to stop flapping toward the end. And it was helpful about the rubbing instead of the breath. Then I got to a place where it was like I was the breath. I mean, it was so pleasurable. It then I wanted more of that. And of course, then it went away. And then at the end, as you were coming out that I was back in that place, and I didn't want to come back out. And I thought, well, somehow it feels really good, but somehow I didn't think that I was doing it right. Meaning meaning that now I wanted I read I was like wanting to stay in that place and trying to I mean I wasn't even breathing the end of the breath went away I couldn't I couldn't I wasn't in touch with even in into the breath It was so that in breath come back again at some point.

Well, at some point my mind said where'd it go? And I took a breath and I mean it was more it it I went I didn't know where the breath way and it just seemed like it was forever I'm sure was just short, but it felt like it was just

just kept going. I've had the experience where when I was new to meditation, relatively new. The early years of the breath, I'm going out with the out breath and just going and going and going. And hock die. You gotta breathe And eventually I learned that that kind of stuffing of the breath, you don't die. So you know, you can actually it's okay, go with it, you're not gonna die. You know, the breath of the breath slow down dramatically, it's concentrated states. And a strong enough concentration don't eat a lot ox jacket we talked about last week, right? You don't need a lot of oxygen. We talked about that. Anyway, when the mind is really concentrated, strongly concentrated. It seems like that the metabolism or the oxygen Jay's mind doesn't need the brain uses a lot of oxygen, normally without thinking and worrying and everything and see me when the mind gets really concentrated and still don't think it needs as much. And so you don't need to breathe as much. And so sometimes the breath gets really subtle, and sometimes it seems like it disappears entirely. So if that happens in meditation, don't worry now thing about the pleasure happens sometimes in meditation and take it as a good sign. Not everyone's gonna experience pleasure when they get concentrated. So don't doesn't be the measure for your concentration. But when it does happen, one thing is getting excited about it by it can pop you out of it. But one thing doesn't have to pop you out about it. So rather than rejecting all wanting thing or wanting as bad as having desires bad, which is sometimes a Buddhist kind of problem, we all have desires bad. There are different kinds of desires. And so it's okay to want to develop the pleasure, enjoyment and actually let it become stronger. That can be appropriate desire,
you'd have to know how to hold that desire in the right way. So it's not 3d. So there isn't kind of expectation or ambition or clinging around it. But so it's kind of more open ended and relaxed, and it would be nice, you know, if you know, we're not Christian, but he's a true Christian. You say God Willing Dharma willing or something. And then with that desire, you can actually start working that pleasure and letting it become more strengthening and developing, beginning to suffuse your body spirit, spread it through your body that pleasure. So it's kind of extends out into your body more and more fully. So, just because the desire this time screwed you up, don't reject all desire, means you have to kind of refine your desire. So it's a healthier kind. Yes, please.

I'm relatively new to meditating only about a year and this last week, I've noticed in trying to concentration practice, I can go about 510 minutes. And then I think I go to sleep. I don't fall over. But my mind. I don't recall anything I've been thinking about except maybe my brain was spinning all the stories and Nonsense, you know, there's not any emotion there. It's just

I think I need something to activate my brain. So a few things about that. One is that some people are associating, concentration concentration by itself is a is a relaxing factor of the mind. So if all you did was concentrate, you would actually get really tranquil and eventually go to sleep. So you can't only rely on concentration, you have to also have these arousing factors together with it so you can keep a good balance of energy. Some people have such a strong association with meditation, that it's so strong association of meditation with relaxation, or some people have such a strong need for relaxation in their life. They're so you know, worked up, that they're pushing the relaxation factor when they're doing meditation. And for a while, they're getting a lot of benefits. It's really great, getting more relaxed, it's great. But then at some point They go over that cross that line where they don't actually need to get more relaxed, until they can get more energized the same time you can, you can get more deeply relax in deep concentration than you can in ordinary states of mind. So, your deepest sense of relaxation will happen in concentration. However, if you are only trying to relax without having the energetic aspects also there, you're going to reach that before capacity for relaxation, then it makes sense when I'm saying, follow people follow. So if you want to go as far as you can, in getting relaxed, make sure you're properly aroused. Also, properly alert. So I could be That's one possibility. Another possibility that someone connected to that is that you're sleeping and maybe you're sleep deprived. And so, or maybe you've overworked at work and kind of overstressed so as you begin relaxing, you could actually go further but because you're going to laxing there's such a strong need for sleep, that that takes over, at some point. In other situation that happens is that concentration practice as we begin disengaging ourselves with our normal mental preoccupations and thoughts, the surface chatter of our mind. The surface chatter of the mind kind of functions as a lid, you know, on the pot, the popcorn, you know, and, and so if you take the lid off, sometimes the popcorn goes flying out, you know, sometimes all this stuff shows itself, you can reveal stuff. And so sometimes as the surface chatter dies away, the material that's beneath there is troubling for the mind. And so one of the protective mechanisms the
mind has is to go asleep. And it's like babies. They're overstimulated environmental go sleep is a protection. So adults have that capacity meditation sometimes. And that could also be something if something's about happening with us, okay? I'd rather go sleep and look at this. I don't know which of these is for you, you to kind of figure out for yourself. But if you know there's a pattern after five or 10 minutes this happens. Be particularly alert just before starts happening. To see if you start noticing what is actually happening. You can discover for yourself what is happening if you're paying enough attention. You might have to do it a dozen times before you begin teasing apart noticing that that's what's happening. Now I now need to see what it's like just before that this happens. And when I can see that see that cue? Then next time I don't know what to do so I don't cross that line. Make sense? Last one, please.

Just a very obvious observation that if you know already that you're sleepy, what I found out is I cannot do a concentration practice in a state of real sleepiness. It just doesn't happen. And so I learned I have to do this at a different time of day. Okay.

that's very wise. So during a different time of day when you're not sleepy, I think it's best when you're doing concentration practice, to Don't, don't rely on the concentration practice, to take care of relaxing your everyday stress. Rather, try to create an environment just before you meditate so that you're sufficiently relaxed, you'd go for a walk, have some key, kind of make some space in your life. You come to the meditation little bit more relaxed, but also choose a time of day where the various factors are most supportive of you. So when you're alert if you can, some people find it best early in the morning, some people at times, so people don't have much choice in when they do it because they're working when they're most alert. No job, so they have to do other times. But what you said it's in some monasteries, in Asia, sometimes, Buddhist monasteries. They have these really intense retreats sometimes where you can get very little sleep. And, and sometimes, you know, it's for hours and I just sleep for days, weeks on end. And sometimes you'll have nights where you're gonna sleep at all. And I know I've heard a Korean Zen monastery, sometimes they go seven days without anybody sleeping. So normally that's kind of problematic because all kinds of problems where they say psychosis can happen and all that. But in order to manage those first of all, when you go on long retreats, your sleep needs drop, just like your oxygen tank drops. And some people it depends a little bit on person to person varies, but I found that on long retreats, I do really well in four and a half hours a night. And so I can just, you know, do that for weeks and weeks on end, four and a half hours. And when I started, did a three month retreat to visit my wife, my girlfriend then. And after a couple of days out of the retreat, I think I slept five and a half hours or six hours, and I woke up that something's wrong, sleeping, I'm sleeping too much. It's sleeping too much. You know, she thought I was crazy. And, and some people will go down to two hours at night, and some people will go even less for periods of time and it's quite doesn't know psychosis is quite good because you don't need to sleep so much. But in the Zen Korean thing, when there's sleep deprived, in order to survive that kind of environment, you have to arouse a tremendous z or strength of effort. That with a strength with a concentration is coupled with so much energy, so much effort in applying that that's what keeps you focused and present and capable. So there is the mind has a tremendous capacity to arouse itself. JACK kornfield, his teacher,
when he had a lot of sleepiness meditation, told them to go sleep, to sleep, to go meditate on the edge of a well. Or a friend of mine who had trouble asleep in bed, sleeping, he went and got some kind of bowl. And that somehow would fit on top of his head, and then fill the bowl with marbles. And he sat there because he thought that if he fell asleep in the marbles film that meditation hall floor, he gets so embarrassed that everybody that they're the heroes that would keep him awake. You don't have to do that to those extremes, but it's possible to arouse oneself you know, and

so,

so everyone has difficulty with concentration at some point. Some people have more than others, they wanted to emphasize last time, same thing on emphasize from last time. Some people get tremendous benefit from trying to develop concentration, but who never get concentrated. So just because you have trouble getting concentrated, it doesn't mean that it's not beneficial for you to try or to be engaged in that process of doing it. Everyone has a different way of going through this process, different ways and benefits. If you hear stories from one person that talks about Wow, I had this tremendous bliss and you haven't had that ever. There's no need to compare yourself you know, or be concerned. Each person has their own way. And your job is to monitor and be content with your way and see what you can learn what you can explore and what's helpful for you in this whole process. As you're monitoring yourself. You also start noticing what happens to you if you do start getting concentrated what some of the physical and Mental symptoms are of developing concentration. And there are shifts that happen. So some of the shifts might be for example, you feel the body gets lighter, or the mind starts getting lighter, both in terms of weight occasionally in terms of actually color light. Like the mind gets some clear lighter lights up in some ways, the visual field lights up. Sometimes the opposite happens whereas people get concentrated, they feel heavier. Some people as they get concentrated, feel warmer, or when their hands are warmer in the body. I've had situations of meditating in a cold room and at so much heat coming off the head, the stairs, peel off my shirts, my sweater, my shirts and death my T shirt. I was just kind of like a furnace. And as soon as I entered meditation, I got thrown back on and sometimes people actually get cold when they get concentrated. And, and sometimes I've seen people covered I've done that also covered myself with blankets They get concentrated because somehow, there's not enough inner heat being. So there are different symptoms, different manifestation of this. Sometimes there's tingling, all over the skin that can happen. Sometimes aches and pains can surface as you get concentrated, as the body relaxes the surface tensions in the body relax the deeper tensions that are usually hidden, show themselves and those deeper tensions that people will say, Oh, my meditation practice is going backwards. Because now you know, so tense, and it's not getting tensor. It's that you're actually getting more relaxed, but the deeper underlying tension is showing itself and you know that Oh, oh, I'm getting tense, good, it's working. That can happen, right? And there can be changes in your breathing pattern as you get concentrated. So you have more things you can engage within monitors, how your breathing changes, does it slow down? Does it get more faint, too? And move a little bit where you center gravity is for breathing. Sometimes, I'll feel it in my belly at first. And then as it gets more concentrated this center guy where I feel my breath changes up to my center of my chest. Occasionally people will have other
symptoms like the eyes will water, sometimes look at a lot of saliva temporarily. Sometimes people will see colors or images arise. Express does not get involved in those colors and images. Just continue with the breath continue with your object of concentration. But just know that happens sometimes into maybe it's taken as a cheerleader. So yes, you're on track, but don't pay attention to me. Occasionally, people will have sensory distortions, when they get concentrated. They're getting concentrated and perceptual distortions, I mean kind of things. And that is and I understand it this way that perceptions are so Pure perceptions. perceptions are usually usually involved a fair degree of conceptualization. So if I see someone here, and I see you as a man, I mean, that's a concept concept. And it's pretty innocent because I think you are but you know, it's it's, it's still a concept going on as applying to seeing this form and shape there. As the mind gets relaxed, the conceptualization of the mind begins to relax also. But it is a transit sometimes transition period, where we're still receiving sensory input. But the creation of the sensory input into our perception into a concept is still the point still trying to do it. We will do it a little bit kind of odd ways. It isn't that you're hallucinating. It's more like some something that suddenly someone's they're sitting there and you start your body sudden If you're amazingly squat, like you feel sore, or your neck or your bike is suddenly so long, it's really going to touch the ceiling. And you have to open your eyes and make sure that nothing's changed. Or your hands get really big or smaller, or some, you know, some some kind of kind of little distortions happen. And, and so that's also a sign that getting concentrated, it'll, it'll pass it with time. There are other things that can happen as you get concentrated. And that's what this is probably enough for now. But in other words, in other words, one of the things you study, oh, just being relaxed, just feeling relaxed and calm and tranquil, is a nice symptom of it all. Sometimes feeling clear, greater clarity arises. So as you monitor and study this, you kind of notice a change is how things change. And as you notice it changes. The more you can notice it changes and the more it actually helps you to find your way in the future into concentrated states. Oh, this is the way this is what helpful, this is what I did to get to there. This is what it required. A lot of learning that happens with concentration. So it's not a dumb thing, just hold your mind like that, and everything's gonna fall out. There was a lot of information given today, let yourself take in what you take in and just keep doing the practice. And some of it will be useful. Some of it won't be useful. Some of it, you'll remember in 10 years, no, you know, now it's useful. And, but just, just, you know, it's your engagement with a process that's really going to be the primary teacher for your teaching for you, and what you learned from your own experience. So the requirements for the class is sitting every day for 45 minutes. Sitting in the class doesn't count. You can make up for tomorrow, if you need to make up some metrics or time 45 minutes doesn't have to be all at one time, but you know, 350 minute sessions in fact, if you're new To all this, it might be better for you to short periods rather than one long period. And memorizing the Metta Sutta, Messman discourse, are set differently, engage in the process of trying to memorize it in a serious, sincere way, whether you memorize it or not, that's, you know, I don't know, different people have different abilities, doesn't matter if you succeed in it in matters that you try. Even if you just memorize one slide, that's all you can do. That's beneficial and helpful in this process of learning. If you have memorized a sutra, then notice that if you don't keep it up, if you don't do it, practice it regularly. You'll lose it probably. So you have to maintain it. Same with meditation, you have to do it every day. The continuity is really important. And if you've memorized it, it might be nice for you to recite it silently or out loud, before
every sitting both to get you into a nice mood and also To begin that process of concentrating the
mind. Next week, I'm going to talk about the obstacles to concentration. For all the rest of you who
need that, all of us in understanding the obstacles, the difficulties of getting concentrated is a really
important part of the process of learning how to get concentrated. So next, that's for next week. Okay.
Thank you very much.