

2005-10-02 Introduction to Mindfulness Meditation

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SPEAKERS

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This morning, I would like to give the instructions for mindfulness meditation, kind of the basic instructions for what we do. And to do it over the course of the talk. And my hope is those of you who have done this for so long, who get the instructions yourself will find it interesting. I know that I love hearing introductory instructions. And even though I've been teaching it for years, so we practice meditation practice called Mindfulness, meditation. And mindfulness meditation is a practice of paying attention. And it's part of a Buddhist tradition of practice called Vipassana and the past now, maybe it's best to Isolated insight. And so as we learn to pay attention, notice things carefully as they occur in the present moment, then, that noticing when it's gets to be very clear and deep penetrating, leads to insight and insight, then when it becomes clear and penetrating, leads to liberation to freedom. So mindfulness practice is the basic practice that we practice here. And, and in its simplest instruction, it's the practice of paying attention to what's happening in the present as it's happening. To elaborate a little bit more fully, it's to pay attention to what's happening in the present moment as it's happening, and discovering how not to be in conflict with what is happening. To be at ease with what's happening. Now, mindfulness meditation is part of the overall kind of Buddhist teachings and practices for liberation. And in its Buddhist context, meditation practice has three overarching purposes. The first purpose is to know your mind to know yourself. The second is to train your mind. And the third is to free the mind. So to know the mind, to train the mind and to free the mind, and there's no particular order for that. They can be sequential, you know your mind, well, you know yourself really well. As you know yourself. Well, you can train yourself you can train the mind as you train yourself becomes easy You need to liberate to free the mind. But all three kind of all mixed up together and work together and occur in different ways at different times as we do the practice. And the first one is to know the mind. Many people don't know themselves very well. It's very easy to spend a day, a lifetime, quite busy, caught up in thoughts, concerns, activities, and not really know deeply what makes us operate the way

we do. What motivates us what our reactions responses are, what our feelings are, even what our thoughts are. I've met people who have no clue that they're even thinking they know they're thinking, I mean, they have some clue. But the idea of tracking their thoughts, being aware of what they're thinking what they're thinking, is a foreign idea to them. So important part of mindfulness is to begin to notice learn who we are. And one of the tremendous advantages of that is that as we study our mind our reactions, then we can begin Relating to ourselves to the mind or to the world also, in more healthful ways, in more healthy ways, then maybe what we noticed we're doing. So that's the second part training the mind. So we begin to kind of take the mind not as a given to me we just have to live with and just that's the way it is. But the mind is something which is quite malleable, quite plastic, and so it can be molded and shaped and changed in some way. And so a big part of Buddhist practice is then taking responsibility for the shape, then formed the activities of our mind so that we can begin having the mind operate in ways which are more helpful for us. It turns out for many people, one of the first trainings is not necessarily in meditation practice or mindfulness practice, but is it training and kindness or compassion, or training, learning how not to be in conflict With ourselves conflict with our minds or conflict to the world, and it doesn't take a lot of knowing oneself to know that the mind is often in often in conflicted states, its mind often, it's not happy with what's happening in the present moment. So it wants something else and could spend a lot of time planning. It could be filled with desires, it can be filled with versions filled with confusion, a lot of planning a lot of regrets, the mind can be caught up caught in a way that in some way or it could be understood to be in common, you're in conflict with the world there's a lack of acceptance of what is. And so one of the first trainings then, of course, person trainings as we know ourselves, is how to hold what we know is with spaciousness with kindness with a certain kind of acceptance or non conflict. Someone once said, self knowledge is seldom good news. And so I don't know how it is for you, but sometimes, you know, self knowledge is not good news as we begin seeing ourselves so the first training then it as we get to know ourselves, how can we find a way to be hold that likely hold it kindly hold it without conflict without adding, you know, salt to the wound in a sense. So really important part of Buddhist practice then is the attitude that we bring to ourselves to our practice to our life. And then beginning to adjust that part of the trainings adjusting a little bit, oh, can I be a little bit Kinder here can be a little bit more forgiving here. Can it be more spacious, more allowing, as opposed to judgmental or critical or demanding or ambitious or, you know, all kinds of ways which there's all kinds of ways you can engage in a meditation practice or spiritual practice, which are counterproductive. You can strive too hard, you can be trying to escape, you know, out of something, void, something you could try to hold on to some idea like a lifesaver and ended up just drowning with lifesaver. There's all kinds of ways we can kind of engage in practices. not so useful. So one of the first things is the attitude, kind of, can you find an attitude as you know yourself? Whatever it is, whatever it is, you notice, how can you hold that so that you're lighter about it and more at ease with what you're noticing. As we become more at ease with what it what it is, and as we then it's possible to train the mind in other ways, we can train the mind. And there's many ways you can train the mind you can train the mind in concentration. In greater capacity for mindfulness, you can train the mind, in loving kindness, develop your capacity for love or compassion. You can train your mind to be generous, you can train your mind to be more ethical. There's many ways you can train your mind. The mind is almost like a muscle. And so you can train

that muscle like you train at a gym where you'd build up your muscles in the gym. And I know some people will spend a lot of time adjusting the external world to make it just right. They're close. They were there. The body they kind of carry with them, they get buff for whatever exercise it. But very few people actually take the kind of care it's for their own mind as they would for their own physical body just you we clean our body regularly and you have a shower every day. And we you know, we do various things to help support the body to be healthy, we try to eat well what kinds of things people try to do for their body. And not a lot of people will spend much time being the caretakers or stewards of their mind and try to support that to become to be healthy also. So training training the mind like some muscle or something coming and be developed and changed. And there are three primary inner qualities we might call spiritual qualities that are most helpful for mindfulness meditation that have been cultivated in mindfulness meditation. And one of them is awareness, cultivating To be aware, to be mindful. The second is cultivating our capacity to be concentrated, to be focused. If we're going to decide I'm going to pay attention to something here, I'm going to stay there and not let the mind wander and stay focused. And the third is to train them train the mind or train ourselves to be tranquil or peaceful, to to have the ability to be at ease with what is. So as we develop those capacities for awareness, for concentration, and for tranquility, then our capacity to see the mind understand the mind gets stronger and stronger. It's kind of a feedback loop here. And so we understand the mind better, as we understand ourselves better than our attitude gets good to look at our attitude again, because as new information gets revealed, and you're constantly kind of working and refining, knowing, you know what's going on training and Then finally liberating. So as we, as the mind gets more aware, more aware of the mind, more trained, more plastic, less rigid and more peace, then it's possible to begin freeing the mind of actually letting go of the places where the mind holds on the mind is clinging. And anybody who gets to know their mind well will discover it that the mind clings to things we cling to our pleasure to comfort. we cling to security, we cling to self identity, their self image, we cling to our relationships, what's supposed to happen them, we cling to our pain, sometimes people cling to their suffering. People cling to their ideals. People cling to a sense of wanting to control people cling to their opinions. There's many things that people cling to. And so part of the spiritual practice in Buddhism is to learn to let go of those clinging take a lot of trust a lot incite a lot of understanding, and a certain degree of inner strength, the strength of mindfulness, strength of awareness, strength of concentration, strength of peace or tranquility. And so then we free the mind. And we talk about freeing the mind, I actually prefer to use the word freeing the heart. Because the mind seems so mental. And, but the heart seems much more to me more, embodied more full, more based, for me more appealing to free the heart from whatever keeps it bound or restricted or closed. And the end of the Buddhist path in a sense, is to liberate the heart so there's no barriers no shackles, no constrictions on our heart at all. So mindfulness meditation is one of the key vehicles for developing these three areas, knowing ourselves, training the mind and liberating the mind with liberty. In the heart the training and mindfulness is a training to pay attention to notice what's going on. And knowing the knowing of mindfulness is deliberate and calm, deliberate, calm knowing. In one way of understanding kind of that deliberate or the conscious way in which knowing goes on in mindfulness is that when you know something, not only you know, that you're breathing in and out, or you know, you're thinking about something, or you're feeling about something, or you know, that you hear the traffic outside, or, you

know, something, but you know, that, you know, that, you know, that, you know, and that's really important because sometimes you can get absorbed in some activity. But if there isn't that kind of stepping back and knowing that, you know, then you've chances are you're not quite, you're kind of maybe a little mature, entangled or involved or lost in experience. There's a way in which knowing that you know, we're a little bit indecisive into what you know a little bit free from what's happening, the image in Buddhism is that of a lotus growing and muddy water, the Lotus has its roots in the mountain, because out of the mud it water. And as the petals lotus blossom and open, it's untouched by that mode, it's clear white or whatever color it is, but it's, there's no mud on it, nothing sticks on it. So in the same way, the knowing the awareness is something that arises out of the muddiness of our life of our minds. And there's a knowing which has clarity to it, you know that, you know, maybe another analogy for this, maybe it'll work is maybe some of you have been in a situation with maybe a lot of other people, maybe, you know, a kindergarten class. And, you know, these kids are just, you know, wild. I mean, how could it be that and, you know, fighting or struggling or something, you know, and one possibility is to get into the fray. Lose yourself, you know, and then stop that don't do that to any kind of you know. And another possibility certainly try to do the responsible thing or you know, then necessarily then, but you're in there and, and some other adult is there also, and you look up and you know that you're not caught you had this overview this great acronym, do you see what's going on? You're not caught by it and you look up and see the other adults there. See, she's not caught either. And she knows that, you know, she knows she's not caught. And there's this meeting of relaxed, peaceful independent minds. Oh, you know. So maybe you've been in situ other situations besides kindergarten classes, but you know, something where you've been at a party or something or some kind of difficult situation where you're not caught in the way most people are. And you notice someone else is not caught and you meet their own kind of recognize that not Caithness that kind of you know that you're both independent from all that some kind of way of knowing that you're free knowing you're independent or something is part of the mindfulness practice. So when we come to do mindfulness meditation, it's helpful to know that the minute mindfulness begins before you actually start meditating. And some people will wait until they sit down to get themselves down, they get organized, they sit, and then finally, okay, now I'm going to do it. And, but actually, what we're trying to do is to have a deliberate, being deliberately conscious, deliberately aware, deliberately attentive to what we're doing even before we start meditating. So, deciding to go sit, Now's my time to sit and walk into the place where you can sit is a deliberate mindful activity. And to recognize now I'm actually starting the practice of being deliberately attentive, deliberately conscious of what I'm doing while I'm doing it. When you sit down, now I'm being deliberately conscious of that activity of sitting down, deliberately conscious of, of myself here with some care. And so you sit down We give some care, deliberate conscious attention to the posture that we sit in. It's part of being certainly generous to ourselves kind to ourselves. It's part of the mindfulness training, than to cultivate awareness of our posture. And since the first thing we do we meditate is our posture. It's part of the meditation practices. How do we be mindful of our posture? Some of that is becoming familiar with your body. noticing what your body is, like, the limitations of it, the possibilities of it, the holding patterns, attentions of your body, and somehow taking it all in so that when you sit down to be in a meditation posture, it's respectful of your particular body. Some people sit in chairs, some people sit in the floor. Some people sit in all kinds of

different ways, but somehow become familiar with your body, not to indulge it, not to kind of just sit in the couch because you're lazy, but actually become mindful of the body so you can take the most balanced most approach posture for meditation. And I would suggest that the most appropriate posture for meditation is one that encourages you to be alert, relaxed and alert. And those two together some people think of meditation is something is supposed to help you relax, and many people will use meditation is stress reduction for its relaxation purposes. But in the Buddhist context, we say, you can get too relaxed. You get so relaxed, you fall asleep. And what we're trying to do is to have an appropriate balance between something which is more energizing, which is alertness or awareness, and something which is relaxing, which is relaxation, calm. So you want to take a posture that expresses both and one of the ways of doing that, if you can, is to have a back which is self supporting and upright, so you're not leaning against anything. The back of the spine is balanced. And an upright, maybe so that the chest a little bit not puffed up a little bit. Oh, And so that because the spine is you know, so balanced and, and, and in that alert spine that allows a lot of the muscles that hold up the torso, the shoulders and everything's to begin relaxing. And the more balanced the spine is, the more it allows the relaxation, the rest of your body rest of your torso. If you if your posture is not aligned upright, then it's actually harder to relax the body as fully as possible. So sit down in such a way that you can sit upright with an alert spine is very helpful. And then sit down and in our tradition, we generally close our eyes, we did usually kind of half closed, I mean, usually kind of your eyes are closed. Some traditions have your eye the eyes kind of half open, and maybe pointing down to 45 degrees to the floor. It's okay to do that some teachers we pass the teachers will teach that. But generally in our tradition, we encourage people to either eyes closed so we can pay more careful attention to what's happening, you know, if you sometimes if you want to hear really distant sound, or you close your eyes to hear it because you kind of can really be present for that sound at any other input. So if you really want to be present for different things, sometimes closing one sense door could be helpful. And then we have the most control over is the eyes. So we gently close the eyes. And the first task, I would suggest is to just relax, Kennedy's prepare yourself to go kind of further, you know the whole period of meditation by taking a few long slow, deep breaths, and helping you using those deep breaths to help you relax, especially the exhale to kind of relax the shoulders, relax the stomach, the face muscles, wherever you can relax. Take deep breaths. I like the in breath really good because The Ingress is the time to kind of feel like I'm getting massage from the inside, I feel the stretching of the body, the torso, the ribcage as I breathe in deeply. And, and so I kind of like stretching like a massage from the inside. And then as I exhale, let go of the tensions that might be there. It's a way of reminding myself also at the beginning of sitting, here I am, I'm going to be here in this time in this place. One of the, it's very difficult for the mind untrained mind to be in the present moment, to be in the present place, position and the present time. And so the mind often can use some help to be reminded you this is what this is what we're going to do for the next 40 minutes. We're going to sit here and be here and now. You know, and sometimes you have probably you can have to nudge that mind remind the mind regularly because it has a very short attention span. And meditators have noticed that they have Add. And so and so you need to remind yourself, oh, here I am. So taking this deep, slow, long, relaxing, deep breath in the beginning is a reminder, here I am. This is the place where I'm going to be I can let go of other times and places the best I can. And then once the you've

done that, maybe two or three or four or five deep breaths, some people like to do more, some people like to do 10 deep breaths, somebody's been counting one to 10 as a way of helping that in accounting helps focus them, then to let the breath return to normal and have a normal breath. Some people like to do kind of yogic breathing, breathing kind of special way. Generally, in mindfulness practice, we try not to have a yogic breathing technique or any kind of special way. Because what we're trying to do is just try to discover who we are discover what's going on, when we're not interfering with ourselves trying to adjust and change what's going on. So we sit down, and I find it most helpful when I first sit down to meditate to stand after that initial Kind of settling in to spend a little bit of time becoming familiar with how I am right now. So it's a process of familiarizing myself with myself. And I like that word familiarizing because it at least for the time being, I don't associated with the words meditation or mindfulness or concentration or awareness. It's kind of Buddhism. It's Buddhism free word. And so I don't have any associations with it. Just become familiar with what's going on here. And, okay, so familiar with what's happening my body. I was the body right now. familiar with my feelings, the emotions that are present, familiar with the mind with the thoughts that are going on the concerns that I have become familiar with what's actually going on. And that's part of that mindfulness training, becoming aware knowing the mind knowing what's going on. And then seeing Can you adjust your attitude? Is there a better attitude you can have for what's happening? Could you be a little bit more at ease with what's happening with kinder, more generous, more accepting of what's happening now? What is the attitude you have? Or you're striving here? You're angry, you're upset? Are you trying to push things away? Or you're critical just noticing all these things? And can you lighten up a little bit? If you can't lighten up, then we try to be light about that. You know, okay. It's hopeless. And I guess I have to accept that it's hopeless. And that helps. As opposed to fighting you know that to sew into becoming familiar with what's here without trying to make anything happen. Just familiar. Maybe it takes you a minute to do that maybe takes you five minutes, just become familiar with what's here. Once you kind of recognize what's here for you at this time in this place, then one of the important training To the mind that we do is beginning to help calm the mind further develop some degree of concentration. And the primary place we do that is with the breath. So we cultivate both concentration and mindfulness on the breathing. And there's a variety of places where you could connect your attention to the process of breathing. Well, one of them is feeling the breath, feeling movements of the belly. As you breathe in and out. Feel what happens in your belly as you move in it as it moves there can be helpful to feel it down here for a number of reasons. One reason is it's kind of reminds you of which low center gravity helps you be kind of grounded, to feel the breath and kind of just below the belly button. Feel the movement to happen. Now, the reason is that many people keep their bellies tense, and if you keep your attention down here, it's a bit easier to keep that fairly kind of relaxed as you meditate. Another place to feel the breath is in the chest area. Some people like to feel it, they're in other places to feel it as the air goes in now through the nostrils, the temperature change, coolness as you breathe in the warmth as you breathe out. Some people like to feel the breath and other ways of breathing other ways, kind of the whole breath, body feeling of the whole body breathing, kind of like a, like a bellows that goes in and out. You feel the whole, you know, breathing in and out your whole body kind of expanding and contracting. Some people like that feeling of all body feeling of breathing. But what we're training ourselves to pay attention to is not the breath per se, we

often say, globally, pay attention to the breath. We're paying attention to the sensations in the body, as the body breathes, what we're paying attention to how the body experiences breathing. How does your body experience breathing, or experiences as expansion and contraction as movement as he can coolness various ways. And so we're trying to, then we try to whatever way you're feeling, experiencing the Breath any of those for any other way, then trying to maintain some continuity and consistency. He's tried to stay there with many breaths over a period of time. So I just kind of touch in with a breath briefly and then mind wanders off, but stay there and try to hang in there. So we have continuity with a series of breaths in a row. Now, this is a training in both mindfulness and concentration, and relaxation. And one of the primary ways we can relax deeply, is beginning to let go of a preoccupation with our thinking. Mostly, if you pay careful attention, most stress that we feel has to do with the ways in which we relate to our thoughts, to our ideas. And we, you know, suddenly have some thoughts about your boss. And suddenly you start feeling that those thinking about your boss creates a lot of tension and tightness. Maybe your stomach gets tight, and you start feeling angry. Well, you've related to that thought and take it away, you've grabbed on to it, you've caught by it, if you don't get caught by your thinking, if you can just let it go, then the chain effect that gets put into place by having gone to those, you know, Boss thoughts, doesn't have a chance to get set in motion. Once it gets set in motion, you can go quite far. And so coming back to the breath. Whenever you notice your mind has wandered off, coming back to the breath, is a training in learning to let go of preoccupations with thoughts. And don't under underestimate the tremendous value of letting go of a thought of thinking process, thinking preoccupation, you might come second later, half a second later, you're back at your thinking. But the fact that you could let go a little bit is so counter to how the mind usually operates. Usually, for most of your lifetime. Your mind has had free rein And, you know, wild animals have had free rein, or wild kids who've, you know, been spoiled. You know, it's kind of hard to kind of get them, you know, disciplined or focused. So you mind basically had a free rein to do whatever it wants to think and follow whatever thought it has. And so it's a, it's a, it's a, you know, it's, it's a big change to begin, not letting the mind have a free rein. And beginning, taking your precious attention is wonderful capacity for awareness and directing it back to the breath, letting go and going back to the breath. You might feel that it's hopeless, you come back to the breath and you flip off right away. But if you just keep it up, keep it up, keep it up, you will actually discipline the mind much faster than it took to become undisciplined to begin with. And actually, the mind can be trained, it might take weeks, months or even some years, but some of you have been doing this for decades, you know, you're giving the mind free reign. So it actually goes relatively fast. If you compare the two, you know timeframes. That make sense. But I said, Okay, So don't underestimate the power of just letting go and coming back. And so the more you can stay with the breath, the more we're undoing, that the magnetic force, the stickiness the attachments that are there, to our thinking mind, the activities of thinking, grab, grabbing on to our thoughts and churning away more and more thoughts. As we stop being preoccupied with our thoughts, just to that tends to relax the body, the mind tends to relax. Because as I said, most of our stress is connected to the way in which we are attached to our thinking, the way in which we get involved to grab on to our thinking. So as we relaxed the thinking mind now so coming back to the breath and coming back to the breath over and over again to hang in there with a breath is a training that's relaxing. It also is a way of cultivating mindfulness. As we begin feeling the

breath experiencing the breath. The idea is to become familiar with the experience of breathing. What's this? Like? What's the simple experience of breath? Like? Where do we feel the movement was the shape and form of that movement? Where do we feel the tightness, attentions of the tightness of breathing where we feel? They the warmth, the coolness? Where do we feel the pressure, what do we feel when we breathe, start noticing those things, train the mind, to start noticing the details of what's happening in the present moment. It's a way of training the mind. Some people will protest and say well, the breath seems so mundane. So you know unspiritual even though the word spiritual has the word, breath in it, I say so unspiritual to just follow the breath. I liked it that that word spiritual in Inspiration as the Latin word for breath and as the root of both words, like the respiring right spot. So some people complain that breath is so you know, unspiritual the breath is a very profound vehicle for training the mind. First of all, it doesn't have to be special. What we're doing is we're, you know, those weights in the gym, something special about those weights, right? They're pretty simple pieces of iron or something. But they're very effective for training the muscles. The breath is very effective for training the mind, strength, strength in the mind, for concentration in mindfulness. It has the virtue of being repetitive, and has the virtue of constantly shifting and changing. If you were going to try to focus your attention on one spot, one thing and now that the mind waver move not to at all. It's actually a very hard task to do. It's actually easier to develop concentration on something which is moving change. With the rhythmic way, so this wave like quality of the breath coming and going the breathing, expansion and contraction, I think it's actually easier for the mind to stay focused with a kind of following. Something's kind of changing and moving. The breath is also very closely connected to our psychology to our emotional life. And so we learn a lot about ourselves as we connect to the breath. You'll notice how the breathing changes in different circumstances, when you're upset to breathe one way when you're deeply relaxed, you breathe another way. So it's a way of learning about yourself and how you breathe. And as you stay with your breath, it tends to relax the breath tends to lubricate our body or mind or feelings because as we breathe mindfully tends to allow the breath to relax and become more of a natural breath, more of a at ease breath. And that has tremendous benefits, for health, for psychological well being for all kinds of things, to begin relaxing and having easy natural breath that we kind of stay with. As we began getting a little bit more concentrated, a little more relaxed at ease in the meditation, and the mind will sooner or later wander off again, once again, into its thoughts. Now once you start getting a little more relaxed, what it's helpful to do is not just let go of your thinking right away, but acknowledge that you were thinking, Oh, I was thinking, just a little acknowledgement, oh. So you know, that's what's happening. And then you can let go and come back. There's some kind of recognizing of what's happening while it's happening. And then in that recognizing beginning to have some wisdom, about the thinking mind, a story. A desperate meditator came to the great master and said, I just can't control my thinking mind. Everything. I try. I'm gay I try everything I do about it and I try to stop those thoughts. I try to push them away. I tried to do this and that with them and all those things nothing seems to help. It's the Master says, oh, there's something very simple you can do. Oh, the key the final simple solution to that crazy mind in mind. And the Master says don't think about the monkey. Wow, that's all I have to do is not think about the monkey. Great. So he sits down to meditate. Okay, I'm not supposed to think about the monkey. I'm not supposed to think about the monkey. I'm not supposed to think about the monkey, that monkey. That's

monkey that's always jumping around and that monkey that's always kind of, you know, yelling and monkeys and post monkeys are so noisy and there's just one monkey like two monkeys. Three monkeys, just so noisy monkeys and, and, you know, in what shape are these monkeys? And what color are they supposed to be and those monkeys and boy, those monkeys are noisy they seem to be, you know, jumping on the roof of my house and now they seem to be in my room and the jumping up in my desk and seems like a whole you know a bunch of those monkeys all over and finally meditator opens his eyes to our monkeys all over my room what's going on so that he goes back to the master, which is what's going and gave me this instruction and just became terrible and kind of you know, the monkeys I moved in. And the Master says something like Well, there's actually a lesson the best thing to do about your thoughts is not to engage them, just ignore them. If you start thinking about your thoughts and engaging in them, it just they just multiply get bigger and bigger. Just kind of bury bury yourself in your negotiations. One of the wisest thing to do with thinking mind Not be concerned about it, yet be concerned enough not to be caught by it. Come back to the breath. But don't try to engage it too much. Don't try to fix it, don't try to judge it. Don't try to just kind of let it be. And, and don't be bothered by your thinking mind. It's one of the wisest instructions I've ever heard. Don't be bothered by your thinking mind. The best you can, you'll be bothered, but no instructions, don't be bothered. So try to be lightened up a little bit. And just come back. Just let it be as it is, come back, come back, be with a breath. And that's a training for many people. That's a very useful training, to begin letting go that preoccupation with the thinking mind. The practice of mindfulness is to notice what's happening as it's happening. It's easier to notice what's happening if you develop some calm, some focus and relaxation as we do it. So, but we don't limit ourselves just to the breath. So as we'd be Getting little bit stabilized, a bit present a little more calm because we're staying with the breath, then we become interested in whatever else is going on in our experience. And the way we get interested, is we start noticing, when something else becomes more compelling than our breath. When something in our experience becomes more compelling the breath that represents in a sense, something important that's happening in our experience. So when, when something more compelling is happening in the breath, we let go of the breath. And then we bring our attention, to pay attention to become familiar to recognize, to notice what it is it's going on. So if it's physical experience in your body, often it's discomfort for people who are new to meditation, or maybe some pleasure in your body. And it's more compelling than the breath. Just you feel a little tension with your ability to stay with a breath with this kind of physical sensations. Then you bring your attention and carefully attend to those physical sensations developing your mind from us, they're paying attention to them. It can be very helpful in certain situations to attend to the physical experience of your body. It's stress reducing, it can help sometimes with pain, it can help in many different ways. It also develops a capacity to notice your body, the body, as it is a repository of tremendous amount of intelligence, a tremendous amount of information about our lives. And as we begin becoming more embodied feeling our body, that information becomes more available. Sometimes the emotions become more compelling the breath or emotional life than the instructions to let go of the breath. And then become familiar with what emotions are going on, and attend to those in a wise way. Sometimes our thinking mind is the monkeys are just like out of control. And it's much more compelling their ability to come back to the breath over and over again. And then we need to learn to bring wise attention to the thinking mind,

there's a whole way of doing that, noticing that. Sometimes it's the external world, which is really loud noise. And so then we learn how to open the attention to noise and include that as part of the mindfulness meditation. For some people, that's a training then, and learning how not to be caught by those sounds, not to be reacted to the sounds or the experiences around them. As we do this training, paying attention to what's here, paying attention to our feelings, our body, our thoughts, or experiences of the world. The first one of the first things I said, keeps reapplying How can we hold this in a wise way? How can we have an attitude towards it? We're more accepting of it or less in conflict with it. How can we, you know, be wise in our presence for this experience? So we might have very ugly emotions. And the first task is, how can I hold this in a way that's wise? How can I be more not in conflict with it? How can I not be critical? or How can I not interpret this as a personal failing, we're just going to hold it there in a very spacious, generous, generous kind of way. So over and over again, the training is becoming familiar with what's here, familiar with the mind, training the mind. And the first part of training is the attitude in which we hold what we know in training, the mindfulness of concentration, and then the last is freeing the mind. So when we start noticing that we're clinging to something, can we let go, sometimes we can let go easily. Sometimes will, will fight tooth and nail so we do not let go. The mind doesn't want to let go. Sometimes, we let go after a lot of careful attention we've learned since we studied phenomena really carefully Sometimes we go when our trust is really deep. Sometimes you let go when our insight is really deep. And there's varieties of ways in which we can let go, it leads to letting go. Letting Go leads to the freeing of the mind. And the freeing of the mind is also a freeing of awareness. A freeing so the awareness becomes like the Lotus that's blossoming in muddy waters. So the awareness becomes something that's all encompassing, radiant, transparent, translucent, has no boundaries, has no limits, has no before and after. So the awareness that the kind of awareness we each of us has now in this room, sitting here in this spacious room, listening to my voice, or listening to your own inner voices right now. Whatever it might be, that there's something in the quality of your awareness, when they were that they weren't can be set free. And it's one of the greatest things that exists in this world is awareness set free. It's also one of the greatest gifts we can give to others. Because when we set awareness free, then we can meet the world with an open heart, with an open mind, and with an open hand, and the world needs people who have all three. So, I hope that was helpful or useful to kind of give us an overview of the practice we do. And, of course, there's a lot more details to the instructions that are can be given. You know, many of you know that I do a five week introductory course where I go through five weeks over the details of this practice much more fully. But in the essence and in essence, you're supposed to be become your own teacher in this practice, so you can take a five week course you could read books know that. But in the end, you need to become your own teacher. And the vehicle for being your own teacher, is your capacity to notice is your capacity to pay attention. So, and once we start using that capacity to pay attention, we enter into a whole big universe of things to explore and become aware of. No, nobody can tell you a formula or fix technique. This is what you do, do ABCD and you'll become enlightened. Just do these things. What you do is you begin becoming your own teacher, by learning to use your own capacity for paying attention. And as you use your capacity to pay attention, you become creative. You become intuitive, he become wise, the best You can and knowing where to direct your attention, what needs attention in a given time. Okay thank you very much.