

Buddhist Meditation: Mindfulness Practice (2 of 7)

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So, good evening, and I wanted to continue on the topic from last week, but for those of you who weren't here last week, I talked about mindfulness, and I tried to discuss it. But the nature of mindfulness, then, I like to continue with a discussion a bit about mindfulness practice and how that fits in the wider context of Buddhist practice. I ended last week's talk by saying that in the practice of mindfulness, something like the practice of mindfulness is a great adventure, and it can be a kind of surprising thing to people to think that mindfulness and also meditation can open up worlds, open up vast realms of human experience that are bigger and vaster and more interesting than, you know, travelling the world. You know, all kinds of other things you can do. Sometimes when people don't know anything about meditation, they think meditation is somehow a very narrow aspect of human life, and spending a lot of time meditating is a kind of narrowing your life rather than making it bigger.

And now, I think this is a little bit like an hourglass, you know. You go into the hourglass at the top, and it gets narrower for a while, and then at some point you go through that narrow little passage, and then it opens up again, and it turns out that the open up part is actually much bigger, this hourglass much bigger than the top part. So mindfulness is multi-faceted. It has many different aspects. And it's best not to have one definition or one idea of what it is, not because often mindfulness, when it's presented and discussed, is often discussed implicitly, without telling you. That is, it's often discussed together with other mental factors, other aspects of the mind, as if they're almost the same thing, or there is no distinction being made.

So because all the things that mindfulness is associated with are always shades and varieties of mindfulness. But in thinking about all the different aspects of mindfulness, for those people who like adventure, mindfulness offers a great process of discovery and adventure. For

those people who like protection, playing it safe, mindfulness provides a great protection. For those people who just want lots of joy, mindfulness practice can open up to lots of joy. For those people who want to understand, mindfulness practice can open to all new areas of understanding. So mindfulness has many doors, or its many different aspects are like a jewel with many different sides.

And depending on what side you look at, you might see different things. It might do different things for you. And each of you is a different kind of person, with different tendencies, different abilities, different kinds of doors or angles. You look at and relate to this wonderful jewel of mindfulness. And so some of the sides of the jewel might not speak to you, and other sides might. So there's many sides to the jewel.

And as I said last week, mindfulness has become extremely popular in the modern West, in America especially. Some of you probably came here through mindfulness as a basis for production programmes at some of the local hospitals. Sometimes, at the end of those eight-week programmes, they refer people here. And so mindfulness has found its way into the popular American culture. It has particular meanings in that kind of context. Sometimes that's different than what it is in the Buddhist one, in its essence, or maybe I should say "essence."

But one of the basic ways of discussing what mindfulness is in the Buddhist tradition, the early Buddhist tradition, is it means holding something in your mind, holding something in your attention. So, you know, if you want to go to the store and buy milk, you'll have to remember to do that. So you have to be mindful. Hold in mind the fact that you are required to buy milk. So when you get to the store, you don't wonder, "What am I doing here?" And in a lot of situations in life, it's helpful to keep something in mind while you're doing it, to be mindful, keep it in attention.

Many years ago, I went to see the symphony in San Francisco, and the thing that stood out the most for me during the first half was my inability to really be present for the music. As you know, it was a great thing, but my mind was all over, wandering off, thinking about other things. And when I finally got into the room, then I was watching an orchestra and just making endless commentary about the people I saw playing the music, and I wasn't really listening to the music. But as I went, that was kind of a sloppy way of using the music. And I don't know what else I was thinking, but I could notice that I wasn't really taking in the music. So I closed my eyes, and with my eyes closed and without the distractions of the visual field, then I could take in the music.

I could hold the music in my mind. I could be mindful. That's kind of holding that part of my

experience, holding it in awareness in a certain way, or taking it in a certain way. And that was an act of mindfulness, to take it in. That meant hold that as the focus of my attention. Or, I don't know if this is a good example, but a few times I got massages, and for me it notes the difference between the effect the massage has on me if I just let my mind wander and hardly know what I'm getting versus when I'm really there and put my attention right there where the masseuse's hands are on my body.

Somehow that seems to have the impact, the effect of the hand seems to go deeper into my body and have a wonderful effect if I really put my attention to what's happening when I get the massage. So again, that's a process of holding something in mind. You make a decision: it's useful to let my mind be directed in this way, or take in this part of my experience. And there's a huge range of things we could take in human life. So it's a decision to take, to limit and hold something in mind. For many people who do mindfulness practice, one of the things we're told to hold in mind is the present moment.

And so the present moment, of course, is huge, but at least to hold in mind the present, take in the present, limit the activity of the mind, so you really know what's going on in the present moment. So that's being mindful of the present moment. And then, of course, there is a whole big range of things you can be aware of in the present moment, but still you can be present for something of the present moment. So this holding something in mind, or letting the mind take in something that's happening, is mindfulness, or holding, or so closely connected to memory in Buddhism. So to remember something also means to hold something in mind. To remember the shopping list, hold that in mind.

To remember a teaching you've heard, you hold that in your mind. Be mindful of a teaching. So often I encourage, and it's good to learn some of the teachings and hold them in your mind so they can be useful at different times. So you hold in mind, you are mindful of loving-kindness, loving-kindness. And you can be mindful of, you can be mindful of the teachings of impermanence. You can be mindful of the variety, all the different kinds of teachings we have about mindfulness practice.

So "you're mindful of" means to hold it in mind. That's a little bit different meaning than the narrower understanding of mindfulness practice, which is often seen to be non-discursive. You do not must be thinking about anything but to let go of all your concepts and ideas and just be present for this moment as it actually is. But in the Buddhist tradition, there's no sharp line between, you know, memory and thinking and conceptualization and pure non-conceptual experience. So mindfulness is—the word mindfulness in Buddhism includes a range of how we use our mind. And what is held in common in all these ranges is holding

something in mind, if that makes sense.

Those of you here last week, if that more or less kind of makes sense, what I said last week didn't contradict myself. So also, for those people interested in liberation, mindfulness is helpful. You might find it has so many different functions for different interests people have. So it should be, you know, you should be at the edge of your seat right now, so interested. I'm sure some of you are bored and want to leave here. We have a few people leaving already.

So a very important distinction made in Buddhism is the difference between mindfulness and mindfulness practice. Mindfulness is a function of the mind, activity of the mind, particular functioning of the mind, holding something in mind, and mindfulness practice is something much wider, something more specific or bigger than mindfulness. And so, I don't know what is a good example of something like this. Like swimming and swimming practice are two different things, right? You know, if you're running and the practice of running are two different things, because anybody, almost anybody—I shouldn't say it—a lot of people can run, but if you tell people you have a practice of running, that brings up another association, that a person who runs every day, they probably are training in a certain way to develop their capacities. They're probably, you know, getting ready for a race or something, right?

As soon as you add the word practice, it implies other things besides just the running. So mindfulness practice implies other things than just mindfulness. And so if we turn to the discourse the Buddha gave called the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, or the Four Applications of Mindfulness—I like the translation "Four Applications of Mindfulness" because when you are, we have this thing called mindfulness, and it can be applied in particular ways and for the purpose of liberation. The Buddha suggested there are four basic applications of mindfulness, which is really useful to do. You could apply the mindfulness, your attention, to all kinds of areas in human life. There are so many things you know, and pay attention to the symphony, you know, to television, to the traffic, you know.

You can do all kinds of things. And the Buddha actually—maybe it's not so useful to pay attention to certain things for the purpose of liberation, but rather you can apply it in a particular area. And he said there are four areas of application which are really well suited if what you want is liberation. So mindfulness practice, then, in Indian Buddhist tradition, is—one of the meanings is to apply it in these four areas of our life. And I'll tell you in a few minutes what they are. But the other thing is that it's using mindfulness—mindfulness practice is also using mindfulness in a particular way.

It's using it in a particular way. And there are three qualities that you're supposed to use when you practise mindfulness. One is mindfulness itself. The second is a wonderful word

translated into English as "ardency": to be ardent, to be, you know, ardent. You have some kind of ardent energetic quality, ardent energy, kind of enthusiasm, some kind of engagement. Being a couch potato is not what the Buddha recommended.

You know, you can't just come in with a serious engagement in what you're doing—ardency, being ardent. And the other is the aspect of clear knowing. So here is a distinction being made between mindfulness and clear knowing, where mindfulness is the holding something in mind, and clear knowing is the clear understanding of what it is that you are looking at. And often when we talk about mindfulness here in California, we conflate these two meanings so that they seem like we talk of the same, not the same thing—kind of being aware and being—we use all these words like awareness and mindfulness and attention and knowing almost as synonyms, whereas in the teachings of the Buddha there are shades of difference or differences between these different words. So these three qualities of holding, of mindfulness, ardency, and clear knowing. So mindfulness practice involves all three of those.

So if you understand mindfulness practice, you have to hear ardency. The Pāli word is—maybe you've heard it—*tapas*. Some of you know the word *tapas*, or no, actually it comes from *tapas*. It's a *tapa*. So *tapas* has a fit meaning of kind of fire, spirit. So those three qualities, and in the Four Applications of Mindfulness, are the four areas that are particularly useful to apply your mindfulness.

It's particularly useful to apply your mindfulness in the area of your physical body. It's particularly useful to apply your mindfulness to the area of your feeling tones. And it's particularly useful to apply your mindfulness to the state of your mind. And it's particularly useful to apply your mindfulness to the mental qualities and factors and aspects and patterns that go on in your mind. The Buddha said—I think I said this last week—that if some animals leave their habitat, he called it their pasture, then they can be in danger. So, you know, if a white rabbit leaves the snow and goes out into, you know, a green forest, its whiteness will stand out, and some animals can come and grab it.

So if you leave your habitat where you can know the area, you can be safe. But if you leave your habitat, you might be exposed and there's danger. So you shouldn't leave your habitat. The word the Buddha used: you shouldn't leave your pasture. The proper pasture for a monastic or for someone—a practitioner—is these four areas of one's own life. If you want to be safe, if you want to apply it, apply your attention, keep your attention close in.

I'll have the expression "close in to yourself, close in." And now to really know what's going on at the level of your body, what's going on at the level of your feeling tones, what's going on at the level of your mental state, and what's going on at the level of what's happening in

your mind. And so, you know, you can save yourself a lot of trouble and you can get a lot of information of what's going on. If you fall in touch with your body, you can find out a lot of what's going on by being aware of your state of your mind. And you can protect yourself dramatically by not making big mistakes, by not acting in certain ways when your mind state is dangerous, when it's in the grip of hate or ill will. So these four areas, the four applications, are the proper pasture for practitioners there.

That which creates safety for us, and also it's what keeps us from—it's also what helps us move in the direction of liberation. So when the Buddha talked about mindfulness practice, he didn't talk about just choiceless awareness—just be aware of everything freely, you know, what's happening at present moment. He actually suggested that you actually narrow your attention to particular areas of your life where it's most useful to pay attention. And in that spirit, he suggested, when you sit down to your mindfulness practice, that you turn your attention around. This is my interpretation: turning around 180 degrees from your concerns with the world so that you can feel intimately what's happening here. And again, in my interpretation of it here, in the subjective experience, we can—you know, we certainly shouldn't ignore the world or not pay it—you shouldn't deny it. That's not the implication at all here.

But in order to deny the domain—to go forward with mindfulness practice is to develop a heightened sensitivity to what's happening in this psychophysical being here, in this kind of what I have been calling "closing in." So the expression is, "I am." The meditator puts aside their greed and distress for the world. That's the instruction. If you want to do mindfulness practice, you are to put aside greed and distress for the world. For some people, it's a paradoxical oxymoron kind of statement because it's because I have greed and distress for the world that I need to practise mindfulness, and now you're telling me I have to get rid of it so I can practise it. That's silly.

As I interpret it, we have to understand: in order to do the mindfulness practice, there has to be a willingness to turn the attention away from, at that moment, being concerned with things out there. What he did to me yesterday—you can't believe that, you know, and you go on forever thinking about him. That's being concerned about the world, distressed with the world. But if you turn your attention 180 degrees and feel what it's like to be distressed, then you've turned. Then you've put aside—my interpretation—you've put aside that preoccupation with the world, and bring your attention in here to the immediacy of where you can discover safety, understanding, freedom. Make sense?

So, you know, perhaps it's not so much different—if I'm allowed a comparison—if you want to take up the practice of running, you have to put aside your attachment to the couch. Now, of

course, the couch could complain and say, "You don't love me. You don't care about me." And in fact, after you come back from your run and you have good tone and good strength and lots of energy, you might actually clean the couch, and the energy for it, you know, it comes back and benefits the couch. But if you stayed on the couch and loved the couch, and just stayed there, you wouldn't have the energy to do anything, and the couch is more grungy. So in the same way, by turning away from the world temporarily and learning how to take care of what's going on here, then we can come back in a renewed way and take care of the world in a more helpful and effective way.

So it's going to get more interesting. Mindfulness practice in the West often has—there's a rhetoric or reputation that mindfulness practice is a practice that's radically different from concentration practice. In fact, sometimes I teach an Introduction to Mindfulness class, and occasionally I teach an Introduction to Concentration class. In separating out those two practices, there are benefits in doing that, and I'll admit there's some problems in making that separation. And when you look at the teachings of the Buddha, it doesn't seem like he makes a sharp distinction between these two practices. They shade into each other, they support each other.

And in fact, it may be more useful to think of mindfulness and concentration as two different functions of the mind. So, for example, one function of the mind is to process hearing. Another function of the mind is to process seeing. And maybe, if you're hyper-attentive, you can say all you want to do one at a time. But in the normal kind of life, both functions are going on for most people, right? And some of you are looking at me, and some of you are hearing me, and you're taking it all in, and it's part of what's going on here.

So in the same way, mindfulness and concentration are two different faculties of the mind, functions of the mind that can operate simultaneously, even though there are differences between them. So when the Buddha discussed mindfulness practice, as far as I can tell, he tended to use language of seeing, using the mind's eye. You hold something in the mind's eye. You see something. And a cultivation of mindfulness involves seeing. So a lot of examples of how seeing is an aspect of mindfulness.

In a concentration practice, the language that's often given is not that of seeing, but much more the language of feeling and sense of feeling, of physical sensations, of sensing or touch. Actually, the word "touch" is often used when talking about concentration practice. So touch is something physical, something you do with your body. Concentration practice is a faculty that has a lot to do with being in touch with your body, at least initially, and mindfulness has a lot to do with this opening, this mind's eye. And so both those things can happen together.

Just as, for example, if I am getting a massage, I can take my mind's eye, my understanding, my awareness, my mindfulness, and hold it there where the hands are.

And at the same time, I can be aware of these wonderful feelings that are happening in my body right there, you know, the delight, the pleasure that's going on there. So those two faculties of being able to feel that pleasure and be in touch with the body and to know that's happening while it's happening can happen at the same time, right? So on these Four Applications of Mindfulness, when we learn to do it well and really get into it, learn to turn away from concern from the world enough to really see what's going on here, be present for what's going on here, that in itself leads to the development of concentration, because you begin to concentrate and focus on something—not just anything at all, but on something. And as the concentration, as a practice of mindfulness, develops and develops, it's not meant to be separate from developing concentration, but concentration seems to kind of occur in the wake of that, and is considered to be very important to have concentration developed in the wake of it. Not everyone teaches mindfulness that way, and some people actually will teach particular concentration techniques to build up high concentration, which in some ways can bypass the Four Applications of Mindfulness. But in the classic description, the translation is, as the application of mindfulness deepens, it comes with the development of concentration.

So not only—the kind of heightened mind that meditation provides is a heightening of mindfulness and a heightening of our capacity to be concentrated. Now, concentration in English, for many people, has strong associations with kind of one-pointedness of mind. "I'm going to hold my mind like a laser on something." That's what concentration is. And in the Buddhist tradition, as I interpret it or understand it, it's probably better to call the word *samādhi* "composure" than it is to call it concentration. Certainly one-pointedness is an aspect of *samādhi*, but a big part of *samādhi* is a unification of all our different functions and faculties. So all the aspects of who we are working in harmony are unified and composed together, converge together on doing the same thing at the same time.

And it doesn't take a lot of self-understanding to realize that our minds and bodies and hearts and feelings are often going in all kinds of different directions. We're often fragmented as people. So you might sit down with a great sense of purpose here. "This is really important. I finally got here and could meditate. This is important, you know, enlightenment robust. Nothing else is, and nothing else is less important for me than this." And then you sit down, and you start thinking about what you can have for dinner.

And that's maybe even a good example, you know, and what's going on. You know, this was so important, you know. And it's really embarrassing for most of us—not all of you, I know—

but it's really embarrassing to notice what goes on in our minds. And you know, you can know in spite of this great noble intentions we have. So our intentions are to be present, and the mind has something else in mind, and so it's a split that's kind of sort of fragmented, and there can be multiple fragmentation. For example, you could sit down here with your purpose to sit and meditate. Your mind is going off in the direction of dinner, but you had this huge argument at work today.

And so the anger you feel is still kind of in your pores, in your cells, in your body, and it just kind of this mood that just permeates everything you do. And so that mood of anger is still there, that's also kind of at cross purposes with your attempt to be here in an equanimous way. So our feelings, our emotions, can be going in one direction. Our thoughts can go in other directions, our intentions in other directions. And probably all kinds of other things can go, you know. And you're lucky just to have one thought direction your mind wants to go, you know, sometimes it's like a lot of different things, always concerns now.

So part of the function of concentration practice is to begin healing those fragmentations, and to unify our psychophysical being so that it's not at cross purposes with ourselves, but our whole being. Everything about us is oriented and moving in the same direction, is oriented in the same way, lined up, all kinds of heading in the same direction. It's like, instead of having a car that has four wheels, and each wheel has a different idea of where to go, you have a car—all four wheels are going in the same direction, and the car goes in a nice way. So the function, part of the purpose of concentration practice, is involved—it involves this unification, this composure. So our physical body is composed for the purpose of meditation. I've meditated sometimes and felt this tremendous urge in my legs to bolt. "Let's get out of here." And I'm not composed then, you know, I'm not really here.

And then also bring together our emotional life, our emotional life is supportive, and actually part of the process of being concentrated in our mental life as well. So it's all brought together into harmony. And when that harmony happens, it's a delight. It's really wonderful. And you just feel kind of whole. You feel complete. You feel a healthy sense of wholeness or well-being that arises. It can be painful to be at cross purposes with oneself, and to give you maybe a little bit of a sense of this, I think that maybe most of you, I hope most of you, had the experience of engaging in something that really had your interest.

And, you know, maybe doing a hobby or reading a good book or something. It really captured your interest, and you were so involved in this. Your mind didn't stop thinking, necessarily, but your thoughts were about this, and your attention—you know, so much so that maybe someone called your name, and you couldn't really hear them because you're so engaged in

this thing that you are doing. And in that kind of sense of well-being that can well up in that kind of rapt interest. In fact, that rapt interest sometimes can give birth to a sense of rapture, and the joy, the delight can actually be quite strong when the rapt interest is strong enough. So it's one thing to have rapt interest in something that's inherently compelling. It's another to have rapt interest on the breath, you know, in my body, you know, this fragmented life of mine.

And so it's a big training to develop the capacity to be present enough for the harmonization, the composure to happen, the unification to happen, and to get into this place with rapt interest in what we're doing in meditation. One of the signs that this rapt attention is beginning to happen, develop, is that the five hindrances have fallen away. And the five hindrances are the hindrances of sensual desire, the hindrance of ill will, the hindrance of sloth and torpor, the hindrance of anxiety and restlessness, and the hindrance of doubt. And these are said to be five particularly strong forces in the mind that can operate even on its very subtle levels of the mind that keep the mind fragmented, that keep the mind going out, disappearing, not being present, not staying here. And one of the huge tasks of any meditator is to overcome these hindrances. And that can take a long time. It takes a lot of understanding.

In fact, when I teach about the hindrances, I tell people that one of the very important tasks is to really understand the hindrances really well. And for that to happen, you have to have hindrances. And so, don't be in a rush to get rid of them. Don't feel like it's a personal failing, or be impatient. But actually, if they're happening to you, take them up as the subject of study so you can really understand how desire works for you, really understand it well and deeply, how ill will really works for you. Because if you understand it deeply and well, it's easier to become free of it. If you don't understand it well, then it's easier for hooks to grab you and lead you astray.

So take your time, be very patient, do the homework. But eventually the hindrances no longer trouble you. You somehow overcome the hindrances enough so that in meditation you are free of them. The freedom from the hindrances is said to produce a certain kind of joy, a particular kind of joy. Some people ought to be reminded to feel that joy, but it's a kind of relief, well, and finally not the kind of being pulled around by the nose by these hindrances. And finally I have some mastery, some control over my own mind, and now my mind is wieldable. He said that in English: I can wield it, it's rightly wieldy. My mind is wieldy. And a mind can be used, rather than the mind using you.

Now, the mind can be used, and it doesn't require, you know, just some, you know, greed or hate to engage it. It's engaged because the natural capacity of mind is soft, malleable, and

wieldy. And so there's some kind of delight that gets born from that kind of mastery of the mind. And then, as the practice deepens further, there are increasing levels of concentration that can happen that give birth to increasing levels of delight and happiness. The mindfulness practice is needed in order to develop concentration. The concentration is needed to develop mindfulness. This is not a paradox. What it means is that you start off with mindfulness, and mindfulness helps to develop the composure, the concentration. And as the concentration develops, then you can take your mindfulness to a new level, to a deeper level, more mature level.

When mindfulness goes to a more mature level because it's yoked together with concentration, because the concentration is there together with the mindfulness, then it's possible to open up to the pose. The *vipassanā* is sometimes translated into English as insight or clear seeing. And often *vipassanā* is treated as another one of those synonyms with mindfulness. "I do mindfulness practice. I do *vipassanā* practice—all the same, right?" *Vipassanā* is not a practice. *Vipassanā* means insight. It's the result of practice. And when there's strong concentration and strong mindfulness, then that itself almost naturally can open up to insight; we begin understanding more clearly what's going on in a deep way.

And one of the reasons why concentration is needed for this is that as we get more concentrated, it begins to thin out our thinking. I don't think I have ever thought about this, but we can think in different degrees of intensity, different strengths. Thinking can be really powerful and loud and pounding away in your mind. Or thinking can be really soft and light. Thinking can seem really substantial, like the most important thing in the world. And thinking can seem so ephemeral that it's like not even there. You feel like you can almost put your hand right through. It's like clouds, not clouds. And as concentration deepens, part of its function is to begin to thin away, to thin out the thoughts. It can be hard to let the thoughts stop entirely, but to have the thoughts thin out, and you actually feel it in your mind. They get thinner and thinner, weaker and weaker. And they might not have stopped, but they get weaker and weaker. And then eventually, at some point, certainly, regular discursive thinking stops entirely in deep states of concentration.

So when concentration and mindfulness are joined together, then there's a possibility for *vipassanā* or insight. So I feel like that's enough for today. We can take a few minutes for questions, and if this topic seems interesting for you, and most of you stayed, then I thought maybe next week I could talk more about concentration, because I just scratched the surface. And then the following week maybe we can talk more about *vipassanā*. So I've got a bill right as we go through these weeks. Does that interest you? So we have five minutes if anyone has

any questions you'd like.

Yes, further on you, is it on? In the beginning of your talk, I had said there were three things. Is it on? Yes, I am now, the old closer I'm. There were three things that are involved with the practice. One was mindfulness, ardency, and then the third one. I came to the conclusion it was a sort of clear idea of what you're focusing on, a clearness about what you're working on. So I'm a little confused between that clear-sightedness and mindfulness. Is mindfulness more about the body in that sense, and clear-sightedness more about not being distracted so much? Would your action work on that regard? Is it?

It's a great question. And of course, you know, I should probably have an answer for you, but I'm a little confused myself. So the distinction that you're making here is between asking about this mindfulness. There are three qualities that come into play when you do mindfulness practice: mindfulness, ardency, and clear knowing. And ardency—that's clear enough, right? An energetic engagement in what you're doing. But what's the difference between mindfulness and clear knowing?

And here in the West, many teachers treat them as synonyms—no difference between them. And now mindfulness can be understood in the early tradition as holding something in mind. So you can hold your breath in mind. That's mindfulness. But what about clear knowing? How is that different? When I look at the discourses of the Buddha and try to understand what he's teaching, I haven't really come to this conclusion, but what is—what he means by *sampajañña*, clear knowing? So I apologize. I should know, but clear knowing, my understanding, involves more than just holding something in mind. But it's a cognitive activity where there's a recognition, a knowing of something. So you don't just hold your attention on the breath, but you know your breath. So, for example, you know that this is an in-breath. You know this is an out-breath. You know this is a short breath. You know this is a long breath. You know that the in-breath involves an expansion. You know the in-breath involves a contraction. So you start knowing something about what you're holding your mind to. And that knowing has a lot of dimensions, a lot you can know. And so that's the best distinction I can make that can help you.

Yes, I was wondering the distinction between when you were talking about focusing on the body and then the emotions, then you said the thought, like the thoughts, and then you said the mental state, and then the thought processes and mental patterns. And I was wondering the distinction between the mental state and the patterns of action, like three? Yes, the third application or foundation of mindfulness is a mental state, the state of your mind, and the fourth is what's called *dhamma* or *dhammas*. And the third is the easiest one to explain. It's

the general state or the mood of your mind or your heart. *Citta*, the word *citta* in Pāli, heart or mind. So you see the general kind of state of mind. So you see someone in the street who is angry. You can just feel the mood just permeates him, and, "Oh, that's," you know, you can feel that mood, or you can feel it in yourself, or you feel very generous, and this mood of generosity in just anybody. You see anybody ready to give things, give into something. So that is a generalized mood. It's kind of like the sum total, gestalt, sum total kind of flavour of the mind at any given time. Now, that sum total flavour is certainly influenced by the factors that are in the mind. So chances are, if there is a mood of anger, chances are there is a factor of anger operating as well.

The fourth foundation or fourth application has to do with focusing on what's called *dhammā* or *dhammas*. And this is focusing on the particular qualities or factors of things that are happening inside the mind, within the mind itself. So it's knowing the hindrances, knowing the functioning of desire—not as a mood, but as a particular factor or functioning of the mind. You see the desire, you recognize it, or ill will. It's recognizing the quality of the mind that grasps, the clinging in the mind. You actually see that clinging. You know the difference between a mind that clings and a mind that doesn't cling. It's seeing the difference between—it's recognizing that as you do this practice, certain particular functions or qualities of mind ripen and develop and mature, and so there's a recognition of these wonderful qualities like mindfulness getting stronger. You recognize joy, tranquility, equanimity, concentration all develop. And so you see these particular qualities of mind operating. And as you see these particular qualities of mind, factors of the mind operating, you also begin understanding something about their patterns, how they work, what brings them about, what are the conditions that cause them to arise, what are the conditions that can make them fall away. So it's also understanding the patterns of the conditioned nature of the factors of the mind. So it's a little more complex, and that makes sense—really more helpful. Yes, we settle for more helpful.

Yes, what you just described for the last, the mental formations—how can that be an application of mindfulness, is to do all of that? That sounds very discursive. That sounds very odd. Yes, so now this would be the seventh factor of aggregation. Or, I mean, it doesn't sound like something you'd be doing as a meditation practice. Now, I suppose that computers are really complex, and you're told, you know, "Be mindful of your computer." And these are all things you want to be mindful of. And you open the computer up. Yes, you're right there. Just, "I can't do this, it's too much." But most people who, you know, study their computer or fix their computers don't just fix the whole thing at once. They focus on particular things—the

hard drive and this and that, right? And so as you go into the computer, certain functions of the computer stand out, become clearer and clearer, and you didn't see them at first, but you see layers and layers maybe. So same thing with us. You don't rush ahead and start looking for things which you know are not evident. But as the practice unfolds and deepens, these things on their own will start standing out with greater and greater clarity.

So once you're able to be more in the present moment and be here, and then the mind starts being settled and concentrated, you'll naturally, because we're becoming aware of the hindrances—I guarantee it, you know. And as I tell you, just—we just tell you, pay attention to what's keeping you from being present, and you'll be aware of the hindrances. So that could be recognizing belief statements or should statements. If you're keeping track of your anger and you start, "Wait a minute, I just saw a should statement go by," it's just like keeping track of one thing at a time that's alive for you. Would that be an example? Yes, it could be. So becoming, being aware of one thing at a time, and then so you begin seeing what's operating. You see how you close, you know how your mind operates, or what the conditions are under which it operates, and you know the operating principles. In a sense, you start seeing that with great clarity. And what people see will, of course, vary from person to person at various levels about how your mind works. Some people are desire types of people, aversion types; they'll see different proportions of those things as they look at their mind. And there are many different things you'll start seeing in your own mind, in different ways you get attached, and different ways you set free. And, you know, joy appears in different ways, in different people, different qualities of joy. So you start seeing more and more. And, no, it's a little bit—yeah, we'll be careful, because we have a psychoanalytical culture. And so we can be very good or very bad—I don't know which word to use here—at being hypersensitive and interested in all these phenomenal nuances of our psychology and our biography and our biology, and you can get an endless amount of time kind of being mindful of so much of this complex world, and it's like a maze you'll never get out of. So sometimes it's useful to know that maybe I should cut through some of this. Maybe some of it's not so useful to pay attention to, even though it seems like I'm learning about myself and gaining insights.

And so when the Buddha gave his Four Applications of Mindfulness, he didn't say you notice your should statements. It could be very wise to do that. It's very helpful in all kinds of situations to do that. But he actually limited the path of practice in a particular way: how strictly it's going to take this limitation, or how generous you're supposed to be in opening it up to other things, you know, how wide the pasture is supposed to be, is an interpretation that people have to discover on their own, what's useful. I've heard some teachers say, you know,

they define the Four Applications of Mindfulness as the area of your body or your feelings, the area of your thoughts or mental state, and then the fourth foundation of mindfulness—that just means everything else. And that's very generous. And then you could also instead take the particular lists that are listed in the fourth foundation, and just kind of narrow your attention to just those aspects. And one of the benefits of that is that there are, for example, many things to be desirous of. And you could maybe spend a lot of time making a catalogue of all things you want, but that might be a waste of your time to be interested in all the different varieties of desire you have. It might be more interesting to cut through it and just say, "This is desire," and see it as desire, rather than be concerned, "I desire what?" It's desire, for its sense. And so with should statements, it might be useful not so much to focus on the should, but rather to focus on the clinging or the aversion that might or might not be part of it. And, I mean, I think anybody who does meditation is operating under a should. I think it's OK. I think it's certainly appropriate at times. I certainly know that some people who meditate discover how oppressive their shoulding is, and so it's helpful to be free of it. But then, but we don't want to get rid of all shoulds—like we should stop soon, right? You would like me to have that thought, "Oh, I don't should anymore." So anyway, I hope this is helpful. I realize it's a lot of information, a kind of conveying a lot of information. My inspiration for giving this talk was not to give information, but somehow to channel the retreat I was on. Two weeks, it was a wonderful, strong two-week retreat, and I thought maybe I'd just give this talk and still be in that mood. But somehow I just feel like I gave a lot of information today. So more next week. Thank you.