So this evening's talk is an important continuation of the series, I've been giving the last two, Monday's. But I think for those of you didn't come, I hope that today will stand on its own as well. The what I've been doing these series is talking about some of the key elements of our meditation practice. And the first evening I talked about mindfulness itself. And mindfulness is often understood as the central practice that we do here. And then last week, I tried to talk to him about the difference between mindfulness and mindfulness practice, as if the differences between running and the practice of running are slightly are two different things. You can be running from, you know, running from the police, you know, and you could be practicing running in three different thing right. And so There's a mindfulness practice, which is broader in scope than just a simple factor of mindfulness. And the mindfulness practice is very closely supported and connected and feeds into what in English is called concentration and concentration practice. And until there's much to be said about the role of concentration in Buddhism, Buddhist practice in this little bit, what I'm going to do tonight is talk about concentration. And its role with mindfulness, how they work together. One quote I want to give you from the Buddha, say early on, so if maybe it'll stick first and I tell you, maybe it'll stick it'll stick. And that is, he said, For someone who is concentrated so someone who is concentrated see things as they are. That concentration, the practice concentration is one of the conditions for seeing things as they are. And seeing things as they are is kind of code word. And Buddhism is very good. It's kind of a expression that's used a lot for insight into reality as it actually is, as opposed to our interpretations or judgments of the conceptual overlay, we might put over things that prevents us from seeing things as they actually are. So the Buddha says, rather than saying that mindfulness is what's going to help you to see how things are, he says, concentration is going to open that door to see how things are. And over and over again, you see in the soup, there's a tremendous emphasis on concentration, and the importance of deep concentration, practice. And down through the ages, on resources, so The English
word concentration does not translate very smoothly back into the ancient language of the Buddha spoke. So, we ended up a little bit of problems because we have English word concentration. For one thing people sometimes in English associated with willpower to forcefully hold my attention, some places active will. And sometimes they have associated concentration with holding the mind still or fixing the mind. And having this fixation of mind as an act of will or as a laser kind of penetrates something. And so when you’re told to concentrate some people will kind of gear up everything and actives mental kind of active focus, as if that's what concentration is. There’s no good word that translates into concentration. And so when we use the word concentration too much, it might kind of misrepresent a little bit the nuances of what the Buddha I have to say there’s a series of words in Pali that they're like concentration. Usually, sometimes sometimes press those concentration. One of them is some matter. And some of that is probably best translated to English as tranquility, or calmness. The other word is Samadhi. And Samadhi I think should be translate a little bit different than concentration, because Samadhi is usually understood to be a state that you’re in. Whereas if concentrations understood as a state, maybe that's okay. But more often than not, I think people think of concentration as an act of a particular function of the mind that concentrates on something the eye looks and concentrates. But Samadhi is a whole holistic state, like a change like a altered state of consciousness that you go into or occurs to you and also somebody is very At least initial stages of it is very much physical in nature as well as mental. And so, I actually like the translation of composure for somebody. And so rather than saying become concentrated me talking about Samadhi, you talked about becoming composed, and just kind of cute also because the etymology of the word Samadhi, in Sanskrit, some means with the means to pose or to stand, is the same etymology is the English word composure. Calm is with poses, pose stand to be composed. There’s a whole new family of words or concepts, which are close synonyms, if not synonyms for somebody or some data that we can say in English. Words like certainly the words like being focused, concentrated, steadied, stabilized. Composed tranquilized come to mind to some of these kinds of words. Another reason why the word concentration is a little bit difficult word to use to translate some of these terms. Because I think for some people, maybe not for many people I don't know who but concentration sometimes seen as a single factor of mind. But actually so like I said, Samadhi is a much broader than that. And it's like an ecosystem that has many kind of elements, many species and plants and animals in it. So I'd like to give you a list from the Buddha actually from sorry quick draft from suttas. of some other factors of mind are some of the factors that come into play. When a person gets concentrated, when a person enters into an absorption of very strong deep concentration Applied attention, sustained attention, rapture, pleasure, unification of mind, feeling, perception, volition, zeal, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention. pretty crowded in there. So often, you know, if you get super concentrated suddenly maybe by accident or something happens, you know, we don't analyze what's going on, it seems like a unified state, you know, hold it safe in itself. But if you can kind of get in there and tease apart all the different things going on in the mind, you see, actually a lot of different things are going on in the mind. And when you get when you get concentrated, just as if you know, simple perception of seeing people in a room seems like an innocent simple thing to do. But if you do an MRI or something of the mind, and see what's going on, you realize that there's a lot of different functioning of the mind that creates the sense of space and distance in people and self another. It's a complicated
thing that goes on. And even though it seems like it's pretty obvious, you know, it couldn't be more obvious right proceeding here in this room. The value of concentration is perhaps seen. By the ways in which we're not concentrated, to be unsettled, can often be quite painful and difficult. And often people want to get settled, they feel unsettled in some way or other and so they try to find some way to get settled and unsettled. It's often difficult to see things as they are, it's difficult sometimes to tap into her. or common sense sometimes difficult tap into our wisdom, it's difficult tap into our compassion or care or love. To be unsettled is not a very pleasant state to be in. To be settled. allows much more of our inner life to flow freely and helpfully allows us to kind of be wiser in our inner life more capable to do what we're going to do to be scattered, and very similar to be unsettled, to be fragmented, or states which are not very comfortable in humans, human being which is scattered or fragmented, often cannot kind of have a primary focus and really get into doing something. Because as soon as you focus on something, the mind is going off somewhere else. And some of you probably noticed that this evening if your mind was somewhat scattered, or fragmented, so if you're if you can sit down the thing I find amazing is I can sit down with tremendous motivation to sit and meditate meditation is you know, this is it. This is really important. This is connected to this great tradition and religion serves a purpose and great goal and this is the most important thing for me in my life. And finally, you can sit down to meditate, this is my chance to really do this. Really noble and wonderful fantastic thing and you know nothing really needs to be done anywhere else you know the dishes have been washed and job has been done I sit down okay as soon as my mind starts thinking about what's for dinner you know or you know who you know who wants to be in the playoffs in baseball right? And I can't believe it you know all this series intention like you know what happened to it I'm thing but dinner menu you know the mind goes off. So your intent or intention is to do one thing, but the mind has a mind of its own. So the mind is scattered or fragmented. Or the minds might be fragmented in many different directions one minute it's determine use the other minute, it's baseball and eliminate. That's what happened in high school. And so the mind is going off in all these different directions, but also our feelings, our emotional emotions, emotional body, might also not cooperate and keeping us here settled in a hole. This time and place, you might have had a difficult day at work. And maybe you came here after someone being really angry with you or yelled at you and frazzled or angry in return. And even though your mind maybe he's not into at work anymore, it's so effective. It's such a big impact on your emotional body, your body, that that emotion of irritation or annoyance might be still there lingering. And so the emotions are kind of going off in the direction of irritation or aversion. The mind is going off thinking about dinner, and you're trying to stay on your breath, because it's a noble thing to do. So your fragment and all these different directions or perhaps you in addition to all that you thought that maybe you know who wants to be in the playoffs in baseball right? 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the practice of unification or harmonizing, unifying, composing, unifying all the different faculties of who we are so that our intentions, our thoughts, or work, or thought, intentions or thinking or emotion
And your physical body are all unified, and, you know, on on track together is supposed to be in different tracks. And when that happens, then we often feel settled. Often that comes with a feeling of deep settle this and relaxation can let go of so much that kind of wants to carry us away. And it can be a great relief to be settled and relaxed in some deep way. So as people do mindfulness practice, and focusing on the breath, focusing on what's going on their experience, they're also cultivating and developing the subteness the focus that they're developing the unification and arriving coming here, letting go of the distractions that pull us away, letting go of these different forces, settling, relaxing, wind, unwinding, calming down. And, in doing that unification work and settling work, the mind becomes more wieldy or malleable. Another word that's used in the tradition is workable, the mind is something you can work you can. It's malleable, it's pliable. A mind which is not concentrated, is said to be a mind that's dry, and brittle. So you know that our mind state of our mind can vary quite a bit. And if it's fragmented or scattered, then it's not very workable. As some of you probably found out today, you can sit down and say, I'm going to sit here and follow my breath. And your mind has a mind of its own. And you try to bring it back. But the mind goes off again, it goes off again goes off again, or the mind has resistances or their mind has fears or worries or judgments, or is hard in some way or has other things going on. But at some point, when you can relax deeply enough, have enough tranquility and calm, then the mind it's kind of like meditation practices a tenderizer of the mind. So the mind Rather than being hard or brittle, becomes very soft. Rather than being like cold beeswax. It becomes these wax which is soft, it's warmed up and it becomes it once you have beeswax which is softened, you can shape it to something beautiful. So once your mind has softened, warmed up, harmonize come together, then you can begin using the mind rather than being used by your mind. Meaning the mind put thoughts for you this way that way. Now you can tell your mind what you want it to do. You should stay here in the breath, stay focused here, then your mind will. And when that happens, it starts becoming a delight. And you're encouraged to enjoy the delight of a subtle mind. Enjoy the life of a mind which is not in conflict with itself or in cross purposes with itself. mind which is this scattered or fragmented going off in many different directions. The mind is really here and ready to do work ready to focus. One of the definitions of a mind like that is a mind in the Buddhist tradition is a mind which is free of the five hindrances. So free of it's free of being caught by sensual desire. Desire for comfort, desire for sensuality, is something that can often you know, pull the mind off in all kinds of directions. I can't sit probably numerate how many times people have told me on meditation retreats, that they spent a fair amount of time being lost in lustful fantasies. So that's kind of you know, the hindrances taking them off there. You know, sometimes they say it's very pleasant, that's why I do it. But still, you know, you're not in charge, you know, who's in charge? What's going on, and then there's a hindrance of innovation. ill will. Then there's the restlessness, anxiety, worry. Then there's sloth and torpor, resistance, boredom, lethargy as a strategy. And then there's doubt. All these kinds of forces called the hindrances are the forces that kind of some of the forces that keep the mind fragmented, when the fragmenting forces of the mind are no longer operating, then you feel like in mind is something to use, you can stay here and be present, you're not worried anymore by being pulled off, you don't feel the tendency pulled off anymore. He's here in a very solid settled complete way. Then
that gives birth to a certain kind of delight or satisfaction or sense of well being. Here I am, this is what's going on. And this is called the Buddhist tradition. The joy born from seclusion strange retreat. Freshly boring from seclusion. It means secluded from the hindrances, the mind the hindrances are not gone. That's why there's you're secluded from them, you're kind of you kind of out of their radar for a while. But you haven't purified your mind once and for all. But these hindrances are now kept at bay or kept gone or kind of settled enough, and so you're secluded from them. And so the mind is freed or secluded from these forces. And there's a certain kind of joy that gets born with that. When that joy is there is a fragment and forces are gone, then there's a feeling of the mind is unified, we can have a unified sense of unification of mind. There can also in addition to the joy and unification, there can arise a sense of well being, deeper sense of satisfaction, of ease of likeness of sometimes it's called happiness. And also because of mine is my fragment. It has these qualities Of being kind of lighter, happier, glad unified. Now it's possible to apply the mind attention in some direction where you want to apply it to. So you want to project Okay, I'm gonna apply to my attention on the breath. And it's also possible then no need to apply to turn the attention, make a decision, can we have the attention there my breath and do that, then it's possible also to sustain the attention on the breath over time. So now I've listed what's called five factors of absorptive meditation, which requires five primary factors and needed to get absorbed in the meditation practice. So there's the that that sense of joy from that comes from the seclusion or the hindrances, not being fragmented, not being scattered, you know, a certain kind of joy. Finally, you arrived, you're here you're connected to yourself if you really connected the joy of being connected. wasn't available to do work. And then a sense of well being that comes from a similar kind of thing. And then a sense of unification gather together and then then be able to do X through the work of applying the mind and sustaining the mind. These are called the five janyk factors, the five factors of absorption and absorption is a very important function aspect of meditation practice, be able to get into your practice and get absorbed by it. In the same way that you'd get absorbed by a really good book, or a really good hobby. You know, it can be very pleasant to get absorbed in a book. And you lose track of time you lose track a lot of things you will lose track of all your problems. And so here you are, you really absorb the feelings of pleasure and delight that arise as a result. The first time that I experienced the certain kind of I'll say this way, there's a the joy the joy is born from seclusion is the innocence of well being and delight is born from the fragment the fragmenting forces of the mind are gone is said to be a joy that is non sensual in nature. So, there's joy which essential in nature, you can get a massage and feels really good. There's certain kind of delight that comes from stimulating your senses. But there's also something as good as non sensual as a technical word. Some people like to translate your spiritual joy, because it seems to be connected to a spiritual practice, not to worldly success in worldly situations. The first time I experienced something like this, something like this was when I was about 11 or 12 years old, that I can remember. And I used to take a bus to school and back and forth to school, public bus to pay for a ticket and on the way home from school and The near the end of the bus line. And there was the driver and then the conductor who sold the tickets. So I would get on the bus, and I would pay my ticket Sit down. And near the end of the last few stops, and the less than five minutes of the trip, there wasn't really going to be anybody more coming on the bus because we're getting to the end of the line. So the conductor would go sit at like the second or third seat back from the driver. And he would tally up all the different
tickets he sold round trip one way children's senior citizen, I don't know all the things he had. And he had this ledger that he would keep you know, keep accounts you know, how many different kind of tickets he sold? And I noticed that if I sat in a particular seat like he was like a third seat back if I said like in the fourth seat back then if I watched him do his work I would feel really good. I just feel these feelings of warmth and unification and delight and satisfaction and everything was right in the world and this and I knew I had no idea what I was doing, why what was going on until many, many years later. I just knew that was good stuff. So I would always try to strategize and get sit there, you'd have that tickler seat in the bus. So I can be there when he when tallying up his numbers. And I never thought about it much. I just, you know, it's kind of like almost like a instinct to do this. But what I understand now, is that for whatever reason, I was I kind of was borrowing his concentration, kind of sharing his concentration, and I got concentrated on his work kind of focusing on what he did. And in that kind of focus, kind of narrowing of my attention and all kinds of things fell away. This sense of well being bubbled up in me so as as we get absorbed, there's this is a wonderful symptoms that begin happening that we offer tremendous sense of well being. In Pali, sometimes it's called nimita. In sign if you have the flu, you being weak and nauseous or signs of having the flu, right. When you enter into an absorptive state, then you have signs with I feels like you feel light. You might feel bubbly, you might feel warm, you might feel joy. You might feel really solid. There's many ways in which you might feel but you know, the signs or symptoms of entering into this kind of state, just like there's signs of symptoms of entering into a flu state. So and those those signs and symptoms have a lot to do with our body. If you kind of feel this warmth, this unifications flow this ability, variety of things can happen to different people. So some, a lot of different things can happen as people get absorbed in their meditation, there's shifts that happen in the body, there's shift that happens emotionally in the mind. And it can be quite an adventure to see all the different kind of shifts that could happen. In Buddhism, the purpose of these kinds of ship absorptive states concentration states is not for the joy in it for life, they can give, give us some people think that's the purpose. The point is not to feel joy in the light, though, that joy in the light can be very healing. And part of the part of the reason for doing this concentration practice is often the heals a lot of the psychological woundedness that people carry around with them. And it's also said it can it can, but I don't offer this or do not offer this as a promise or guarantee. It also can help a lot with physical illness, a variety of things. Sometimes when I've been in deep states of absorption, it almost feels or tears Even feels like I don't know if it's really happening, but it feels like healing energy is kind of coursing through my, my veins just feels healing and just moving through cleaning and purifying and healing things are there. And so I think that concentration practice in deep this deep joy and well being and harmonization is very, very healing of certainly of the ways in which we're psychologically fragmented. And it can rewire us it's kind of like we have a cellular memory sometimes of trauma, we have salary Miss cellularly, memories, cellular memories, of certain pains or fears or, or things that are happening or you know, psychologically happened to us. And sometimes they get deeply embedded so they become our personality almost. And part of the function of deep concentration is they get down below That conditioned personality part of who we are. That place we've been conditioned by our life experiences in some negative way. And it's possible to get in there and recondition it. And off, you know, by feeling the light and warmth and trust and confidence that comes with concentration practice. And you feel these wonderful experiences. And it's kind of in
there kind of saturating or moving out into the body to the cells. And it's like you're re educating yourself in a new way. And you can actually give your personalities can shift quite dramatically from doing concentration practice. But the ultimate purpose of concentration practice is not the joy and delight of concentration practice, but rather to use the tremendous stability. That concentration practice gives the mind tremendous purity. Preservation practice purifies the mind, the tremendous purity of the mind. So you can see clearly. If you want to see through a window, make sure that it's clear and clean. If the purify the clean it, so you can see through it to see what's really going on. Or the analogy that I used in Buddhism is that of a pond. If the pond is muddy, you can't see the bottom. But if you settle upon that all other modes settle, then you have clear water and you can see to the right to the bottom and see all efficient everything. So the same thing with a mind. The function of concentration practices settle things enough so that you can have the clarity to see what's really there. It also one of the things we can see with strong concentration factors is how unsatisfactory or how painful certain things are they used to do that. We thought were joyful when we did them. Does it make sense where you said we can do things which when we do we think this is really the best. And then later we can say what was I thinking? And, and strong, deep, settled concentration practice can give us a very alternative point of view, to understand some of the things we used to do, or have been doing. And realize, wait a minute, there's something a much better game in town, there's a deeper sense of well being, the thing I was doing is not actually that pleasant after all. And sometimes there's a there's a natural willingness to let go of certain things we have been doing. Because we see that there's a much, much more, something has much more integrity to it, much more sense of well being and much happier. Because from the vantage point, you have this strong concentration. It doesn't mean you have to stay in a strong concentration practice for no state, strong concentration state all the time, but the concentration gives you this graph point you understand things in a new way. Because a strong concentration also is a strengthening of the mind, the mind gets stronger with more concentrated as the stronger the mind is. And the faster we can see the stronger, more penetrating and kind of more, maybe faster as the quicker is or the more they're more subtlety, the nuances we can see. the mind becomes very, very perceptive, strongly concentrated. And, and so it gives mindfulness, an edge that kind of helps the mindfulness to be much more penetrating. So the idea is to yoke together bring together the mindfulness and the concentration. And one of the computers forms of mindfulness arises when we're very in one of these deep concentration states. It says it the fourth jhana for those of you know, fourth absorption is where mindfulness is totally purified. So mindfulness concentration have come together and work together. That's when the two of them allow some of the more deepest work that Buddhism points to, which is the work of liberation, that the deepest work integration is best done with strong, strong powers of concentration, and strong powers of mindfulness. And that requires us to be unified, to be harmonized, and not scattered anymore to have to have work through. And sometimes it takes years and years to work through some of the complexes and, and hang up some of the issues that we have. That keeps us from being fragmented, keeps us from being settled, keeps us from really dropping down. Sometimes mindfulness practice contrasted with concentration practice, as if there are two different practices. Sometimes they are and sometimes they're not. You find some teachers who say, Yes, they're completely different. And the other teachers who say, No, no, no, there, they should be always be done together. Some teachers say we should always start with mindfulness. And then
you do concentration. Other say, you started the concentration than you do from my mindfulness. And there's no shortage in the religious world of opinions. And not only is no shortage of opinions, they usually have opinions about who is right. And it's seldom them. So there's very people you know, in the Buddhist world in the US, none of you have come to this or maybe even know about this, but there are intellectual or philosophical waters about this issue. About what is the right meditation? Is it mindfulness, first concentration? First is the combining them, how's it done this and that. And there's no end of this wonderful, great conflict. Who's right? And then people go back to the sutras of the Buddha and try to say, Well, you know, if you read him, he says this. And you know, so it's interesting. So, I'll give you an opinion. The mindfulness practice, there is a whole series of things that are mindfulness practices is a set of things called mindful practices. And there's a set of practices called concentration practices. And those two sets overlap. So some mindfulness practices don't fit in the middle where concentration and mindfulness overlap. Some concentration practices are out on their own and practices are right there where they overlap. And both are going on at the same time as it regardless of where you start, very strong mindfulness practice, very strong concentration practice, sooner or later, will require each other. You can't have mindfulness without concentration can have concentration without mindfulness, if you want to go really, really deep into practice, but how you get to the place where you're deep in there's so many different ways to get there. I don't think there's a right way even though teachers will say this is the right way. What that means if someone tells you that this is the right way, this is the tree or just the way Buddha said. What you might think of doing is to reframe it in your mind so you can be kind to them. And say, I bet that was the right way for him. It's usually him You know, usually I tried to be gender neutral. But they usually hims doing this war. And it probably worked for that person. And I think we have to be very respectful of how many different kinds of people that are, how many different kinds of minds that combines to actually function differently. And some people are more tactile in nature, some are visual, some are auditory, some are more introverts and extroverts and this and that way and all these kind of different things. And so rather than having some fixed idea of this is the right way. You know, you need to kind of actually assess who you're talking to your audience who you are you're talking to, and realize and modify. They realize that you have to modify the practices to suit the person and it's a terrifying tradition. There's a classic list of 40 different meditation practices that a good meditation teacher supposed to know about. And then when people come, they're supposed to assess the person they're talking to and decided inside which of those 40 is suitable for that person. So says okay, you guys it with me enough. So right here, I can't leave. I can't even ask that question because I will get a good answer. Some anyone not with me. I really wanted to I wanted to tell you, it's running out of time. Really, what I wanted to do tonight was to give you try to make a an evocative description of this similes that the Buddha used for deep concentration practice. He has four beautiful similes. And some of them have to do with water. Water is often the symbol or the uses as a symbolically for the kind of joy in the light that arises when people get absorbed in their meditation practice. But I think that we'll let it go. And maybe we can do it next week. And maybe use symbolism, maybe this talk that started off just as a one night talk will go on and on and on. And so, maybe I'll maybe I'll do this similarly, the great similes and try to evoke them and make them come alive for you and their images. And so you for those of you who are more visual in nature, you can get really into these images and then some point when Finish with the concentration
stuff. Then I went, I said, I'll give a talk or talk about what insight is. So the sequence was mindfulness, first talk, then mindfulness practice, second talk. And then now try to cover concentration. And then once I've done that, then we'll talk about insight. Because the function of mindfulness of concentration is to allow bring the insight. So what is inside me center name right inside meditation center. And then once we've talked about insight, then we set the stage and we can talk about liberation. So if we hang in there long enough. We'll get there. So I hope it worked for you. Okay, hope it didn't seem so strange. We have a couple of minutes if anybody would like to ask questions about what I've said to clarify anything because it can be very confusing this whole thing Concentration seemed very foreign, or discouraging. In the back. Could you describe a concentration meditation for me? There's many, but one of the ones that we use in our tradition the most is concentration on the breath, breath, if you stay focused on the breath, and don't let the mind wander from the breath, and breath can become a concentration practice. The breath also works very well as a mindfulness focus. It has both focus functions. And but you know, there's some practices are almost seemingly almost exclusively about concentration as opposed to some combination of mindfulness and concentration. And so, one one in our tradition, one of the ones that a classic one is, is called is, involves hearing a, you seeing an image in the mind's eye The around image like image of white light, or a image of a colored disc, and then somehow taking an image and focusing on the one pointed way, until you kind of get absorbed into it to kind of like plunge into it and everything else disappears. But that image turned on. I've been chanted by the combination of the zeal and equanimity is listed here. Yeah. Could you comment on that? So there's this long list of factors that come into play with concentration. And one of the nice things about that is different ones, then can be strong in other ones in the kingdom. weak. So some people, their sense of determination or volition is really strong and that's the primary thing that helps them get concentrated. for other people. It's a sense of the word brazeal is chonda zeal or revenue, or intentionality or volition. It's a very strong desire, healthy counting desire, read this really want this, you know, you really want to get concentrated. And often we, we get the message that you're not supposed to have any desires if you meditate, but there's appropriate my art newsletter article this time talks about, it can be very appropriate desires to have, and they can be very strong. And some people that's what kick you know, he has helps him get concentrated. for other people. It's a start, they have a strong access to states of equanimity or peace or tranquility. And that's what helps them get concentrated. So equanimity is one of the fruits are very strong concentration practice because when the mind is no longer fragmented, then it's possible for the mind to no longer before and against things of the mind that for and against things, the mind is not going to waver because they balance equanimous. And to some degree, you need some of that equanimity. In order to be settled, you can't be really deeply settled. Unless there's some degree of equanimity. And that acronym it becomes stronger and stronger. The deeper you go into the concentration until at some point, equanimity is the primary symptom or sign that characterized in that state. I don't know if that addressed your question at all. We can talk more later. Smith the last one. I'll repeat the question. If it see if it's simple enough. Do choiceless awareness could be, it could be the choices awareness is usually understood to be a form of mindfulness practice, where the mind is just very present in the present moment not going to leave the present moment. But rather than choosing one object to focus on like the breath, the mind is just open in a choiceless way to take in whatever experience comes to it. So, it could be sounds,
which is you know, thoughts whatever it arises, and the mind is very, usually very open. In order to do this well, the mind has to be fairly concentrated and settled. Otherwise the mind keeps getting distracted. And some people are very strongly like sweets out there is very strongly drawn to do that choices over this practice. It can be very helpful and appropriate practice for some people to do. And over a long career of practice, meditation practice, different meditation practices are appropriate. Different things are being worked out and done, and so they can be intuitive sense sense of what is it that needs to be done at this point? The idea choiceless awareness practice for a long time, until I kind of reached a certain kind of plateau with it, it was very satisfying. But then I felt like I had to plateau. And then I changed the nature of this little bit to kind of to like, go further. So, I hope this is a helpful talk. It can be discouraging to talk about concentration, it can seem like lofty states that are very distant from what people where people are at. But I think it's also helpful to know a little bit about concentration because even a small dosage is impossible to utilize it more in daily life, meditation practice, and also having some sense of what's possible. The danger of knowing what's possible, is that we strive and we judge ourselves if y'all never get it, we feel discouraged. That's a negative side, the positive side is that if you know something is possible, then it's possible to go there. That direction if you don't even know about it, why would you do it? So maybe it's an unfortunate example. But it's like the four minute mile, right? It's no wonder it was. The assumption was no one can run a mile in four minutes, four minutes. That was the kind of bottom line belief. And then someone was able to break that four minute mile run under miles under four minutes. And then lots of people did it. Maybe review, but I do believe so. And then within various kind of things, situations when he knows we know something's possible, it isn't just something in decision that he makes, but he's almost I think, I think, a kind of a kind of inner almost unconscious or subconscious processing that allows us to do something when we finally see that as possible. There's a hurt there's a hurdle which is overcome, when we see what the possibility is that we see And we think it's impossible, then, you know, why would anybody do it? The last thing I'll say about concentration for tonight, please spirit bear with me is one of the key teachings of Buddhism, early Buddhism, the Buddha is the importance of intentions, our volition, or what we're motivated by our intentions. And acting on our intentions, living our intentions, has tremendous repercussions down through time in our lives. So, if you act of intentions, which are the intention to cause harm in the world that has tremendous, it ripples out from us, it ripples into us in deep ways, very penetrating ways. If we act on intentions to be helpful, That ripples out in the world in any way different ways. It also ripples out into ourselves in many different ways. And intention can be very powerful. But one way that intentions become amazingly powerful, especially in inner life, really changing something inwardly, is when we set an intention, with a mind that's strongly concentrated. Where the mind is deeply harmonized and settled and calm, and has a strength of concentration, and mind is malleable and workable, then our intentions can really go far can really make a big difference can really can make a huge karmic difference in our very being who we are. So at the end of many Buddhist events, there's a practice of stating an intention. So called dedication of merit. So for everybody That we've gotten concentrated here tonight, or been inspired or learned or benefited from his teachings and concentration. May an intention Arise for all of us that this teaching and this practice, benefit others that somehow helps our compassionate heart, travel out in in all directions in order to help bring some peace and well being and care and forgiveness to ourselves, and now outward to do
the same thing for all beings everywhere, so that all beings everywhere can know the wonderful compassion of the concentrated heart. Thank you