

2007-09-07 Anapanasati Introduction 1 of 10

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SPEAKERS

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Dharma practice day I'll do the welcoming introduction in a few minutes. But for now, just as you are without any change of posture to change it all, it might be useful to turn your attention to your breathing. drift as it is no special effort to breathe any particular way. Notice how your breathing is

In particular, notice your exhale. Notice what happens in your body and your torso as you exhale.

Being very simple and easy. There's no right or wrong here just tuning into experience of exhaling.

And then with the most gentle touch possible, feather touch, see if you could pause a little bit or relax a little bit at the end of the exhale. So you exhale in just a little bit more fully than you normally would. Not by forcing it. But gentle, relaxing, gentle, letting go of relaxing at the end of the opera.

Relaxing can be anywhere in your body, but somehow can Secure breathing doesn't have to be dramatic, softening at the end of the exhale

There's a pause or ever so slight pause the end of the

scene, see if you can

linger there for the first time possible. linger. Enjoy. That pause the stillness there. Relax at the end of the breath. Enjoy

the stillness

Here your breathing can become Primary refuge

support.

Friend for you in your life. Your breathing can become your home. When someone's asks you what your address is, can say, your breathing. That's where you live more than living in your house that has a street address.

Welcome to the beginning of this year's Dharma practice cycle. And every year I've done a different kind of theme exploration for these Dharma practice days. The idea behind the Dharma practice days is a little bit multiple, multiple purposes. Certainly To explore and some of the teachings of the Dharma,

but also to practice some of the teachings. It's also to engage in a variety of different learning approaches around the Dharma. Often in monasteries, the monks and nuns, they're learning a lot from each other, as much, sometimes even more so than they learn from the abbot or Abbess or the great teachers, the older monks or nuns will often talk with the younger ones, causing all kinds of directions. And that sense of community and learning community is a very important part of traditional engagement in the Dharma. So part of the function of these practices has been to explore the Dharma in ways that also allows us to be in discussion with each other and get to know each other and create sense of community around the Dharma. And as Have you done this before know that different Dharma practice days can be organized or very differently from the previous one. Sometimes there might be very, mostly just silence, occasionally just no talking at all and just a lot of silence. Sometimes it's a lot of talking. Some, sometimes it's a lot of talking, I do, I dominate. And sometimes I do very little. And mostly you talk about discussions or sometimes very, sometimes sometimes kind of intimate discussions that some of you might have with each other one on one, give you some topic to discuss, and sometimes group discussions, small groups, three or four or five. So it's a it's a, you know, if you've come here and you'll never quite know what's going to be. However, this year, the theme of the year is mindfulness of breathing. And I think this year the focus will be much more in the practice of meditation guided meditations around probably less on the interactive part than we've had in the past. They might. So we'll see how that goes. But they'll be some certainly interactive, some chance to discuss what's going on. And

the,

in the past these Dharma practice years, those of you who want to do the whole year, you can always just come for one, two sessions come to today, it's fine. If you want to do the whole year. I think that will definitely build over time. What we're doing here because we're following the progression that the Buddha taught, if you do the whole thing of doing the whole year, I'd like to encourage you to find a buddy in the group. Maybe today or some point, someone else is going to do the kind of year and it doesn't have to be one buddy. But the idea is to have some opportunity to outside of this class, to have conversations with people about your breathing. Normally, we don't go around you How's your breath today? You know, what did you learn about your breathing like layer? What's the joys and sorrows around your breathing. But there's a find someone it's like it's gonna be in the form. It could be different people different months, or it could be the same person if you have a buddy over the course of the year, but to find someone who you can engage in a conversation around your breathing and what you're discovering what your challenges are, you know, your thoughts about it, your relationship to your breathing, and you kind of share that and have conversation about it. I think that'll also help. The deepening engagement with the topic of this year if you have a chance to talk to someone about it and get feedback and learn. Maybe skip it but to do with a number of people over the course you get different experiences different people's takes on the breathing and to share your experiences with it.

The reference point for this year is a particular teaching that the Buddha gave on the 16 stages of anapanasati. anapanasati means Breathing in and breathing out. And there's the word gave 16 stages. And as far as I know, there's only three places in the canon. The Buddhist teachings, we talked about the 16th stages. And the most extensive is in the discourse called upon a Anapanasati Sutta, the discourse on anapanasati which is found on the middle length discourses of the Buddha. And it's, as you know, find translations pretty easily. But one of the I did a translation which is found in imcs website. So if you go to the articles link on our website, if you scroll through the articles, you'll find a few translations I've done in one of them to sign up on Sati. That's one place you can find And the other place so one of the other places that Buddha mentions the 16 stages is when the Buddha gave, seemingly the first time he gave meditation instructions to his own son. And then he gave instructions

on the 16 stages of breath meditation. And so I find that kind of touching, you know that this is what the Buddha was, when the brekford was going to teach meditation to his son. He taught him the 16 stages. The anapanasati Sutra is a little more significant because it ties the 16 stages to the practice of the four foundations of mindfulness, and the four foundations of mindfulness as the primary practice that we do here at IMC. And it's very nice that the experience of breathing and using the breath has is very dovetails very closely intimately with the experience of the four foundations of mindfulness and the four foundations. The first one is the body. This Second is the feeling tone of our experience, the third is mind or the mind, state state of the mind. And the third is the Dharma, the experience of the kind of deeper experience of insight that can come with practice. And, and so, the, these 16 stages are divided into four tetrads for groups of four, and the first four is correlated in the sutta. This discourse is called the first four are correlated with the foundation of the body. The second four with the feeling tone, the third four with the mid state of your mind. And the last four with the Dharma. The suits are also correlates there connects the practice of mindfulness of breathing with a seven factors of awakening. Seven factors of awakening is a very, very important qualities of mind or inner life meditation that arises as person deepest or meditation practice. is a really beautiful qualities qualities, there's mindfulness, there's investigation, there's energy, there's joy, there's tranquility, there's concentration, there is equanimity. A beautiful qualities of mind that come. And so this breath meditation is correlated to that. And so the breath meditation is one of the vehicles for developing both the foundations of mindfulness and for developing these beautiful qualities, seven factors of awakening.

The idea here is that there's a way of using the breath or connecting to breathing, where the, the main kind of thrust of the meditation path to liberation can be found. So the idea of breath meditation is it can has a very profound potential and potential celebration. You can connect and get into the breath, concentrated in the breath and use that experience of breathing as a way as it is a tremendous vehicle. It's a tremendous store a support for the path of liberation. In addition, breath meditation has a lot of other benefits in the Buddhist tradition lists, variety of benefits that come with breath meditation, but also in modern life, there's lots of people, psychologists, physiologist, cardiologists, neurologists, yoga teachers, who will very happily list all the benefits and come with cultivating a wise useful kind of breathing. And I read recently that they studied 153 cardiac patients that some hospital and all of them were breathing in properly. You know, there's healthy ways of breathing and improper ways. And every single one of them was the breath was seen. And they did another study of people with heart attacks, and they taught a group of them how to breathe In healthy ways, and there was a dramatic improvement in their cardiac health. And then the way they the way they measured healthy and unhealthy breathing was whether a person breathe primarily from their what's called a secondary muscles, respiratory muscles, the muscles that are in the kind of your rib cage or the rib cage, you breathe primarily from there that's considered you know, overall in chronically that's considered unhealthy and healthy is going to breathe with your diaphragm and your belly kind of going. And, and so we've created a very interesting correlation. The 253 of the 153 patients in the cardiac unit are breathing in your upper chest. And when they were taught for different group retarted read when the belly, their hearts improved dramatically. So there's a lot of benefits that says you can benefit with Sleep, sleep improves, your health improves, many things improve with having a proper way of breathing In the mindfulness tradition, we say that, you know, in addition to its function of moving us towards liberation, mindfulness of breathing, by tuning into your breath, the breath can be this great book, this great indicator of what's going on in your life. The breath will teach you a lot, the breath changes its nature, how you breathe, depending on how you're feeling, what you believe what you're thinking, what you're doing. So much changes and so address changes so much. And so if you start tuning into your breathing, you start learning so much about what goes on rest of your life. And sometimes it's the first it's gonna be very powerful. And the more familiar you are, the more regularly check in with your breathing, the more the breathing will show you what's going on. Also, if you start

tuning into your breathing, it's possible to see when the breath is being held, and when there's a free breath. And just that awareness itself can make it more or less that you've returned to a free breath, that your breath, breathe more freely and naturally. People who are unconscious about the breathing are more likely to be chronically held in some way or other people are conscious of their breath. Initially, leave aware of often how the breath is held or how it's unhealthy or natural. With time, you'll find a more natural way of breathing. In the mindfulness tradition that I teach in, we primarily emphasize, don't try to control your breath or change your breath. When you do mindfulness practice, just breathe the way you are. There's some wisdom to that teaching. However, when people first come to meditation practice, and we kind of just getting started with hopefully maybe a lifetime practice of focusing on the breath or meditating. It's sometimes good to spend a little bit of time cultivating healthy breathing habits. And we often don't teach that we just teach them don't do anything. Breathing don't breathe a particular way. Just notice. Over time, generally the breath gets healthier and healthier. But there's nothing wrong with spending a little At a time developing healthy breathing habits, and then at the beginning of a meditation in a life. And then you have that as a foundation that will support your meditation as you go along.

It's sometimes emphasized, or say this way that there's many different meditation practices in Buddhism that you can do. You don't have to do breath meditation. There's other practices you could do. And but he said, one of the benefits of breath meditation is it's much more likely that your, your path of practice is going to be pleasant, it's going to be enjoyable. And that's pretty good. And sometimes, occasionally, people think that, you know, the Buddhist path being a spiritual path and the very serious, profound that it needs to be kind of nice to be serious. Grimm used to be kind of, you know you to kind of, kind of, you know, you're dealing with, you know, ultimate issues. So you've had to kind of steal yourself and look good. The Buddhist path of spirituality goes through requires joy, relaxation, happiness. It's a very important qualities that need to be cultivating, developed. And of course, you can't feel happy and joyful automatically. And sometimes you have to go through a dark night of the soul. And sometimes if you go through, you know, going through some of the deepest fears or anxieties or frustrations of your life, but in order to get to the other side of it, but it's good to keep in mind that joy and happiness are really important parts of the path and said that breath meditation is one of the wonderful ways to ensure that they're doing help that happen to breath meditation has A quality that's supposed to be relaxing, and enjoyable. And if it's not, then we work with that, and explore how that might happen. So it said that breath meditation is very conducive. And the technical expression in Buddhism is to a pleasant abiding here and now. It's also conducive towards getting concentrated, to consider a wonderful concentration technique. Now, breath, meditation doesn't work for everybody. And you're not taking it as a personal failing, it doesn't work for you. Sometimes it doesn't work for some people, because it has some kind of trauma in their life associated with breathing. And so somehow that bringing attention to the breath doesn't, doesn't work so well. I've known people who have struggled with their breathing. And then at some point, they realized that the reason they were struggling was they had a near drowning experience as a child, somehow that they've conditioned them in such a way that getting close to the breath was made, made things difficult, and they're better off not focusing on the breath. So, you know, always with practice, we're always kind of really always kind of taking into consideration, our condition how we are with great compassion and acceptance. And then working with that using that as a basis to work with. But for most people breathing can work very well. For some of you there during this year, if the breath meditation doesn't work so well for you, certainly come and talk to me, we'll talk about it. And there's various ways of doing it. That might, you know, adjustments that can be made, that might be helpful. So the idea for this year is to go through the 16 stages of breath meditation. And, and some days we'll go through a number of these stages in one day, like today and my plan is to do three stages. And some days we might just do one depending on how it goes and how much time at different stages now It would be nice if the end of the year you all liberated. You know, we just follow these the key stages and just you know, we've Matter of fact, you know, and,

and that'd be very nice and certainly my hope, but more realistic hope is that you have kind of felt sense visceral kind of sense experience, appreciation of how the breath is a path and vehicle for going deeper and deeper into your spiritual life. And, and have a sense of how these stages work and have some sense of some of the deeper some of the deeper aspects of the Dharma, maybe to understand it to its full potential, but you have some real appreciation of some of the depth of the Dharma is about as soon as practical useful in your life, not just something abstract.

Talk a little bit more Time was mostly to do breath meditation today.

From my Zen training, wherever this was emphasized the teaching there was something I'm something teachers is to take your breath all the time. And not just the meditation. But the cultivating default attentions regularly going to your breath, doesn't mean that you're absorbing the breath. Nothing thinks anything else, but that you're aware of the breath, in addition to everything else. So the breath is like the home where you reside, and you're still looking out the window, seeing what's in the neighbors, but you're always kind of checking in. But that takes time to cultivate that familiar that regular Already that concentration that grounded in experiences.

And I find it very, very helpful

all the time. So one of the things you might do is to start doing your daily life, to name and cultivate that ability. The other thing I want to say is that is about this discourse of the Buddha. Some of you might read it. You know, it's something basically many discourses of the Buddha, the uninitiated kind of person falls asleep, but it really is not that interesting on the surface. However, if you, I encourage you to read it with your imagination can be active reader as a passive reader. And so for example, the opening of this you know, it's kind of formulaic. But if you've started imagining the scene that's being laid out for you, there's this the scene for the sutra is that of a large gathering of monks practitioners and the gathering and it says the senior monks are teaching the younger monks. And some are teaching 10. Some are teaching 20, some 30 some teaching 40 monks. So you have all these kind of groups you can imagine this beautiful park like setting they often met in parks like settings and time of the Buddha, for settings, and you can see kind of spread out around you. These little groups, and they're all intense. They have a senior practitioner whose other monastics the monks and nuns are sitting around. And, and maybe there's rapt attention, which has a kind of wonderful quality to be witnessing these people so attentive and, and they're being instructed. And the Buddha is in the midst of it sees all this is aware of it. And the Buddha announces to all of them and they gather together, that he's really pleased. He's really happy that to see this going on. And that as he's noticed that as these younger monks are being taught, that they're actually taking the practice to heart and actually getting deeper into the meditation practice. They're kind of attaining deeper stages of practice of realization, in a discourse is called deeper stages of distinction. But then even deeper stages of practice. And that's such a beautiful scene. So happy scene in some of you have ever walked into IMC or walked into a retreat, well, meditations and session, there can be a kind of a palpable sense of stillness or silence, tranquility or peace or something that's in the air. That is quite wonderful. And so that's the, that's the setting, it's being laid out in a setting with a Buddhist pleased. It's nice, he's happy when he sees and then he says that here there are people who have all kinds of different levels of attainment in this group and these people are learning and he's really happy and he describes all the different state levels of attainment from the Most High highest highest attained to progressively kind of less attained but in a describes people who are engaging very practices including the practice of loving kindness and compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. And the last thing he mentions is there's a group of some of the minette monks there who are practicing breath meditation. And this seems to be the point he wants to get to. And then he got you're saying there's some people here practicing breath meditation,

he says, and breath meditation is really great. Doesn't say it that way. But But you know, if you kind of realize he's talking into his old kind of, you know, language of 2500 years ago, maybe a little bit formulaic, and just kind of dry, maybe kind of, you know, you're falling asleep here at this point. But he kind of kind of give yourself kind of the imagination because the book was just saying, This presentation is so great. It's cool. It's wonderful. Yeah. That's right. That's part of it. And some people have said, Now might be a good way of remembering it. But since these monks were reciting it often, there's something mantra like about you know, you can recite it out loud and hear it and, and allow yourself, you know, to let go of your judgments about this as formulaic and you know, and this is boring and all that, it certainly kind of kind of kind of settles the mind if it concentrates the mind in itself.

So and then he says, you know, it's really great, a lot of benefits, it brings great benefit, great fruit to the breath, meditation. And then he describes, and also that breath meditation brings to fulfillment, the four foundations of mindfulness and brings to fulfillment, the seven factors of awakening. And then he's gonna describe how this happens. So describe first he describes with this breath meditation is essential. stages. And then he describes how these bring the four foundations of mindfulness and factors awakening to fulfillment. Now, if you don't know the four foundations of mindfulness don't know the seven factors of awakening. Again, you read this before from start falling asleep, kind of boring. But if you if you remind yourself that the four foundations of mindfulness in this infectious awakening, are some of the most celebrated experiences and practices in this Buddhist tradition, and the seven factors of awakening is beautiful states of mind and the most beautiful states of mind a person could attain. And just imagine, you know, the most beautiful state of mind you've ever had, you know, his reference point and the Buddhist thing. And, you know, this breath you know, it brings these beautiful states of mind into into fulfillment that brings them out here that could be the edge of your seats. Yeah, let's find out. So, these discourses need some help and you know, With your imagination, but I think it's completely reasonable to be an active reader, not a passive reader, many people are passive readers and, and, and we have great writers in the modern world who've mastered the technique of writing. So, you can be a passive reader just be swept along carried along and nothing is required from you. But in this ancient literature, I think you have to be an active reader, and so require something from you in engagement with it.

So the, the 16 stages begin with again, something that seems very simple, pretty simplistic or formulaic. It says the person

first of all, begins with instructions. Having gone to the wilderness foot of a tree, or an empty building amongst its dam with legs crossed and body erect. So here's instructions, you go to someplace it's quiet, you're not going to be likely to be disturbed. And I get a wilderness from the woods, you go to Hyde Park or someplace, you know, find a quiet tree, no one's gonna disturb you. Or you find a quiet place at home someplace where you can be quiet alone, undisturbed. So the setting environment you're in, is somehow chosen consciously, to be conducive and helpful for what you're what you're about to do. And then you sit you will sit down cross legged, which is the way people sacking the old, old, old world. But you're welcome to sit in the chair. But the important thing here is things instructions with body erect, not stiff, not tight, but not slumping. You don't want to be a couch meditator

So then, when establishes mindfulness, always attentive, when breathe in with mindfulness, when breathe out with mindfulness, that's the beginning. before it actually stages begin. So always attentive is a very important term here, always attentive to this develops in concentration, some continuity of attention with the breath. And you might guess those of you who can do the year, even if you've meditated for a long time, think of yourself as beginners this year, just this month, you're starting this brand new. And the first thing you can do is develop this always attentive qualities, concentration

quality, you're going to connect to your breathing, and try to stay attentive of a number of, you know, as many breaths in a row as you can. One of the first ideas of concentrating on the breath is to maintain continuity over the cycles of breathing in and out, in and out. And almost all meditators, even people who meditated for a long time can benefit from developing more concentration. And concentration also is something that's developed, I think, I think it's good to take a developing concentration something you do more actively, initially than passively. Some people have this passive idea for like active active, the grass somehow concentration will develop. But I think that developing concentration can be likened to trying to memorize a passage or a poem. Usually, we don't memorize things passively. Just read it once and just that's it. There's an active engagement with the process of memorization, you have to activate heightened some activity of the mind, remind yourself of the pump kind of hole, as you read your hole, you can take it into certain kind of more active way than if you just kind of passively taking it in. There's a kind of active engagement that goes on we memorize. So it might be helpful to think of developing concentration as having some of the same qualities of mind that are engaged me try to memorize something and if you haven't memorized something for a long time. You might this month, go find something that useful for you to memorize. Yeah, it's whatever it might be doesn't matter. But and then maybe just memorizing a friend's telephone number, you know, but you memorize something good or some Dharma passage could be his text. And then with watch, as you memorize the memorize for the sake of memorization, memorize something mo you memorize, study. what goes on in your mind, what how you engage in memorization, what happens, what gets activated? What do you do, when you're going to memorize something and maybe a phone number is too short, you can start there. But then you know, do something longer and longer and see what what what it takes to you. And, and then as some of those qualities of heightened activity of the mind heightened attention in the mind, which are useful to engage with in the process of meditation Now you might protest and say well, I thought meditation supposed to be relaxing. And here you're telling me to kind of activate something that Titian is supposed to be relaxing. However it might be that in order to kind of you need to get over a certain hump in order to get to that place which relaxed you to activate something and relax mind is not in the mind that's sort of placid maybe or kind of, you know, it's, it's actually quite sharp is this combination of sharpness and relaxation together which unfolds in a healthy way. And some people need to kind of arouse that the sharpening quality first, and then once that's in place, it becomes second nature, then you can kind of focus on whether relaxing qualities follow up. Some people find that actually the more active parts bring relaxation in itself. So for example, if you some people find it they really focus in template on, you know, absorbed in a good book or absorbed in some craft you're doing or playing music, that just that absorption, you're actively engaged, there's something heightened. But that's because everything is focused on that you're not being distracted by other concerns that actually it's quite relaxing and so, the two can go together. So, to cultivate this ability to be continuous with the breath, and so, what does it take to do that? And then once once you start cultivating that, then the first stage of the 16 stages is very simple. Breathe, breathing in long, my nose, am breathing in long. So when you have a long inhalation, you simply know you have a long inhalation. It's not excuse the expression you are not rocket science, right? This is very simple.

Breathing in short, when nose I am breathing in short, breathing out long, when nose, I'm breathing out long, breathing out short my nose, I'm breathing out short. So what's being asked is very simple and simply knowing the length of your breaths, how long it is short it is. And you can see that in different situations. Sometimes your breath is very short, because you're running or something or very excited. And sometimes it's very long and relaxed. We come from a nice nap, and maybe your breath is really long and relaxed. Just that degree of attention. Now, if you have the view, they're attentive to the breath, one breath after the other. And you know, the breath is shorter, the breath is long, then you're engaged in the process of mindfulness, your presence in the present moment. It's so simple, and some people will protest and kind of walk away win here are simple it is. However, remember, this is a radical

different way of being in the world than being distracted. And the mind, you know, the normal mind from probably most of you, when mind is left to its own devices, you know, it's not necessarily a pretty picture. And it's not necessarily to your best advantage, whatever your mind is thinking in any given, you know, when it's given free rein to think whatever it wants. So what we're doing here is we're gathering the mind into the present moment. So it's here, present the present moment. And if you can really see one breath of the other, this is a short breath. This is a long breath. Here in the present moment, you're connected to doing something different than letting the mind wander away freely into the past in the future. Now, these 16 stages, including this first one, the Buddha did not elaborate as far as I can tell almost anywhere about what he really meant here. And so it's really kind of a Like cliffsnotes. And what this means is different teachers will instruct you differently about how to utilize these 16 stages. And the textbook for this year called Mindfulness with breathing by Bhikkhu Bodhi dasa, he has his particular way. other teachers have other particular ways in which they do these 60 stages. So, if you don't like how I teach it this year, you're welcome to find another way. But, but realize that, you know, anybody who teaches you how to do the 16 stages in great detail, doesn't have it on some ultimate authority. This is how you do it. You know, so you can be kind of light and loose, which they do is to find what's useful and helpful. As you go progress through these different 16 stages. There's a progression that you'll experience if you go through them, but the details of how that is and how to do it. So with the first one, do these first two stages seeing the And the length of the breath long and short. One of the ways I like to interpret it in which a lot of people, other people interpreted is, it's really short 10. For be getting familiar with your breathing, does noticing all the different aspects of your breath, without interfering with the breath or controlling the breath, just being very simple, not interfering, non judgmental awareness. We use simply becoming intimately familiar with all the different aspects of how your breathing is. So your breathing can be, you know, the length of your breath is part of it. The shallowness, the depth of it, the texture of it, the sensations connected to your breathing, were in your body, your breathing, when you breathe. They are holding patterns in your body as you breathe, the temperature of your breath as you breathe. In the nature of the pauses, if there are any pauses in the breath, especially the end of the opera, there's a lot of things you become aware of and the more aware you are For the breath and where sensitive you are to the all the range of things going on breathing, the more the breath can become your ally and friend, your support to refuge. If you're only aware of a very narrow range of experience of breathing, the breathing cannot serve you as fully and as wisely in your life as you can as it can, if you're aware of much of what goes on your breathing. So the first task the first two steps here is to become aware of how you breathe, what goes on in your breathing and to cultivate a real capacity for checking in regularly getting to know it. And so I think that this for this first month, those of you who are going to meditate at home and is really the task is to become familiar with your breath.

And don't assume you can go with your breath is because How could your breath is so malleable, so changeable, so changes depending on so many different conditions or changes with temperature. Hot and cold outside, your breath will change, which changes with your moods it changes with who walks into the room, it changes with your activity. These changes all kinds of things. And so you can never kind of know enough about the breathing because there's so much change going on all the time. I like to say, just like snowflakes, no two breaths are the same. So if you feel like I'm a guy, this is it. It's like saying, I got to understand snowflakes now from that one. And so then that builds on that foundation of knowing the breath really well, then the other stages come. And the better you can become aware of your breathing, the easier it'll be to follow the next stages. So it's really important exercise is getting getting familiar with your breath. So that's what we'll do this morning. And maybe much of today is to do a variety of exercises to explore your breathing, get to know it better. So how's that sound? Do you have any questions? Yes. No questions. Any questions or comments or concerns you might have Yes, please.

Understand

this is on. Yeah. Okay.

The idea of noticing and noticing the

the effects of various types of breathing, and I think that's valuable, but I also wonder why I wouldn't if I notice I'm breathing shallow. kind of want to retrain that for deeper breathing.

We will do that. That's stage four. So we'll get we'll get to that. And I wasn't planning on getting that today, because I thought it's. So if you're willing to put it off, the idea is that the Yes, there is a very important role in this presentation to adjust your breathing. If you see it's, it is obvious, you know, it's obvious you're holding it tight in another place. Let go and relax. But the working with making the adjustment and changing the breath is something which is really comes in here on stage four. And again, the more familiar you can get with your breath. First, the wider range of possibility potentially you have in making an adjustment. If all you're aware of as you know, is, you know, a single sensation of you know, your body, like it used to where you're, you're just going up and down. You can adjust that. But that doesn't teach you much about your ribcage and your back and your spine and your diaphragm in your belly and your nostrils in your throat and your mouth and all these different things that come into play as you breathe. So we want to expand our intimacy with experience of breathing First, make sense? And then once we once we start learning how to use the breath to adjust it to help us support us and relax more deeply. Then we can actually use the breathing also to help us experience more joy. And hopefully now, the fifth stage and this is the start experiencing joy. So I know it's hard to put off joy. You're all eager. But, but it's better to do this carefully and systematically follow the doctor's orders. You know, and, and then so and then we'll get to the joy part soon enough. Yes, please.

I feel very enthusiastic about being a beginner. In this class. There's something very special about just how this is unfolding very slowly and coming back to it a place that's very

primal for us, isn't it breathing?

My question is about

these words long and short, which are one relative terms and to require up mental process to label them

that way, which

sort of already starts to feel like it's pulling me away from going down into awareness.

Yeah, so it's okay. It's okay. If you're used to being calm or settled or something required. It's okay to have the mind get more activated by. But there's a way what we're trying to do is we're trying to, not only to label but you really want to know or understand, so that at the end of the sitting, you can say, that was a short breath. I really knew that. If you can, it's possible to get connected to something like the breathing and get absorbed in it, and not know anything. And so it's pleasant, it's nice, it's relaxing, but there isn't any understanding that comes with it. And what we're trying to do is to cultivate a sharper

we're trying to do is cultivate the combination of gifts relaxation and a sharp ability to see and know. It doesn't have to be so discursive Well, how do you know something? Whereas that is the first thing.

Luckily. So so what is it? So it partly is because maybe different people have different ways of knowing. But knowing minimum means that after the fact you remember, yeah, that was short, that was long. So whatever that whatever that registering is, whatever that comprehension is, that allows you to say, Oh, yeah, that's that. You know, that's my friend, you know, just walked in, you know, so like, you know, you wouldn't feel very good if if you know, in five minutes when we take a break, you know, someone said, Oh, Who was that? You were talking to it? Who has a possessive question? Your question? I don't know, is a great question. I was involved with a question. But, you know, I don't know who it was. I mean, I've known you for almost 20 years, right? So, you know, some part of me knows it's rainbow. So there's no mean goes on. It's so it's for you. It's so automatic. So you know, no engagement have to remember always that. But, but there's a knowing. So there's so what what allows you to clearly know sometimes with a more clear, clear, the knowing is, the more clear the acknowledgment, the more it's taking in, take it in. And also the more you're in the present moment. And so as you know, sometimes with you know, interpersonal issues, when you feel like someone has really heard you and they repeat back to you what they heard, you feel like you've released been seen and known or understood. Does it clear the person really knows. So what does it take to really know to register, and that's why they process a memorization is a good thing. parallel, because there's a kind of deeper kind of registering, you know, the poem when you read it first time, but when you memorize it, there's a much deeper kind of engagement or registering or it goes in a deeper way. So how can you have the experience of breathing in and register taking it in a much more full kind of way? That so that's, that's why it's so important term in this first stage. The first step here is a one knows, at four knows is very important. So how do you know doesn't require labeled with

the poem that you suggested that we try to memorize or whatever it was, I think I chose Paul. You know that you know, when you can replicate it when you can recite it, but you're not asking us to replicate what that breath was like. You were asking us to register it. What was what is this

To take in the experience of breathing, so that after you've had an in breath, if someone asked you, what kind of in breath was that, you can say great confidence. Oh, that was a long in breath. That was breathing mostly through my chest. That was jagged. That was smooth. That was cool. That was warm. That was relaxing. That was, you know, tight. That was you know, you can recognize all so Oh, yeah, I really saw it. I believe that and you're so present for registering it you saw a lot. So I guess like these games for little kids memorization games, we show a kid a photograph of a room, all this stuff. And you know for theirs but look at it for a minute, and then they turn it upside down. And second. Can you tell me what toys are in the picture? And they have to go through you know, or what toy the second picture is. If there's one thing missing, which one's missing? So somehow they have to take it in. So how does that take me into And how do you do it in such a way that it doesn't agitate the mind. Because we're not trying to agitate the mind making the mind busy and active in a way that's agitating. So part of the art you have to have the whole process of meditation is that process of self monitoring to monitor yourself, and no recognize when what you're doing is not helpful when it's helpful. So if you're labeling and thinking I'm discursive analysis of your breath, and you're just getting kind of more and more, that's not helpful to monitor that no, this is not the way to know. Maybe there's a silent knowing that kind of like, keeps the mind really silent. It really kicks it in with something in me really registers. So when this sittings over, I can really tell you what that breath was really like. That's how it is, or maybe it's different ways. And I think each of us can have a different way. It doesn't matter, you don't forget it, right? Don't worry too much about getting right. There's a wide room for error in notation, as long as you're in the Presence. As long as you're engaged in the present moment, it doesn't have to be so accurate

especially initially, because it's such a wonderful alternative to being lost in thought. At least you're not lost. you're connected. So, just appreciate that. Yes. Sorry. Tanya, stop just.

Hello. Yeah.

In deep meditation

it's not like a you feel that the breathing you're not. You're not aware of the breathing. You just kind of gone. Yes.

So,

like, you feel enjoyment.

But so

that you want to you can be aware of it. Breathing, isn't that right?

Yes. But you don't

care about in the moment of all the breathing. Are you curious about your enjoyment? Right?

Yes, there's no there's many, there's many ways of meditating. And there are many experiences, that person could have made choices many choices a person can make and where the attention should go. So in deep meditation, sometimes people are no longer aware of their breathing because there were something else. Mine is very still very quiet, very joyful. Sometimes in the sanitation, the breathing disappears, there's no breathing, as far as you can tell, you know, even if you look forward, you can even find it seems like the breathing seems to stop. And, and that's all fine. This, this particular 16 stages doesn't refer to this. But there are places in addition where the rest stops and then instructions can be very particular to that experience. For now, if that happens to you enjoy it, for one thing, but what's very important in regardless of what meditation practice you're doing your experiences doing, it's very important for Buddhist meditation practice is there has to be some sharpness of mind. And knowing quality of mind when you actually know what's going on. It's not discursive, it's not analytical. It's possible to have very still meditation, the breath stops or disappears, a lot of joy. And some people will just kind of sit back lay back too much and just enjoy it and kind of tune out and not really know what's going on to kind of after a while they pop out of that meditation. So that was great, but I'm not sure what happened in there. In Buddhist meditation, there's a there's a quality of knowing that remains. There. registering your knowing and knowing quality is very important. The knowing to be aware. And knowing is a little bit different than awareness. Because it can be the same depending who's speaking. But I'd like to maybe make a little difference in that knowing there's I can be aware that someone walks into the room but I didn't I don't really know if there's some clear crisp way probably know who that person is. I don't really know what this is a man this is a woman. There's not engagement with a knowing faculty just just kind of comes into the field of awareness and some abstract kind of vague way. And the quality we're developing here is kind of Christmas or sharpness, you really know. So the experience of breathing really know it. And then if you have this deep experiences, you know, certainly we can talk about how to work with that as we go along. But for now, we're starting off with beginners. That says, okay, is it clear enough Victor

It's might be a little pedantic. So your example between awareness and knowing seems to be the amount of detail at a given awareness. So if somebody comes in, somebody comes in broadly where somebody comes in, oh, it's skill, it's knowing it's skill, but it's just your attention is focused, more, it's less diffuse, is that it doesn't,

it doesn't have to be more detail. And maybe go back to a phrase that rainbow use earlier. When there's no when you know, clearly, you present and know something clearly. Then there's, you know, that you know, so if someone comes in to the room, like someone just walked in here and who was but as it were someone walking in, because I was focusing on you and we're saying, I didn't notice it was a man or a woman or who it was or anything, but I was aware there was a man walking in I knew that I was aware. And I knew that I wasn't going to focus on that because I was trying to listen to you. And so there was a there was knowing, and I left it being very indistinct. But I knew that I knew. I knew that I knew that was leaving it interesting.

So the problem is you don't know when you don't know. Sorry. So the problem is, you don't know when you don't know there is no problem. Yeah.

So I think so the quality of this knowing is he kind of just kind of like a knowing that he could almost say, I know that I know, that kind of self censor. Kind of, I know that I do.

Think ramsau had something like that. And the unknown unknowns

the last one, and then we'll

I noticed that you, in the beginning, were emphasizing for us to notice our outbreath. I'm wondering why that is. And also, as opposed to all these other things? Is it okay if I am saying, in my mind, this is a long breath? I mean, is that cluttering is that

I really am a beginner, I'm not trying to

create the, the answers or questions of what is right or wrong, or just the right way of doing it is really not specific for me, from your own experience, trial and error. So some people sometimes are really scattered mine, it might be really helpful to have a very kind of discursive engagement with the breath and say, Oh, this is a long breath, and this is rough and this is this and that and, you know, and kind of really be engaged in a very active conversational kind of way, because that corrals the mind to be focused. And but but but as you get more corralled and more centered or more focused, then at some point, you realize that there's possible to be calmer, more relaxed, and then you stop this kind of conversation about their breathing. So to have a statement in your mind that says, Well, this is a long breath, that might be useful a certain stage second point, another point, it might be something that drops away, but the knowing is still there. Even though there's no sentence being said.

I guess I was thinking more in terms not of right and wrong of what is the most skillful way of doing it, that would facilitate growth, rather than GP?

static? Yes. Right. So for so there's a number of things, then you have to ask what is what are you trying to grow we're trying to develop. So right now we're trying to develop greater familiarity with the whole experience of breathing. So what helps you do that and maybe having a maybe, maybe analytical thinking at this particular stage might be helpful. We're trying to be in the present moment.

And so even though you're having conversation, you're in the present moment, you're conversing about something in the present as opposed to daydreaming about yesterday. So that helps you in that regard. is it helping you become calmer than you were more relaxed than you were. If it is great, along with its for now, that might be enough. And then later, you might find that that in order to kind of develop deeper layers of relaxation, deeper sense of intimacy and connection, maybe this is a conversation needs to fall away because it proves to be a little bit filter, a cloud through which you're kind of experiencing things. And so you simplify the mind quiet the mind and then you start some pointers to feeling is just helping not only get calmer, calmer, but it does bring me some degree of well being joy or happiness. And how I'm doing it know the way I'm doing it. It keeps me connected, but it's not quite doesn't bring me happiness or joy. So what can I do now? To adjust that service for joy, they don't have to quiet the mind even more, perhaps, and so on we go.

Okay, and the reason you were focusing on the outbreath is Oh, that

Yeah. Oh,

I wouldn't

don't take that first exercise too seriously. There's reasons for what reasons for doing that. I just had this little when this idea that before people coming in late, you know, and stuff so you start with some little bit, and I just wanted people to kind of start getting some familiarity with the breath connection to the breathing, and to have some experience of starting to tune into the fact that it might be possible to relax with more with the exhale. Because sometimes if you relax more fully with the exhale, the breathing by itself becomes more natural. the in breath kind of happens more naturally by itself and fuller, more relaxed way. Sometimes at the end of the outbreak is possible discover, discover a little bit of peace. Sometimes it's very nice to touch into it kind of helps us be more concentrated more engaged in the process of being present. And with with another reason I thought of doing at the beginning was, I had this idea that if I can get you connected to the breath right away, then while I'm doing, I was gonna get much shorter talk. But, but what but while I gave this talk about it, you would continue being in touch with your breath. And that and so you'd be engaged in the breath meditation practice while I'm talking and get those benefits rather than just listening to the words or only two words. I didn't tell you that so I shouldn't have said

that. Thank you.

So

let's take a silent break. Some people can go pee and stuff to stretch. And, and, and then we'll come back and then we'll do a series of breath exercises. So keep the silence and there's a bathroom upstairs. as well. And we'll take about maybe 10 minutes. Let's try see if we can do pull it off in 10 minutes and start again at five minutes. 311 is for me you can come up here