So this evening's talk is on the hindrance of restlessness and worry. And the hindrances is a particular list that we use in Buddhism, to refer to some, some of them but not necessarily all set, but some of the key mental forces that come into play. They make it very hard for us to be settled, very hard for us to get concentrated very hard to see clearly what's happening. Very hard to be mindful. And anybody who practices mindfulness, meditation needs to kind of come to terms with these five forces need to understand them well. He's doing learn how to work with them, and hopefully learn to overcome them, so they don't have their hindering effect on our lives. And these five are sensual desires desire, ill will, sloth and torpor restlessness and worry, and then doubt the five categories. And the fourth category which is today is that a restlessness and worry, restlessness and regret. And in some ways it's the hindrance which seems of meditation is most directly designed to help with because meditation is meant to be calming and settling, stabilizing. And so meditation itself can can be very helpful. But what do we do when the meditating is not helping? Because restlessness and anxiety has the upper hand. And, you know, sometimes sitting down to meditate, can be confused like you're at the rodeo. And in fact, I remember many years ago, one meditation teacher gave a talk and he said, occasionally a very successful marriage. Motion is the sign that it was a stressful meditation. everybody listens carefully. What's that? How am I gonna know what's a successful meditation? The sign of it is that you didn't get up out of your seat because sometimes it can feel like the rodeo he said, his wild energies, restless energies, the legs can feel like that, you know this bolting energy rush for the door. The mind can be so incredibly restless. Sometimes it's really amazing with the restless mind will do. So sitting quietly meditating, everything's nice and wonderful, maybe and then or not, and then it suddenly becomes imperative to defrost the freezer. Now you know, what you and then and I know I've heard of people When, excuse me, my throat, went, boy, who's going to sit down.

So I've known people who have gone to sit down to meditate and felt very quickly, they have to get up and do something. And then sat down until they could get up to get a better seat, arrange themselves better, and then sat down and then something else and this and that. And by time, her meditation, alarm goes off, you know, they finally managed sit down, be still for a minute. So that's maybe an extreme version. And it can be that the mind is so busy thinking about something so concerned about something or so jumping around with things, that there's no effective ability to get focus concentrated and settled. Sometimes it's called monkey mind. And the many of you heard that maybe I don't know why it's called monkey mind classically. It said that a monkey will, you know, when grabs from one branch to the swing
through the trees, and then immediately grabbed to the next branch and the next branch. So monkey mind is a mind that thinks one thing and immediately grabs for the next thought. And the next thought, often, maybe even different topics of thinking just kind of jumps around a lot. That's settled.

It was very interesting about restlessness is that there are different levels of it, or intensities of it. And that that can be the most obvious where it's, you know, it's clear that you're restless, you're really agitated about something and you can hardly sit still You know, for whatever reason, and then there's, but there's also very, very subtle restlessness. And it said in, in Buddhism, that until you get completely enlightened, completely, not even partially, but completely. There'll be some movement of restlessness in your mind going on. And even at times when your mind is very, still very quiet. If you're super sensitive, or super mindful to see what's going on in your mind. You see, it's still there's a little kind of jumping around in the mind, even the very even the subtlest movement to want to think about something, you can feel that as a movement away from stability. It's kind of do it can be very, very, very settled, in your, in your mind, very peaceful. And some thought arises, and it's almost like the mind reaches up to grab that or witches or get involved and that that movement is agitating is. It's like it it's like ever really, really still pond lake of water, it's pretty still. And as long as there's any kind of ripples, you can't see reflection. And so even the subtlest little movement of the mind can create a ripple, so you can't see it clearly. So it's supposed to be very gross, very subtle. And so because of that, it's something that's hopefully interesting for everyone to study and get interested in. And to become discerning. It said that one of the very important aspects of restlessness and worry is to learn to recognize it, see this there. And because one of the one of the wonderful qualities of restlessness is that it can, sometimes it can camouflage itself. We can be so restless about something that we don't even notice that we're restless. This can be self perpetuating movement, going for things going for things. They can also be very uncomfortable, restless. This means very strong, and the very discomfort of being restless, creates more restlessness, or the discomfort of restlessness creates an outward looking, what can I do to fix this? What can I do to settle this? How can I get it to do something. So the challenge and restlessness is how to turn towards it, and be present for it and engage it. So, I'd like to offer you a variety of ways to engage restlessness to be present for it. One has nothing to do with meditation at all. There's a whole category of things which has to do with learning and reflecting contemplating what the nature of restlessness is, because sometimes it's better done outside of meditation. So there might be some really good cause for you to be restless. And, and so there might be a reason you maybe haven't paid your taxes in 10 years. And you hear the government need some money. So you know, you You know, you're concerned. And so, you know, and maybe, you know, you realize, oh, then you hurl meditation, meditation can help you calm you down. That's what I need. No meditation needed to pay your taxes. You don't use meditation to run away from the real issues of your life. That would be a terrible mistake. So sometimes it's a, what's needed is to really kind of look and understand, you know, the root causes and reasons for being restless. The other half of this hindrances worry. And actually, the classic word is my worry is regret because in the ancient tradition, this was the five regrets was defined as having regret being agitated, because of regretting what you didn't didn't do in the past. And that's totally understandable. And but here in the modern world, it seems like a lot of people can have agitation and worry about nothing to do with the past, but about what might happen in the future. And so that seems to be almost a bigger issue for many people here in the West in America, then regret sometimes. So we've expanded it to include worry. And worry, you can also include regret about the past, worried that you're going to be caught the IRS is going to catch up, or the equivalent.

So sometimes it has to do with our behavior in the past. Sometimes it's an ethical thing we've done or have hurt someone. And sometimes if we have to, if we notice that we need to go back and make some kind of amends, ask for forgiveness. And again, it doesn't make sense just to calm yourself down so that you can just avoid making amends. Avoid saying sorry to someone that doesn't make any sense.
I'm fond of a where they spend a whole step in a is to go back and make it moral in inventory and go over your life and see, you know, was there anything in your life that you regret having done it's still kind of unfinished. And it makes a really wise thing for people who are serious about meditation to do something like that. Because otherwise these past regrets, sooner or later will come into play we'll kick in. So funny a way in which the mind is still learning still learning, Stiller, the, the way in which you kind of dislodges that concentration and meditation will dislodge the unfinished, unresolved issues of our life, many of them and some people are trying to, again, use meditation to avoid the uncomfortable aspects of their life. But it's really necessary sometimes to turn towards those things and deal with them. And meditation shouldn't be the solution. It shouldn't be the escape. Sometimes there's other things in the world we need to think about that reflect about While we're agitated, there might be some beliefs we hold that are not tenable in this world, perhaps we have a certain belief that, that you know that our new president is going to solve all our problems. And so, that's not a belief system that's going to create a calm, relaxed state of mind. It's not going to you know, or there's a belief that somewhere in the world, some way or other, you can have absolute security, when nothing bad will ever happen to you. You know, that's that belief system you hold to that really tight place will make you very agitated. Or you might have a very tightly held idea of self. You know, this is who I used to be if I if I my identity is deeply tied to being Anything, but being a compassionate kind person deeply connected to being someone who's always employed a certain job, a certain prestige, a certain recognition. You know, being smart being something, when you have yourself, you know, always certain kind of way. Reality doesn't that doesn't really support that very much. There's always someone who's gonna be smarter, kinder and more compassionate. And then there's always going to be times where you're, you know, you can't figure it out, or you can't be kind enough or you're going to be snap at someone or do something. And so they, they try to maintain and hold on to a very tight identity. It tends to make people relatively fragile. And so sometimes we need to address the deep held identity that we have where we hold ourselves and think about ourselves, unless we address that. It's gonna keep us from being able to settle, become so reflections and the other thing to reflect on is some way in which we we live our life, which is restless producing. I've seen in my life that certain activities tend to create make me more restless than more settled. There are a few times where I've watched television sometimes I've noticed it maybe because I don't watch it very much. I feel kind of agitated afterwards. And maybe some of you have built up that television muscle and you don't have the fortitude and the capacity of sitting there calm and upright and straight, you know, stable and just a watch that too but it doesn't move you at all but I haven't really gotten that and I just it isn't that I'm trouble boy See, but the flickering somehow I noticed that sometimes spending too much time on my computer, too many hours, emails. That I don't think there's any particular attachments I had to deal with or identity issues to deal with. But it's just somehow that activity seems to kind of makes my mind kind of agitated. And so then I had to find some way to settle the agitation. And often meditation helps for me But still, there's the kind of feel this agitated quality, not getting enough exercise. That's another way or some people enough for me sometimes not getting enough sleep, I get kind of restless, negative, restless energy, sometimes in my body, rather than rather than being more settled or more tired or drained, sometimes we get more agitated. So there might be things we need to look at in our lives. And that kind of looking looking at our lives, especially on outside of meditation. So if in meditation, restlessness and regrets, worries, it's a regular visitor for you comes a lot, you might take some time and think about what's going on. Talk to a friend, or talk to a teacher kind of explore what's happening here that what might be helpful to address. And then there's what to do with meditation itself. And now restlessness can be really fun in meditation, sometimes, I hope that some of you are all of you had a good bout of restlessness, where you really enjoy it. And I mean, sometimes it's a drag and it's not enjoyable at all. But so I'll offer you the, what I've learned a few times where I'd really thought this would this was, this is pretty cool. And that is to feel the restlessness in the body. So rather than thinking...
about the issues I'm restless about or the feel, you know, to feel it physically, energetically. And close my eyes and just imagine my whole body is a container for the energy And then just let the energy bounce around. You know, like a ping pong ball, you know, in the legs and do this and one of both no arms want to move. And, you know, it's sometimes it's just been so much fun, just, you know, feeling all this energy kind of rushing around and, and, and then eventually if I kind of have not bothered by it, but just make space for it and just let it be there, it's going to settle itself. But if I'm upset with it, and trying to stop it or block it or do something with it, sometimes that can make me more agitated. So to kind of get out of the way, just kind of open up have awareness be really, really big. Some people can imagine that awareness or awareness that holds the restlessness is bigger than the room or as big as the room or bigger than the room. And because it's so big, it can it can, it can contain the restlessness. It's like if you if you have

You know, if you have I don't know, three bouncing balls, bouncing around a lot inside a teeny little box, it's going to not much space inside the box or anything else that happens, it's gonna feel like a lot. If you take a stand up, it'll bump bouncing balls and put them in this big room here. It's not gonna be a big deal. So if you can imagine that your awareness is as big as, as or bigger than the restlessness. Some people find that very helpful. To them, the restless is this chance to settle inside that bigger space. Some people find that concentration is really the key to settling restlessness. And this takes discipline to set that very focused, really use. Use your attention to stay really sent On one thing, sometimes when people do mindfulness practice, they're not so centered, they're paying attention different things, their attention is bouncing around. And so to use take, okay, for the next 10 minutes, I'm just gonna focus completely on my breathing and not letting my attention waiver. I'm going to count my breath. Just keep it in one one place. And sometimes when all the attention all the energy of attention goes towards one thing, there's not much, you know, kind of pour it forward into one thing, then there's not much energy left to feed the restlessness. And sometimes the restlessness can settle down because the energy doesn't go there. And other thing that can be helpful is to feel whatever the emotion that might be behind the restlessness. Sometimes restlessness is a symptom of frustration. And that's why the restless or sometimes it might be a symptom of confusion. Or it might be a symptom of fear anxiety. So rather than feeling the restlessness, per se, is to drop down, see what is the more the emotion that seems to be part of the restlessness. And then once you feel the emotion, it's again very helpful to drop into your body and let your body hold that emotion and enter into that world of that emotion with mindfulness, and the mindfulness kind of sometimes settle the issues and then the restlessness can settle itself.

Another thing that can be helpful is to value calm Sometimes I've been restless. And then I've heard Oh, calm, that's a good thing. And, and then just just remembering what a good thing it is, I could kind of search through my mind. See, whereas there calm is there is there a possibility of calm here and sometimes just evoking in thinking about it, I can settle my mind. But if I don't value it and think about it, I can stay restless. And there been times when I tried to, I've tried to deal with restlessness. Whereas I'm just kind of dealt with it directly and hasn't been so effective. But if I just kind of evoke calm, think about Calm, calm, sometimes that becomes available, and that could kind of settle the whole thing. Couple of more things to say.

Things that occurred to me to say have to do don't have to do with meditation per se. It can be very helpful to cultivate contentment. If restlessness is an issue, some people find it's helpful to actively reflect and think about, or cultivate a content. We live in a restless society, because many people are not content with what they have, they always want more and more and more. And so they cultivate contentment with what we have is one way to settle restlessness for some people, and is considered to be one of the great supports of meditation practice in Buddhism, is to cultivate contentment. Another
kind of contentment that just kind of lets you be content with your suffering, but the kind of contentment that keeps you from always incessantly wanting more and more and more of everything. And then if the rest of is a really big issue in life for you, then it's helpful to sometimes it can be helpful to have a disciplined life. So to have a schedule life, so you're not always doing a lot of different things all the time. But you have a regular routine that you follow regular time of day when you meditate, times you exercise time that you eat, and having a regular routine and that kind of settle into, can support some people from from. So the rest of this doesn't have the upper hand. And finally, a classic Buddhist instruction for restless people is to cultivate friends friendships, with people who are calm. Instead of, you know, being with people who are restless,

So that's restlessness and a lot of the same things that apply to, to worry. Worry has a little bit different things to explore. And that is sometimes we can question what we're worrying about, usually has to do with belief system and ideas. So in question that or we can turn learn to turn our attention away from what we're anxious about and feel how it is to be anxious. So this is a very important movement. I've already talked about the very important movement. Working with all the hindrances is to learn to turn the attention away from what it's focused on. objectively, you know, I'm, I'm anxious about the IRS from anxious about something and turn the attention hundred degrees and feel where it's about Objectively what it's like to be anxious, was like to worry. And that can be very powerful because it can take the power away from the object of things we're concerned about is turning around and feeling and being present, and then letting things settle. So the hindrance of restlessness and anxiety. It's a good one. And so now it's your turn. We have about 10 minutes. And do you have any things you want to ask about? What I've said about restlessness and anxiety or? Yeah, people are restless, ask. Yes.

Is there

a connection between visits Pain and restlessness, like physical manifests is a manifestation of restlessness. Sure.

I think that if there's a lot of pain, there's a there's almost a physical basis for getting restless a lot of energy. And that could come out of that. And so sometimes it's not good to sit with pain if you can avoid it. Some people have health conditions where it's very hard. But chronic chronic pain can be agitating. meditation can be an antidote to it. And it's possible to do things that can settle that both in meditation or elsewhere. And becoming becoming skilled at meditation can help you can settle some of the deleterious effects, that pain can have some of the side effects that it has. I've sat with intense pain, and been very, very peaceful. And that's after the intense pain and become very restless. And Meditation has helped me to sit with pain. And I think it's so some of the reactive modes that we come into play around pain. It's settled. If it's a chronic health kind of issue, you want to be very careful that you're not pushing the pain or sitting with pain in some kind of stoic way. So then trying to find other ways of sittings that are more settling that address your concern.

That's definitely one aspect. But the other thing I was wondering about is maybe restlessness actually manifests as pain, comfort.

Oh, yeah. Yes. Sometimes the mind can as your mind is a genius sometimes in getting you not to pay attention and sometimes the body will kick up pain, discomfort. As a way of trying to distract you from what's really going on so you can happen

a little contentment what flavors that what pally word is
that you're using for contentment, the Pali word. I don't know I'm not quite sure if remember it but something like sun sun sun dukey Sun

tantalized me by saying couple of times, regret regret by looking at it

Well, I'm a little bit reluctant to kind of, to say much because I can. There's so many, so much behind what you said to me, it's obviously a big issue. There's so many reasons or causes or streams that feed into that regret that you have, that if I say something I might not, you know, address your concern. But one of the things that occurs to me is that there's a beautiful practice of mindfulness of tracking our emotional life, which means this that there's almost like there's layers of emotionality. So, if you sit very still, someone sits very still for example, with restlessness is feel the restlessness as you stay there present. After a while and the cracks of the restless you see that the real issue is not restlessness but is regret. And sometimes you can transfer it morphs into maybe regret, then you stay very present for regret. Stay there, don't look for a unified look below it just a very, very presence. And allow it to be there. Allow it to unfold as it wants to unfold. And then it might morph into anger. And then person would feel the anger do same thing there. Just be with the anger. Feel it, let it be in the body. Don't try to get away from it. Just hold it there in respectful way. And then that anger might morph into sadness. And then you stay with a sadness. And each of these little like a layer going deep down, down. And then you stay with a sadness and perhaps a sadness. Maybe has maybe it's And maybe, you know has to do with some deeper fear. And, and then all of a sudden you might realize that you're afraid of losing your parents love. And the sadness was because you did. And the the anger was the rage of not having it and you know and certainly regret you know was was not knowing but not not knowing what to do with all that anger and all that pain and all that stuff. So it's not analysis and not trying to not going back and trying to understand what happened. But it's a very, very thing very much in the present moment. And then as you're staying very, very present, these these things begin showing themselves in or say say better showing themselves, but they begin to kind of open themselves open themselves or unfold, fold. So it might be for you very interesting to To do that sit really still very respectful of each different layer. So it starts starts with the regret. And forget about it has nothing to do with what you're thinking about any story. You have a being regretful forget about the story for this exercise. And just stay in your body stay with the feeling Big Lots of space and permission for it to be there. Like the emotion has never had a chance to be in the sun before. And finally has a chance this is a chance you can allow it to finally be in the sun and kind of permission to be there. And then see what happens is as you'll give it permission to be there, and just allow things to unfold and unfold. That's one approach. Sounds great. Yeah, it's really yeah. That's not gonna help you. So so that's just that the lots more that Curtis could say, but that would be distracting now from this one instruction Yes

By the way, don't regret not being hurt.

Thanks, Gil. This, this is probably an issue that strikes home quite well for me.

The middle of your,

your talk, I think from

often expect to occur and eventually because be several

key like

that it will
finally get centered

because they're just on its own from maturity as as a

factor of maturity With each moment that I'm older, another moment than I'm able to be here, so

you're relatively on the young end of the people in the room here. And there's some people here relatively in the older Ed, some of you were a little bit older ones want to say something. Is that how it works?

Please, I'm sorry. I guess my the focus of my question is, is about actually another state of mind. Something that may or may not have been something that other people have experienced with the attention deficit disorder earlier in your life and

and to be in a

state where you're, where you're actually able to stay with a thought, for an extended period and just be there.

That's an interesting topic. I think, you know, anytime there's some kind of challenge and I guess, Bo's that attention deficit would be a challenge. But there can be health issues there can be, you know, personal psychological issues that go on with all kinds of stuff. Very important, very important area for mindfulness practice, is what is our relationship to that issue? Because sometimes if we relate to it as if it's a problem relate to it is bad. I'm bad because I have it, I have to get rid of this I have to fix it. Just that way, that relating will make us restless. And, and so, like, so if you have attention deficit disorder, which you know, can have his challenges to have the life that way. The Are you getting more restless, more anxious about it more upset, more suffering more By bad because you're relating to it as a bad thing. And so you look at the way you're relating to it. I read an article earlier this year in the economist that pointed out that in hunter gatherer society, a much higher percentage of people have, I think it was an attention deficit disorder, then in non hunter gatherer society, and the feeling was that, to call it a disorder, when it's like 20% of the population had it in these these hunter gatherer society, to call it a disorder was mistake. And that actually, is back in hunter gatherer times. It was actually a very helpful for society tribes to have people with that had that kind of it was a gift that was asked was kind of a gift that allows you to kind of, kind of keep looking and keep searching, keep hunting and keep all your senses open. It's really Useful out there, you know, in the wild it's just that nowadays we have a different culture and society and so now in this particular society is decided to find as a disorder but the different societies you know sorts of relatives anyway so I'm trying to say that our relationship to it is a very important part. Now I know that there are at least two wonderful leap profound and mature meditation teachers in our tradition who have attention deficit disorder. And they've managed successfully to practice with their particular condition. And one of them has told me that one of them says that in his situation, he's the kind of attention deficit creepier person who can compensate but by being super concentrated, locked in somehow that's his ability. So you could do that. But did it take care of things in daily life without that kind of locked? Attention, that locked in attention helps him in meditation. The other one doesn't have it that ability at all. And he says, I just do my meditation in small spurts and you know, you know, just you know, like most of us right most of us have Attention Deficit so so, you know, he can he could get, he can get focused for maybe a couple of minutes or something. And then his mind wanders off and then he gets focused and, and he actually has had a very profound deep meditation practice using his mind that way, but he's not bothered by it.
He's just the both of them have learned how to both of these people have learned how to use the mind they have, rather than thinking, you know, I can't do it because I have this kind of mind. And I think that's known as signs of maturity. Unnecessarily, you're subtle, organically as you get older, but rather that we learn to work with our own limitations and not let them be limited. To help that address your concern. So one more here, rainbow.

I wondered why this was one of the topics

that you suggested we spend time looking at off the cushion. Almost never hear you suggest things that we do sort of look at a situation away from temptation. It's a good question. I think that with all the hindrances, it's good to, anytime, anytime. It's really good to live a reflective life. And sometimes, if you're only focusing on if you're only talking about it, like mindfulness meditation, in my class, meditation is supposed to reflect about things. And so sometimes people get the idea if they only listen to a mindfulness meditation meditation teacher, but they're not supposed to reflect just because Be present. And I think that a, it's a really healthy, you know, part of the mature rich, you know, responsible life is to spend time and quality contemplation and sort of going for a walk and thinking and think that things reflect, going through the good friend and exploring things, talking about some issues with a friend in some useful way, sitting having a cup of tea journaling. There's some way in which we actually can contemplate think, reflect. Reason, the things, I think is one of the important ways to understand your life and to clarify our life, and it has its place. And if you can do it in a quality way, someplace in your life, then hopefully, you're less likely to try to do that meditation.

So I hope that you didn't get too restless listening to a talk on restlessness. And if you did, I hope you're listening. So, thank you. And then next week we have our last hindrance and the hindrance of doubt. And they say that that's the most dangerous hindrance of them all. So come prepared. Thank you.