That's loud enough. That's not enough. A little bit louder. little louder still. Set. Good. Good, great. Okay. So welcome. So it seems like a long time ago now. But in the fall, I started a series on the Eightfold Path, and giving one talk for each of the Eightfold eight factors of the path. And so every Monday, I'm most almost every Monday that I've been here I've given a talk going through them. And now we're up to the seventh factor, which is right mindfulness. So that's what I'd like to talk about today. So the context for this teaching on right mindfulness is the path of practice called the Eightfold Path. And the image of a path suggests something you walk so you Bring all of yourself to it. And, and so the Eightfold Path is meant to bring all of yourself to you to it. Your understanding your orientation, your intentions, motivation, your behavior, how you relate to other people, and how you relate to your own mind. you cultivate and develop your mind, not for its own sake, but rather to get somewhere because a path goes from someplace. But it's not a real path. And so it's not like you can come to IMC and find the Eightfold Path here. We don't have it here. It doesn't exist at IMC the path exists in you. And if you walk it and so if it's a path to get somewhere, you know, where does it get you? So generally when we think of going someplace on a path, we think of going from A to B. And I prefer to think of the path of practice because it's not a real path, but grow Either path in your heart or within you, as you're going from A to A, and they're wired like a to a is that it's not a matter of, you know, getting something or attaining something or, or it's not seen, it's kind of dangerous, a little bit dangerous Saturday have a goal out there that you're going to attain in the future. But to really inhabit here to really show up here is quite an unusual thing. Because most people don't really live very present in their lives. And so it's a path to really be here, but be here in a way that's free and liberated. Some people might think that the path of being here is rather limited, because here is a limited world. It's you know, it's you're left with yourself. And it might seem a bit limiting tissue to kind of really come here and be present in this life in this body here and some clear way And they'd rather be free running around doing what they want. And, but if we look at what it means to be free, we need to look at what motivates the behavior that's free behavior. And so for example, if what motivates you is desire and greed, to get things have experiences, choir things, then freedom would be unfettered opportunities to get what you want. And some people like to have wanderlust feel most free, when they're off wandering around the world to traveling, which is a beautiful thing to do. Don't want to knock it. But if the motivation for it is strong desire, and that's what's driving it, then you can sit still, because the desire is so compelling. The person is not really free. They're under the control of their desire and the freedom is only the freedom to live. The desire not to That's not freedom from desire, it's freedom to be propelled by desire and be unfettered and desire. So same thing with fear. Some people are very motivated by fear. Fear is a big part of their life, anxiety, worry. And sometimes they can run in circles or run around agitated or run this way that by trying to fix things and take care of things, and as long as they're busy doing all this stuff and unfettered in their fear, then they can manage with it. But if they stop, all the doing it just sit with themselves, they find out
that the fear is quite a strong, compelling force, and it's very hard difficult. And they'd rather be free to run around like a, you know, you know, an agitated, restless way.

So, freedom and Buddhism is not the freedom to do whatever you want, freedom to shop, freedom to whatever, but rather it's freedom from compulsion. Freedom from restrict the inner restrictions freedom from the forces within us, that push us and drive us and require us to, to pursue our desires, our animosities or hates, or angers that pursue, that somehow have this caught up in the whirlwind or the panic or the whirlpools of fear that can come along. So, in Buddhist practice from A to A is to really show up and be here, to dive into here to enter into this world in a way that initially can seem quite limiting. Because to be really here, it doesn't seem as wonderful as being everywhere else. I've sometimes had a particular delusion and desire or that was connected to the grass is greener somewhere else. So whatever I'm doing, it's not good enough like someone else has it better Thing is, you know, or, you know if, if neighbors are having friends over and they're laughing, and my friends are my house, but those friends are probably better friends over there. You know, wondering what's going on over there, what am I missing, and not really here for these friends. So maybe the practice, you know, eight to eight is to really dive in here in such a way that we can work through the compulsions that givenness the fears the desires, so that we're not always on the move and fefe our freedom that way, but to have the freedom here, because we're not driven anyway, or we're not afraid we're not escaping from something. Some people find it seemingly very limiting to to that, but to enter into this world here opens up to something quite expensive. So this is what I'd like to try to describe today through the past. of mindfulness. So right mindfulness is the kind of mindfulness mindfulness practice, that helps us in this task of becoming free of freeing ourselves from desire, from fear, from hate from all these things that keep us kind of going and churning and rich and, and constricted. So in talking about right mindfulness, the Buddha defined it, not by a singular term, like a particular mental faculty to pay attention, for example, but he described it as being a set of different practices, that you somehow work together in a coordinated way. And, and so the first thing about the these set of coordinated practices, is he talked about what's called the four foundations of mindfulness. And are the four places for ways of establishing mindfulness. And so here, the instructions are that it's useful to pay attention to for particular domains of a particular areas of our experience here at this time in place. Sometimes when mindfulness practice is given, it seems like we're other The goal is just to be in the present moment and have open awareness to whatever's happening. Now, that's a wonderful goal in and of itself, but sometimes paying attention to everything leaves us paying attention to what isn't very productive. So you know, I can do a lot of people in America can have one pointed attention on their television. But I don't think a lot of people become liberated by watching television. I don't think that's been that effective. Though, you know, maybe, I hope someone else but the or you No, you could pay attention to anything. So well let's pay attention to mother. That my toenail on my little toe. I don't know how many people have gotten enlightened by paying attention there. What I'm trying to say is that what the Buddha directed attention to, for particular areas that he found to be particularly useful for the purpose of becoming free.

And these four areas are the first one he called the body. The second is something that he called feeling or feeling tone. The third is mind or the mind states. And the fourth is, I like to translate the word Dharma here as truths, the four truths but different ways it's true. So it's probably best not to translate at all, but four dogmas are for the areas that we'll get to that. So four areas body, feelings, mind and the truth and it starts with the so it's useful to pay attention to these areas of our life. So it starts with a body, it's useful to pay attention to our body, the body is an amazing place. Because it's the it's what houses or contains both our suffering and our happiness. It's where we find on both ways. We're constricted, limited, and the ways that we become free. So and in fact, it's kind of like the same location for both, depending on what's happening in those locations. If I pay attention to my fist, my hand and I
make a fist, I can feel the limitation of my fist, my hand being all bunched up and tight. If I release it, the
same place the hand now I feel a certain kind of vitality and flowing energy and warmth and freedom
and usefulness of an open hand, the same location If what if what I want to have is a free hand, I bring
my attention to my hand and feel the restriction of the fist and release it. So the same thing in our
physical body of ours, much of the ways in which we are caught, attached, limited, constricted occurs,
the physical basis of physical areas. So this is the place is it a location where the work is this, this
container, everything is within this fathom long body, the work that we're going to do. And so the
beginning of practice is to plunge into here, the A of this body, this time at this place. And here to do
that, for some people, it's quite difficult, because sometimes I've never done that in their life and the
momentum of their desires, their fears, their wandering mind, their occupations to doing activities that
they have are so strong. That it feels like they're going to die sometimes to sit there and be present for
your body. Because they're not giving in to the usual activities that they want to do. It feels very limiting.
Some people have you know, are used to wandering around a lot, doing a lot, and find their joy and
their happiness with doing many things and going around the world a lot will find it kind of restrictive, to
sit here and be still just be quiet and focus on your own body. But if you learn the art of it, it's like going
into a, you come out in a much more expensive a, it's quite a beautiful process. So to begin by focusing
on what's going on here, and so there's a series of instructions for how to pay attention to the body
usually begins with paying attention to your breathing. Because for many people, mindfulness of
breathing meditating on the breath is a way of helping to train the mind to settle the mind to stabilize
the mind the attention. So it can really be here in a high quality way. So we can begin paying attention more
carefully to what is actually here. As people begin paying attention to here to this body here, the body
can provide lots of information. The body is a repository of tremendous amount of information and
what's going on for us are reactions or responses, our feelings, our thoughts. And so much so that
sometimes when people have come to me, and asked me, it's not uncommon for people to ask me to
recommend a book to read on Buddhism. And generally, I don't like to answer the question, because
you know, it's like matchmaking How do you you know, I don't know what book is a good match. So I'd
usually say I don't know. But sometimes, you know, if you're the right person, and I think I'm not At the
risk of irritating them, I look at them and I say, Oh, the book you should read is right there and I point
right at them in their right their heart. That's the book you should read. Because I generally general
genuinely believe that the what you really need to study is not what some in some book, but
you really need to study what's in your psychophysical. Being starting with your body, the body is a door
in to the depths of who we are.

So to train ourselves to learn how to stop and pay attention in some high quality way is really important
part of this mindfulness training. So then the second foundation of mindfulness is mindfulness of
something called feeling or feeling tone. And this is something very simple. This is the idea that every
experience that we have, has one of three flavors. It's either pleasant, or it's unpleasant, or it's neither
pleasant or unpleasant. So, you know, someone gently strokes your arm, maybe it's pleasant. But if
they pinch you it's unpleasant. Maybe if they just kind of brush against you casually in the store, it's
neither pleasant or unpleasant because it's just neither massage, nor is it a pinch. It's just a mistake,
they brushed against you. So everything is supposed to fit into those three categories. And it's kind of
interesting or very interesting for some people to start as you start being present in your body for your
experience, to notice that your experience that you have has these three flavors, because it's often it's
the nature of the flavor that we have, that we react and respond to. So if they if the flavor is pleasant,
some people are driven to once more to get attached. If it's unpleasant, some people will either push it
away or pull away if it's neither pleasant or unpleasant, some people just kind of space out or
something. So to get a handle about how we tend to react to our experience, it can be helpful to tune in
or bring into focus how our experiences in pleasant and unpleasant part of the power of this simplicity is
that it cuts through the amazing billions of your mind to make things more complicated they need to be
so I can be sitting here and you know, I could be sitting here and feel a little bit of some kind of unease in my wallet in my ankle. And then I could start thinking about you know what I did today and maybe I walk too much today and probably should get more shoes and it's hard to get shoes for my size and Why don't they make sure is my size and I need to write someone to fix this problem. And so you know, I can go on and on with that. Or I can just bring my attention to the unpleasant feeling in my ankle. And feel carefully what's there and feel that probably what I need to do is give my ankle a massage, or maybe just kind of not sit in half lotus, when I've retired my ankle, and you can tune into the simplicity of it and get different kind of information than if I tuned in to the complexity of it. But the simple reaction being for and against is there. So hope that was clear enough that okay, you're with me, because it gets more interesting if you follow this simple thing in the discussion, so the idea is to drop in, just to show up here for the direct experience of your life through your body. So you have to really be here. When you can be here and your body for your experience, then you start noticing something about your experience. And the first thing the Buddha says directs your attention to is notice the flavor, pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. And then he divides up these these three categories of feelings into these two, three kinds of feelings into two categories. Two domains, there's those feelings that belong to the world of our five senses. And it's those feelings that belong to an inner world, not connected to the five senses. So if I get that massage, that's a sense sensory pleasure because it's my sense senses are being stimulated in a nice way if I get it pinched, that's a sensory experience because my sense my senses my skin, my touch, neurosurgery stimulated. So same thing with smell or taste or things you see or hear. You can have pleasant or unpleasant things there. But there's also what we feel inside. So if for example, you feel peaceful, where do you feel that peacefullness it's kind of you know, maybe feel in your heart you feel you just you feel kind of inner radiance, perhaps or stillness inside that you feel.

If you feel regret. Say that you offended your best friend today. By say, doing something that maybe was not so nice to do. Then you maybe you feel kind of regret you feel kind of heavy and way down. Where's that feeling of being heavy and weighed down? It's somehow inside. And so it doesn't belong to the sensory world of since the five senses. It belongs to some inner world that is not of the senses. So that Buddha says it makes us distinction between the inner world and the outer world. And in both those worlds you can, you can tune into whether the experience is pleasant, unpleasant and neutral. So this is very interesting because now we're beginning to be here in a in this experience right here, it would be getting out to distinguish between two different aspects of here, an inner world and an outer world. And as we begin moving into the inner world, that's where the we discover the world of freedom. Because freedom is not found by getting a better massage. That's not the point, or having more pleasant experiences in our life. If you're only free when things are pleasant, you're not really free. The idea is that freedom is much deeper than that. That allows you to be free in any circumstances at all, in such a way that your happiness, your peace, your well being is not conditioned. By the sensor world around you with the conditions of the world around you, but there's something you have within. So in the second foundations of mindfulness, the instructions are to begin also becoming aware of this inner world. And this very simple thing, is it pleasant or unpleasant? I was it for you right now. Then we come to the third foundations of mindfulness, which is, the word is mindfulness of citta. And citta means, usually translated as mind, I think it might be better to translate it as a mind state. And so the mind or the heart state. So as we become aware of this inner world, there's the general quality or state of this inner life that we have. It's not just pleasant or unpleasant, but it has different other characteristics as well. So for example, and what the Buddha talks about, is that if the if you're gripped by greed, Then the inner state is characterized by greed. If you're, if there's no greed there, then it's not characterized by greed. If it's script by hate, and then its inner state is characterized by, by hates, kinda like a mood, you can feel this mood within you. So to start becoming aware of the inner mood becomes part of the task of mindfulness. Because as we become aware of the inner mood, the inner quality, I'd like to say the quality of our inner life, then we start becoming the custodian of quality. We begin realizing that
probably the most valuable thing you have is the quality of your heart. Some of the most beautiful and profound and meaningful things that people have in their lives are not the things of their life, but rather the quality the character, feelings that kind of can be said at the heart. Love, Peace, compassion. Freedom that it's felt from the inside. You know, I consider to be the qualities of the inner life, qualities of mind qualities of heart. Some people will say no, it's, you know, it's my family that's important, or my friends are important. Yes, but probably the reason they're important is because of the way that you connect to them through your heart, through the quality of heart, that's a high quality. If you go around being greedy and hateful and spiteful at home with your family or your friends, your friends still might be important, but you're probably not getting a very high quality connection to them. So, when the Buddha talked with this third foundation of mindfulness, he talks about the mind state or the Interstate, the quality of it, it's possible not to tune into that quality of our mood or in our life is a variable. And you can feel it being in different ways at different times. One of the things you can feel there is that sometimes it's contracted Sometimes it's expensive, so that the text talk about an expensive or contracted mind. And probably that's something some of you have experienced from time to time, that sometimes your your mind your heart, your mood gets all contracted, you're caught up in some concern. And other times you feel quite relaxed and open, it feels quite expensive. And if you have a nice snappy, thin, nice meal, and things are going basically well for you. You can go out on a beautiful sunny day and look at the mountains and feel quite expensive.

And other day you've gotten the letter from the IRS saying that you haven't you know, there's a problem with your taxes. And you go out of your house and you don't notice anything but you know, you just get caught up in your world of you know, taxes and you know, what am I oh now and, and, and so she feels much more contracted or limited because of the concern you have. So, you can feel sometimes that Consciousness the inner life sometimes darkens, gets small, gets heavy gets way down, gets troubled. And sometimes it feels the opposite. It feels expansive, it feels light, it feels transparent. It feels translucent, it feels expansive in some way. So the instructions is to start noticing the shift in quality and characteristic of the mind state. The Buddha in this instruction doesn't say you should, you should be one way or the other. He just says in this instruction, just notice this shift in quality of how changes through the day and over time, become familiar with it. But he's talking to people who are meditating. And so part of the instruction is also to become aware of these things in meditation, where you tend to have a much wider range. If you meditate well, of expeed of feelings of expansiveness, openness, stability steadiness. And a sense of freedom. I'm sorry about that, especially those of you that so all this is Bill all this is something like information gathering part of the practice. So we learn to arrive in the present moment to be here at a in some high quality way. And a means to really dive into yourself into your body, your experience of breathing experience of your body, the feeling tone, what it feels like. And as you kind of go into this deeper and deeper, you start noticing, even without trying, start noticing that there's a mind state there's a mood there's a heart in there, that has a certain quality characteristic and, and that quality can be high quality or can be low quality, depending what's going on in their life. That just information just to notice these things. Then we get to the fourth foundation of mindfulness the fourth area of mindfulness training And this is begin to notice what's true about how we get what affects the quality of our heart. What affects the heart, whether it's in slaved caught up, trapped and restricted, attached clinging, or whether the heart is liberated or free. And, and the truths about those things, which keep the heart unliberated keep it caught. And those things that keep the heart free. Those are the truths from begin to notice noticing. It's the patterns is the causal connections. It's the cause and effect relationships that have bearing on the quality of the heart. And the task here is now not just to gather information, but actually begin to understand how this works. How attachment gives rise to feeling suffering. The release of attachment gives rise to feeling of freedom and liberation and peace. So the first task here is something called the five hindrances. So I'm not going to tell you the all five because there's enough list for one night. But these are the five different areas where we tend to five areas that
with we tend to lose our mindfulness, loser attention, lose our wisdom, because we're so caught up in desires and aversions. And so whenever you get caught up in the really strong desires, you hardly even know that you have a desire, just want something, then you know, you're lost in this hindering quality of mind. It hinders our ability to have a heightened sense of attention. It also it creates suffering. So the task here is to begin to notice. How is it that you get caught up in something like desire, and how do you free yourself from the desire? What what's the what's the path? What's goes on here? What are the feelings, the emotions, the beliefs, what's coming into play that gets you so wrapped up around desire? And once you're wrapped around desire, so how do you free yourself from it? How do you let go of it? So this is the task to see this. Because as we begin to bring you this kind of understanding, then we get a certain degree of mastery. We're not the victim of desire. We're not needing to just be able to, if we're suffering, we're not just suffering better.

You know, sometimes the way mindfulness teachings is taught, it would seem that the instructions are be really mindful of your of your suffering. Seemingly, so you can just suffer better. But the task of being mindful of your suffering is not just to be mindful of suffering so you can suffer better, but rather to understand it in some deep way. So not only can you free yourself from the particular suffering of the day, but you understand the patterns that cause conditions that bring about suffering. So you don't have to suffer so much in the future. So this is the task or the fourth foundation of mindfulness. And you have a much better place to study this to pay attention to this. If you're really in a if you really hear in a high quality way. So we enter in through the body, breathing and body. As we're as we begin to stabilize the attention here and this body and breath, then we start noticing some of the feelings and qualities of what goes on. And that helps us to separate out the inner life and the outer life, something that's not often recognized so well in life. As we begin sensing the inner life, which is where suffering and happiness and freedom resides or can be felt, then we start noticing how it shifts and changes the quality of this inner life. And that gives us a possibility or a vantage point to understand something about the causes and conditions for the shift. The nature of our inner life, so that we can start choosing or have some mastery over what we do in relationship to it. So we're not the victims of our the mood, we're not kind of just by accident and by circumstances, that we feel free are happy or peaceful, but that we have some mastery or we have some choice or we have some ability to negotiate this life of ours, so that we can safeguard the high quality of our inner life. When we do this, and we have this higher quality of inner life, then the world feels quite expensive. And this is where mindfulness or attention or awareness as you see really wonderful qualities that that are probably hard to or difficult to probably characterize in some essential, honest way. Your absolute way that this is how it is. But people talk sometimes about today I was meeting with people who talked about every, in every experience in the heart of every experience you have is a taste of the infinite. And the beautiful expression, I thought it was kind of nice. And so the taste of the infinite twin a great thing. So I'm just content with peace. You know, but yeah, like, or they feel. One of the beautiful things is as awareness becomes quite expansive, and a lot of peace, the sense of self of self referencing that we often live our life by, falls away. And it's quite a relief and quite beautiful, to have a certain kind of transparency transparent or or

You know, they did classic Buddhist and that word is empty experience of self, to feel. The self referencing self consciousness has dropped away entirely. So this piece in this freedom, there's a kind of lack of self referencing or lack of self consciousness, which is feel so much better than how most forms of self referencing work in our minds. And so then Buddhists talk about not itself as part of that experience. And that's, you know, and then then if you try to philosophize about that it gets complicated very quickly. But it's mostly just a matter of relaxing and opening up and having the consciousness become expansive, so expansive and so relaxed, that there's no self referencing. That's fun. Much more fun than philosophy. The so in this case, process then the truth, the four Foundation. The last of the thing that we're emphasis emphasize, if you want to understand is what's called the Four Noble
Truths. And that is to really see how the Four Noble Truths work in the details of your own heart. So the Four Noble Truths are the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, the truth of the cessation of suffering, and the path leading to the end of suffering, which is the Eightfold Path. So now we’ve kind of come into full circle, because the Eightfold Path begins with appreciating the Four Noble Truths. But as the person goes along in the path of practice, and goes deeper and deeper into this path, at some point with especially with mindfulness being strong, it's possible to see and experience the Four Noble Truths in a much more intimate and visceral way. Where becomes obvious and direct, that the Four Noble Truths are operating our lives. And at that point, when we can really see it for ourselves and have some tremendous confidence in the value of, of orienting our life around the Four Noble Truths, a person is said to become independent in the Dharma. Isn't that a great term, independent in the Dharma. So meaning that you understand the practice, you understand the Dharma for yourself, and you no longer rely on a teacher. Because now you know something for yourself. And that's part of the goal of this eightfold path is to go from A to A in such a way that you can really be a you can be independent, you can be the teacher here. And in case there's a danger of having too much conceit, around being, you know, independent, the Dharma, you can't be independent in the Dharma. Well, there's a lot of Self referencing going on. Nice. So we can't take much credit for it. So the Eightfold Path there is a right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort. And then today, right mindfulness, all these things work together, they, they support each other, they coordinated together. And, and right mindfulness is a really important stepping stone for this deep inner work that we're doing in this practice. And then the next time I'm here as a guest is probably next. Maybe next Monday, I'm not sure. But next time I'm here, the final step of the Eightfold Path which is so right concentration. It's the coupling of mindfulness with concentration in such a way that mindfulness can do its most penetrating work. So we have about five minutes. If any of you have any questions or comments you'd like to make about this, you're welcome to. Something wasn't so clear.

Well, I just have a kind of humorous comment. So last night, I watched men and Black three with my husband. And there was so much awareness of agitation in my mind and body as I'm watching the monsters flying and all the daggers going I had to get up and leave it was just it's it's ruined me I can't watch the movies with my husband enjoys anymore. I hardly watch any movies at all But anyway, I gave it a try last night and it was a horrible failure.

So the practice is ruined, you know?

In that in as far as movie watching, yes.

Please express my apologies to your husband. If coming here her somehow you know made your home life a little more awkward. It can share this with him but it'll get better as you become free or you'll be able to watch and not get agitated.

I was waiting for that to happen, but I was so aware of the bodily manifestations and my the agitation my mind and body it was it was not pleasant.

Yeah, it might take a few years. Keep keep keep going with a practice. Eventually you can be there with your husband watching black men, I know this.

So okay, maybe that's enough. Yeah. May I ask you to list the five hindrances, or list the five hindrances, or the hindrance. So, people who do our practice here, the mindfulness practice, it's really
good to become experts on the five hindrances. It's kind of like one of the important tasks of our practice is to really understand them, so you can smell them coming so the usual list there's actually two versions of the list, but the usual list is desire. Ill will an English Buddhist English. The next one is called sloth and torpor and then the next one usually is restlessness and regret. And the last one is doubt. So, these are I think I call them sometimes the black holes of the mind because when they become strong black holes, you know the light goes in but can't come out. Awareness goes in it doesn't come out. You know, you get caught up in one of these things. Is it the issue at hand book, I don't think I have anything there but five hindrances but on our website, there's an article page and if I A lot of articles I've written, they're not in the book. And there's a host of their six articles on the five hindrances, a general overview of them and then an article for each one. So you can read about it there. Okay, so what I like to say as as we close is that if this kind of talk tonight seemed complicated with all these things, you know, four things now the five hindrances and the Four Noble Truths, I'd like to encourage you to remember that the practice is meant to be simple. And a lot of these things open up and reveal themselves in due time by themselves, you don't have to go looking for them. And so maybe the most important thing I would like to use to leave with is a hugely big part of the practice is to go is a path is to go from A to A. So to really be here, and to learn how to be here for your experience right here. And then the rest of it. Hopefully, we'll open up for you. So May you be your quad may May you thrive in your particular version of a