So greetings from Redwood City. Clear day looks like. So, this will be the last talk the seven talk of the seven factors of awakening. And to say a few before I talk about the seventh factor, the factor of equanimity. A few more thoughts about the these factors overall. The Buddha made a remarkable statement about these seven factors. And that is that the continuity and the growth of the Dharma, I think he meant like the growth of Buddhism into the world, is dependent not on what people believe. But it's really dependent on people who cultivate these seven factors of awakening. That is what where the growth and development of the Dharma is, is in the qualities developed in people. And he also said that those who want to be involved with what's ultimate, some people really want religion is kind of about what's ultimate, the ultimate truth, ultimate reality ultimate something. And in Buddhism, kind of some, you know, ultimate states of awareness and enlightenment and these things. And in one statement, the Buddha says, if you want to be involved with what's ultimate, be involved with the seven factors of awakening. And remarkably, these are not views, are not tenants of belief. They're not doctrines. They're qualities that live inside of us, that can be cultivated and developed. As I said the first day, this is the sap that runs through that tree of Buddhism. The Buddha said that if you have a tree in the forest, and there's other trees, different species of trees that are over growing it, then there's no light that allows the smaller tree to grow up and become strong. And he used that analogy for the hindrances, that if the hindrances are over growing, the seven factors of awakening, they can't grow, there's not enough light there. But if the hindrances are removed, then there's light that allows these the tree of the seven factors of awakening to grow and become strong. And this idea that we're learning about how our inner life, the quality of our inner life, the state of our inner life, we're learning and studying it and paying attention to enough that we can learn to put aside and not be involved in the hindrances. These things that are said to cover over, obscure, hinder the wisdom of the mind and the clarity of the mind. And then as we uncover, we remove the tree cover of these other trees that we want to grow. Then there's the seedlings that are ready to grow and become strong. And
these are the seven factors of awakening. One of the things we're looking for when things we can begin studying and become aware of as we practice mindfulness, we become aware of what are the things that enhance the hindrances, make them grow and develop and what enhances and develops the seven factors of awakening. We understand the conditions that lead to each. The ancient languages, the food for each. And part of the many things are the food but preoccupation with the hindrances is food for the hindrances to grow. Paying attention to the seven factors of awakening, recognizing them is the primary food for that to grow. And here the idea is that we have these in us already. These are not foreign ideas. These are not something that none of us have. But some of us have not learned to recognize that they're there. I've done the exercise of when I've woken up from a nice, refreshing nap, but I'm laying kind of laying down looking at the ceiling, feeling very content, pretty clear, woke up in a clear state of mind and just kind of gone through and notice the seven factors of awakening that are there in the ordinary kind of waking up clearly and contentedly in from a nap. You might do the exercise. If you have something comparable to that, where you just very content and happy and the mind is clear and alert. And you have nothing you need to do maybe sitting under a tree in a park in a time when all things are taken care of for you and see recognize these factors are already there for you. And then we want to enhance them and develop and grow them. And one of the requirements for that is not to be caught up in our thoughts, our hates, our greed or desires or emotions, not to be caught up in them. To let them be, you know, let us to be that big redwood tree that can sway with the wind and not knocked over by the wind. And not be a tumbleweed that just blows across the desert because it's not rooted. So the seventh factor of awakening is equanimity and equanimity has two primary aspects. One is stability, a sense of balance that can come even from physical stability. That if we have a real sense of being physically stable and strong, that sometimes can make us much more resilient in the challenges of life. That if we're healthy and feel strong, and if eaten well, and maybe it has some exercise, there can be coursing through us have a certain kind of strength and stability, that we're much more resilient to what people say to us or what goes on around us. If we're ill, or tired or hungry or agitated in all kinds of ways, then the slightest little thing, it's too much and we get pushed over and it's hard. And so there is a sense of equanimity that can come from being balanced and stable. And the example I gave now as physical stability. There's also stability in our emotional life, stability in the mind, in our inner life. And that comes from practice as I keep doing mindfulness and concentration practices. And there's a sense of stability with a calm, a sense of strength in the mindfulness, strength in the concentration, strength and being able to let go, strengthen the application of practice, showing up and, you know, just not, you know, having confidence, strength of confidence. There's a lot of strength that gets developed slowly over time with practice. And then we have this much more equanimous, meaning that we're not reactive. We don't get obsessed with things or reactive to things. We act, we respond, but it's not on automatic pilot. We're not kind of swirling around, pushed around, triggered so easily by everything that goes on around us. There's stability, so we can gaze upon what's happening before the mind's reactivity takes over. Not an easy place to come to that place. But this is the direction of the practice is to come to this place where to be still. Be still and gaze upon everything kindly. And the word gaze is a choiceful word because the word equanimity has in its etymology, in Pali upekkhā, has the meaning of to gaze over, to look have an overview of what's going on. And so the second meaning of equanimity in terms of our practice, is the
equanimity that comes from having wisdom, of having the overview of things, to see the conditionality of things, to be able to see what's happening and see our response to it, our reactivity and to be able to kind of have this broad view or clear view, this gaze, we see what's happening. And watch it arise and pass and come and go without automatically reacting, picking up, pushing away. So that there can be greater capacity for wisdom, for understanding, for kindness and love to operate, that can't operate if we respond automatically and triggered and get pushed around by things, get angry or sad or upset or collapse or we quickly take it personally or use it to find ourselves or want to defend ourselves or feel sorry, or whatever we want to do. That gets in the way of this broad open ability to just see and be and not be pushed around by things. And equanimity, upekkhā, is kind of like the crown jewel of the Buddhism. It's kind of like the, it's a little bit hard to appreciate for people who haven't touched into it. It can sound like indifference perhaps. But it's actually a very, almost like a very sublime rich treasure of an emotional state almost. It's a whole state of, of our inner life, being allowed to flow and be trusted in a very deep way without being tipped over by it or pushed around by it or distracted by anything or obsessed by anything. And it's a phenomenally generous state, to be equanimous, because things are allowed to manifest and be as they are in the gaze of equanimity. And this feeling of generosity that's an equanimity, this feeling of love or willingness to be present is such a needed thing in this world. It's such a beautiful thing for ourselves. To have the equanimity to allow things to unfold, especially in meditation. And one of the very inspiring aspects of this Dharma practice that we do is that the way in which the Dharma not only lives in us, but we are the Dharma, in the sense of the Dharma, is the inner process, the inner movement towards health that leads us to freedom and liberation. There's a momentum, there's a capacity, there's a natural potential for growth within us, that we kind of mostly a lot of that just getting out of the way of, so that these processes can unfold and lead us to greater and greater peace, greater and greater wisdom, greater and greater love. So, to clear away the hindrances, and to recognize the seven factors of awakening is to begin recognizing the Dharma that's within us. And when those seven factors become strong, then in a sense, we become the Dharma. Or the Dharma becomes us. No difference. So seven factors of awakening and the word for equanimity that I would like to offer, as I've offered a word for each of the seven factors. And the word for equanimity is okay. It's okay. That there is a way not to accept that not to condone anything or agree to anything, but there is a kind of okay, that's how it is where there's space for things. We can see things before we react deep sense of wise, wise, okay. Okay. So, mindfulness to be here. Investigation to have the question of what? What is this? Effort with the word this. Being present for this. Joy with the word yes. Tranquility with a word ease. Concentration with the word steady. And equanimity with the wisest possible way of saying okay, it's okay. And all together, someone here, Tom, wrote a cultivation. And I love the word cultivation for describing this practice. Because cultivation for me is a botanical gardening term, we cultivate and allow the plants to grow. We cultivate ourselves in this practice and may the beautiful trees of equanimity within you grow and flower and be a benefit for all beings. Thank you all very much.

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