

Concentration: Week 5

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I ask any questions that you might have about the concentration practice. Like I like, it's a time you can have an interview. You can put it all out there. Just a few people will hear what you've to say, but say how it's going with the concentration practice, or questions you have, or questions you might have about how to continue with us beyond tonight, beyond a series, or anything. Okay, well, that's a good open question, but that'll be part of the class, too. So I think we'll wait for the class.

So in the question about, as you go forward, and how do you make a judgment in your intent on a particular setting in a combination of concentration and agitation and stimulation. And how would you recommend that we vary those? In answer to Rodati, individual is—so the question is, how would you decide when to do concentration practice and when to focus more? And Viposenaaneth: That's a good question. You know, I don't have any simple guideline or rule for that.

I think when the mind is distracted and it easily scatters and can get lost in thought a lot, then it usually it can't often be very useful to do concentration practice. I often do at that point, it as sometimes, if there's been no—you know, until the mind is stabilized. That's a classic function of concentration is to stabilize the mind. So you can do vision and but sometimes it's more—I find it more useful if I do try abstract state, to do *vipassanā* on that state, to do *vipassanā* mindfulness on that state. You know, because it's very interesting to kind of see what's really going on there and deal with it. Whereas in concentration, not dealing with anything, you just concentration, just calming things down, whereas in a we pass, you know, with mindfulness, you'd be actually kind of looking at it, you know what is actually happening in that state.

So if you're distracted, for example, because you're where you might get a speeding ticket, got driving home from the centre, then you might calm that down, you know, through concentration practice. Or you might look at your minds and say, Why you plan to drive fast even before you get in your car, and you know, reflect on that and change, you know? That's a silly example. But so you have to decide what is most useful. And so it's kind of—so if you have little experience in both, then you have some criteria to help you decide which is most useful, because you know what the consequences would be you mix these up with the enemy. It's setting.

So you're setting down forty five minutes that it then say, All right in, focus on concentration, on live, on focus, or let it flow. That's a good bit. That's a good question. Sometimes I'll choose to do one or the other. Sometimes I'll choose to do some concentration practice first for a while, very specifically to do that. But the way I do a passing practice is very breath centred, and the breath also functions as a kind of breath meditation has a double function.

It's both can be mindfulness and it can be concentrating. You can get concentrated in doing mindfulness. So it doesn't have to—you not have—you not to see these two things as being so separate either. So sometimes, if I'm sitting down and distracted, I'll just do a meditation on the breath, do mindfulness of breathing, and that'll help calm me and settle me a little bit. And then no, just continue doing mindfulness. And sometimes I'll switch, you know, be very particularly focusing on the breath in a much more narrow kind of simple way than I would during doing *vipassanā*.

So you know, in meditation practice, it's best to think of yourself as being the teacher, and you're discovering how to find your way by trial and error. So you try something. You try into doing something for a little while, seeing how that helps you, supports you, and or how it doesn't. And you might find certain situations as really helpful to do some concentration practice, and then you might find that you do a lot of concentration practice, and after a while it doesn't seem to be helping. It doesn't really help you get down to really deal with some of the things you need to deal with. So then you switch over and trial and error you can to find your way.

Also, one on a comment, I found that the instruction that you gave in peace, that sort of forgiveness, a little like a loving time in meditation at the beginning one, and then the loving time in meditation really settles me. And to being very able to go into concentration meditation in a very simple, easy way, as it lets it really lets go. So much when you, when you do that process of that forgiveness, and then do the loving kindness, and then five, ten minutes later, you really can go into very beautiful, really nice concentration. And that's a simple, easy way,

nice. So one of the classic—one classic way of doing a meditation session is you'd actually divide it up into different parts and do different practices as you go along. And one of them you might start, for example, by doing a couple of different practices like loving kindness meditation might be one you might do, or you might do some recollection of the Buddha something brings you, inspires your faith, or helps you let go of things you might contemplate death.

That kind of helps. Sometimes some people let go of a lot of different things, and then kind of starting that way then sets the mind, kind of helps you settle you much more quickly sometimes. And just concentrating on the breath and loving kindness practice has the added function that it brings on is, for some people, it's very helpful because it kind of attunes the heart into being an most a mood that's more favorable for meditation. You can count and think at the same time, right? Well, that's very important to see that and recognize it as happening. You can expect that to happen sooner or later, the counting will become mechanical.

And then, as soon as you notice it, that's your cue. Then you have to reinvigorate with life. And so you take whatever is your life force, whatever is your kind of vital kind of attention, and pour it back into the breath. Cause your vital attentions cannot be lost or into your thought, and so you don't need to stop thinking. If you can, great if you can. But you want to take your kind of central gravity of your attention to your counting, or to the rational breath itself, so the breath and the breath and the counting become the place where it's more organic, more alive.

And so he has to become a turning of that vitality into the breath. And a lot of that involves just paying more careful attention to the breath. Let it be really taking an interest in the breath. We can read, Oh, so you're relying on the hearing of it to notice your breathing. Feel it right. Some people, I know some people who do that a if it is helpful sometimes for concentration to breathe more fully or deeply.

At some point, sooner or later, you have to let go of that extra effort, because that extra effort gets in the way of the stilling, the quieting that happens in concentration practice. What you want to try to do is try to develop a greater sensitivity to your breathing, sensing the physical sensations connected to your breathing. What part of your body—I usually feel the breath if you're breathing heavily, but what with your breathing really subtle do you feel in your chest? It gets really, it gets more subtle. So when the mind gets really concentrated, it can get very, very subtle, and you has to apply it extra effort to kind of stay with it, to find it. And sometimes it can not do, can be no, no, can just be a very slight sense of movement or pressure, or a little bit, you know, heaviness or something that you might feel there, and just want to hang in there, and hang in there, and hang in there.

The best you can. And no, you mean, it might not feel like your regular kind of breathing. And sometimes a breath after the sensations of breathing, or the breathing seems to stop entirely. And then there's other instructions what to do give its example of the difference between watching the breath and watching the breath. So the difference between watching the breath in a be passing water, watching it in concentration. There's an analogy that might help.

If you're in a snowstorm, and you're watching the snow falling, you're looking on the window, and the snow is falling, and if you're what, you're kind of watching the flow of the snow fall going down stream. That's more like concentration. If you're picking up each individual snowflake, as it's coming down, really getting to know its seeing. You know that, in fact, no two snowflakes at the same time. Welling there for each snowflake. That's more pass.

So when I practise concentration, if my concentration wavers, the way that I bring it back is to be more attentive to the way the breath feels. And I don't really get a sense that I am doing what passes, and I really feel like I am now concentrating on the movement of my captain up and down or whatever it happens to be. And I'll notice that if I've drifted or something, that at what? I've actually drifted away from this sensation, and that all I try to do is just come back to the sensation of the feeling. That sounds great to me. There are the senses.

This is concentration, or sense perceptions. I think it might be lower both. I wouldn't worry about it too much. You note you don't develop your concentration. You can develop concentration doing mindfulness, making it very strongly concentrated in mindfulness of the breathing. So if you find it helpful, develop concentration by getting a little more interested in what's actually happening with the breath.

Go for it. Then, however, the one of the differences has been cone concentrating and viposna concentration. You don't have actually have to know much about the breathing to you're using the breath as a place to anchor the awareness, so the awareness can get still and relax and calm down, because it's just kind of resting in one place. In *vipassanā*, you're trying to actually discern something about the characteristics of that breath. So the cognitive factor, the recognition factor, recognizing what's there becomes more important. In *vipassanā*, in concentration, you don't have to know anything about the breath.

You can leave a session of meditation, doing concentration work, and you don't have to know anything about what the breath was like. You just have to have been there is a kind of dumb that way kind. Concentration presence is dumb. He now stay there. You often, you often know a lot more with the function of what's happened. Concentration is helping the mind become stiller and stiller, quieter, inquire more, but more peaceful.

And we're focusing on concentration primarily on the on the. The point of concentration practice is to change your subjective state. The point of vipassana practice is to understand something about what you're focusing on, understand the object, to see more clearly, penetrate what awareness can know. So I'm sitting here in this hot room kind of warm, and I could kind of just relax into the heat, and it would change my subjective state to relax into the heat. Just kind of let it take over and get more sleepy and tired and whatever, you know, it can make me relaxed. Or I can be very curious about, This room feels kind of hot.

What is a feel like? What I feel out on my body? What is it feel like to have a contact of heat against my body? But what, where in my body do I feel it? Where does it seem to be coming from? The heat. And we know what's the texture of it.

And so suddenly my mind got kind of alert and investigative. What's going what is its like. So one on one is a kind of first one is kind of like leaning into the subjective state, is really, you know, getting calmed by it, settled by it. So in concentration practice, you're focusing primarily on changing your subjective state through letting the mind be resting in one place. And we, as now, you're trying to understand that place where the mind is focusing on, to see it more clearly what actually is. So I think you send a course on these classes that inside doesn't really down in a concentrated state.

We do vipassana. Do I understand that bite? So the question is, when this insight occurs, and do and does it happen? When you do concentration, does it happen? when you do vipassana. I think it's best not to make a too hard and fast distinction between concentration practice and the post practice. In the classic books and in some people's discussion, they want make a very sharp distinction between them, but they're like the there's a big overlap between the two, and so I think it's best not to make you know. So generally, insight arises through the possible practice, though, to being discerning what's actually your experience is.

And so if you're primarily if you're only focusing on changing your subsubjective state of becoming calm, peaceful, stilling the mind, developing equanimity, your villain, developing the balance, the joy, the happiness that can come with concentration, then a you. Now, you're not really learning something about the objects you use, focusing on this, calming down. And so you can develop any wisdom by just, you know, stilling the formations. So do is by bringing the subjective change. You get some as you go along. For sure, one of the values of doing that kind of practice is the purification practice, and when you're at your purifying stuff, you'll learn something about.

You know what wakes you up, and you're also have got the wisdom of knowing what a purified state is like, and that becomes a wonderful reference point to highlight what's going

on the rest of your life. So it really helps if you have, if you have a really pure state, then you can notice little irritants, you know, and how they work much better than if you were always irritated. So one thing then that I bump up begins to laugh over the course of these weeks is I'm being very open, and then being just out of nowhere. This resistance comes to just, I just resist what I don't want to see it. I don't. I mean, it's not that.

I really don't that it's like. And so then I mean, I see it coming. I see how it comes. I see what it's like when it's there. I see what it is. I know what it's going to be like if I follow it, or if I don't follow it.

And that seems to me like, out of practicing concentration, I'm getting some understanding. It's not just that right feeling, no the that comes along. It's why you want to separate these. Absolutely. There is a lot of understanding come with concentration practice, but that's not the primary function of it. Its function what happens.

Its more and what's happened more as a subjective change that's a focus of deeper concentration practice. And that's and focusing on the subjective. Then it is kind of one of a guide, one of the things that guide you into the more concentrated state. So noticing how to concentrate, how the concentration practice affects you subjectively, then becomes a biological device to help you kind of go further into that state. So you notice upwelling of the of the feelings of being concentrated, the feeling of being in your body, being embodied, suffused in your body with sensations, the joy, the happiness that can arise. And you notice it coming first.

You might notice just a little bit hints of it, and then you kind of e.g. it on, you kind of encourage it on. But there it is. You know, its kind like you keep, you keep honing and developing the concentration on the breath or whatever it is with that kind of initially in mind, kind of, you know, trying to develop it and strengthen it, your kind of focusing and developing that ective state. Or you focus, or you turn your attention away from the breath entirely one should get some of the symptoms of getting concentrated, and you focus on those symptoms, and you kind of trying to expand it, intensify it, evoke it. So to deepen in concentration involves, in an attempt, an attempt.

In a sense, the point of deepening concentration practice is to change your subjective state. The point of your practice is not a subjective state, but rather has to do with being able to develop your capacity to see clearly what's there and the by product of that. One of the by products of one of the functions of that is to learn to have the capacity to be present for things as they are without needing them to be different, to find that place where the mind is not afraid against anything. And that's a very powerful place to discover in concentration prac-

tice. We're not looking for that, particularly yours. Looking how to get a subjective change, how to have meditation experience.

So just one last question in regard to noticing this state that you want to e.g., on or that seems worthy of aging is—So you're sitting there, and suddenly you just feel your heart open, and you feel compassion, feel wet. How do you may it on? What do you mean by egging it on? Do you mean what way you say that? The I don't know. It's a bit hard for me with that kind of description to tell you exactly what to do.

But from what you described, if I was trying to develop concentration, I would probably go back to the breathing and continue working on it, because one of the dangers is if you use some concentration practice, and there's a kind of opening into some level, or be kind of compassionate or loving or open hearted in some way, and then weak. It's very easy then to get detracted by those states. And cunning art is great, or you know this, you know, to thinking about it, or kind of indulging in a little bit, or and so then no longer doing the meditation practice, but rather a kind of glbit doing something, being carried away something. And then probably what I'll happen within a short period of time is your mind to start thinking again. So certain states that arise, like what you described here, and you might switch to do loving kindness practice, then just keep yourself anchored. But what you describe, what I would do is just keep developing the concentration on the breath, and just let those states not knowing those states that have arisen are really conductively helpful for continuing to deepen the concentration.

That's what I did, because I didn't know how to make it up. I just opened, and what happened is I mean, what do you know? Sometimes the experience got more intense, and sometimes it was just that my intention went back to just the breath as the breath, with breath. So I guess what I was going was that I've had experiences where I felt my heart opened in a more dramatic way than a normal no. And a part of me wanted to really go with it, and I parted, made it no. Exactly how to go with it without just losing track of everything I was doing, as it was so overwhelming in a way.

Yes, sometimes you use one, surrender to some of these things. If it's not normal for you to feel a lot of love and compassion, and that's what's going on, then times you surrender to it. Just kind of, you know, stay with it. And maybe it may be, stay with a breath, but kind of breathe into those feelings of compassion or love, and no, I just kind of enjoy it, let it kind of bathe. You let it kind of recondition your program. You can let it be a rest for the mind and the heart, and then see what happens.

And if you find after a while you get kind of discursive and thinking a lot, then you might want

to go back to the breath a more concentrated way. It's a wide range of things you could do. It's a little bit hard to it to kind of give you simple advice here. So it's interesting to discover, though, that it's a practice you as to playing around yourself and see what happens within the context of the instructions. Yes, I don't think you—Now, I think it's probably it's almost impossible to be a meditation teacher, you know. I think that idea a terrible job, and I don't even know, don't even can't even approximate you know how to actually explain to you how its how exposed to do the practice.

And you poor students, you listen to me and you try to put it into practicing at least these bumbling words of mine. But really, its really a trial and error. Each of you has to find your own way. So you take the instruction you get from the various teachers, and then you see. Try your understanding of it to apply it, and see what the consequences are, and learn from your own experience and find your own way. And really learning from your own experience is so important, because then you have something you can take with you now, all kinds of different situations.

And you know, you know, you're not always relying on the met teacher or the books, or no. Some people are a little bit unsettled by that, because they want to have the security of knowing this one way. You can hold on to that. But I think that it's valuable to feel that you're learning to rate having one way. You're actually learning the skills, learning the ability to find your own way. Yes, and to not usually mad yet.

You're required to in this class to be a good artist. he you like it well. First, which I say often is that the continuity of your best effort is really what's really, it's really important, and so that when you are sick or something's happening where you don't have the same kind of pristine effort you'd have at other times, it's well worth giving it your best effort to have available to you, because the continuity is the consideration. Come practice comes. Consideration comes with continuity of practice. And the continuity of your best effort bears fruit.

So even though you can only get to two and keep trying and keep applying, doing your best that give you your best then bears fruit, you know, over time, and that will build a kind of strength in internally. That makes it possible for you to develop, you know, concentration. Maybe so. So we ought you won't want to give it your best effort, and I think just try it your best. However you have to, also want to try to be wise in discerning what's happening. So your best effort together with your best judgment.

So your best judgment here might be that maybe need to change a little. But how you do the practice when you're sick, I actually find sometimes when I get sick, it's very hard to meditate. My mind as rifts, and I get out of a sitting, and I feel like that was—I feel like I think I

ought that was a wasted sitting, you know, occurs to me. But then I remind myself. Nothing's ever wasted when you practise. And sometimes when I get sick, it actually helps me get concentrated.

There's a way in which I'm much more in my body, and I'm kind of, like, in a contain much more, and I feel intimate and connected. And when I do, actually when I, when I'm sick, I much more often do concentration practice and vi poson, because what I'm trying to do when I'm sick is to relax my body. I feel like the more relaxed I can get, the more healing it is for me. So I often do that with the breathing, and I'll focus on the breathing, and then each time I breathe out, I'll focus on relaxing some part of my body, and often here's very subtle, or some tensions I can find in my body when I'm sick, and I want to try to at least amount attention anywhere. So I just kind of a kind of relaxation exercise that's a bit more of concentration than it is mindfulness. What I do, in a part, do is kind of a free flowing wherever my attention goes.

And I'm not just simply trying to notice the place, this tension. Am I all actively relaxing it when I'm sick? Is relax there? The tension. And so with breathing, also, it can be, you know, just used a breath as a way of helping you to relax. And if you're using it as a relaxation aid, it might be more compelling to stay with it. And sometimes I, when a few times we've been really sick, I felt that was the practice with my life line.

Excepting a fellow was really helpful kind of stay there, and because otherwise my mind would get filled with self pity poor Gil getting so sick, and, you know, and then I know that kind of thoughts are not healing, and so I'd rather not have those. And so I hold on to the practice, not the practice, and let go of those, and try to stay with something much more whole-some a pain place, a sa, as well. How do you, how do you define contemplation? seems to be always where what's going as you plan place. Cora: It always looks erotic. The contemplative practice caught calm, thinking about things, reflecting on things. It's a beautiful thing that human beings can do.

It's very valuable. It's very enriching to do that. And many any spiritual traditions, including Buddhism, I emphasize the value of doing those kinds, doing that kind of work. and as many ways of doing it. It can be part of, part of, part of, part of the benefits from doing something like concentration practice is it quiet and calms the mind down enough so that when you turn your mind towards being reflective, that then its much more workable. You're more focused, think clear, you think work, or in a more useful way and get a lot of good thinking in.

And sometimes, too, like you said, you is thinking about what's going on right then. It can also be thinking about certain themes, for example, thinking about some of the Buddhist

teachings, really thinking about that massaging and working and working them out in your own mind. Sure, contemplate content. Yes, contemplate that. It can be very valuable to do that. However, that is not mindfulness practice.

And so a lot of people here in the West have already very strong tendencies toward reflection and thinking things and thinking about things. And if they sit down to meditate and there's doing more of the same, they're kind of reinforcing that part of they're always thinking about things. And it's really helpful to kind of realize that you have another capacity, and that is to have this non discursive awareness, and that it's actually one might be more useful for you in the some have. Sometimes when you go underneath the radar of your thoughts and go into the kind of still or silent part of the mind, and explore your life in what's actually going on with the silence of the mind rather than thinking of the mind. And so both with concentration and with *vipassanā*, there's kind of usually, specially in the circles we are in, an encouragement not to think about things when you're practising, but rather to you stay with bare attention to what's happening. Sometimes *vipassanā* practice is taught as a contemplative practice.

When you actually pick up certain, you develop very strong concentration. Then you back off from the concentration and use that very soft mind to actually think about Buddhist themes. And that's one way we pass done. And the tradition that I was trained in, it was not done that way pass done with a non discursive mind. So it's very enriching to do contemplative practice. I like you're talking about the, you know, for someone who does someone who wants passena practice.

However, I would encourage them to find a different time to do that than when teaching. Repossna, do you think on as this, like I icon on er change pass were in the way I said it too. That's could be, and it's very common for us teachers to say. So what won't? One of the dangers is that if people hadn't had too many practices up their sleeves, that they're just bouncing around you. Now they spend, they do two, three, inutesamett, but it's not really working so well.

I think I'll do body sweep, and it is. Nataly, I don't like this, you know? And maybe the breath I've heard is a good practice. I'll stay with a breath, and after thirty seconds well, only very far on the breath. And then I've heard that listening to sounds is really good. Not listen to sounds for a while, and that really works really well for me.

And then, you know, and then, well, you know, it's not really that profound. Sounds, and maybe I should think about infinite space, and just kind of dissolving in—Let's try. I'm just getting a headache, trying to do that. Well, that doesn't work. So headache. I've heard that doing mindfulness on headaches is really good things, and that's where those sensations.

And then you go for a little bit, Oh, this. I'm so tired of this. It's so much work and meditation, and always trying, you know? So that's one of the syndromes. People always changing and switching, and at some point won't have some commitment to one practice. But as you know, it's okay to do some changing now.

If you find it's strategic. If you're doing a *vipassanā* practice, it's very powerful to, you have a real commitment to that. It's unvarying, unchanging. Not be involved in strategies. And just this period for this retreat is going to be postapRACTICE come, reposnapRACTICE come, what may. That's a very powerful way of practising.

But also, okay, very powerful to actually be more, you know, it's very little bit. And as I said earlier, it's one of the classic ways of doing the posture practice is a start with a little bit of *mettā*, or stop with a couple of different things, or start with concentration for a while. And I know some teachers who are not narcene, but some Buddhist teachers who say, who divide up like a fifteen minute forty five minute meditation session. Fifty minute can have ten minute segments. The first ten minutes you do come settling. In the second ten minutes you do *mettā*.

The third ten minutes you do choiceless awareness of mindfulness. In the last ten minutes you do something else. And sometimes at the retreat leader will say, Okay, ten minutes or up which? And a you know, it's one way of staying connected and engaged, and they find it helpful. There's many ways of doing this. So, you know, one of the one of the shortcomings that I have as a teacher is that, as I said, I see there's a place for all of it and such, really.

You know, it's a matter kind of rather than making it really simple for people like personal. Now, anybody needs just this one thing. You have to have some wisdom, and understand some of the principles, and find out, Batralandar, what really works for you, and then find you know what, find your way, and you can do it with, together with a teacher, and you kind if they can help. Teachers can help you be it a little more discerning about what's actual, what's useful and not useful. But if you find it useful to start with, you know, ten minutes of contemplative practice like you mentioned, that helps, you can get them, you know, settles you and quiets you down. And then switching over to nondiscursive in practice.

That's quite a valid thing to do in a mention last week is as right. And if I was at it for eoni-toasatioir, I vary at a ation self in hers the right. The attention is getting osooitatiion. I am not sure what to say. I suppose that when you think focusing a different person, you can be much more her lot of associations and thoughts and reactions lot stuff can come up on a person. The idea when you're doing *mettā* as a concentration practice is that are you developing the mat? Are you actually stilling the mind or being absorbed in not? You simply just

not necessarily just one thing, sometimes just one thing, saying the phrases.

Sometimes, with *mettā* practice, you have you hold an image of the person in front of you, you say the phrases, and stay connected to your body. So those two at least three things together kind of, you know, quite absorbed doing those three things. But you're not doing reposonibility, you're just letting mind become stiller and stiller as you do that. Now, with a there is subjectively a different result from doing *mettā*. Then there is doing concentration on the breath in the sense that sometimes with *mettā*, a kind of loving, friendly feelings might arise. Whereas you do concentration and the breath, those feelings of friendly feelings might it arise?

You might get joy that might arise because it's concentrated, but it hasn't of it, doesn't he? The same flavor as being this kind of soft, loving kind of a feeling. No, so there is a different results from the two. I won't, if that was clear enough, what I just said. Did you say a little bit more about well access? And yet, so the question is, how do you recognize excess concentration?

The primary definition of primary recog, way of recognizing excess concentration, is that you no longer are caught up by the hindrances. So the mind is now able to be concentrated on the present moment. You know, you turn your attention to the breath or to *mettā* or whatever it might be, and you can pretty well stay on there. And you know that the hindrance is not going to pull your way. The hindrances are no longer an issue. You might have bubbling up some sensual desire or some ill will but doesn't grab you just like washes off you just like you don't.

You know, or don't pick it up. You don't get involved. You can let go. It releases. The mind can stay present. Mistakes they focus.

So this settling of the hindrances is the definition, a primary definition of access concentration. Then there might be different symptoms that people might feel with access concentration. A person might feel the breath gets very subtle. The person might feel very connected to the body, the very connected to the body. Some of the normal factors we talked about last week might arise in the person, and so they recognize those things. But the primary thing is the hindrances to the hindrances of the big hurdle is for concentration and mind fullest practice.

It is to, in order to get into seriously into concentration work, or seriously in to be posing enough, you out to find some way to let the hindrances put the hindrances to rest so they no longer influence the mind. That's a really, really key thing. So learning how to practice

with hindrances, and learning how to have a mind becomes stronger than them, is a big part of what we're working on. Initial periods of practice, and then once they won't be able to have a mind strong enough to overcome the hindrances, that's when you can the mind really becomes workable, can be worked to do something. Until that point, you can't really work the mind so well, because you start doing something with your attention and it slips off into a hindrance. So and you can reflect on it and say, No thing you're bothering on, but you know you're not bothered by the hindrances.

I'm extremely practising but well, if it, if you can apply your attention to where you want to put it, and you know you can, you can keep it there relatively well, and you know the mind is not being pulled, or being trapped, or being ambushed, or being, you know, you know, the mind feels stronger, or feel like it's risen above any tendency to be interested in hindrances. When the mind becomes workable, you can apply your mind, and you know you're free of the hindrances. You know the not. Can it pull you? So it's that fit. Access concentration is you've just come to that place, and in is when you're there.

You're there, or in focus. Let it once you recognize the get there. Once you're in excess concentration, then you want to continue developing the concentration practices. Sometimes excess concentration is like the playa. I don't know. That's a good analogy, but it's like you reached the threshold, like you came, like there's this big house you can go explore, and you finally made your way to the doorstep.

And so a long muddy path to get to get there, and it was really hard to get there because you kept being so muddy. You your feet kept stepping into the mud, and it's hard work pulling yourself out. Every once in a while you fall in the mud, and you fall asleep in the mud, and you wake up and sit by a house. How could I fall asleep in the mud for so long, you know? And you get up, and you dry yourself off, and take another step, and here's another mud puddle there, and you know it's really hard going, and then but you keep, you know, plugging away, doing your best to practise. In some point you make it to the, you know, to the doorstep, and there's no more mud on the doorstep.

You get on the doorstep, and you know you're on the doorstep, and you're really happy because you know that the mud is no longer going to bother you at least for now and then. But then you want a doorstep. You want go through the door. So you go. What you do in concentration practice, you won't develop concentration further. So access concentration and concentration when experiences in the lower dharma states are actually different.

Is it the same? Well it is a matter of degree. So with the A, there is different degrees of strength and concentration. So strength of being able to hold the mind one pointedly, so as the mind

gets as mind goes from access concentration to full concentration, that the definition of the change is that the mind now really has a strong sense of one pointedness. With access concentration, there's one pointedness there. I think with full concentration, it's, you know, much more developed, the full bone concentration.

But the definition of the changing from access to the first *jhāna* involves an intensification of those five factors, the five goanic factors. So when you can recognize the presence of those five goanic factors, then you've entered into the first *jhāna* together with some of the kind of subjective feelings that go with that. And would you tell the initial application of mind, the sustained application of mind joy, happiness, and one pointedness, and one, you know, So there as many. There are many different other things could that go on? Other mental states, other subjective states that occur in the *jhānas*, besides those five. But those are the five that define the five *jhānas*, and the others might or might not arise.

For example, if you don't, in kind practice, you might feel actually a lot of *mettā*, together with the presence of those five positive factors in the first *jhāna*. But if you do a concentration of breath, you might not feel the feelings of *mettā*. So the other factors that can be present, and that somewhere I probably have it wrong now, but there are some *abhidhamma* list of thirty two different mental factors that are present in Now, when you read the *jhānas*, but the five that they suffice, many factors, which are the key ones that really define what the *jhānas* are to understand out. The strongest, I think, for the most part, no relationship is accentuation, sister, and a weaker meditator. And as that's more, that's the sad old. So in a way, I don't know how to not.

I don't know how to answer that. I don't know so well. I know. I know for me when I, when I am in something that I recognize as access concentration. I don't think of access concentration as being, you know, very clearly defined boundaries like an element, like a range, kind of what can be access concentration in my mind. at least.

And I can be in a state that characterizes access concentration. The hindrances are no longer operating, and it's relatively easy for me to stay focused on my breath, for example, and I can merely apply it there. And I might be aware of sounds around me, and I have some ability to choose to actually ignore them and stay on the breath. It's like, it's like, like the it's like the centre of gravity for attention becomes the breath, like that's where downhill is, like that's what you'd rather be. You know everything unless something might pull me away and sounds, but really well and be is with the breath. So I come back to it, or kind of settle back in an urn.

There's sometimes a feeling like a rubber band that pulls me back to it. There's a kind of

feeling of, For me, this is all very personal. Some of these descriptions you have to find out for yourself. But when I get into access concentration, I kind of feel like I've locked into a groove, like I made a groove now, and that. So like, I'm on that groove, and there might be things that pull me. There might be things I've become aware of around me.

But I kind of settle in that groove. Or are, you know, or it's like a canal, and the ball is rolling down the canal, and something pulls the ball up the sides a little bit, but the ball wants to come back into the centre of the canal and keep rolling down some kind of feeling. And we, when it's really strong, the concentration, then there's actually feeling a very strong feeling of being locked in. It's like sometimes the body gets the bottom, the spine sometimes will become very upright, and get a feeling also being locked in is when the concentration is very powerful of her, a kind of locking in. But the mine is still also very soft and pliable, so very soft. But to kind in the kind of in a groove or something like that Ms. Supra's addressed is consciously those good meditation.

A judge is I know some said ratouit'solyroin. He posed on or answered, As I have a difficult time continuing, you have that is itation. That will be. As for wondering how I am a pre for a no, she is. A is the description in the access concentration. A classic description is that the hindrances are suppressed.

They haven't been resolved. So, you know, and if you have a particularly. You know, you know, powerful passion for some of the hindrances. You know, you might have managed to suppress them, but that power is the kind of just lurking there waiting to come back into play. So given the right conditions, seem to come right back up. And sometimes, with a concentration, the mind has become still, the mind a little bit mind has become concentrated, mind has become kind of open, and not a lot of the tendency to a lot of distractions.

And sometimes, if one big distraction arises, it tends to the mind will on a lock on that much more strongly than it would if you're a normal kind of everyday street consciousness. Were kind of scattered. It's like you now you can be walking on the street, and you might have lust, but there's a lot of other things going on air, and you know you kind of you know your mind goes off, and all you know you know it's nothing like you like locked onto it. But one of the dangers of being concentrated is that concentration they can lock on to certain thought patterns or ideas or feelings, and they can actually much more powerful than usual. So you now certainly have lust, but there's not many other distractions such. Something Robert said earlier may be wanting to mention that then it's quite common that when people experience some kind of what they might describe as an opening experience, as Robert used felt very open, upright, some kind of transform experience, some kind of sometimes mode dramatic

with the mind.

We feel much more open, or more at peace, or resolved, or some kind of realization experience that people have. It's quite common, though not universal, quite common, that afterward people have much more difficulty. And part of the reason for that. I don't know exactly what the reason for that is, but this is my guess, you know, is my understanding. My best kind of understanding of this is that it's as if the psyche has generally been opened in a sense. But because now it's open, it has room for to deal with some stuff that hasn't been dealt with before.

So suddenly these things bubble up into that space. And sometimes people get depressed after, you know, I have been greatly challenged after, How could this happen? You know, I've never felt so much bliss and joy in opening and whatever in my life a week ago or a day ago, and now I just feel wretched, you know? But rather, being discouraged is a good sign. It means you've opened up the space to allow that stuff to come up so you can work on it. So you know, for you know, it might be that actually, you know, for it was very valuable for you to have the concentration you had when the person came into the room.

Some tendency that's very powerful in you came to the forefront, and now you get a chance to really look at it. In a way, maybe you normally can't. So probably what I would do then, in that kind of situation, is I would switch quickly to reposinosis. Its great. Now I have this concentration and ability, and I get to study this. You know, my lust really well, you know, I often conditions for studying lust.

Great. And then learn. Then see if you develop a different relationship to it than you normally do, and how you normally are with it. Was lust, wasn't it? That's what you said, Dayaya. Look at it.

You a member? Oh, I know sometimes, you know, it helps if I concentrate better. I noticed that in my concentration practice. that in the morning, it's very easy to become concentrated. And in the evening, when so my mind is mentally fatigued, and my body spent fatigue, or physically fatigue, and I probably need the concentration, or because, you know, it's more stress at that time that it's hard. Even suggestion on types of rate of energy concentration, or your son mentally in peseti So how to get into a concentrate? Get concentrated when you're mentally and physically tired.

One way is to get refreshed, and there's a number ways of doing that. You don't. Don't. You don't have to think of your meditation as being the way to solve all your problems. You know, meditation has to be the way, the way you find balance. We might be more useful to go and

you'll take a shower and look out the window for twenty minutes.

No, do something kind of relaxing and then meditate. So I want your kind of refresh that way. Sometimes when I meditate in a late afternoon, noon, the business activity of the day is still there, and the tiredness of the day is there. I'll try my best to say, Concentrate. Don't do a very good job for the first twenty minutes. And what's happening is I'm kind of re integrating partly, and kind of getting some rest that not of.

And then after about twenty minutes, it seems to be suddenly I wake up, and suddenly my mind is really clear. and then it's really easy to stay concentrated, like a kind of everything's had a chance to integrate and settle and be processed, whatever it does, during those first twenty minutes. So I just have to give myself that time to let that happen in the afternoon, and then the second twenty minutes is much better. So you might do something, you know, now meditative to get yourself refreshed and rested and integrated. Or you might, you know, think of the first period of meditation as a time to really get rest. You know, I may be focusing more on relaxation practice, or just doing the practice, or just doing the concentration practice the best you can, and just let it be as it is.

You find it yet how long you sit for an evening. It is as if you tired the whole time. No, I shift some point, re ten minutes. So it's better than me, you know? Maybe that did mean that's the way it is. You've ten minutes.

I mean, that's that. You know, to get kind of self re grouped. That sounds great. And you can also do what you now when you're tired. You can also do walking meditation. You know, if you're trouble getting, trouble staying focused, and because you're tired or start don't have much energy, sometimes doing walking meditation can bring energy and keep you engaged.

And walking meditation is a great way of doing both concentration and big and mindfulness practice. So many other things people like to ask before we start with the meditation: Yes, I, I, in a way, a way, I, I, down below. And all so, I look at me, I, I, I, I, seen to, I, down below means what, down below means what, what is down below me. Oh, so, you know, the two things I could think of saying, one is that concentration is an impermanent phenomenon, like everything else. So it is. Concentration has like a lifetime, and sometimes a lifetime is five minutes.

You can do it, and then it kind of fades. Sometimes it's no longer. And for most people, you know, if you sit long enough, concentration will stop fading, because it's just impermanent phenomena. It's there because of different conditions coming together, and at some point

you'll fade. And so you want to be kind of autonomous about the fact that, you know, it's impermanent phenomena that rises and passes, like everything else. You can get concentrated, and then you can stay concentrated a while, and then it wanes after a while.

Not necessarily mean. It might be mean. It might be that forty minutes, you know, that's your regular sitting period. Might have those you know, that kind of pattern, and then and then the but then you're building over the days and weeks, and it's probably every time you probably find that you can sustain it longer and longer as you develop that muscle, and also you develop the intensity of it. You'll settle more, you get concentrate more quickly, and the concentration will be more powerful. And it might still be that you have forty minutes of good sitting in the five minutes of, you know, get tired of the end.

I don't know how it'll be for you. But over time, the continuity will develop that muscle. And so you might not have the cascading enjoy to day. But you might have it, you know, in a few months as you build up the continuity, and you might not have it on a regular basis. It might be, you know, when all the conditions come together, just be right. I mean, if you know, if you enjoy, if you're sitting, it's very interesting to watch how our meditations change from day to day.

And some people report that they've noticed a change through the week. That Monday is the really sharpest day for meditation. And then each in a Monday, as the week goes along, they get a little duller as the week goes along, because they'll get tired. You know, people refreshed from the week end, and then they get tired as they go through the work day or work week, and so they see the pattern. You know, that's the pattern. And over the months and years, it seems to overall prove, but the pattern remains.

So the Fridays is the most stracted sitting. It was most extracted sitting for the last ten years. But it's a lot better than it was ten years ago. Just a whole thing is improved. But there's a pattern. Or you know, as you're getting, if you get close to like April fifteenth and your taxes are due, you know, you might find, you know, that I hardly get concentrated.

Or if you have to go, you know, you have to go to court because of a speeding ticket or something. You know, it's all kinds of uncomfortable conditions that can make you, you know, waver a little bit. And so you've got to kind of be able to serve and be graceful about, you know, over as the conditions of your life change and things happen, your ability to get concentrated will change, too. And so what's important is just to keep giving it the best effort you have. The continuity of your best effort is what's important. And then at some point, you know, the conditions come together well enough, and you can drop much further.

For the last five minutes, well, I think, what do I think? It's only five minutes at the end. I think it what's useful to do then is to keep trying to develop the concentration during those last five minutes. But try to work with that state. See what you do know and reinvigorate yourself. So kathi happens is my pattern.

That's how I get really calm and kind of just draw a groggy or something. The very end, let me see what I can do to see if I can change that, and try to reinvigorate the concentration, or investigate this, or, you know, sit up straighter, or arouse. Can I suppose can I figure out some how to arouse a kind of mental effort? And you might not. You might take months before you figure how to do that. But rather than thinking as a problem, thinking of it.

Think of it as an opportunity to see if you can, you know, learn some other way of developing concentration, develop other muscles, other activities. And you might, with time, find how to work with that state in a way that's much more useful. And you might actually be able to override it at some point, or change it when it arises. That's what goes on my thoughts when I sit. I sit. Sometimes I sit for a particular length of time, but if I have a kind of open time, I'll just sit down to sit for long, and I'll sit sometimes for an hour and a half or something like that, and I finally stop sitting when I feel the concentration is waning, you know, as long as I feel like I'm engaged, and it's going well, and I'm kind of absorbed in what's going on, great.

And then at some point, is kind of, I feel like, and is not always. So you, after all these years of meditation, I'm often tricked by my mind at that point because I think much more concentrated than I am as it begins to wane, and I feel kind of I feel calm. It's kind of nice feeling. I feel this lingering feeling of calm and peace and ease, and my mind is beginning to think more and more. And I'm not often so quick to catch the thinking, and because I'm kind of be seduced by the feelings of concentration that have risen. And so, you know, I think I'm actually doing fine, and kind of keep applying myself, and then after awhile I realize, I'll wait a minute.

I know the state, and if it's time to stop, Oh, for me, it may, for me personally, makes a big difference. Oh, yes, I very er little generally there you know, the longer I sit up to point you now, the more concentrated I get. I really get into it in a kind of working that state. So, you know, yes, exactly. Ka: So though some of you've been sitting now for a while, if you'd like to stand for a minute, you more than so get yourself kind of into your meditation posture, and in some way or other turn your attention inward, some way or other turn into the subjective state of how you are from the inside out, some way or other. See if I can enter into your body, submerge yourself in your body, feeling what's happening in your body from the inside out.

And as you breathe, see if you can soften your body, your mind, your heart in whatever way

you can. Let there be a softening of who you are, softening of your resistance. Some people brace themselves against life. Softening doesn't have to be completely, but just soften the shoulders, the stomach, soften your chest, and the inside of your chest, your heart. Let the warmth of the room help soften and then let your mind soften. The thinking mind that may be so tired, fatigued from all its concerns, give it a rest.

Softening Your Mind I sometimes find it helpful the image of letting the mind flatten out, settle and relax outwards in all directions, like a still forest pool, alpine lake. Or the softening of the mind: Let the mind become spacious, being aware of the boundary less nature of mind. The mind has no fixed limit, boundary edges. What we call the mind is diffuse with the environment around it, and we often talk about bringing the attention to the breath. Instead of doing that, let the breathing come to your awareness.

Keep the awareness, the mind soft and relaxed, and allow the sensations of breathing to enter into awareness, into your mind. And then, instead of holding the attention on the breath, gently but firmly hold the breathing within the awareness, let your breathing be on the mind, letting the breathing come to awareness. And the rhythmic quality of breathing, in a sense, massages the awareness, or is like the waves on the shore that roll up and down across the shore. So the breathing, the waves of the breathing sensations in your body, they roll across the awareness back and forth. If your mind is active or you have some agitation in your body, then let the breathing be a calming influence. As the breath comes in, you enter awareness.

Let the breathing soothe or calm your body and your mind. specially as you breathe out. Let it. The breathing out maybe have a settling effect on your system. If you need to relax, focus a little more fully on the exhalation. If you are sleepy and the mind is already kind of dull, you don't want to relax any more than want to bring energy into the system.

And then maybe you can focus little bit more on the inhalation, and let the energizing let the breath be energizing, uplift, uplifting, rather than letting go its exhalation. Be energized with the inhalation, energized and stilled. At the same time, let go of any thoughts and concerns you might have, and settle into your breathing, settle down into it, settle down as if you are going to be rooted in your breathing. Let yourself become as totally involved as possible with this one little corner of the universe that we call the breathing. There's a whole universe to be discovered within your breathing. Let the mind become still and quiet as you enter the breath to become the breathing.

Try to become your breathing. If you feel any joy or pleasure connected to breathing in any way at all, somehow associated with focusing on the breath. If it helps you get more absorbed in the breathing, intensify that pleasure, or enjoy it, or let that be the aid to be more fully

present with the breath. Be become the pleasure, become the joy. And now, as you're staying with your breathing, become interested in getting to know the breath a bit better, understand a little bit what's actually happening as you're breathing. What's what? What happens to the sensations? What kind of sensations make up the experience of breathing?

And then notice that as you are taking an interest in the breathing, you know that you're breathing. There's two things happening. There's a sensation of breathing, whatever they might be. And there's a knowing of those sensations of movement, of pressure, or tingling, or warmth, or coolness, vibration, pressure. There are the particular physical manifestations characteristic sensations of breathing. And there's the mind's ability to know that you don't know those sensations, to recognize it.

It's very simple. There is a sensation, and the knowing of that sensation, the knowing of a sensation arises. and passes together with a sensation. The deepening of ephesia practice entails developing, strengthening, moment by moment, this faculty of the mind. To know what's happening there is what the experience of breathing and the knowing of it. The mind can get very quiet, very concentrated, very absorbed in the breath, for example.

But you see the difference between the breathing sensations and the knowing of it. If you wanted to deepen concentration, you would forget about this distinction between the sensations and the knowing of them, and you would enter the breath. You would become the breathing. You would simply, as best you can, let the awareness in the breathing become the same thing. No distinctions between knowing and the breathing. Just breathing, letting the experience of breathing absorbed, absorb you.

So you get absorbed in your breathing, absorbed by your breathing. And in the last couple of minutes of this sitting, spend a couple of minutes time just reviewing a little bit what happened during this meditation. Be Paula, can you turn on a light switch and get the two left hand switches? And then you can take the big steering wheel, and that's below you, and turn us little bits towards the north. That's good. So what was that like for some of you? Did you follow along? And what happened during that sitting? You have to kind of rouse yourself a little bit here so you can talk.

You said he let the breath come to you. You didn't get that. The key is not to get it. How many of you didn't get that? You're some. You didn't get it. Got so many of you now? Then they we sometimes have a kind of fixed idea of what the mind is, and we think the mind is something began. We use the language, You now turn my mind towards something, or some people jerk their mind on their breath, you know. The mind goes away, and they jerk it back on the breath. Or they say, They bring, they bring their minds to the breathing. They bring

teirattention to the breath, as if the mind is the kind of thing you can kind of haul around, you know, at will. And just the kind of kind of an image we have of the mind, which sometimes is not very helpful. Sometimes it works. It's just as valid to say to let the breathing come to your awareness, come to your mind. Or if you're sitting here and like this, Sylvia Borstein likes to teach, when you notice your mind has been distracted, you're not on your breathing any more at that moment. Notice if you're breathing in or breathing out. And what happens then? Is it more of a sense of just kind of noticing what's happening, as opposed to trying to bring your mind to the breath and then noticing what the breath is like much more peaceful, more gentle? Just notice where what's happening to let the breath come to you, let the breath absorb you. So I know it's so. This kind of language not is not, you know. It's not, it's not like a true way of seeing things. But also saying, I'm going to bring my mind to the breath is not a true way of seeing things. Whether it's kind of a conventional way we talk. So if you didn't make any sense to you, it's okay. If the other sense makes sense, fine. It's very disappointing for me to kind of assume that nothing happened to any of you. It's worth talking about. And it's just like, you know, I can't tell the difference between falling asleep and being concentrated. Chances are that you're either asleep or getting kind of drowsy. There should be a kind of vitality, vitality, clarity. But can you describe, Wilbid, what your experience was? Maybe in retrospect, Oh, that may be not sleepiness. When your person is really absorbed time and go really fast, was there a sense of clarity during that time? I say, Oh, I should my sleep, and start in I angry or right then you have many thoughts or thoughts or no thoughts to see. Dedalyemar: Yes. Maybe you are quite nicely absorbed. It could well be Yes. Here is Yes. Oh, lonaiiiietat Fosyoamswis. It's that's fine. If you don't need it, then you don't. If you know if you don't feel like breath as the counting is helpful, you don't have to do it. Or It might be that you find a way to count that's much more subtle. Try to find a very subtle whisper, a little corner of the mind that kind of just almost doesn't you not even sub vocalizing? But somehow it's, you know, keeping count: Oh, I had this sensation, my mind, as being kind of a flat, infinite platter, and then it stopped being a platter, and its kind of pulsing, so that I tried very hard not to make an image out of it. But there was this kind of feeling, and I got so relaxed that I started getting really drowsy. So I went back to counting my breath, and so let go of that feeling that I found out really interesting, because it was infinite. It didn't seem to be this mass of stuff inside my skull, the not mine. That's one of the qualities of consciousness. It has a kind of feeling. There's a kind of infinite quality to its boundaries. And when a person goes into the higher *jhānas* that I didn't talk about last week, but the higher, the four higher ones. One of the things a person gets absorbed in is the infinite. It is infinite, this infinite, or infinite, infinite space, or infinite, infinite, infinite consciousness, or conscious is

self that has no boundaries, or just space that has no boundaries. So the infinite aspects of awareness, of experience, which gets singled out and get absorbed in it, and everything else falls away to experience this farness. That there were periods of time when I couldn't ascertain really whether I was breathing and beating out breath got very short. The I can describe it, and so it was just it was almost a circular, bright, the visual. And the second piece was that just about the time we were talking about being body yourself. At the breath begin body, I had beginning of a hot flash, and it just was unbelievable. It was this experience of the hot flash that was extremely cellular. I could feel that, feel the words in the skin having this hot flash, and I just usually people are not that attentive to it, are they? The was like, as I may be a whole season or watcipro. Very, in a way, great. Oh, so the very end, I talked about the difference between concentration practice and mindfulness practice around the breath. Do that make sense in that? Dis, that distinction. Could you follow along? The distinction between is, first of all, the distinction between the sensations of breathing and the way of those sensations. that make sense, some of you? And then, and any kind of healing that difference, or let letting go, that difference, just kind of becoming the breath, or just being absorbed in the breath that is foot, not letting there be that difference. Just let the awareness can become the breath. See that difference, too. That's that distinction. Its one of things that points to a difference between the pass and concentration. And as the *vipassa* practice gets quite deep at some point, so to say, there, so you need a lot of concentration to do *vipassa* practice. As I keep saying, this is why I want to teach this class, so people can up their concentration to do *vipassa* And the part of the a very important part of the Terabotna tradition is teaches that in order to do *vipassanā* practice, a person has to be at least in access concentration, that if you're doing mindfulness practice, you do mindfulness practice, you know as we do, and then mindfulness becomes *vipassanā*. When mindfulness is brought, you to the point of being access concentration when hindrances are no longer an issue, and you can really focus on what's there in a very penetrating way. And then the lexis concentration is a kind of a fork in the road. You can either go the concentration route, get more absorbed in your in the meditation practice, or you can go into the *vipassanā* route, and the doorway to the present world is seeing the difference between on the experience and the knowing of the experience. It isn't so much that you need now go look for that. I think that actually kind of be a problem. But at some point when you're quite concentrated, that'll be an in *viposinata*. It'll become quite clear that there's two different things going on each moment, there's the experience, and the knowing of that experience, and the deepening of *viposinā*, follows from that initial clear seeing, clear awareness of that distinction between those two. Yes, Oh, you are watch to you a very waterkiwi. Yes, kind of be very careful the words er. But you mention

generally what you say is right, but I would say not that you are watching it. I would say that there's awareness of the difference between the experience and the knowing of that experience, though the scene is two different phenomena. And whereas when you do in concentration practice, that distinction kind of falls away. Sometimes when you are very concentrated, people talk about no longer seeing any difference between themselves and the object or the subject object distinction falls away, or you become the object completely is one way people talk about. And whereas *miposna*, you're not getting absorbed that level in others. You're developing this. The knowing, the recognition factor of the mind actually knows that this is going on, and knows that the knowing is different from experience being known that becomes really important for me, possible, because we pass involves a recognition of what's happening. And there's a kind of you to know that. You know what's happening. In a sense, seminal sense, make sense to all of you. Yes, there's always awareness, and yes, it's a little bit complicated or a little bit arbitrary how we understand what's happening. When we're aware of something, I mean, it's like awareness where awareness of anything is actually not the whole thing of awareness is kind of I mean that there are technical, different descriptions of what happens, but I'm a little bit mistrustful of those technical descriptions. I think it's like, you know, a light. Is it a particle, or is it a wave? You know, that kind depends on, I guess I don't know much, but physics, much about physics. But kind depends on the angle perspective you want to use. And sometimes one perspective it's a wave, and one perspective it's a particle. So with awareness, you can use different perspectives to understanding it. So I don't want to kind of say, No, this is how it actually is. But that's not so important. What's important is that it, for a person practice, that as it deepens, there's a clear awareness of the recognition, except that the knowing, which is separate from the experience, it becomes stronger and stronger. So you really see the experience, and you know you are seeing it, this recognition of it. You know, it's two different things. So you know, there is the hearing of the car, and you know that the knowing of that hearing is different from them than the sound itself. There's, you know, the pressure of my hand against my knee. That pressure and the knowing of that pressure are two different things. And that the recognizing the difference, the knowing, that capacity to know that that's pressure becomes stronger and stronger with we pass practice. So, you know, also, you, when you get more or more intimate with the pressure against the knee, you really see it, and the contours, and the textures, and all the aspects of it. But as you do that, at some point with we pass practice, it's really clear also that the knowing of that pressure is different in the pressure. So this making sense. I hope it's useful. But I am afraid in my mind that that way, that this is not going to be useful for you. It's just tie you up and not explain the difference. Yes, so she says, at no time were

not breathing is happening on its own, and she is not really thinking about it. I think, Here's breathing happening on its own, and you feel like you're absorbed in it or focused or concentrated on it, but there is not much cognition or recognition of what's going on there. At no point do you not sleep. When you're concentrated, you don't have to can't get to sleep. But then with me, pass? No, you would actually know. So it was. So the distinction I made earlier in the question answer session is that I don't know a best analogy, but concentration is our little snow falling down outside your windows, a big snowstorm. The snow is pouring down, snow. And when you're concentrated, you is kind of absorbed in the in flowing of the flow, the movement of the snow falling in front the window kind of you kind of absorb that flow. Whereas in *vipassanā*, you actually focus on a particular snowflake and recognize something by the snowflake, get to know it better. So with concentration of breath, you just absorbed in the breathing, and we don't really care what the sensations are like. to you be possibly our actually care. You want actually to know much better what's actually the details of that experience of breathing. So if you're breathing in, you would actually recognize that there is movement, expansion, pressure, maybe experience of tautness at the very top of the breath. You know that as you exhale, there is, if you're following it in the torso. Beware of the contraction, letting go, the releasing, the movement. Maybe at the very end of the exhalation, you wear maybe a little pull, maybe. And you'd actually know those little details. When you do in concentration practice, you wouldn't know any of it. You just kind of use, you know, hanging in there with a flow. That's as helpful as I'm trying to make a distinction because, too, after the weeks of working on concentration, you'd like to try to clarify the distinction between them. So there is a distinction to be made. I also kept saying, I don't want to make a hard and fast distinction in concentration and mindfulness. I kind of like to think of them as kind of overlapping, or say this way that you need a certain little uncomfortable with a debate that sometimes exists in Theravāda Buddhism between you the concentration path, I should do to put in the mindfulness path, as if there radically separate paths. Or rather, it's a discussion about the merits of the relative degree of each cause. You need to have both. If you, in order to get to concentration, you need to have some modicum of mindfulness to be able to keep you on track. If you do mindfulness, you'd have some modicum of concentration, some concentration, in order to keep you on track with mindfulness. And then it's a matter of the degree. So when you do pure, constantly straight, stronger concentration, emphasis, you wouldn't have a lot of mindfulness. You're just focusing and developing concentration. You need some mindfulness, and you do. So you need now both are needed, and then it's a matter which degree you have. Now, some people will develop concentration first, and then switch to doing insight practice. Some people will do mindfulness practice first, and

then we'll switch to doing concentration practice for a while, and then switch back to doing insight practice. There's all kinds of different ways of doing it. And some people, like in the Mahasi tradition of Burma, which is the tradition primarily that I come out of, the rhetoric is, you only do mindfulness practice, but the whole context of doing the practice, you do a support doing it. with a lot of concentration. So the context supports concentration, but the rhetoric is just keep doing, working on your mindfulness, so you get a lot of a tremendously strong mind. Concentration builds while you're doing the mindfulness practice, so much so that the teachers in Burma talk about *biposinajanas*, that there's some *ta janas*, which are the *janes* of *sammadi* practice, concentration practice, and there's a *biposinajana* with the *jhāna* of *viposinā*. And it's the *jhāna*. Five *jhāna* factors that happen in *samariscosajanas* also occur when you enter into *viposnajananas*. The difference is that there's a difference, and that is that the *viposnajananas* are not quite as intense, quite the level of absorption, but still you are quite absorbed, quite involved, and the hindrances are engaged. And rather than mind being one pointed on one thing through time, the mind still has the ability to get one pointed, but gets one pointed with whatever is happening in the present moment. So the *jhāna* factor one pointedness is there also. The sequence of going from joy to happiness to equanimity as you do when you go through the first four *jhānas* occurs also with the *viposnajananas*. How strong, how absolute is the separation between these *repostojanas* and *samārijanas*? I don't know. There is a turns like concentration *jhānas*. There is a range of schools. There's different schools of thought about what constitutes a *jhāna*, and some teachers say, Only if you have these particular characteristics is it a *jhāna*, and other teachers know it's different. You can have different characteristics that characterize a *jhāna*. They all agree that the five natural factors play themselves out. But then can there be any thinking in a *jhāna*? And some teachers say, Absolute *jhāna*, no thinking whatsoever. And other teachers say, Yet there can be some thinking. It's no discursive thinking. You're not kind of wandering around thinking about dinner, you know. But there can be some kind of very refined kind of thinking about what's happening in the *jhāna* itself. Some people say in a *jhāna*, in some of the *me*, some of the *jhānas*, you wouldn't even be aware what's happening. You only kind of be aware what happened *jhāna* when you came out of it and you reviewed it. Then you are aware. And some people say, some teachers say, No, I mean it. That's a *jhāna*. That's a *jhāna* at all. That's something else. Are not even aware that *jhānas* always some kind of presence of mind while you're there. You wouldn't say that you weren't aware what's happening while it's happening. So there's a wide range of what people want, what different schools of teachers say. Whats a *jhāna*? And then we have *speaposina jhāna* also. So we have to kind of make our way through that and either decide which one is right and go along with that teacher. Or we

could try to figure out some other way of holding the differences. One of the ways I hold the differences, and you can go along with me, if you like, is that its *jhāna* can be experienced with a range of intensity. So there isn't looks like one degree of intensity. That's the *jhāna*. Rather, say that each *jhāna* can be experienced from one to ten in terms of intensity. And you can experience at a level one or a level ten terms of intensity. And all points in between are in the *jhāna* also. And so some teachers will say, Oh, its, you know, because of their own experience, perhaps, that Oh, it's mostly, you know, one and two is what I recognize as being a *jhāna*. And other teachers say not' only nine and ten, which is *jhāna*, and they're all, but they're right. They're all *jhāna*. They all are within that range of intensity that allows for that. *Jhāna* then makes sense. So that's very nice, because it harmonizes everybody. I like to harmonize everything you know, and not have people being posed to each other. But I don't know, right? I'm not really that qualified. Just talk about it. Then I've done a lot of concentration practice and have experienced a wide range of concentration states, but I haven't been formally trained in concentration like the *jhānas*. So there are some teachers who actually guide people to go through the *jhānas* in a very organized, very systematic way, and trained people in a systematic approach are going through them. And I haven't had that. So you know, if a person really wants to get trained systematically in the *jhānas*, you are probably better studying with someone who actually, you know, has gone through systematic training themselves. So you are not that qualified to answer this question, what these different teachers have to say, who are actually in the system much more than I have in the personal world, the personal world of IMS and Spirit Rock. The avenue for going into the *jhāna*, or developing at the level of concentration, is with doing *mettā*, the *brahmavihāras*. And that's usually by going on long retreats, four, six, twelve week retreats. And there's a fair number of people now in this inside meditation world who have developed *mettā* practice. And have you know one been trained systematically in the *jhānas* by doing *mettā*? And its really fantastic. Its phenomenal to realize the tremendous power of the mind, how you can train the mind. And the mind, as you know, just a phenomenal apparatus. And people who used to live in a street consciousness couldn't even imagine, I think, how powerful an instrument the mind is, and how it can be developed and used. And then there, outside of Spirit Rock, there are other teachers who teach various ways of doing the *jhānas*. A Teniserabicu, who comes here sometimes, has his way of approaching it primarily through the breath. Lee Brasington, who's been here a few times, has his way, which he was trained by kamma. And what I haven't studied with either him or her, but how I understand it is that he uses the he helps the people, helps the practitioner discovers some kind of a pleasant sensation of pleasure in the body. And then you use that. Focus on that. Intensify it. And as you intensify it, then

you get into the *jhānas*. I said Rachel and Cheryl has studied with Lea. And then there's a Bantagunarotina in who also is a *jhāna* teacher in West Virginia. And there's a Westerner in Australia named Bramovamsu, who has very strong opinions about what a *jhāna* is, and he's undeseen. He's only ten on the scale. So the thing is interesting. But the *jhānas* is that these very strong states of concentration is that in the cosmology of Buddhism, Buddhist idea of the cosmology of the realms of existence, the realms of life, the heavenly realms, and earth know the realms of the world here, that the it's said that the heavenly there's thirty three heavens in Buddhist cosmology, and those the realms of the heavenly realms correspond are divided into the there's two general categories. I see in ones you care about this cosmology, but it I feel I wanted to make a simple point, but I feel like I have to kind. So there's thirty three, thirty three heavenly realms. Those heavenly realms are divided into three different realms themselves, three different categories. There is the one, the *loka-dhātu*, which is the worldly realm, and we live in the worldly realm. *Loka* means the world, and there are some of the gods who live in the worldly realm. But you can't see them because they are living in a kind of up there heaven, but they are considered to live in the worldly realm. This is a second heavenly realm is called the *rūpa-dhātu*. And the *rūpa-dhātu* the consciousness of the beings in the *rūpa-dhātu* corresponds to the first four *jhānas*. So as you go up in the higher and higher realms. In the *rūpa-loka rūpa-dhātu*, you go from the first *jhāna* to the second *jhāna*, third *jhāna*, the fourth *jhāna*. So their consciousness is defined or characterized by being *jhānic*. And then when you go into the higher, highest realm of gods, its called the *arūpa-dhātu*, and there the state of their consciousness is characterized by the four formless *jhānas*. five to eight. And now what? It's interesting also. It's said that when a human being like you enters into a divine state, you temporarily become divine, isn't it nice? And so the different realms of existence in Buddhism is defined by states of consciousness, and that in various ways gets embodied. It's not bodies that kind of go into different states of consciousness, so consciousness it gets embodied in a sense, and is. So the *arūpa* have no body at all, and then the *rūpa* date has kind of some kind of body, and then the human realm, for us, we have like solid bodies. And so, and then if you happen you get really adept at developing these concentration states, then you're likely to get reborn in the corresponding heaven. So if you do a lot of the *rūpa jhāna*, if you do logic into the first *jhāna*, like to the second or third or fourth, then the chances are you get reborn in that realm of the gods that characterizes their consciousness. If you spend a lot of time in the *arūpa-loka*, in the formless *jhānas*, then you probably get reborn in these formless realms. So how you want to understand that element of Buddhist cosmology is up to you. But the moving of consciousness between different states is something is very clearly recognized in Buddhism, and something that Buddhist practice is

helping us to do. So for concentration, for we passena practice, you don't need to get into. Or this is also a debate. Some people say you have to go into the *jhānas* in order to be able to do *vipassanā*. And so the whole schools that they actually take you to certain levels of *vipassanā* of *jhānas*, and then, as you emerge, either as you emerge, some people teach you how, as you emerge from *jhānas*, you then start doing *vipassanā*. And there's and some people say that within some of the *jhāna*, especially some of the lower ones, you start doing *vipassanā* within those. And some *jhāna* teacher says, That's absurd. There's no way you can do *vipassanā* within those states because the mind is not able to you or so concentrated. And some people say, Oh, yes, you can. So I don't know if we need to go into all this, but there's a whole system. Different teachers have different systems of how you switch from doing concentration to *vipassanā*, and there's different ways of working with that. If you feel that it's useful, and if you feel attracted to this concentration practice, I'd encourage you to continue doing this. And I think probably now, if you find it useful, if you find you have some ability to get concentrated, and you get absorbed in our in, interested in it, and it's helpful in your life, develop it as far as you can, and it becomes like a concentration, becomes like a strength. It's a very helpful strength at you carry with you into the world. It's like you have this like really strong strength, like this solidity inside of you, in a sense, and that all the things of the world that you know might are disturbing are can be less disturbing because you have this pillar inside of you. You can have this bit is grounding, and you don't have a lot of wisdom, necessarily. But you're kind of stable, whereas if you don't have the strength of concentration, you're much more likely to kind of, you know, tossed around by the world. *Vipassa* doesn't focus so much on the concentration stability. Focus more on the stability that comes from wisdom and seeing and understanding. But it's really helpful to have that strength of concentration. So I'm very happy when people develop concentration. And if you feel interested in it, and feel like it's helpful, and you have some ability in that department, please continue. And if you stay around here, you're welcome to come and talk to me about that, and how it develops, and how it goes, and how you might develop it. some more when you want a switch to be passed. Some people develop too much concentration, and then there's a whole way of working with them, or they're kind of stuck in there. They're hiding in their concentration state, and it's very pleasant, very nice. And this kind of always going in there is not very helpful for them to always go and hide out in the concentration state. And sometimes they it'd be very difficult to switch to be pass. Partly difficult because suddenly it's not so pleasant, and they don't want to know, Why should I hang out with all the suffering when I have this pleasant place to go? But it can be a kind of a dead end to spend a lot of time in the *jhānas* or in concentration states. At some point, you need to switch over. Yes, please, san er that,

sir. Unnecessarily, some of the factors of the seven factors of awakening are universal, they say, in the *Abhidhamma* tradition, are universal aspects of every moment of consciousness. So there's always some concentration, and there's a base of tranquillity and an investigation of Dharma's that doesn't have to be present, doesn't have to be present when you're in the *jhānas*, for example, or you know it. Its so, for example, a joy, which is one of the factors of awakening, is there, you know, in the first two *jhānas*, but that in the third *jhāna* falls away. So I don't necessarily you know, the factors awakening aren't all present necessarily just because you are present for the breathing. In fact, when I was on retreat once, and the seven factors of awakening were quite strong for me, there wasn't much happening. I was very concentrated, very still, very absorbed in my practice. And a lot of my the these *viveka*, the that I talked about Monday night a few weeks ago when I was quite strong. It wasn't no experience in my physical body any more. My body disappeared. Very little, very little going on in the mind. Very rarefied states of consciousness. And the seven factors of awakening were quite strong. And so I went to my teacher, and I would talk about seven factors, and we work with him a little bit. And then, after a few interviews, I the teacher noticed that I know I would name the seven factors of awakening, but it always leave out equanimity. I'd forgotten about equanimity, and in fact it was one that I had to develop in order to bring them all into balance, because it wasn't that. It wasn't that. Maybe it might be a little bit present. So I had a running out of time here. I had something else in mind for this evening, beside talking here, and that was I actually wanted you to talk with each other a little bit. Oh, the *mettā* suit. I forgot all about that, you. But I actually want you guys to spend a little bit of time. Maybe we can take your stuff. You don't. If you be patient with me, I think it's really important what this concentration class and your engagement, you're working with it, and what happened as you did it would happen when you did. The concentration practice would happen when you, you know, heard the various teachings I had about it. And I think that if you guys have a chance, formed little groups, and actually talk about what that was like for yourselves, and actually talk to someone about your own practice a little bit, and here it was for other people, I think it actually might help you kind of solidify and integrate a little bit what happened here in the course, and you shouldn't feel shy. It isn't like everyone gets angry. So, you know, some people, you know, have greater abilities, get concentrated in others, and that's just different minds. It's not like their better person because they get concentrated. I know people who are real jerks, who have great ability, get concentrated. So, you know, just be and I know people who are really, you know, some of the purest, most wonderful, greatest people that I know who have you now really poor Billy concentrated. So don't take it, you know. Feel free to kind of say how it is for you. And you don't have to kind

of be apologetic or feel, if you know. So why don't you, of form, little clusters of about five people, for four or five people, and just each of you spending, you know, you'll have about ten minutes. So each of you has about, you know, one or two minutes. And just talk a little. But how what this course was like was last four or five weeks had been like doing this practice, your experiences of it well. The impression from looking at all you was that that was very useful. It seems like very nice people. You seemed intent, and it seemed like to have so many people kind of intently talking about their practice, whether it has to be good. So I was very happy you participated in that, and not sure what to say now to finish up a couple of things. So this is the first time I've taught a class like this, and I was hoping it would be useful for people. And impression I had was useful for a lot of people, and I think and it was also very interesting for me. I felt like I learned a lot, especially learning of people who talked to me about what happened to them when they did to concentration. I felt like I learned a lot from you. And there's a wide range of how people engaged in the practice, how they use it, and the benefits they get. And I felt, I kind of felt, there was a whole world opened up for me of of how concentration affects different people, and how different kinds of benefits people get, and different ways of working with people, different options for people. It's like a whole I felt like in a bigger garden, and I feel like I have a lot to learn. So it was really great. And for me also, and what I tried to do was just kind of put out whatever I knew that I could tell you that I thought might be remotely interesting and useful for you in this regard. I've never taught a class like this before, and I've never taken a class like before. So I don't have any models of how you pose to teach a class like this, but I'd like to. I'll do it again, probably once a year, we should do this. And personally, I'm looking forward to kind of learning how to do this kind of class over the it might take three or four years to kind of times to kind of find out how to teach a class like this well. But it was what it was, and I enjoyed it, and I hope that you did, and it was useful. And if you didn't memorized *Metta Sutta*, you're expected to still finish memorization. Just because the class is over, you're not off the hook. The commitment doing the class was to memorize the *Metta Sutta*. So you have to do that and on, and you can't wait until the next time we do it, because I might have you member something else to the next class. So any final words, any questions, anything that you feel like I've I should have covered, or anything burning questions about all this, you like, word mindful posayaenin popular discourse. Viposhna and mindfulness are considered the same in a technical little bit work on abidarmic kind of technical distinction. Aviposna: Mindfulness is a factor of the mind, the minds ability to hold something in a discerning way. Viposna is it is having insight. So using up mindfulness, the point of begin to have insight into what our experience is. So until you start having insight, using mindfulness, once the insight starts company coming on,

then you've started doing *viposna* practice, and then there's a whole progression of what happens. There can be I don't say there is, but there can be a progression. Or there are different levels, anintensities of a posna insights that happen, just like there's a progression in the janic practice. So it is also progression in *viposna* practice and the insight it as they unfold. And technically, *viposna* begins when a when the mindfulness is coupled with a strong enough concentration that you start seeing either the difference between whats called *nāma-rūpa*, which we talked about today a little, but in between the sensation and the knowing of the sensation. Or, for other people, the *vipassanā* begins when you have very clear insight into how things are impermanent, how your experience of things are permanent, and that's the first is one of the primary insights in *viposna*'s insight to impermanence. So in some in the Mahasi tradition, you're not. You just hold to pay attention and investigate, see clearly what is actually happening. In the in some other traditions where you concentration practice first, and then you switch to *viposna* practice, you are actually directed to start looking for impermanence. Whereas in Hasi tradition, which I mean, you're not directed to look for anything, not usually not directed to look for impermanence, but some semi posteticosayo can now start looking for impermanence, noticing everything is impermanent. So some ways of doing *vipasa* is much more directed. You're dirtied to pay attention to certain things that bring you those insights in the tradition that I practised in, you're not directed. And part of the reason for that, at least for one of the reasons I like to think its reasons that is that the mind has its very suggestible, and it's very only suggestible, but it always has a great imaginative ability to create things. And so people can think they have having insight seeing something there, but they're kind of imagining their seeing it there. So if you don't tell them what the insights are supposed to have, then they can't. You know, Power of Suggestion is not there. And you know, you actually can be more sure that you're actually seeing it. I went out my first time. I practised in a theatre at Monastery. There are very few Westerners there, but there was a library upstairs in a little building, and the library was all tie books. But there was a picture of the king. I mean, a lot of the rooms in Tireland have a picture of the king. So a picture, the picture of the king, I found out just before I was leaving the monastery that all the English books were behind that picture. It was because the abbot didn't want any of the Westerners to read those books until afterwards, after they practice for a long time. Then you read it. So at one style, as you practice first, and then you read the books to find out what happened to you. But you don't read the books first some little more at that school. You don't read the books first. You trust to practice. And then afterwards I'll give you the books. Afterward I'll tell you what happened. Yes, right as well. That's it's a big, it's a big issue, which I don't feel that qualified to answer that question, because a reason least, because there's a lot of spiri-

tual traditions in discourse, which makes as the ultimate goal of the practice the dissolving of the subject object distinction. That's the ultimate mind. Is no longer a subject object got a distinction? You're entirely one with experience. And is that the case in Buddhism? Some Buddhists say that. Some Buddhists don't say it is. Beyond leading us to that, you could say that, and you could say it's not that. It depends a little bit on the perspective, how you understand you now, the angle, like a wave or particle. So it's a big topic that you raised. And however, the interesting thing I want to leave you with, rather than answering the question, is that Buddhism doesn't always answer, doesn't always say that the ultimate way of being in the world is to dissolve that subject object distinction, which some people continue to be the ultimate. So saying that that's true, but the ultimate truth is just saying that to raise in all you're in your mind some questioning of the position that that's the goal of the practice. I do. Now, that was a helpful answer, but that's the one you got. Sorry, it's dissolving of any idea that there's a self here watching involved, but there's still awareness and the object of awareness. So it's on subject terms of an eye, but there's subject terms of awareness and an you nor her sound. The knowing of the sound. There's no, there's no I knowing it, but there's a knowing. Still, some people would say that the *nibbāna* is the dissolving of some distinction, and that's very nice to say it. Just a lot of things that don't apply in *nibbāna*. So, you know, that doesn't apply either. Does that mean that it's, you know, that it's the wonderful kind of disappearing of the subject and object in *nibbāna*. And you know, you could say that. Some people do say that, but you know, there's no ice cream in *nibbāna* either. So with that, one more question, or I ask you all how you know this class has gone over every time, right to day, even more than usual, what would be like if this was a two hour class. Would that be okay with you, or some you've left now? You can't. But it is. So it's next time she, next time she just do to a two hour class, and should be seven hundred nine thirty hours. Seven nine is seven. Does seven work, or that challenge with work? and stuff, but you got to put it in your calendar. No, this is a class. I can ask it on it, you know. Otherwise, I've to. Otherwise, I don't ask you. Then I just make it up on my own. Seven, thirty. How many people want seven? If a cost, how many people would prefer seven? Thirty would it satisfy every one of you? at seven fifteen to nine fifteen will ok. So what fifteen? Or because people, you can't track that well, it on. You start at seven seventeen. Lock the door. Well, the thinker won't synchronise our watches. So anyway, was really, really nice for me to this class, and I really enjoyed teaching it, and I felt stretched in trying to figure out how to teach this kind of material and look forward to next time. And no, I appreciate all your being here and I wish you all well. Thank you.