

Introduction to Mindfulness Meditation, Class 3-Emotions

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January 28, 2026

Keywords: mindfulness meditation, emotions, anger, fear, trauma, depression, RAFT, IMC, Buddha's birthday, homeostasis

So we'll wait a little bit to see if more people come so they can start at the beginning. And does anybody have any questions from last week or questions about maybe if you're meditating at home or anything? We'll wait a little bit to see if more people come. So waiting then, I'll just tell you a little bit that might be interesting for you, that I just came up from the retreat center we have in Santa Cruz. We have a retreat center. The house is about 40 retreatants. And I'm teaching a week-long retreat there.

The standard length is a week. People come for a week at a time to be in silence and meditate. And it's quite peaceful, quite lovely. And so I kind of... Coming from there to be here, I just feel cozy. It kind of feels kind of nice. I'm happy.

Kind of like in this nice, having come from this nice event. And then just to say a few more words to letting people come in late. Maybe I didn't say this at the beginning, but we've been here in Redwood City at this place for now 25 years. I think this January is the 25th year that we've been here. And before that, we were in Palo Alto, and I started with this group in 1990, being the teacher for it. It preceded me for about four years, and then they were in Menlo Park.

And then we went to a wonderful place for a while in Palo Alto. We were at the Quaker Meeting House. I don't know if you know it on Cowper, but it was really a delight to be with the Quakers. And it's really enjoyed being with them. It felt a lot of resonance between them and us, and... And then at the end of 2001, we bought this building.

And it was very nice the buying of it because it was the ministers kind of found... We knew we were looking a little bit, but the ministers found us. And the two elderly ministers and husband and wife, and they wanted us to buy it because they were kind of mystical Christians. So they sat in silence a lot. And so we sit in silence. So they wanted us to have it.

But then there was a strange, strange, kind of unusual way. So we learned that they were interested in selling it to us. We had been looking. And so I called them up and they said, great. But don't call us. We'll call you about this.

So about nine months later, they hadn't called. So I thought, well, I should check in with them. And it was a little bit of an excuse that... We were looking for a place to rent, so I thought, well, maybe I'll call them up and see if we can rent it. And maybe it's been nine months. It's a long time.

But they weren't going to rent it. But then I talked to the woman for about an hour, and it was really nice to talk to her. And they said, well, tomorrow, why don't you call again and talk to my husband? So I talked to him. And by the time that conversation was over, it was clear we were going to buy it. Like they were going to sell it to us.

It was like no question. We were like best friends. And... But then it took another nine months before they showed us the church. This was a church. And then we met them here.

I met them first. Our community came to see the church. But I came first with them. And there were pews here. And it's not a very big place. So the first thing they wanted to do was give me a tour of the place, the church.

So we walked around. And as we walked around, pretty quickly, we started to have longer and longer silences. Right. And by the time we came back here to the pews right in front here, and we sat down, and then we just sat together in silence for a long time. It was really nice, a long time, maybe it was 15 minutes, and really nice and a way of being with them.

There was something special about that silent time together, because that's what they did and what I do. And then the people came from IMC, came to check it out, and so we got up to greet them, and I went over to the ministers and said, someday we'll have to continue where we left off. And so that was a lovely, lovely connection and a lovely way of buying the church and converting it into what we have here. It was just this small section with the church? Yeah, this was, yeah. No, no, there was a whole thing.

The whole thing. Then that was kind of like a social hall or something. And that was the front door there. We don't use it now, but that was the front door. And there was a kind of a little low fence in the back, I guess. You'd come in and then there was pews here and the ministers would be up there.

And then... So why did you orient it this way? This way? Oh, this is the shortest distance from the teacher to everybody else. We tried over there when we first came, but then there was bad, the lighting was a challenge. And then they're kind of far away too.

So this kind of is kind of, that's more the shortest distance. Yeah. Is it okay that it's this way? Oh, not up there? Oh, no, I'm not going to sit up there. There was a long history before I was willing to sit on this one.

Anyway, because we always sat on the floor, and I was happy on the floor with everyone. And then there were so many people that they wanted... me to be elevated. No, no, I'm not going to be elevated. That doesn't work. But then they made a platform that was just as thick as this, just this, this, this, this, this thick.

And so, okay, well, I'll sit on that platform. And that was before we came here. That was in Palo Alto. And then we came here. And they said, but there's so many people, but you're not high enough. And so okay, well, so they made one where the legs go off.

And so for a long time, we would always take the legs off, except Sunday morning when there's most people here, just so I wouldn't have to be so elevated. And slowly, over 25 years, we kind of stopped doing that. And now this is the, I'm sorry, but this is the, but up there. No way. I'm up there once a year. We have a, in May we do, kind of our only kind of Buddhist holiday we celebrate is the Buddha's birthday.

And then we do it all up there. I sit up there with the Buddha goes up there. And the kids come in. So kids program kind of. The kids come in with a flower pagoda and they put it up there. And so then it's kind of seems appropriate to have it up there.

And then part of the ceremony is the kids being up there with me. So have I just used the... None of people here now. We have a quorum, and we'll start. Great. Well, welcome.

Welcome back. I'm delighted to be here with you. And maybe today I won't say much to begin with. Let's just meditate first. And then I'll explain afterwards why. And it also allows some people to come, you know, don't miss teachings, but...

So for those of you who make yourself into a comfortable posture that you want to meditate, will probably do it for about 15 minutes, and at the end of which I'll do a little exercise for you. So to gently close your eyes and to arrive here at this spot in your body to take some fuller breaths. So your ribcage expands, stretches a bit, and then a long exhale so you can settle. Relax. And letting your breathing return to normal.

And for a few breaths, as you exhale, relax your body. Maybe you can soften your face, the shoulders, the belly. And then becoming aware of your body breathing. In particular, the sensations in your body associated with breathing could be the movements of your belly, the sensations of your chest, or the sensations of the air going in and out through your nostrils. Or sometimes it's all of the above together.

And then for the next three or four breaths, be with a single breath. It's that all you have to do to stay close, feel it well, giving yourself over just to the experience of one inhale and exhale at a time. As if it's the only thing. And as you exhale, let your thoughts drift away, let go of your thinking, and let go back into your breathing, as if breathing is at the very center of all things, and you accompanying your breathing. And then as we continue for a few more minutes, it's going to switch from doing breathing to noticing how you're feeling. What emotions are present? State of mind? Mood.

Are you calm? More calm or more agitated? Settled or activated? More on the content side or the discontented? Happy or sad? Anxious or confident?

Quiet or chatty? And very calmly... as calmly as you can manage in your mind. Tell yourself a single word that describes how you're feeling. But see if it's in saying that word. You can say it so calmly and so clearly that the word is not entangled with how you feel. Almost like you step out of how you feel and have a bird's eye view.

And then whatever way you're feeling, it might shift... for a few moments, maybe three or four breaths, accompany it. Breathe with how you feel. Breathe through how you feel. Center yourself on the breathing and breathe with it. And then to end the sitting, take a moment to see if you can notice how you might have shifted in these 15 minutes. What changed for you?

If anything, and then to take a few deeper breaths, feel your body, feel yourself here in the room, and when you're ready, you can open your eyes. So many people associate meditation with breathing, breath meditation. Some people think of meditation and maybe mantras. Some people think of meditation and kind of looking at light. All kinds of ways that people meditate. But not many people associate meditation with focusing on emotions, how you're feeling, except maybe some people are expecting to feel something, some really fantastic, lovely emotions.

And so they're prioritizing expecting to feel blissed out or super calm or something like that. When we do mindfulness meditation, the idea is that all of our lived experience, whatever it might be, is subject to attention. And we're learning that there's a special way of being attentive, being mindful, being aware of everything in our life that allows us to be present for it in a very nice full way. So we see it, we know it well. At the same time, we're less likely to be reactive to it, or caught in it, or pushed around by it, or upset by it, or attached to it.

It's a very, very simple awareness where we simply feel whatever is there. And what it means is that in mindfulness meditation, there's a lot of permission to have emotions. And you're al-

lowed to have any emotion a human can have. And sometimes in religious circles and even in Buddhism, there's a feeling that some emotions are okay to have, some are not, some emotions you should be ashamed of, some emotions you should prioritize, all kinds of strong opinions about emotions. Some people are afraid of some of their own emotions, some people are proud of some of their emotions. There's kind of lots and lots of ideas in relationship to them.

And the gift of mindfulness meditation, one of the gifts, is to have an emotion and leave it alone. Just not make a story out of it. Not prioritize, not push away, not define yourself by it. Boy, am I an angry person. That's an extra layer. It makes it more complicated.

If there's anger, which is, oh, there's anger here. And there's a qualitatively different experience to simply recognize, oh, there's anger. versus I'm angry. I'm angry is actually a cognitively complex thing to say. It gets associated with all kinds of ideas about what it means to be a person, what it means to be you and your life history and all kinds of things. But to just say, oh, it's anger.

It's okay for it to be there, but not to give into it, not to believe it or to disbelieve it. but to simply let it be present as something that we bring this kind of mindful attention to its presence. And so in that exercise we just did about recognizing how you're feeling and maybe breathing with it a little bit, maybe naming it briefly. What happened to some of you? You did that. Did you conveniently have some emotions to recognize?

I just felt... kind of weightlessness and buoyant. And it wasn't like floating, but just, you know, it released from kind of feeling my body. Very nice. And so did you try doing the naming of it, weightless or buoyant or something? Yeah, I was thinking that as it was.

Yeah, so do you have a kind of, like I said, the bird's eye view? Did you able to kind of... Yeah, a little bit. I just imagine, you know, like... Well, you mentioned the other day an eagle. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

But then gradually it was just detached. So you could see it and be with it, but a little bit detached from it, not so caught in it or something. And this idea of breathing with it what happened then? It just continued to lift me, so to speak. Very nice. Very nice.

So someone else. Yes? Yes. Mine was not so lovely. It was, I would say for three quarters of the time, I was so frustrated because I was really uncomfortable. Just sitting there feeling like, I'm uncomfortable, I'm uncomfortable.

And probably about three quarters of the way through, I, I changed position and I decided, okay. And then I was okay. I was comfortable. I was satisfied, I would say. Those are emotions.

Yeah, yeah.

So did you name it then? Yeah, I mean, I certainly named frustration. Yeah. And then the other name I would give it is comfortable. And when you did that, like a bird's eye view, like just named it for what it is, what happened? Did anything shift?

Yeah, I felt much... more at ease. So naming it put you at ease kind of. Do you have any theories of why that would be? My leg could be in sleep. Why naming it?

By naming it? I think naming it allows it, accepts it. So you don't feel, maybe that takes away the frustration. Yes. Yes. It also, there's a way of naming something that takes away the identification.

Because we so easily lock into things and get entangled in them and preferences and don't like it, they're believing it or being carried away by something. And there's something about stepping back and saying, oh, I'm frustrated. That's what's happening in a very clear, simple, relaxed way. And it kind of makes space for it. It creates a little bit of a, a little maybe a healthy distance, healthy kind of non-entanglement. And so things can be a lot easier.

And some people are trying to resolve difficult emotions by kind of negotiating them and bargaining or manipulating or engineering or trying to make something make them stop. What we're trying to do here is not to fix our emotions, but find freedom with them. And someone else. Anything interesting? Yes? It was hard for me to figure out all my feelings, but when you said the balance, more on the content side... Do you say, could you use the mic? Because my hearing is not so good.

So initially it was hard to figure out how am I feeling, but when you started saying like the metering of it, whether it is more on the content side or discontent side, yeah, on meters, that really helped. And that helped, in what way did it help? Like on the spectrum, and I guess my word was meh. And then when I gave the instruction to breathe with it, what happened to you? I guess I felt more peaceful. More to ease with it?

Yeah. Uh-huh. Great. So, one of the arts of mindfulness meditation is to learn how to have a kind of a special high quality attention to our emotional life rather than being caught in it, rather than being reactive to it. Some emotions are there because we're reactive to something. So we're already caught.

But that's okay. But the idea is to kind of just know that this is what's happening. If you don't do that, then these emotions will be in the background and they'll actually can have a very strong influence on your meditation and on your life because they're kind of telling you stories, they're telling you the opinions or they're kind of coloring or shaping even how you see

your experience. And so the idea is to try to not be shaped by it. not be under the influence of whatever emotions and feeling we have, but without discarding them or without pushing the way or having the idea they shouldn't be there. So that might be clear to understand when it's a difficult emotion.

But what's wrong with leaning into and enjoying and identifying with pleasant emotions? What's difficult is that if there's some emotions you prioritize and hold on to, you're reinforcing that identification, you're reinforcing that way in which our inner life or inner landscape becomes dependent on the emotions we have. And it's possible to have a very high quality inner life that is not dependent on the emotion that's present. And there we have our freedom. with the emotions. And that's one of the things we're looking for in mindfulness meditation, is to have any emotion at all, but be free of it, free with it.

And so then you can also be wise. So, for example, if you are angry at someone, if you can just clearly recognize, oh, I'm angry, that's what's going on now. Let me feel that anger. Let me kind of breathe with it for three breaths, a three-breath journey. You know, I probably shouldn't speak right now. If I speak the anger, I think I'm going to spend the next two months having to repair the relationship.

I think that I'll just allow it to be there but not act on it. But then the anger says, wait a minute, I'm important. The lawyers, the anger come along. You're justified. You have to do something about it. And, you know, or...

So we see that. We breathe. We relax. What's happening here? Oh, there's all this strong insistence. There's a lot of authority that I give my emotions that the emotions are demanding to act right now.

Yell right now. Oh, that's interesting. So you start seeing what it is. You start seeing the inner landscape. And in such a way, by seeing it clearly, you start becoming free of it. And if you become free of it, then maybe you can make wiser choices of how you live with it and what you happen.

And then there's kind of... So that's kind of the beginning of mindfulness of emotions, kind of just the simplest way of it. But there's a little bit... But there's more to it. the mindfulness of emotions is a very rich part of mindfulness meditation. And there's kind of layers or something or different aspect of it.

And that is because emotion is not a singular thing. It's a composite made up of all kinds of things. It's made up of body sensations. made up of attitudes, made up of beliefs, made up of different energies and tensions. It's made up of desires and aversions. It's made up of

thoughts and memories.

And there's all these component parts of it that kind of get folded together into the emotion. And what we're trying to do in meditation is to begin seeing some of the component parts for themselves. and each one individually kind of. Because that's a way to start becoming freer for each emotion, not be caught in it. And it's also a way of starting to resolve or settle some of the more difficult emotions than they might be here by being able to not be caught in their grip, but to see them as being these different parts. So does that make a little bit of sense what I'm saying?

So there's three, there's, there's, so there's, so one of the most important things with emotions in terms of mindfulness meditation is to feel the physicality of it. How does the emotion feel in your body? Most emotions, if you're sensitive, will be expressed through body sensations. In fact, if you didn't have the body sensations, you probably wouldn't recognize you were having the emotion. So the fear might be that you're tight in your belly or in your shoulders or something. Anger might be a fire in your belly and heat, different kind of tensions.

Happiness might be a kind of soft, warm glow in your face or in your chest. Confidence might feel a feeling of strength and uprightness. Discouragement might feel a feeling of collapse and feeling heaviness and weight that we carry with us or being drained. There's a wide range of ways it feels in your body. But the thing about the body, the body is not a story. The body is just a sensations in and of themselves.

And one of the things that keeps emotions going through time is often the story-making mind. You know, he told me that and I was wrong and I'm going to tell him that and then he said this. Or some people, it's been said that a lot of people, one of the primary causes of depression is rumination. Saying or telling yourself the same thing over and over and over again. And if you tell yourself once, I'm a lousy person, it's probably okay. but ever so slight, it's a little bit of a downer.

But if you say it 10,000 times in one day, it slowly drains out all the life. You know, like it just gets more and more kind of... It's like the mood music in movies. If, you know, it's a beautiful forest scene, it's like idyllic and peaceful and wonderful. It seems like the day to frolic happily. And then the movie has this ominous mood music and your hair stands on ends, you know that something terrible is going to happen.

All because of the music. The stories we tell ourselves, kind of is providing the mood music. And it can cast a huge impact on how we experience ourselves and experience our life. And so when there's an emotion, if we're not teasing apart the story from how it feels physically,

then that mood music might continue. But one way to not be caught in the story is to feel the emotion in the body. Have any of you ever experienced an emotion in a body?

Where? Where? Where? Right, that's a... What other places do you think? Just here.

Uh-huh. In the forehead. Any other ideas? Any other experiences where your emotions reside? Hmm? In the belly. Uh-huh.

It can be almost anywhere. Sometimes in the hands. Yes. Sometimes in the legs. I've been so restless in meditation, my legs just felt like they just wanted to bolt. You know, there's all in my legs, yeah?

I have a question about something you said about rumination. Yeah. But the example you gave was of self-deprecating. Yeah. Could you talk a little about rumination and fear? Oh, I think if you tell yourself a fearful story, then your whole physiology might... start getting afraid.

And if your physiology gets afraid, then you have more fuel for more of those stories. And they can be kind of cyclic and reinforce each other more and more. The person can be sitting quietly, minding their own business and peaceful, not thinking about anything. And then there's some thought. about, you know, it'd be nice to go walk along the cliffs and look out of the ocean, but the cliff is really high and if I fell over it would really be dangerous. And you can feel the belly getting tight just from the story you're telling yourself.

There's no cliff here at all. It's IMC. And so then that, once the physiology kicks in around the story of fear, And then it can just build and build and build. And some people end up having panic attacks. And some people have trauma that they've had. They've had some horrible thing happen to them, a car accident or something worse. And so it's very close in, that fear.

It's kind of almost like it's embedded in the body. And so the body starts reacting sometimes before the mind does. And sometimes it can be very hard to sit with and be with. Many people, though, find that learning the skills of just feeling in your body, breathing within the body, and not reacting to it, finding that independence, that freedom, okay, it's just fear. It's just fear in the body, no story. Just be with the physicality of it.

Sometimes it begins to quiet and settle trauma. because the trauma needs to be released, needs to have space. But what the trauma doesn't need is ideations and thoughts and ideas which are perpetuating and keeping it going. So to really learn how to feel it in the body and just breathe with it can be quite powerful, quite wonderful. I've known people with a lot of

trauma who just, it was phenomenally useful for them to just find it in their belly and breathe with it. And before that, they would freak out.

So, and then feel it in the body. And then there's a couple of things we do with the body. One is allow it to be there. It's kind of you give permission for it to be there, the emotions. Just feel it in the body and breathe with it. And this is where breathing can be very helpful, because breathing is a way of being present for something by breathing with it, breathing through it, accompanying it with the breath.

And the breath can be a little bit of protection from the mind getting sucked into it, more stories, more identification, more predictions of where this is going to go, and... I'm terrible or I'm wonderful. But just keep it simple. The breath is supposed to keep it simple. Keep it simple. So we can just experience what it is in and of itself without all the extra layers we add on top.

Keep it really simple. The what's not simple are all the second arrows we add. So, you know, I could sit here and I could have my knee hurt. Okay. And I can just sit and be mindful of the ache in my knee. I can make it the subject of my mindfulness.

Oh, the knee hurts. Let me give some time to the knee hurting. So I bring my attention there. I start to feel it a little bit and say, is it okay for it to hurt? Yeah, there's no danger signals in there. I think it's just a tendon or something, muscles stretching a little bit.

So it's okay. Okay, well then maybe I can feel it. Let me just feel it. And then a thought comes up, I don't like this. And I see, that's just not liking. Okay, I don't have to go along with that thought.

I just see it as a thought that arises. Let's go back and feel the knee hurting. And then I breathe with it and be with it. And it lightens up a little bit. Great. And then I go back to my breathing.

I took care of it. I acknowledge it enough. So it's no longer an issue anymore. And I go back to my breathing. Now my other knee hurts. And now, this is too much.

How could I do this? This knee. And a friend of mine used to do this. So he would have knee pain. And he would hurt his knee back by going like this. He was so angry at his knee.

So anger at the pain he had created. He eventually had to have knee surgery. That's not being free. That's caught and reactive to it. And so we start seeing, as we try to be as simple as we can, we start seeing some of the complexity we add on top of it. And the art of mindfulness is to be simple.

And it's a very famous saying in our scene here that if it's not simple, it's not mindfulness. But simple is very freeing. Because what's complicated is all the stories and reactivities and judgments and identifications we build on this. We build universes on top, you know, of all our experience. And it's simple, just simple. Let's come back.

What's the simplest way this is right now? What's the simplest way? So is this making some sense? So there's some people here at IMC sometimes we teach acronym called RAFT, R-A-F-T. And it's, some people like to have like a little technique with all this, kind of get organized. And so in terms of emotions...

The first thing to do is just simply recognize it. But to clearly recognize it. There's something about this clear, simple recognition. And take the time to recognize, what is this? And then experiment with the voice, the mind that recognizes. Can that mind, can that voice be calm?

Yes. Can that voice not be pulled into the drama, pulled into the attitude or the complications of the emotion you might be having? Just calmly, oh, I'm restless. Isn't that interesting? Oh, it's restless. As opposed to, oh, I'm so restless.

You know, just name it calmly. Oh, this is restless. And kind of see if you, as you do that, can you find some freedom in the naming, in the recognizing? And some things, it's really powerful to name things. Some things, you almost get free by naming it. Partly because we only, sometimes we only partially know things.

We're not really so clear about what's happening. And there's something about the clarity, oh, this is what it is that can settle something or open something. So the first part of a raft is to recognize. The second is to allow. And this can be pretty hard. Okay.

This is to allow whatever you're feeling, whatever emotion you have, allow it to be there. It's completely okay in this mindfulness. And because you're kind of committed when you're meditating to not moving. So if you have murderous rage, you're not going to punch anyone out. You're not going to yell at someone because you're supposed to be sitting quietly. And so it is something about the quiet, not moving meditation that creates kind of very special space.

It allows you, this is one of the rare places in the world where it's okay to feel whatever you're feeling. If you have murderous rage anywhere else, it's a little bit of a problem maybe. But here you're allowed to have it. Some people think that in Buddhism we're supposed to always be compassionate. So we're not supposed to have murderous rage. They remember being a bad Buddhist.

The people who believe that usually suffer extra. Of course we don't want anyone to act on their rage, but it's really meaningful to have some place in your life where you can see it clearly. Allow it to be there. So what is this? Let me feel it. Let me get to know this better.

Let me become wise about it. Let me find out a way not to be reactive to it. And so the way to do that is simply to allow, allow the emotion there. So you can know it better. As part of knowing it better is the F part of raft, and that is feel it. Find out where in the body the emotion is sent.

Where's the energy of the emotion most active? What's most activating your body around the emotion? Is it around your eyes? Is it around the face and the jaw? Is it shoulders? Is it the chest?

Is it deep in the heart? Is it in the belly? And belly is a huge repository for all kinds of emotions. Is it in the hands or the arms or the legs? Or is it the whole thing? Sometimes people report when they have a lot of anger, it just feels like their whole body is a volcano.

And that's okay. As long as you don't feel your... you're hurting yourself from it, and just sit there and let it flow. So to feel how it is, and there is feeling too, is get out of the way and allow the feeling, allow the sensations, the physical manifestation, make room for it to be there without fueling it, without adding to it. How do you add to it? Often it's through telling stories, rehearsing it over and over again.

And so what we're trying to do here is not to live in the story. So that comes to the next part of RAFT, and that is a little bit complicated, but it's teasing apart. So I said that the emotions are composite. And so if you can separate out the different pieces of it, it can be a lot easier. If they're all working together, they're kind of gang up on you. It's like too much to really deal with, and you're kind of pulled into their web.

But if you tease it apart, then you can see, oh, here's the physical part, and here's the story. The mind is telling me the same story over and over again. The story is what's adding to it. Let's leave the story alone. Let's not be involved in the story. The mind can still tell stories.

Let's just stay in the body. Feel it. Allow it in the body and see what goes on. And one of the things that's so good about that is that the body... is not just a hunk of flesh. The body is a very sophisticated processing field.

It's a field of sensations and information and processing. And the body knows how to process emotions. Your heart knows how to process grief. Your body knows how to settle anger if you leave it alone. If you don't identify with it, if you don't lean into it, if you don't have a boxing match with it, if you don't keep telling your stories over and over and over again. Some of

you might know this study that some psychologists did, I think, of emotion, where they came to some conclusion that if you left an emotion alone and didn't feed it, it probably wouldn't last more than 90 seconds, which is a little bit crazy, given how some...

They seem like they last for days sometimes. Right. but it's because people are constantly involved in feeding them over and over again. In Buddhism, we don't quite go along with that because we distinguish between the kind of emotions that arise because of the stories and the kind of positive emotions that arise just because of the harmonious working of our system. So there can be tremendous feelings of well-being that dwell up that are not dependent on any kind of story. And it's one of the benefits of meditation.

Start having a variety of feelings of well-being that are not dependent on what's happening in the world. Not dependent on having a story that we're pumping up or living with or being reminded of, a memory. And then this raft, recognize the good feelings, recognize the calm. Allow it. Don't try to pump it. Don't try to push it.

Don't try to hold on to it. Just allow it to be there. Feel it well, feel it in your body. And if there's a tease apart, if there's anything extra, any extra leaning into it or wanting it or illusions of grandeur, I must be the calmest person in the world. Just tease that apart so you don't get caught in its web. Keep it really simple.

And those kinds of positive feelings like calm, they can persist for a long time, much more than 90 seconds. So is this making sense? Do you want to ask any questions about what I said? Yes. Okay, could we have the mic? Because I need just a little bit of help.

What happens when you cannot clearly recognize and name the emotions? Yeah, that happens. So the default in mindfulness meditation is simply is to recognize what is happening. So in that case, just say, oh, I can't name it. I don't know what it is, not knowing. And then you've done the job.

So in mindfulness meditation, the idea is to do the obvious, to recognize and be with the obvious, not try to find something special or find what it actually is. We want to know so much, we want to fix or something. In mindfulness, what we're training ourselves to do is just to notice what's obvious in the moment. And if we do that for a while, then over time, if it's an emotion you're not sure about, at some point it might reveal itself to you. Oh, that's what it is. Like I remember many years ago, it was kind of noteworthy to me.

And it's an example of this. I was feeling off. I feel kind of off. I don't know, I couldn't quite know what's going on. So I laid on a couch and I just started doing what I was telling you to do. I just felt it, and I felt it was a feeling of pressure in my chest.

And I didn't, how am I feeling? I don't know how I'm feeling. And it's like, oh, it's okay, I don't need to know. But I know I'm off. And so I was, okay, and then the pressure in my chest, heaviness in my chest. So, okay, I'm going to feel and hang out with those sensations in my chest.

And so I was there for two or three minutes, just breathing with it, feeling in my chest. And then suddenly, this word popped up in my head, depression. Depression. I was depressed. I didn't know it. As soon as I said that depression, I recognized what it was, my chest relaxed.

I had been holding it, my breath almost. And then whatever feeling off vanished by itself. So that was kind of a good story to tell. It was so nice and clean. But there was an example. I didn't know what it was.

So I just hung out with not knowing and feeling what it was like. And then with time, it showed itself. The idea in mindfulness meditation is not to make it a project. Not to try to make something happen. Just try to see clearly what is happening. That's the goal.

So, you want to ask any more? Because if you don't, at dusk, then we'll meditate. Yes. I'm wondering, how do you label what you're experiencing without making it a thought? Experiment. How do you, what do you do about thinking? Like how do you label what you're experiencing in the body?

I have trouble hearing you. How do you label? Yeah, how do you label what you're experiencing without making like a thought experiment? Oh, so you're, I'm sorry, I'm having trouble hearing. So you're saying, what do you do? How do you recognize without using a thought?

Or like getting lost in your head. Oh yeah. So next week we'll talk about mindfulness of thinking. So, but, um, And so, and thinking itself can be the subject of mindfulness. But for now, I think to answer your question is, if you recognize your thinking, make a quiet note. Thinking, that's thinking.

So you're kind of stepping back to recognizing you use a thought to recognize that you're thinking. And there's a distinction between thinking and thoughting. So if you're lost, you're thinking. Right? If you're simply recognizing your thoughting, just a simple thought, and then come back to your breathing and breathe what's going on. For the time being, just let go.

Recognize it briefly. Come back. Don't make it a story. Don't get involved. Don't even try to work with it directly. Just come back over and over again.

Does that make sense? So if you want to stand for a moment before we sit again, just to stretch out and... refresh yourself. What if you have a joyful emotion? Should you try to recognize and detach yourself from that or write with it for a while? It depends what you want to do. If you want to write it for a while you can, but if you want to learn how to be free of your emotions then you wouldn't write it you would just do the same thing I'm telling you just be with it and find a different way, find some different way of being with it.

Because in the bigger picture of a life, finding that ability to be free in the midst of whatever is going on, including joy, it turns out to be one of the greatest joys. So don't settle for a small joy. Iron. Pain is also necessarily associated with... Pain? Pain?

It can. I mean, people often have a... In their reaction to the pain, they'll have an emotion. They'll have fear, for example. Or they'll have aversion and anger. So those are all emotions that we have as a reaction to the pain.

Sometimes the pain is a consequence of emotions. So, for example, if I'm really afraid, I might clench my fist. Right? And after a while, I'm so clenched that begins hurting. So the emotion kind of had this physical effect that brought on the pain. Sometimes some emotions are involved some kind of deeper...

Some physical pain seems to be in a concentrated, embedded form of an emotion. And so what we do with pain, we do the same thing. We recognize it, we allow it to be there, and then we spend time feeling it. And the way to feel it is with the idea of imagining that you're holding it gently, like a cupping your hands of attention, just holding the pain as if you're holding it forever. Just feel it, feel it, know it. and begin finding a way to be non-reactive to it.

Does that make sense? Okay, so you can sit down. Let's see here. Darrell, could you... You know how to adjust the camera? Push the number three on that board.

Okay, I think we're good. So, okay. So very simply, close your eyes. And as you're sitting here with your eyes closed... How are you feeling right now? You're allowed to feel any way that you are.

The idea is to recognize how you are. It could be very subtle, and see if you can use that power of recognition to kind of a bird's eye view, take a step back, and just gently, calmly name it. And if you're not clear what it is, the wonderful generic name is something. It's something. And then in your way, the way that kind of works for you, can you allow how you're feeling to be there? Knowing that it's only going to be for a few minutes, allow it to be there.

It's okay. And then where in your body is the emotion most active or most expressed, the

mood, the mental state? And feel it. Let your attention kind of roam around. Okay. in that area to feel the physicality of it.

Maybe now breathing with the emotion, breathing through it. So you're, with the help of the breathing, you're staying close to how you're feeling without getting involved in too many thoughts, stories, ideas. Leave those alone. And maybe you can tease apart Any story, any thoughts about how you're feeling, so you can get closer to the feeling itself, closer to how it is in your body, breathing with it, maybe letting go of your thoughts. And then after you've kind of hung out with an emotion or feeling for a while, then settle in to your breathing again. Gently recognize your breathing, calmly allow the breathing to breathe itself very lightly.

Ride the sensations of breathing. Stay close to the rhythm of breathing in and breathing out. And as we continue, if some emotion or feeling becomes strong or compelling, or if you get caught in one, preoccupied with how you're feeling, then switch to doing mindfulness of the emotion. Forever long it feels it takes to kind of have it well acknowledged, and then begin again with your breathing. And then in the last few minutes, search around within you to see if there's any degree of calm anywhere, even if you're restless or agitated. Is there somewhere where there's calm?

Maybe in the hands. or the belly or in the feet. It could be anywhere. Maybe it's in the space. Just be on the edges of your skin and feel that calm. Breathe with it.

Breathe through it. And then to end this meditation, to take some deeper breaths, kind of waking up your body a little bit. And when you're ready, you can open your eyes. So, how did that go for some of you? Did you feel like you learned something today that was beneficial in terms of meditating this way? Anybody would maybe say a few words?

Yeah, the last one was challenging because I at first felt very antsy and eager to leave because I felt like I had to go to the bathroom. And I was mad at myself for not going when we had the break. And so I was just feeling the pressure on my bladder and... And then when I, when you talked about breathing after, after a while of really focusing on the breath, the pressure on my bladder lessened and the breathing really helped that. Great, right. And then later...

I got hot and my first reaction was, oh, I should just feel with this heat and feel the uncomfort of it. And I said, forget that. I did that with the bladder. So I took off my sweater. And then I felt the coolness and I could breathe better. And it was whether that was the thing I was supposed to do, it felt like that was more immediate.

Great. I love the report. Thank you. Yeah, very good. Great. It was really nice to have the difference between the two times of meditating.

Sitting up in this chair and being a little more comfortable made a big difference for me to be able to focus. But when we started this one, I felt really tense because I felt like I had been working or trying hard to absorb what you were saying and writing things down and all that. So I felt a little bit tense all over. And then as I just kept on breathing and... relaxing. I mean, by the end I was very calm and it felt good in my body because it just felt like everything let down instead of being kind of tight.

Very nice. So this idea of just being present for how things are and allowing it to be there. It's not a passive thing to do or kind of like a It's actually a way to let the body come back into homeostasis. The body knows how to relax. It knows how to find a balance if it's allowed. But if you stay tense, you know, or stay thinking about something and act it all acted up, the body doesn't have a chance to come into homeostasis.

But if you give it this feeling, allowing, recognizing, it's actually a very powerful way to help the whole system come into balance. And it'll do it on its own. And sometimes it does a better job on its own than you could do. And so if you're trying to manipulate it and make it happen, or let's get relaxed, you know, I have only a five minutes to get relaxed. Let's speed relaxing. That doesn't work, right?

So, but you have to kind of give time for this process. And it's quite a remarkable what can develop over time as you go deeper and deeper into this process of returning to some kind of profound homeostasis. Okay, so we have just a couple of minutes left. So some of you might remember that I suggested that, I think the first day was to meditate for, there was a 10 minutes, then 15, and so now 20 minutes every day if you can. So expand a little bit more. And next time I'll say 25, and then we'll stop expanding it.

So there's an end in sight. But just to kind of a little bit stretch yourself and see what that's like to get into this. And... And also I said before, but in that my book that's available for free there on the counter, the issue at hand, there is a chapters on each of these. So there's a chapter in Mindfulness of Emotions. So if you want to read a little bit more about it, and some of the things I said, you can read the chapter there.

So thank you. And I'll stay if you want to ask me anything. And also Daryl, if you have any questions about the meditation or the instructions, you can check in with Daryl. And... So thank you, and may this meditation practice be a wonderful journey of self-discovery and peace. Thank you.