

# 2002-05-15: Concentration: Week 3

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

concentration, breath, mind, concentrated, practice, breathing, vipassana, hindrances, people, meditation, thinking, thoughts, helpful, stay, antidote, find, samadhi, settled, discursive, feel

## SPEAKERS

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Report though that how it's going with doing the concentration practice over the last couple of weeks, or questions you have about any event that's related to this. This is a good time.

I got a question about the very last line

is not born again into this world. Are there different ways of interpreting that?

Certainly. That's, of course this is religion. What's

the word the word in Pali is I forget the Pali word but it means to, not again reborn in a womb is the is the expression and, and what it refers to isn't it? Indian cosmology, the idea of liberation is to actually not just liberated in this life but you're liberating the liberated from the cycles of re birthing, being born over and over again. And so you're no longer reborn as a human being reborn in a womb. And so you're either you're freed, no longer reborn at all, or you get reborn if you really had to cultivate metta to high degree and attain the level of attainment that talked about in the sutta. Then you don't you might be, you know, might not be at our hot yet, but you might be a once a non returner, and run returner is someone who gets reborn in a very pristine, rarefied celestial realm for their last birth and is no no you don't get use patania appearance and these things, these heavenly worlds, you don't go through gestation, birth from the womb. So that's kind of that's the most traditional interpretation of this line. So if we want to interpret it for ourselves, you know, much more contemporary language works for a lot of Westerners. It's no longer I like interpretation no longer it gets reborn in the cycles of suffering. So that you no longer get reborn in the cycles of identity of becoming that we cling to and hold on to by which we suffer. vomitorium Right, right.

Kill I have a question about

which is more skillful

to

to follow.

concentrations are

solely using that as the only form of meditation and just go as talk, push that as far as possible. Versus insight, meditation, metta, whatever. So in other words going back and forth, you know,

Mondays you do

you get that, but moving back and forth

versus staying with one form and going as deep as you can with it.

to kind of take the question at the most broadest level first, or at least maybe my own bias to how I listen to that kind of question. And that is that religious people really love simple answers. This is the one way this is the right way. So it's the concentration way. That's the way or this is the way To do a US ask the question was very generally, how do you know what's skillful is if there's an answer separate from the individual, there's an abstract floating answer to that question. The answer to that question has to be within each individual person who addresses it for themselves. When we when we're aware of our own tendencies, our own strengths and weaknesses, our own issues, we're dealing with our own sense of how the practice unfolds for us as individuals. That's when we find what's skillful, what not skillful. So

it makes sense

to experiment with moving back and forth for a while, versus for a similar period of time. Just go one route and see which

which team is each each for?

Yeah, I think a lot of Buddhist practice as a matter of trying In here, and finding out by trial and error, what works and what doesn't work, finding out what the consequences are doing different kinds of practices or different ways, different approaches, learning from those and finding one's own way in a sense. But it's also good to get talked to a teacher and talk about what's going on in your own life, your

own practice your own mind, and to get some guidance, because there's so much you could choose from otherwise, that it can be challenged to kind of you endless trial and error, it's nice to hone it down a little bit. And, and a lot sometimes depends on the abilities of a certain person. Some people have very, very good ability to get concentrated in the concentration route can really help them out. Other people have really good ability to get concentrated, but they hide in that concentration state and the you know, they can stay there for years kind of hiding. And he's a good teacher to kind of shake them up. Some people have naturally know very, very poor ability to get concentrated, or maybe because of the historical reasons they have very poor ability to concentrate so they're better actually directed away from concentration paths, you know, some real estate's a really serious path in itself to develop the absorptions. And all that, and a bit better off encouraging to be possible. Some people are, you know, if it's teachers really tracking someone who's brand new, they might suggest the dead person to start with a partner and then switch over to, to concentration for a while and then go back to Vipassana. Or for another person, they might say, you should start with concentration then to be passing on. There's all these different combinations of how these things can unfold. So the question is, you know, what is it for you, and what's skillful for you is really the issue. And, and trial and error is one way and, and in my offering, my suggestion and offering this class, is that a lot of people could use more concentration that you can, it's almost it's almost a safe thing to say is almost everyone can Use a little more cautious concentration. And I'm not offering this class is saying, Okay, now, you know, you're supposed to be on the Samadhi path, you know this, take this as you do for next 10 years, you're all you do is concentration practice, I'd be very happy if someone took a five week class, did concentration, practice during these five weeks learn something about concentration, appreciate it in some aspects of it. And then we're able to develop a little bit of concentrate more concentration they have. So when they go back to the passionate practice, they bring along a little more emphasis of concentration as a support for that particular practice. Some of you might decide to spend a year just doing concentration practice based on this class. And that might be a really wise thing to do. And some people who might take it further and go and go concentration retreats, there's a whole range of things. So without, you know, sitting down with you, personally, you know, it's hard for me to give a generic answer to your question, but is that kind of helpful to kind of there

I placed this before but I have a hard time understanding how to apply investigation to concentration without getting contemplated.

I'm not quite sure how you

meant that which, okay, it's okay for it to be contemplated. This is what you want to do for it depends a lot on the depth of your concentration. But what you want to do with concentration practices, you want everything, all your faculties supporting each other, supporting the possibility and getting concentrated. If you have a lot of discursive thought and you know, you can sit down and settle because a lot of thinking going on, then if you know you can't stop thinking very easily, then start thinking about your breath. So you're using that tendency is kind of like doing a keto, you know, rather than kind of keep

drifting off and thinking about other things. You start using that to fulfill that energy of thinking, we're thinking about the breath. So at least the faculty of thinking is directed towards the breath. And it might be very discursive then because, you know, that's what you have to work with. And then with time you get more and more settled. As you get more settled, it might be that you feel that kind of discursive activity gets in the way of further settling, you have to let go of it. But you don't have to like that, you know, that go with, you know, immediately you know, if it can actually be everything can be helpful in its own time in place. Now investigation, even when even when the mind is quite quiet, and concentrated investigation can be part of part of the practice and how to do so is not discursive. I don't think there's a fine I don't think there's a sharp line between a completely silent mind and a mind which thinks the thinking gets more and more subtle. And sometimes it gets so subtle that some people don't even recognize their thinking, but there is some processing going on there. In the mind, and you know, no, no, it looks nothing like the normal kind of way in which we talk to ourselves in the brain in that, you know, that kind of thing that that part of the mind is completely silent you there's no indication, no, no inclination to start talking to yourself, self talk. But there's still a very, very subtle kind of discursive quality going on. So there's kind of a spectrum, from discursive activity to silence. And I don't know if we ever get to silence except maybe in some very, very rarefied states.

You probably do, you probably do non discursive, dark contemplative investigation already. And so what you might do is rather than rather than trying to figure out how to do it, be very still notice how you already do it. And then from that, you might then learn how to do it better in a way that's helpful. So for example, your I mean, you might, it might be simple as you're sitting here. And you notice, you know, you're sitting here you're clustering on your breath. And you have very simple noticing that when you sit in here with your breathing, that you're a little bit slumped over. And it's a little bit, you know, they'll be more forced to breathing because of that. And so you sit a little bit straighter. And there's almost no thought involved, maybe, you know, normal kinds of ideas or no thought at all involved. Just but there was an investigation that was recognition was there there was discrimination, what was going on what was what was needed, and you adjusted, that is that that involves a factor of investigation. So you're probably doing that a lot. And it's not very discursive, or contemplative. And what you want to do is, is utilize that kind of natural ability a little bit more when it's helpful and not use it when it becomes a as constant tinkering with our experience and trying to change things to make things better, and there's a concentration practice, there's a balance between or between knowing how to adjust and change and, you know, work with a kind of ecology of the mind. And when not to do that, and just be very receptive and peaceful, not to anything at all. And, again, there's not there's not like a one right way. But rather, you have to kind of be able to by trial and error, find what you need at any given time. Which makes a little bit more demanding for the practitioner. Because you have to be engaged, you make mistakes, and sometimes you get tired out or by doing that, but I think it's much more realistic and you go much further if you feel like you're engaged that way. So strategically you decide when to be rest with a breath and be very passive and receptive and not try to make anything happen. And you know, sometimes that's really helpful and some That's not helpful. And so you win, then you want to, you know, so making sense. So what would you find? I think in America, like me and a lot of American meditation teachers, there's a strong emphasis on using language, like, just rest with

a breath, don't do anything, just accept things, how they are, don't change. And some of that's a function of most Americans are. They are too hyper, you know, you know, concerned about, you know, progress and making things and changing things and judging things and, and so they just need to kind of as an antidote, you just relax. So mostly, probably most of us here need to just relax. But we shouldn't take that to be the ultimate teaching. You know, the Ultimate Teaching, just relax. That's just an antidote to you know, it's the medicine for us. But you can, you know, at some point, you get to relax and you need to also then bring in more effort, more energy. And if all you hear is relaxed, then you're not you know, you're not Rob is an active and a passive side meditation. And hopefully you have the wisdom to know when to use the different types with different aspects active or passive. And the active parts are really beautiful, as are the passive. Yeah. bringing some real real living

relatives

and talking to a friend who does a lot of concentration meditation and

recommending using those practices when I'm faced with a family situation.

causing problems I was wondering

was

class members to open awareness, not trying to change things. The concentration issue that I have is when I get pulled into

I think again, trial and error, try different ways. In certain circumstances, the best thing you can do is more Vipassana, which involves a number of things, it could involve just kind of more be open, receptive to whole things. It could also be involved very carefully paying attention to what goes on inside of you. In those situations, how does it How does it get pulled into other people's mind states are other people's emotions or feelings? What is there a sense of, you know, what's the sense that what what is it inside of you that's happening? Is there fear? Is there some kind of unhealthy sense of identification with others, there's a sense of responsibility to take care of others is there, what's going on inside of you? What are the personal psychological dynamics you have? And the person I can help? You know, you'd be open to that and explore that and get to know it. So that those don't trigger those kinds of problems. Or you might find that you've tried that and doesn't seem to help much. And you find, well, maybe what you need to do is have some strength of some, some, you want to enter those situations come with some strength of concentration. And so if you practice concentration, practice North get really calm. And then hopefully that calm gives you a better overview of what's going on in this situation, you're not going to get caught because of the strength of the calm or you do both. You do calm going into situation and you switch to the passenger doing it or you do you know, or you simply continue doing a concentration practice in the middle of the family issue, you can just

follow your breath, just follow your breath, just follow your breath, hang on, you know, you might some people you know, hang on to the breath for dear life is the only thing that saves them. You know, otherwise they're gonna punch someone out. You know, so just breathe and breathe. And so what I'm suggesting in this kind of point of view of practice of giving this class is that it's nice to have a repertoire of different tools that you can use, and then to know when the different tools are most useful. And, and, you know, concentration is always helpful to certain degree. But what happens with concentration is that to some degree concentration practice by itself is a practice of suppression. And so or avoidance, you're avoiding certain issues. And sometimes you can get calm and concentrated so you can look at these issues more carefully, more realistically, but sometimes it is a kind of you're holding everything at bay, you can get really deeply concentrated and, and then sometimes it can, it can actually be counterproductive because of the power of suppression or exclusion that goes on in very strong semi practice. Somehow seems to let the hit the suppressed reactions come back with greater force once the concentration wanes. And so suddenly person is much more angry because of that repression that was going on. Yeah.

So loving kindness is a great practice because it has the function of not only being in concentration practice, but it also helps condition reminds us of a different intention of how to meet people. So it's a nice reminder, oh, I think kindness is good here, not just a calm, let's be kind and maybe predisposes you to have a different kind of approach to the whole situation. So it can be very helpful to do loving kindness. And sometimes words are too long phrases or too long and sometimes I just say the, you know, last word of each phrase, I just say, you know, happy you know, safe, healthy, peaceful, joyful, whatever the words might you just say those words over and over again, just just sometimes I just do one word, just happy. Happy.

How's it going with practicing concentration? finding it useful or interesting or challenging? All of the above? Yes

I often kind of

spaced out 45 today and I think

that really helped me concentrate.

Today was just incredible. I did the whole thing with the breath the whole time. Although I had to use different kinds of hooks to stay with it. I even began to imprint the number saying that I pictured it, but I stayed with it and

I only went up to 11

what it's like to concentrate. Not

great. And so, you know, it's you have to you have to realize that when you take on a new practice, like counting, it takes a while to learn how to Do it, and to do it three or four days or even a couple of weeks, and first might be kind of rough and different, what you're used to, and it adjusts to it, that doesn't work for me, it makes as much sense as you know, not knowing how to ride a bicycle, and then getting on a bicycle and falling off the first time. So this is not for me, you know, there's too hard this is too agitated, you know, it's, you have to kind of do it for a while to get in the groove, learn the skill, and then it becomes easier and easier. And then at some point, it becomes you know, you know, it's really easy to stay with a breath and, and the accounting is really becomes like second nature just can't be used to focus the presence.

Some people do, it's pretty common to get the instructions at a certain point you stop the counting, let go of the counting. And some people like to count, finding more useful than others. Same thing with mental noting in Vipassana. Some people find a milcom noting is is helpful. Pretty much right up until Nibbana. And some people find that they let go of the noting a lot earlier, because it just gets in the way or doesn't seem helpful. So again, it really depends on the person. So for you it's to, is to know that it's okay to let go of it. But, you know, at some point, as the concentration gets deeper, and the breath is really still, you know, very, very subtle breathing happening. And you don't feel like the mind is going to really waver from the breath at all. That you know, you might experiment with letting go of the counting, and see what happens. And then experiment with keeping the counting going. If you find the counting actually keeps you concentrated more than the opposite. Keep the counting going.

I can't find my fingers and

the numbers

after the numbers

are interesting, and

I just wonder, you know, since I wonder what shade

The numbers themselves.

I do know that there are people who use molars for that purpose also, and I don't know, on the fingers. You see, then you do, you're doing two things. See, the advantage of counting is it's mental. And a lot of concentration is using that mental world to get more more focused. And if you're using counting with your fingers

you know, my mind goes to the thing.

Your mind is split between two physical areas, you putting your finger and you're in your breathing. And, you know, I'm sure you can get pretty concentrated that way, but I think that it's gonna keep you from from developing that one pointedness that thesis needs to get locked in.

So what happens when you do the numbers?

I just find myself I get very

uptight, tense and used to counting when a I for years I have been tracking, you know, and so I just associated with like counting long numbers and I've been very physically active. And so I I just

just count up the to start over again. Maybe that make it easier. Just count to two.

Yeah. You have said that when you lose your place when you're counting, then you should start back at one. Yeah, I rarely lose my place. You know, I can get up to 10 most of the time, but in between the counting are always thoughts. So I'm wondering, you know, when I realized that I'm not paying attention to breath in between the actual

I probably wouldn't get past two.

You're able to count each breath. Are you are you skip breaths in between the count? Yeah, I think, I think Thank you.

Oh, yeah, that can help a lot. Sometimes it can help to fill the whole count with a number. So, for example, for a long time I counted, the whole explanation just won, too. So by fulfilling the whole count that kept me more connected and less likely to be thinking. The other thing that I like to do is every explanation if I need it, not only be counting and be present for the breath, but also remind myself to relax That part of my mind that thinks I'm letting go of my thoughts, every exhalation, every exhalation, letting go, whatever it is that he's letting go. And then an excellent inhalation something, you know, comes up, but the inhalation doesn't last that long. so that by the time I start exhaling, I let go again, and let go again. And it's a very valuable massage. Very, very valuable skill to use. keep letting go, keep letting go. And it might be that it takes you 10,000 times letting go to get your thinking mind to quiet down a little, but it can be back to another approach. Just Just let go. Let go to remember, remember to let go every time you exhale, use explanation as a reminder to let go.

It's interesting you say that because what I've noticed what I what has another thing it's been helpful some of the time at least, is that in that space between the breath and exhale, that I have tried focusing on relaxing my face because what I've noticed is when I'm thinking that some tense Yeah, so. So at the end of each

show for you, there's a gap between the exhalation, the inhalation and that's where you'll think that's

I don't know, it just seems like I'm really good at splitting my mind between going off in a thought but then also to know where I'm at with accounting in each breath.

At the end of each breath,

what I focus on rather than some

touch point, touch touch point would be That's great. That's That's fine. That's a good way to help also. Now are the principle of concentration practices the mind wants to hold. The kind of classic word is to hold on are fixed, federal, federal used to fixate but really hold something in the mind. Hold Something in awareness continuously. So I don't know if this is a good example. But if, you know if, if this is my belly that's breathing in and out. And you know, I guess the breath gets quieter and quieter enough to where there's kind of a gap, and then you know, stops for a little bit and then I breathe again. What I want to do is, is you what you want to keep your mind your awareness held continuously at one place, some point, so if you're staying with the belly, you're staying with the nostrils or wherever you feel the breath. Even if the breath stops. For a brief time, your mind is actually held to that place. And there might be very subtle sensations, their pressure vibration or tautness, or, you know, I don't know what you You know, and you just kind of you just stay there even though it doesn't seem directly connected to the breathing anymore, just whatever the vitality or the alive feelings that are in that part of your body. So you're holding the mind in one place.

It Well, it's a practice it's a it takes a long time to do and, and yeah

experience essentially between one and four

I could plan

in my head,

the brand and the menu.

So I was able to really split and I kept going, just going one by one, actually just doing one,

counter one. So what you want to do is Want to notice that tendency to be thinking about dinner menus or whatever. And that that energy of the mind that ability, wouldn't you want to divert that energy, or redirect the energy to being with a breath rather than being with food. And you really want to you might have to do it over and over and over again, what you want to be in the garden all the time

is that the breathing and accounting becomes mechanical. And that's when the mind will go off and think of all kinds of stuff. And you want to always make it alive and vital and connected and like your life energy is being poured into this thing the best you can. And so if your life energy is being poured into menu planning, just consciously let go of that are redirected back into their back into there. And you might even take, you know, a couple of seconds to think about the breath. You know, you're still using the same way that you were thinking about the dinner menu. Think about the breath for a few seconds. It's kind of like when you're slipping You're slipping on slippery ground. Sometimes if you go with a fall, it's easier to catch yourself than if you just freeze right away. So sometimes we thoughts, you know, it's easier to kind of, also sometimes it's easier if you find yourself with a lot of discursive thought. Because I find sometimes, rather than immediately letting go of it, sometimes I'll actually go along with it for a few moments. And then I will go along with it. It's like I've really see it much more clearly, by seeing it clearly seems to take some of the, the power of away from me. So I kind of go along with it and see it and be present for watch it, and then I let go of it, then I come back to the breath as opposed to do anything and immediately, and then it's less of a hole to go back. So I said

and I'm not saying

you know, like how you said,

that kind of connection you've described last week.

You're going along with it right

together but it didn't feel powerful necessarily didn't feel like wandering off and felt like

breathing counting thinking

for him. It seemed to happen. So it was difficult to

it was like I could do it all at once if it felt that way. Yeah.

So I mean, I wish there was just a simple instructions to give you but you know, this is how it's done. And ABC just follow it with the with the thoughts. There's certain thoughts that I have their way of thinking, which is in the background or parallel tracking, whatever, which doesn't seem to get in the way of the cultivation of concentration initially. And the best strategy for me is just to ignore it. And just long as I feel like my life energy, my primary life energy is focusing on the breath and being there with that, then I won't be bothered by these other thoughts and they can do whatever they want. And, and at some point, though, those have to fall away at some point. disengage myself from those kinds of thoughts too. But if I wait until the right time, if you think every every time you think you're supposed to let go of it, then you might be kind of, I find there's not so useful to certain. I can't I can't. I don't know

how to teach this. But I find that some kinds of thinking that I do, I let go of some thinking I do. I ignore and let it go on the background. And I thought it's, it kind of settles by itself with time is something I do. I turn my attention around and do Vipassana on the thinking. Unless I kind of do mindfulness to really explore the thinking is going to keep holding me in its grip. So depending on what's happening with my thoughts, I do different things.

Now

when I'm doing concentration, practice, I always have in mind, I'm doing this so that I can get back to the breath. Do they pass the practice, I'm just doing it because it's just just pay attention to what's happening. But I'm with a concentration practice, always thing I'm trying to get back to the breath. So there's a real emphasis in my psyche kind of knows that's where he wants to be. That's where he wants to go. And I'm kind of like doing whatever I can to make everything else supportive of that primary mission.

Yeah, please. So when I find myself in that state of thinking and counting, I found your recommendation to shift the way that I'm counting. Very useful, and bring me back to the breath. So if I'm staying with the exhalation and thinking how count from the inhalation, or I'll count inhalation, And the exhalation together, whatever it is it. It's a way of just bringing me back to the breath. But

what I found in doing this practice is that sometimes

I get quiet and then I, you know, I hear a loud pitch sound or something that if I was doing whiplash, then I would just go right to it and stay with it. And so it's an effort not to rest in that and to come back to the breath. And so the question Yes, yes. When you do the concentration practice, is it skillful to ignore the sound and stay with the breath are.

Generally what you're doing is ignoring everything else but your object of concentration. But sometimes you need to, if something's really pulling you away a lot. Then you might need to turn towards it for a while, you need to acknowledge and maybe do something positive with it, so that it can be more settled. And unless you do that, it can be very hard to stay focused on the breath. Or you need to keep concentrating. Other times, I find that I just kind of throw myself back more fully in the breathing. And one of the ways I do that is I become more interested in the breath, see if I can discover something new about it.

So when I've been when I've had this experience, I've used the technique of shifting the way that I count the breath even for that, although I don't consider that discursive thinking. It's a different kind of an experience, but still coming back to the breath by

shifting back and forth

is really useful. helps keep me right.

So now the question for all of you is In what ways have you found this helpful, so far, a couple of weeks of concentration practice helpful or what may be finding the helpful or enjoyable way.

And I noticed that with your practice in the concentration, then during the day, I experienced moments where, whether it's at work, or actually today, it was on the bike, you know, the stationary bike, where suddenly I'm riding the bike, but then I'm focusing I could pretty,

I guess quickly, or just maybe because of the tendency of doing the practice focused on my breath while I was doing the bike versus, you know, maybe my mind was going elsewhere. And I noticed that at work to where I'd be doing some work with projects, and so the mind kind of has more of a central focus and it's easier to concentrate and

That's how it feels in my head the same when I try to do the memorizing the suture. So I'm just curious if that's part of the increase in practice if that's

the question is, is it is her increase the ability to focus and daily life as a result of doing the concentration practice? I would hope it is. It could be I mean, a lot of people report that I find that's true for myself. Then the more more that the more I do concentration practice, the more my mind unless my mind is fragmented. And the more it's kind of contented in a certain way. And if it's more or less fragment and more contented, it's a lot easier for me to be focused in one activity what I'm doing. Yes.

Go it's letting go of a lot

easier because When you're concentrated,

hanging out with

a feeling it can be passive aggressive, though. So that's one thing that also sharpens the passive. So, like you get like three days on retreat, and just noticed a real quick

calculation.

So, I found that was much

you should be mindful.

I was actually really surprised in memorizing medicine, which I have gone through the resistance at first and, and I would get to like a certain part of it, you know, the radiating kindness, and I just, every time I go through that part, I just go completely still and it really surprised me how concentrated I got doing that. And I just hang out there and finish.

Go very, you know it after it's hatched. To that, and it's a kind of made myself off to the rest that I didn't think I could get that concentrated by

doing that that was a real surprise.

I found it directly

related to my reading because I can read and plan the dinner.

I was aware that it was

great. So being aware of what's happening and then being able to choose what you want to do and be kind of have some strength in that choice. meter.

I noticed most of the positive things or people mentioned I noticed a couple of other things. A little disconcerting. One is not being able to sleep or waking up in the middle of the night and then not able to stay for 234 hours and I'm just exhausted. And secondly, I'd like some

time to take a nap during that Because not make

up for the lack of sleep. And I noticed instead of sleeping I'm entering a meditative state so I'm not trying to say anything I'm just reading my mind wander like it does nothing.

But

it's allowed me to feel you know, the warm coming through your body and you're not aware of different

there's a sound that

could in terms of sleeping thing, some people will find the concentration practice has an effect on their sleep. Sometimes it makes it makes them sleep much better. That's more common, especially in daily life kind of sitting. We used to sit maybe an hour 45 minutes or something. And some people find the opposite happens that it disturbs or sleeps in some way. Sometimes people will avoid meditating just

before going to sleep. because it keeps them revved up. Concentration practice meditation in general has as a function also of taking off the surface lids of our minds. So the deeper stuff that's bubbling can bubble up. And, and sometimes, you know, unconscious material is bubbling up and that's why people have trouble sleeping. Sometimes people need less sleep when you do concentration practice, as I find that true for myself that I'll sleep less when I do a lot of concentration practice. And I mean, even even, like, I remember when I when I was working on my dissertation, for example, are doing a lot of very focused even intellectual work like that, you know, typing into computer, I'd be very concentrated, and my sleep needs decreased during those times. Yeah.

at a seminar this weekend

last weekend,

My attention

concentrations are pretty strong. There's also very conscious when my mind was wandering. start messing with me said

beautiful. also wanted to just take a second say that

45 minutes hours

because because it because you skipped it on the weekend. Yeah.

comments about loss of privacy and continuity issues

Yeah, exactly, the continuity is so important to keep them mentum going. Okay, so you're absolved you are more importantly, you've learned the lesson for yourself. And that was really valuable. I think that you'll learn that then maybe next time you the, I know, I know some some people who are, well, some people who are committed to or sometimes I do this, you know that, that some some days I haven't sat yet in the evening comes around and I think I can sit, so I'll just get in the posture and ask him a question and sit down and, and then I'm here, you know, it's so nice. You know, whatever, whatever I need to do that was so important. And I can see I can sit there for five minutes. Like probably sit here for five more minutes. So you know, I always commit myself always, you know, try to least get in the posture

So I feel quite grounded from this practice more than I've ever felt. And in a funny way, it gives me a sense of strength. That's not very familiar to me. And in some deep way, a sense of happiness and joy. It's also

beautiful and really lovely. So the concentration practice to help Robert Give, give them a sense of strength and sense of happiness. And that's certainly part of the function and that sense of strength, the inner strength, income and concentration. really helpful as you go about your daily life. You kind of carry with you a sense of strength, of power, stability, can make a big difference.

Yes time let's

just say

and then

or physically not in place can

be there Yeah,

the strength of the concentration depends on a lot of different factors. And when when you're tired and the mind body is tired, there's less access to any strong concentration. What's important in terms of the continuity of the practice is not necessarily that you're always at the peak level of your performance. What's important is every day you're giving you're doing the best you can to strengthen the concentration that's there. And it's that continuity of your best effort, which will bear fruit. So if you sit down and you're tired, if you're giving your best effort, and you know your concentration is not very good right now, but your best effort that really counts, that, that makes a difference. If it's really seems hopeless, then you might want to get up and do walking meditation. You know, if you feel like it's really hopefully you sit down and use, you're going to dream states, you know, Just can hardly, you know, you try to focus sometimes when we're on the late evenings and, and if I sit and, and I get kind of calm but relax, but I can't seem to constantly think I can concentrate on my breath. I think I'm there with each breath. But then I realized that each breath is whole theater of different people and characters and talking to each other. And somehow there's the whole amazing mental theater that created these people talking and acting is somehow coordinated with the breathing. So I think I'm with a breathing, but it just, you know, I'm really in this fantasy land. And remember, there were times when I was I was slow to catch on because I thought I was with the breath. And really, I was just, you know, sometimes that kind of state I find it's better to get up into walking meditation.

Yeah, sure. Yeah. You can count to say more. One to 10 there's one one Burmese way of counting, which is kind of nice, which helps some people keep more the focus is you count 125. And then you start again and you get 126, then 127 and you go up to 10. When you do 10, you start counting backwards, so one to 10, one to 9.8, back to five, then you start up again. And that's one way. Yes,

one of the signs of access concentration.

Are there other songs whatever the

primary one is, is that a hindrance is a no longer the definition of access concentration is that the hindrances are no longer bothering a person The hindrances are settled or quieted down, the mind is no longer going to be pulled off into into desire lol the other hindrances

after

the excesses happen before they're not here.

Yeah, in excess concentration, one of the signs is the absence of hindrances.

That's a lagging indicator

that the

access comes first.

Yeah. Then there is the awareness that

there's a trigger, which is the access concentration.

Yeah, I mean there's always going to talk a little bit about access concentration during the class today and But your question reminds me that and kind of a little bit chastises myself because I was going to tell you what it was. But now I'm you know, I'm reminded that there's different theories or different schools even of what access constantly qualifies as access concentration. So to you know, so there's the room for interpretation here, you know, in terms of defining some use of this category to define particular state, but classically, it's defined by the access or the absence of the hindrances, but it's also defined by the presence of a certain one pointedness. It's relatively easy to stay focused on what you want to stay focused on. When you're doing concentration practice, it means it's great use, you find it, you can rotate your groove, and you can have to stay with your object to the concentration. If you're doing Vipassana, then the mind doesn't have to be in a groove on one thing when you're doing Vipassana, but rather the mind is quite wieldy or pliable. You could actually take the mind and apply it to whatever it is, seems the needed object of attention. I think given time, and you actually have a lot of choice in the matter, they're just keeping you can keep it there as long as it seems appropriate as needed. So what you do with the mind is different if you're doing concentration practices if you're doing Vipassana practice, and both both practices can be done in access concentration. And I don't know how important it is to have a, you know, if, you know, careful definition or signs of what it might be. But, you know, I think the hindrances are no longer you no longer feel as much as me pulled away from anything. One of the ways that I characterize it for myself is I have like a rubber band attached to

my awareness. And, and as as it gets stronger, stronger concentrated. My my mind still might start going off, but I don't have to make any effort to come back. It's like a rubber band is attached and it's pulled me right back. And sometimes you know, as a customer gets stronger, that the just shorter and shorter together, you know for the mind to wander away just that's when mine wants to stay want to stay because away it goes away. And then at some point any tendency to go away, seems to fall away, but it's relatively easy to apply myself and stay present. And as you said, the breath at that point is usually very still very quiet. And the body you know, some of that some of that some of the genetic factors can begin to appear in various ways. They might not be very intense. So there might be some people have saw you know, the signs of joy or happiness or feeling of well being contentment. For me, I think it is now the mind has ability to get locked on or grooved on or settled or fixated just to can really be what can be worked there and there's no real tendency to walk wonder away to the hindrances are not an issue that kind of contentment in the mind also, it isn't so much that that for me it is it comes a point where the hindrances are no longer an issue, not because they are don't appear anymore, because they still appear and I'm not interested in them. There's simply not enough interest in sexual gratification or interest in being angry with someone or something

shorter tether and seeing the mind begin to wonder and bringing it back. I've experienced that. And on retreat, what seems to happen

is that at some point, I realized that that movement or the way I had been dealing with it on retreat, actually, at some point, I see that that movement back is actually effort. And that there's kind of a, an inclination to let the mind do what it wants to do, which is to wander but to stay present for what it wants to do. And I find that when I do that, I keep like, almost settling deeper and deeper. So I don't know everyone's but

It's just it's it was kind of a wonderful gift to see that I could notice the wandering or notice the, the tendency of the mind to let go of what it was paying attention to. But still keep the awareness with the mind as

beautiful. There's a little bit more than be passionate, we're open to whatever we are open to whatever is going on. And

I wanted to cultivate your concentration. Go ahead and keep coming back,

not necessarily mean that we possibly can be support concentration also, as long as you know, you're settling something relaxing. If you're always wandering around, then I don't know. But I don't know if this is true. But I've been told by some of my teachers that if all you did was practice letting go, you'd enter into the jhanas. So you know, so if you're doing what you're doing, just kind of taking everything anything comes up. He's letting go and then go on. It makes sense to me. As you get more and more settled in perhaps you would get into a deeply concentrated state that way.

Probably about 10 minutes suddenly get

skin changes

this year. Sure, sure.

Maybe you should all sit a bit closer. I don't know how many people are coming with a little while we'll sit and be nice for late comers to find place. Sorry. Oh, would you like to take a short break? Those of you have been here for an hour. Okay, please, you know. So I thought we would start first with someone reciting Metta Sutta, and then we do a sitting or we can start with a sitting and someone can volunteer to recite the Metta Sutta into our sitting as we begin our sitting. So someone like to volunteer today. All right, okay, so why don't we all just sit, close your eyes and after a couple of moments when Laura feels ready, she can start in.

This is what should be done by one who is skilled in goodness and who knows the path of peace. Let them be able and upright, straightforward and gentle in their speech. humble and not conceited, contented and easily satisfied.

unburdened with duties and frugal in their ways.

Peace, peaceful and calm and wise and skillful.

not proud and demanding in nature. What?

What none,

let them not do the slightest thing that the wise would later reprove, wishing in gladness and safety. May all beings be Eddie's. Whatever living beings there may be, whether they are weak or strong, omitting none. The greater the mighty, medium, short or small, the scene in the unseen those living near and far away, those born and to be born. May all beings be at ease. But none to see the another or despise any being in any state. Let none through anger or ill will wish harm upon another. Even as a mother protects with her life, her child, her only child, So with a boundless heart should one cherish all living beings radiating kindness over the entire world, spreading upwards to the skies, and downwards to the depths, outwards and unbounded, freed from hatred and ill will. Whether standing or walking, seated or lying down free from drowsiness, one should sustain this recollection. This is said to be the sublime abiding by not holding two fixed views, the pure hearted one, having clarity of vision. being freed from all sense desires, is not born again into this world.

As you continue with a setting, begin by having goodwill towards yourself. Begin by extending some loving kindness to yourself sitting here in this body and mind at this time feeling yourself feeling your body in mind, how you are having whatever thoughts you want to have goodwill, of kindness, having whatever feeling or attitude of kindness, intention of kindness that might be easy to bring up. tender, gentle kindness for yourself. And then in a few moments, we'll begin with the breathing, being with a breath. And one of the traps of concentration practice is conceit. feel like you're the one who's going to do it. Kind of Excessive self direction, self doings powering oneself into being concentrated, where it's all about you. But self. I think it's helpful in doing concentration practice. there to be a little bit of a humility

about what you're about to undertake. It's not really all about you and how well you do in the cell. You're going to apply yourself the best you can. It's not a battle of the cell. Different part of you different part of who you are and your self image which engages in the practice.

You might now begin with your breathing and take a few long slow, deep breaths. Connect to your breathing. And as you exhale, relax your body and your mind

and then letting your breath turn to normal.

And take some time now to familiarize yourself with how your breathing your natural breathing happens to be right now. No two breaths are ever the same pattern of breathing changes from day to day situations. situation. How is it now for you

as you're feeling your breathing Can you adjust it in any way so that it becomes more comfortable, more pleasant by relaxing perhaps some of the muscles connected to breathing the stomach muscles or the chest, shoulders or by ever so slightly, freezing maybe more fully into some part of your body.

Perhaps it feels nice to breathe into the tension or that you might be holding in some part of your body, your shoulders or your chest. Your belly.

What is the length of in breath and out breath that feels most easy for you most comfortable.

Take a few moments to notice what effect your breathing has on the rest of your body. Just beyond the boundaries of where you usually feel the breathing. Does it have a calming effect or tensing effect or relaxing

usually, there's some parts The cycle of breathing, which is less clear than other parts. Some people find the exhalation is less clear than the inhalation or parts of the exhalation, the end of it perhaps, can be almost anywhere. Notice if the sense of connection or the sense of clarity around the breath varies

as you go through the cycle. And then remind yourself or give yourself a little more emphasis so that you can have full connection to the whole cycle.

Stay connected with your breathing. Hang in there with it. Hold on to it. And there's other sounds that might pull you away. Give yourself a little bit extra emphasis.

And then whatever place in your body you feel the breathing most clearly. abdomen Solar Plexus or the chest or the throat or the nose. wherever it happens to be clear, just focus in on that part, hone in on it. That that part of your breathing that part of your body.

Be the place that massages your concentration that develops your focus. Hang in there. Don't let the mind wander away from that part. In the background, you might have thoughts or reactions or changes in your body All kinds. Whatever happens just keep being devoted to the breath. Hang in there.

And then you can begin counting if you haven't already. Letting the counting help sustain the attention over time. Letting each count also help you to remind you to let go. of anything else that detracts you from just hanging in there with a breathing.

As you stay with your breathing, relax your mind Your mind become soft expansive. So that the experience of breathing sensations or breathing enters into an expansive mind. To the concentration is very intent very connected with the breathing with the awareness of the concentration, same time as expansive,

relaxed

if there's anything pleasurable about your breathing as you stay with it anything that's anything modicum of enjoying joy meant in it. We easeful are nice use that as the grounding the anchor for being with a breath. So you're there with something pleasant enjoyable, you're allowed to enjoy. You do concentration practice. The enjoyment can actually pull you in to be more concentrated. If you go with it

as you continue with accounting, learn to vary the way that you count. One way is to vary the intensity or the firmness by which you make the count. If need be can be firmer. And like each count is like putting down putting down a steak or kind of grounding yourself firmly into the breath or sometimes what's needed. To let the counting become very subtle, very soft whisper in the mind.

Sometimes it's helpful to have a feeling or a sense of the stillness that surrounds or penetrates the breath. stillness in the body or the room. The stillness that surrounds or penetrates, awareness of concentration itself. So now, appreciating the context of stillness with the movement of the breathing can help the mind becomes Still, more absorbed just breathing

On one hand there can be stillness. And the same time there can also be arousing of vitality of energy she or prana as you sit here, and you might notice as you continue concentrating on the breath, notice the arousing factor, the energized factor of engagement or a lightness, see if there's something more engaging or the active part. Being concentrated. Maybe the activity that you participate in, almost naturally, you joined together with the vitality of your body To be more focused on the breath and be more engaged. It's almost as if the vitality of your body joins in the effort to be concentrated in the breath.

And then in the last two or three minutes of this sitting, give yourself over to each breath. Don't miss it breath was great commitment to the breathing, speed concentrated, whatever it takes. You hold on you break into a sweat if need be. Just don't let yourself miss one breath to try to stay relaxed.

This evening I wanted to talk a little bit about the obstacles to concentration. And certainly to let you know that it's not a smooth path and that many of you sooner or later, probably sooner is the chance. We'll be dealing with the obstacles to concentration that which gets in the way and this makes it difficult and I wanted to say first that I think it's helpful to think of meditation as a journey, as a place instead of as a place, or it's an activity, something we do, as opposed to something, we're just kind of a natural state. There's a very strong tendency for many of us to want to kind of rest the natural state there Buddhist teachings that tell us to do that. And think of concentration is kind of a natural state we fall into perhaps, but concentration is an activity of the mind. Something the mind does, mind is made up of a lot of activities. It's all it is. And concentration isn't one kind of activity. So it can be very refined activity. It's still an activity. And because it's an activity of the mind, in the farther reaches of the Buddhist path, it's also an activity you have to let go of, but you don't have to let go of it before you're ready to let go of it. So you have to kind of develop it before you can let go of it. So, like you don't, you don't like if you learn how to ride a bicycle and use training wheels. You don't let go the training wheels until you have developed certain level of skill, riding the bicycle and then you try without the wheels training wheels. When I think of meditation as a journey and not a state, you're always on an endurance journey or traveling, you're on a path you're going somewhere. If you're pretty intent to walk from here to Yosemite, there'll be parts of the of the trip which is relatively easy and parts which are difficult and strenuous. But you know that in order to get to Yosemite, you have to put your foot in front of you take the next step and the next step. And if it's really hard one day, you're blisters, it's really steep. You know that you have to make those steps you have to continue you're gonna keep walking all the way. If you thought that you somebody was a state that's right here now then you might not remember to take the next step. Concentration practices best thought of as a journey. And don't let any of the difficulties that arise, being excused not to take the next step. It's always that continuity, that's important. And you can expect to be times when it's difficult at times and it's easy. Sometimes it's inherent with the process of meditation and sometimes because of external conditions have conspired to make our life difficult than stare us up. And just to Oh, okay. I say keep them keep stay in that

journey. What's important is you keep walking and keep walking. So you don't give up just because it's hard, because sooner or later it will be hard.

So you can expect difficulties, and then the question is, how do you relate to them? And how do you work with them is the question. You know, classically, Buddhism is not considered an ism, but whether is considered to be a path and the image of the path is nice because the path in the forest is a place with a forest the vines in the bushes and the shrubbery in the trees and the branches have been cut away. So you can be unobstructed as you walk along the forest and the forest. The path is a clearing things that may be made clear. And the Buddhist path is something we create as we go along in the forest of our lives. And one of things we're doing learning to do, especially in concentration practice, is how to open up that forest the thump the jungle thicket. So we have a clear path, but you have each of us powers their own path and sooner or later you run into obstacles. You have to learn how to work with it or clear the path for yourself. Concentration practice by its besides all the normal kind of things that can get in the way of concentration but obstacles and difficulties. Concentration practice itself sometimes kicks up a lot of hindrances. Sometimes a more psychological interpretation to what happens is that the surface kind of lid of the mind, the conscious kind of lid that we kind of normally engage in settles, settles down. And the deeper stuff that's the unconscious or repressed or suppressed, has a chance to finally surface and we have to deal with it. Sometimes concentration practice because it's a kind of a suppression practice, kind of like focusing on one thing, exclusion of other things. We're excluding from awareness, things that really need attention sometimes. And sometimes they come back with a great force. And sometimes as concentration practice, will, will elicit a greater counter reaction. And sometimes it can be quite unfortunate, very, very powerful. If you don't have a wise approach to doing concentration practice. Sometimes, as the mind gets more more concentrated, it seems to be able to pick up certain themes or issues which maybe you always knew about About, but suddenly there you see them in greater clarity or think somehow that concentration focuses on them. And suddenly they look really big. And until you settle these issues, can you really continue with the path? so forth. Now I'm remembering the story, John Travis tells us practicing in India in the 60s. And some point, you know, he practiced very well he practice. And at some point, he kind of wasn't going very much further in his practice, he was troubled by something. And he went to Ram Dass, who they knew in India at that time, and Rhonda said, Oh, you have to go back to Kentucky and see your father and hear you in India. So he went all the way back to Kentucky and brought himself he was a long haired, you know, wondering saw do and, and he bought himself a suit and a tie, to go see his father and kind of work out his relationship with his father. And once that was worked out, then he went back to India to continue being a soldier so certain things kind of appear as we continue, that are better dealt with outside the context of meditation practice itself even. You have to know when to do that not to try to make your meditation being solution to everything I've seen a couple of times that a lot of times, situations where I felt actually sad when someone said, I'm going to work out my difficulties, my life, to meditation. And that particular stupid two people and thinking about it was really sad. They really needed a lot of other help. They really do terrible things in the world and harming other people. And they knew it I'm just going to do deal with in my meditation, I'm going to go

off in the cave someplace and deal with it. Sometimes you need to deal with the obstacles in other ways besides on the cushion or just kind of toughing it out or powering through.

When people first begin a meditation practice, concentration practice, some people have the experience of what maybe flippantly could be called Beginner's luck. And you know, there's a great aura of this great religious practice great religion, great religion you're involved in and it's so fascinating and has such great hope and promise and, and you're now you're doing the same practice and die llama and it's just, you know, really, you know, you sit down to meditate and just really you know, you know, it's just like, and you'll get, you can concentrate really quickly because that beginner's kind of enthusiasm. And after a while, that fades away, and then you're left with yourself. And that's actually considered a very good place to be in Buddhism, you left for yourself and no longer have a dialog along with you. And just and then but then it can be both a lot more difficult. Suddenly, all these all the different different, you know, hindrances and attachments and fears that you have flood yourself once that initial kind of Beginner's Luck falls away. So you have to know not to get discouraged and feel like it's hopeless. Oh, now it's really beginning. That was just kind of a nice foretaste of something wonderful to come perhaps the first, you know, beginning beginning sitting. But now I have to really face myself. So anybody had that experience was kind of nice, nice to begin, it was really great to begin with, and then and then it was about you. And so to know, to know others to know that difficulties are part of the path, and actually in a kind of way, be welcoming to difficulties not welcoming in that you're looking for them and saying, you know, inviting them in, you know, but rather, you know, when they do appear when they invite themselves in, that you actually very welcoming. So, this is part of the path to that this is actually healthy to consider the path to include these difficulties. And then Matt, if question is how do you work with them? How do you face them? Now there are different strategies of how to work with the so called difficulties. If you're doing Vipassana in different ones if you're doing more concentration, practice. Some of the things I talked about last week and some of it maybe is obvious to you and something we'll talk about today. I want to give you an overview first of in the Buddhist tradition, and even just the Pali Theravada tradition, there's a wide range of kinds of concentration that's talked about, there's a lot of different lists and categories of concentration, states of concentration. And there's one list. Kind of a list, it's kind of a pseudo list, it doesn't appear anywhere in the suttas of four different categories of concentration. The first versus not a category of concentration versus our street consciousness kind of the way our our street conscious the way our mind just usually is, you know, kind of busy after a busy day or kind of does you mind is untrained, undeveloped, just kind of our mind as it is the first stage Concentration is called preparatory concentration party comma Samadhi preparatory concentration. The second stage in this system is called access concentration. The third and access concept of preparatory concentration is a kind of is when you have to apply yourself and really work if to work with the hindrances or the difficulties, you have to work with the minds tendency to be fragmented and be distracted. And you have to find out some some wise way of dealing with the kind of street consciousness street mind that you have, and work with it and, and learn strength of letting go learn to strength, learn little things that needed to prepare and develop the Garden of the mind so that the seed of concentration can really go far. So there's a lot of things you might do in preparation, you might develop your faith as I talked about

Monday night fiddle myth, you might develop your morality. You might find things that inspire you, you might develop a strength of letting go, you might develop a strength of concentration of applying yourself strength of application. No matter what happens, you can apply yourself, you can apply yourself.

Try to live a calm life, you do all kinds of things to in preparation, developing concentration, in concentration practice itself. There's a kind of, sometimes a kind of feeling of manual labor, that goes into just kind of just kind of plug away and plug away. And sometimes there's nothing else you can do but just plug away even people who are really adept meditator sometimes will find themselves in situations where they just got it plugged away, you know, just manual labor, you know, just brute, you know, brute forces aren't worried, but you just gotta just, you know, just feels like you're just promethium You know, we've got to preserve the rights myth, you know, pushing the rock up the hill said, right, Sisyphus, thank you. He's like, you know, just you know, pushing that around seems hopeless. Just do it and do it and do it. And maybe you have nothing experience, you know, that just eventually something kicks in and begins to, you know, takes over the concentration, the Samadhi factors begin kicking in, but just, you know, brute labor, you know, manual labor, and someone who doesn't really know anything else. Why are you doing this? You know, it's just so boring. And sometimes it's really boring that level of practice preparatory practice. So the preparatory concentration is that level or application just doing it before any of us and body factors come into place, and use other factor supporting factors kind of there to kind of lift you up and kind of keep the concentration kind of buoyant and alive in itself.

Sometimes in the kind of preparatory stage, this image I mentioned earlier, tethering, the mind is used. Sometimes the analogy is tethering a horse a wild horse. You take a wild horse and you just have to take a really strong stake and you dig really deep into the ground and you tie a rope to it. I wrote to the horse, and then the horse will just go wild and run around and kind of jump and do whatever it can, trying to get free. But eventually it comes down and comes down and realize it gives up and gives up and realizes it can't get away. And eventually the horse becomes more more tamed more and more attainable. And sometimes the mind is that way, if it's Heather the mind and so you have to do the work of just kind of okay, I'm going to hold my mind here. I'm going to do the work. Just hold my mind here, hold my mind here, hold on line here, until the wild monkey mind begins to quiet down, calm down. And sometimes that works really well. Eventually, the mind gives up the mind will give up a good fight. But eventually, sometimes the mind quiets down. Sometimes the preparatory level, you need to do something else. You need to be passionate practice to bring mindfulness to bear and really understand what some of the forces of the mind are, so you can settle them. I like to say a little bit again, simplistically, that there are three ways of concentrating the mind. One is through the effort of applying the mind to get concentrated through an active will in a sense, which is what Samadhi practice is basically about. The second is by letting go of all the things that keep you from being concentrated. And that's a little bit more of a passionate practice where you actually things arise and you bring your attention to there. You settled and you take care of them, and then eventually take care of all the things that keep you from being settled and relax and concentrated. And the third way to get

concentrated is by accident. By accident, you know you had this wonderful lunch and you did great hike up Windy Hill and the grass is really green and you find a nice shade under the tree and you have a nice nap and you wake up from your nap and you feel so calm and concentrated just so present you know with that, with that Hawk that circling above you just right there, you're not leading. You're not doing it. You congratulate yourself for being really concentrated. It's just you know, all these different causes and conditions have come together to let the mind be settled and concentrated. But there's no strength there no development of the mind. It just kind of an accident just causes conditions coming together. So sometimes you need to do more Vipassana practice to learn to let go or settled issues. And sometimes you need to just kind of apply yourself more diligently do the manual work of staying focused on the breath. So are we learn to work with the hindrances we went to work with the difficulties, and we'll talk more about that in a few minutes. We'll learn why strategies How to Deal particularly with things like bringing the antidotes. So if you're filled with lust, sexual desire, then the classic antidote is to think about your visualized contemplate what's called the unbeautiful parts of the body. Sometimes it's translated in English as the final parts of the body then the word there is a soba so beautiful. So it's the unbeautiful. So like you decide, you know, it's kind of like politically politically incorrect for me to say some part of the bodies on on beautiful, but you can decide which is the unbeautiful parts. And so you sit there you know you filled with sexual desire for someone and your mind keeps going that keeps going there. You just start visualizing the unreadable parts of their body. And pretty soon, you know, they say the sexual desire settles away. And so using antidote In other words, it isn't that the Buddhism says the body is foul. It's saying, you know, this is a good antidote certain times, to be to be used when you're really caught up in some other caught up in some place. You don't wanna be caught up in and there's no The supercharger sumati which is access, concentration, and access concentration, sometimes it's called neighborhood neighborhood concentration. And I think because it's the access to being to different, different whole different realm of states of mind, or you're in the neighborhood of deeper realms of concentration, deeper realms of practice,

and access, concentration, your thoughts and your thinking, and what's called the hindrances are no longer getting in the way of you being concentrated. There might still be thinking going on, but there might still be desire that arises a little bit, but they're not gonna hinder you anymore. You now the mind is able to stay on track. You know how you can apply the mind you can stay on track, you really have the feeling that oh, I am on track and I can stay on track here. I can be focused, I can be engaged. The mind is usually feeling quite pliant, quite light, quite open, relaxed. This point, also very vitalized and alive. Often there's a can be sticky thing of joy and vitality, the same time as the great stillness. Sometimes the breath gets very quiet and calm at this point very subtle. With a primary characteristic of access concentration is the hindrances are no longer hindering. And so there's a lot of emphasis then, in Buddhist meditation practice, to learn to work with the hindrances. And the hindrances are many of you know them, those of you who've done more than three retreats. If the pastor retreats, you should have these memorized. If you don't have them memorized, get to work. You should know these really, you know, automation be able to smell them, you know, from a distance is coming in as you know, you're so familiar with the kind of service of hindrances Rather than thinking of the things being

problems, and oh my god and anger and ill will as a result again, we're supposed to say, great. I'm supposed to be kind of Sir, it's supposed to be kind of supposed to like, know them so well I can write a dissertation on these five. So you can really so you really know them well, you're familiar with them, so they lose the power over you. That's one of the strategies. So its desire for sensual gratification is the first. That can be a hindrance if you're really caught up in spoiling sensual gratification. There's nothing wrong with that in and of itself. But the desire for the questing for the craving for it, is it keeps getting concentrated, because you're so focused on the object of wanting that thing. Sometimes it's very dramatically It's nothing to do with meditation at all. And it keeps your mind imagining the most wonderful vacation you can think of having used to obsessing on that Saturday, essential gratification of laying on the beach in Tahiti or sometimes It has to do with wanting sensual gratification in meditation itself. Sometimes that gets in the way, because it's not happening and you want it or you're imagining it or whatever. The second is, ill will, is to have some kind of ill will towards someone or something. You're not you're naturally disposed, your judgmental, critical, angry, spiteful, hateful, some kind of ill will involved what's happening. Both desire and your will have an object for their focus. There's a thing out there we're focusing on and that keeps us from entering into this deep subjective intimacy. With the object of concentration. There's an object of concentration usually like the breath or something else. We want to deep subjective intimacy with that object of concentration and sometimes it's said that in very keeps his concentration, the subject object distinction falls away. But until it does, you want to bring a very deep subjective engagement, what's happening as long as you're focusing on an object like, you know, she did that to me, or that vacation. That thing, the mind is what is pulled away is deep subjective immersion with the object. So the subjective aspect of what's happening is very important. If you want to get caught concentrated, being aware of it's sensing it entering into the subjective world, length objective world be there with the object. So desire, ill will. sloth and torpor is the third hindrance, restlessness and anxiety and doubt. And each of those has an antidote actually has a lot of different antidotes with different number of ones we can use with different ones.

For many for mostly as a passionate teacher, I've been very reluctant to teach people antidotes. I kind of don't believe in them for the purposes of Vipassana, because I'm kind of be passing a purist in that mode. You just deal with it with with your mindfulness practice, you see if you have a hindrance, just bring your full mindfulness that hindrance, don't try to get rid of it. Just enter it naked, that the field of your practice, through mindfulness, mindfulness, work it out. When you do concentration, practice, having an antidote can be very helpful. Because you don't have to work out your your hindrances. To get concentrated, you just have to have them you know, in the basement or out of the way, you know, or kind of not bothering you or just kind of settle for the time being balanced by the antidote.

So in excess concentration, there's a feeling of the state of the mind the mind state and has been altered or changed. You'd be altered not a good word because the ultra has idea of extra special or something. But the mind has become pliable or light, settled, concentrated, engaged, workable, it's usable. Now you can start using the mind, you can apply it in some way.

Oh, this is a word like his mind is starting to become independent. Your ability to be aware or focused or attentive, has become independent of all the different things that pulls you away. You're no longer thinking about dinner or thinking about vacations or thinking about sensual gratification, you no longer pulled or attached to those, the mind is detached itself from those kind of concerns. So it's the mind starting to become independent. That independence then it gives the mind the ability to be then more, to apply itself more fully to be more honed or more, you know, becomes more usable because now it's independence that can be hijacked

so after Hoopa Chara Samadhi. After this access concentration, there's a fork in the road. And it said that a person can choose one or two one of the two forks. Sometimes our mind chooses for us. If a mind has a very strong bent towards concentration, it will tend to choose to go further and concentration mode, which is one of the forks go into deeper states of concentration. Or you can go with a different fork, which is a fork of the past. And the past now is not as synonymous with mindfulness. In the past, that is mindfulness. That's coupled with a very strong concentration. So when so when you have access concentration level That's when really you begin seriously fall apart opportunity getting into real the Vipassana stages themselves or you go into the deeper concentration state, the deeper concentration state is called this point is called upon Samadhi or full, full Samadhi for concentration. So there's preparatory concentration, there's access concentration, then there's full concentration, which has to do with the eight jhanas mean, we'll talk about those some next week. If you take the Vipassana route for, then you have somebody that's called konica, Samadhi and konica Samadhi is translated to English as momentary Samadhi. And this is a Samadhi concentration with a mind is not focused on one particular thing. It's not locked in or honed or, you know, focused one point 11 One thing, but rather, it's completely concentrated to what's happening in the present moment, the mind is not going to leave the present moment for anything. But whatever arises in the present moment, it's their choice of slate to, to attend to meet, whatever arises, there's a sound in the mind is able to really be there for the sound is not going to wander off into discursive thoughts or ideas or fantasy just there for that. There's a niche, then you go there really the itch, the breath arises you really there. And that momentary really staying there and penetrating what arises in the moment, without needing to be fixed on it is what's called konica Samadhi, which is really the Samadhi the kind of concentrates called the Samadhi. That is part of the past in the practice. So the past also involves entering into Samadhi. It's a different kind of Samadhi. Then full concentration, which is the jhanas. Questions for that. Yes.

You're lucky if you're lucky, very lucky if you could do that. I mean, some people are quite adept at this. And they could certainly do that session of meditation. But for most people, this is, you know, you know, long this is what happens in the long term. So I'm going to even go on a 10 day retreat, there will be times, probably where you enter into access concentration, it's relatively common for people to enter into access concentration. But to go beyond that is not so common. And usually in a 10 day retreat, it might not be very long, you know, a period or two here or there. The third or fourth day, maybe someone really feels like they have like usable independent awareness can feel feel really great when people enter into it. And sometimes in daily practice, it happens, you know, momentum

builds over over time and daily practice and you can feel, you know, you can enter into this access concentration, as opposed to skill we're developing. And as a skills become more more developed, the person can get more people And can drop in much more quickly.

If you just continued whatever you're doing, if you continue, whatever, whatever you're already doing to get you into access concentration, chances are you'll, you'll do one or the other. But you could also choose and some people will do a concentration practice to bring themselves to access concentration, or bring themselves to the first jhana or a second or whatever it feels useful. And then they'll let go the concentration practice and then the more be possible. In the mahaska system, which I'm in access concentration is placed, we do the positive practice from so yes, that's you know, that's the fork splits. So, or a teacher might tell you, the teacher might tell you, you know, you shouldn't be working more unconsciously Is is good for you, or might say, you know, stop doing this concentration stuff and then they might say something derogatory about concentration, you know, this, you know, you know, you know, it's Child's Play, you know, or, you know, something in order to kind of dislodge you know, so you don't get too attached because people get really attached to deep concentration states. So it can be and some people get, will get to stay there for years. And sometimes they need a teacher to kick them in the butt. You know, and whatever it takes some people you know, there's all kinds of that's a whole issue in itself.

Sounds like

sounds like

to me like

some of the instructions are getting vipassana meditation is actually baby

sequences back there. Maybe

that's that's right. In, in my understanding if it was just kind of pure pure Vipassana instruction, it would be sit down and start paying attention to whatever's happening in the present moment. And a choiceless kind of way. Most of us when we sit down coming off the street, it's not a very useful instructions, because the mind is so distracted. And so it's helpful to have to start grounding the mind and calm it down and involve some concentration. And so the usual way to do that is on the breath. And the breath then has this double function, where can both be a concentration, device, focus, and it can be a place we develop mindfulness. And when you do have mindfulness in the breath, you really want to get in there to see clearly all the nuances of what's going on in the breath. You want to be doing concentration, you don't have to know anything about the breath. You just have to just stay with it. So when I went so But you're right. And so some teachers focus so I can attend a retreat, the first two or three days will be sustained with the rest day with a breath, because it has a concentrating

function. And when I teach, my basic teaching, I think is, is have a preference for your breath when you do Vipassana. So you really, you know, whenever you have a choice, whenever you have a choice, choose the breath. But if need be, leave their breath and pay attention to what else is going on. But let it be kind of leaning into the breath or preference for because it's so helpful to place develop concentration. At some point, you don't need any, you can just continue developing deeper concentration with the personnel because if you really stay with whatever is arising, you don't need the breath anymore. But for the most part, I think it's very helpful for people.

Could you elaborate a little more on the difference

of using breath for concentration versus your cost. Now,

I've heard that distinction before where we possibly pay attention to the nuances and concentration don't really need to

do that, right?

I understand that and possibly, that's the way my mind goes. I don't I don't really understand what you mean. When you say you don't really need to know what's going on. Just you just stay with you.

So I often feel my breath here in my belly. If I was doing concentration now just plant my attention here, my belly and just hang on to that part of my body. As it goes up and down, up and down. Just hang in there, hang in there, hang in there.

Just sort of naturally goes to the different sensations that happen in that area.

Yeah, so sure. So that's your what your mind does so. So don't worry about

it. Don't worry about trying to interesting.

Yeah, so different minds function different ways, isn't it? There's nothing wrong about having different minds, but some minds are more have more concentrated more tendency towards concentration and some more towards insight or seeing or discerning what's there, and probably your more discerning type. Also, you have a strong habit now doing Vipassana, then that also, you know, probably feeds into that Samadhi practice concentration practice, in some ways, in one way, it's kind of dumb. Because you don't, you don't have to learn very much about what you're, you're focusing on, you just have to hang in there. So, you know, just, you know, leave it, and then you use your intelligence to figure out the strategies of how best to just hang in there with a dumb thing. You know, so your mind doesn't get to wander away and doesn't, you know, use your all your intelligence to do this really simple, basic, dumb thing, just, you know, that's part of the reason why it really helps in concentration,

practice, usually testing very, very simple that you're doing. So the mind gets simpler and simpler and more more focused on this one thing. So I don't know if I was certainly clear enough.

So I want to go back a little bit to the idea of preparatory Samadhi preparations. I don't think maybe I said this clear enough in the beginning. Some people it's classic, very classic and Theravada Buddhism, when when you first sit down to meditate, to actually spend some time, five or 10 minutes, perhaps doing some kind of preparatory meditations before doing either concentration practice or Vipassana practice. And there are four classic preparatory practices. One is called the recollection of the Buddha, which is recall the qualities, the virtues, the whatever you know about the Buddha, as a way of filling your mind with gladness and happiness, inspiration, delight, so that you really kind of, you know, not thinking about dinner anymore. You know, we're not thinking about your bank account as if that's Really important. You just you know you're really there. You're really inspired by this example of the Buddha. The second is to practice metta. So loving kindness is a great toning effect for many people and lubricates settles us sets in the right kind of mood or atmosphere of friendliness to our experience, and it's very helpful to have that kind of settled friendly attitude towards ourselves in our experiences we meditate. The third one is we talked about a soba, which is contemplating the unbeautiful parts of the body. And I don't know you know, some of you might find it really helpful might get you might kind of get you really grounded and settled and arrive here. If you just spent spend some time thinking about the beautiful parts of the body. And you know, sobers you up. And, and I'm sure most of you it's not appropriate meditation to do But I like it just you know that meta and beautiful parts are both being offered here. So you don't think that on this Buddhist you know they're into this world negating kind of stuff you know just all this is a Buddhism is a kind of downer right of religion on beautiful. Buddhism has a full range of wise things that you could pick up to tools depending on you know, different medicines depending on the condition that needs attention. And sometimes they say, the unbeautiful is what's needed. I've actually never practiced it. So true confession. And then the last one is my Mirena Sati, which is recollection of death to spend some time contemplating death, that you too will die. And this is a so each of these is often meant as an antidote. For certain states, so it's pretty easy to see that unbeautiful as an antidote towards the last question of death is maybe the antidote to anxiety or laziness or complacency. metta is a antidote towards ill will or anger, irritation, judgmental ism and contemplating contemplation of the Buddha and recollection of the Buddha is an antidote to anxiety, restlessness. Desire, all kinds superficiality. Oh, skeptical doubt. Thinking about the Buddha sometimes helps overcome doubt. You're so inspired by this. You know, this figure of the Buddha, that whatever doubts you have about the practice is pretty easy. It's easier than it is to get focused and concentrated.

Please tell with me. Yeah. I don't know, you know, he's certainly a little quieter in the room. And I'm talking a lot. And you know, I don't know, maybe you're getting bored suddenly or maybe I used up my allotted attention that you had available to you. Are you still practicing concentration? concentrating on my voice and what I'm saying? Can I continue? So okay?

So part of the preparatory stage that is working with the obstacles, the hindrances to concentration, learning how to use it wisely, so they become settled and no longer become a hindrance. So, as I said, a number of times, you can always use mindfulness practice that can be very helpful. One of the hindrances we have is thoughts, if we want to develop an independent detached mind and mindful of concentration We need to somehow have settled our thoughts enough that the mind is not is independent of our thinking. It doesn't mean we stop thinking. But the mind is no longer pulled by it or caught up by it pulled away, I can stay focused and keep doing its work. Sometimes you can experience it, the thoughts can be in the background. And you can just keep focusing on the issue at hand with it with the thoughts in the background enough in the way anymore. And that's helpful to know because some people get obsessive about the presence of thoughts thinking, and they think that something's some personal failure that they're thinking in meditation. The student Suzuki Roshi had one of the best advices about thinking I thought, in meditation, can't be bothered by your thoughts. That's really the best way to try trying to think and trying not to try to think both agitate the mind and usually conducive to more thinking. So sometimes the best strategies, ignore your thoughts. Just let them do whatever they want, wherever they want. And stay focused on the, on the concentration and the practice you're doing, if you can. But there's other kind of repertoire of tools to work with thoughts. And some of them I've given to you, when I do the those of you who've taken the intro to mindfulness class, sometimes just let go of them is the best thing. Sometimes saying not now you're thinking, now I'll think about that later, is really helpful. Sometimes the mind listens, oh, my nose, it's going to be attended to later. It'll just relax for now. Later, sometimes, you just do very firm. No, sometimes it's really, really powerful, strong apps, you know, used to, you know, give a four year old and sometimes you'd have to say no, in a very strong way. And, but no anger, no animosity, you know, just very clear. No, and sometimes I worked with the mind sometimes the mindset a four year old. Sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes you need to, sometimes you need to look and find out where the tension is in the face, or that in the skull and the brain or in the shoulders, the neck that's associated with your thinking. And then relaxed, whatever tension you can find connected to your thinking. Unless you relax the tension in your body, you're thinking that tension is like this little factory for thinking. Sometimes you need to really acknowledge the emotion that's connected to the thoughts, the planning mind, it's often connected to the anxiety. So just kind of ground yourself in that relax that there's a whole bunch of different strategies you can have with thoughts and different kinds of thinking needs different strategies when you're doing concentration practice. And so you have to find your way in that. And one of the strategies is simply to bear down on the, on the on the breath sometimes appropriate, it's sometimes said it kind of is a last resort, grit your teeth and just you know, you know, hang in there just in the afternoon leave nothing else, you know works and just you've tried everything else under the sun. You just okay. Okay, great to get your grit your teeth. The main hindrances are the hindrances, which numerator enumerated before. And there are two sides to the hindrances and two sides to thinking. One is this, there's, in a sense, their spontaneous appearance. Suddenly you have a desire, or we suddenly have thoughts of ill will or you're restless. And then there's your engagement in it, you're participating in it, you're acting it out. Having this continuous split in spontaneous appearance is not a problem. It's then you getting involved. Which is the problem. And if you can start seeing how

you get engaged, how you get sucked in and get involved, and then stuff that like oh that that's very helpful if you can do that

you know, if you have this you know, you use easy to see if you're thinking about Tahiti, vacation, Tahiti, actually notice you're thinking about it, you're participating, you're engaging in it, you don't have to see like all of it. You might choose later have another Tahiti thought. But then you, you know, I'm not going to pick that up. I'm not going to get involved in that you let go of it. There's a whole series of things that person classic teachings around how you can work with the hindrances. One is to consider the consequences, which means having some wisdom about the presence of the hindrances, you know, out of bitter experience It's not very helpful to spend a whole retreat thinking about Tahiti, you paid all this money to go and retreat, you've cleared your life, you know, and you sit down to meditate in the state of the art Meditation Center. And, and and, you know, what in the world are you doing thinking about Tahiti, it's not helpful. And you know, you've done this before, you've been on retreats before, and that last time it was Fiji. And the time before that, it was, you know, the beaches in France. And you know, out of bitter experience that is simply not useful. It's not doesn't help you it actually kind of productive. And so after a while, you realize this is not a good deal. And you have certain wisdom and because you really see that you really convinced that this is not useful. It's easier to let go of it. And sometimes we might know superficially, it's not a good deal. But the psyche hasn't really taken it in, in in a very deep level. This is a dead end to be filled with judgments about people and anger, but what's going on in the past, it's just why bother. You've known that this is really painful. This is causing yourself pain and suffering. The second is to cultivate the opposite quality, the antidote. And each of you can kind of make these best if each of you kind of think what is the opposite of your particular hindrance for yourself. I ask people sometimes if they're really struggling some something in meditation, to kind of ask them to kind of tell me, you know, some simple words, what is the key words with the key words that characterizes your struggles? Then when I say, Well, you know, when I was a child, and this happened to me, and then this person said, No, no, but the story, just a key word that characterizes how you are when you're having this bout of whatever is happening. They say, Oh, I feel angry and tight and resentful. discouraged, is a great now. Call that in mind how you feel And then what in your own body you don't sense. You being fierce like the opposite of that rage and discouragement and tightness or whatever. And then somehow that hopefully something pops up from that even the psyche seems like the opposite. Maybe peace, maybe strength, maybe love something. And then I'll ask them to see if they can find someplace in their body where that opposite quality exists. And then ground the attention in that place. The person feels very insecure. Maybe the opposite is his strength. Can you find someplace with a strength and sometimes people will say, Oh, my feet, or my hands, or my torso or something great. Just hanging out in your hands, I think can be very comforting and very settling to find that opposite and hang in with it. Sometimes, it's said If you're really struggling with a lot of different discomforts, this is actually advice from the Buddha. A lot of pain, for example, sometimes a helpful thing to do is to find someplace in your body where the opposite is happening. Find some place where there's some pleasure.

And it might be that you're wrapped in pain. But if you spend some time looking around, you can find a little little corner of your body maybe a square centimeter someplace. That which feels pleasant. I like the contact of my lips touching each other, that for me is kind of almost automatically a pleasant sensation. Or sometimes they touch my finger tips together. That's a kind of actually for me kind of a pleasant place, but different places, you know, and, and then bring the concentration to bear on that opposite quality, to let it grow and develop it or rest there. Take a break there to bring balance that can be helpful. Sometimes it's more classic the antidotes For example, the antidote, as I said, of, of ill will, might be loving kindness. The antidote for desire might be unbeautiful. It might also be cultivating contentment. What can you do to cultivate cultivate contentment, the opposite of doubt, is inspiration. Confidence, see what can do what you can do to elicit confidence, reflect on the quality so the Buddha or the Dharma, spiritual practitioners you know, who really inspire you or recite the method sukha memorized or some other texts you memorize sometimes? I bet a lot of you You filled with doubt, if you just recited the Metta Sutta, in the middle of your doubt, you'd probably settle a little bit. Maybe wouldn't go and go away, but please change the context of it all and get you more settled. The app or the antidote for restlessness is said to be concentration, which is a little bit a paradox here from telling you The antidote for sloth and torpor sometimes is light, to bring light to bear on what's going on, or to stand up or to do walking meditation, bring energy. Sometimes the antidote for hindrances is develop what's called the sky like mind, mind, which is very spacious sky, like very accepting of everything that arises. Kind of like be possible, just very, very, like the hindrances are just like these clouds drifting through an endless empty sky, can maybe even use the imagination, your image, your imagery, your powers of visualization to imagine this big empty sky. Another one, which is not very popular, wasn't maybe still not very popular in American Psycho Western psychotherapy. Because it has a very bum rap, you know, it's not good. You know, like the last thing you supposed to be doing. You go your therapist to help you not do this. And, but the nice thing Is it maybe everything has a place? Anyway, this is suppression. Isn't that terrible Boogeyman? apology? No, it isn't. Isn't it? Like the worst thing is like, there's no place for suppression and healthy life, right? Maybe, maybe, maybe they're right. But in Buddhism Buddhism is wrong. But for development, concentration suppression is considered to be a valid strategy. When you do it, whoever do it wisely, know that you're doing it, know why you're doing it. And be very careful with your motivation. Be sure you're not doing it because you're trying to run away from something. Do it because you think this is a really valuable strategy. I'll go I'll develop it's much more useful for me to suppress this get really concentrated you really still unclear with my mind. So I can look at these issues really carefully, that clear mind. So suppression is an example. So especially just Partly sunny. bearing down just ignoring pushing away, denying, not thinking about holding those thoughts at the distance. And the fifth one's classic is go for refuge. If you have a partner like this inspiration thing, if you have a lot of hindrances, a lot of obstacles to getting concentrated, recite the triple refuge. take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the Dharma, I take refuge in the Sangha, and do it. This is like one of the most religious faith based kind of little rituals that Buddhists can do. And if you have that faith relationship to Buddhism, then you can use that as a way of helping you just stop your meditation for a few minutes and just recite the refuges for a while. And then once you feel settled and concentrated and feel a certain level of confidence in faith, then begin again with the refuges with the concentration practice

So this, so this preparatory stage is a lot to do with learning how to work with the hindrances. And I given you a lot of different ideas in brief. The difficulty with giving you all these ideas is that you'll be confused when you sit down with what you should do, you'd be wondering and trying to remember and get all agitated, trying to think of think what's the right approach here. Try to be on the guard from being too agitated or too confused, too doubtful about what to do. But it's also helpful to have a range of these things kind of in the background, and wisely know what to pick up at the right time. They help you get more settled in almost anything you do. That keeps you engaged in the process of getting concentrated, without getting filled with thoughts and discursive ideas and agitation. That way whenever getting engagement The full engagement, everything we have are subjective factors. That's one of the things we're looking for is engagement. So even if you're using your intelligence, you know, to try these other antidotes, you're still engaged, you're engaged with something wholesome, as opposed to the mind wandering off free thinking whatever at once. And there are times when you're engaged and you try different practices, and you know, it's kind of rough first, or maybe it's agitating or confusing. But with time, you will begin becoming become smoother and easier. And more and more, you know, something you use to really help you with focus, again, constantly concentrating. So I hope this next week, as you said, that when obstacles of concentration arise, that you don't let them discourage you, that you apply yourself more fully to the concentration. Your first strategy I would suggest is you try and more fully try to put more energy, more effort and more strength in your concentration. To see if you can override the tendency be distracted or be hindered. If that doesn't work, then see if you can work with the antidote to it. Or see if you can work with wisdom or mindfulness, so you can settle it and come back to get on track again, with the work of concentration. And with time, what we're aiming towards is developing a strength of mind with the mind becomes independent of distractions, independent of the forces around it. And the classic image or the classic images of this can be used for this is a lotus growing out of muddy water. Beautiful White Lotus when it comes out of the muddy water, it blooms and it's completely pure and untarnished by the mud. But it grew out of the mud. So out of the mud of our lives, we grow a lotus In the mind which is independent of all the conditions of the world the awareness the ability to apply the mind activity of the mind, the ability to apply and use the mind that is unswayed, unpooled by all the things that contempt it okay so please continue with the practice and if you haven't memorized the Metta Sutta please make more efforts there also and by all means, please enjoy this concentration practice. If you're not enjoying it, see if you can tinker with a little bit to make it more enjoyable. Maybe you can make it if you're not enjoying it enough well what's enough I don't I don't want to burden you know, the judgment on not enjoying it, you know, you know not doing it right. But the It can be helpful. It can be helpful sometimes to have the DA being playful that you're entering into the playground of the mind when you do sit down to concentrate. So enjoy. Thank you