The month before that, I think there was a lot of talking throughout the day, a lot of teaching on my part. And then there's all kinds of ways in which this unfolds. And each day is meant to stand on its own. But each day also is part of a year long series. And so this year the series is on the meditation instructions of the Buddha gave called the four foundations of mindfulness. And there are a whole series of exercises there, mindfulness practice the Buddha gives. And so we've been going through them over these months. And now we're at the last exercise, the combination the climax of the Buddha's instructions on mindfulness. And that's the topic of the Four Noble Truths. And the Four Noble Truths are as often seen as the kind of essence, core teachings of the Buddha. In some areas, everything that Buddha teach, taught everything that Buddhism is about can be kind of held are contained within the Four Noble Truths. And if you understand the Four Noble Truths and everything else follows from that the Four Noble Truths can be seen as very simplistic. And however, sometimes the simplest equations are the most elegant and simple ones, or the most ones that are most profound. And in science or mathematics, so that's the way it works in Buddhism. There was a scholarly study, a woman wrote a book some years ago that she made a claim based on some very, probably not very reasonable assumptions about linguistics, that when she looked at the ancient texts, and came to the conclusion that the Buddha didn't teach the Four Noble Truths. It was later edition in the tradition, and so when Thanissaro Bikkhu Taan Geoff scholar monk, as we know, comes here sometimes reading our book, he said, Well, you know, I don't really care who ever came up with the Four Noble Truths that versus the Buddha. So whether the Buddha came up with it or he came later, you know, it doesn't matter just that's so important to know. So and so that, you know, for those of you don't know what they are, they're usually stated very simply. And often, the way they're stated is the way the new game where the game telephone happens. By the time the Four Noble Truths ends up in popular American culture, it's often misrepresented. So the first noble truth is simply that there is suffering. And the telephone game brings it to America as saying, life is suffering, which is just a drag to here that we've missed the hope right. But this statement There is suffering. And it's kind of hard to argue against that. There is suffering, there's also happiness but there's out there is suffering. The

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second is that there's a cause or conditions that give rise to that suffering. And then there is the third one is that there is the cessation of suffering or there is the cessation of the causes that give rise to suffering. There's cessation, there's the end of this, there's that coming to an end. And then there is the last one is that most noble truth is the path to to be walked to be engaged and that leads that cessation leads to that end. So there's the suffering, the cause, the end, and the conditions the path that leads to the end. Another way of setting it which is usually not said in Buddhism, but you could, we're kind of a little bit likely say There's suffering and the cause of suffering. And there's happiness and the conditions for happiness. And so, the fact that we use the word cessation or end for the third noble truth, doesn't mean that you know, it's not just kind of like, you know, a dead end, it's kind of leaves you kind of a limbo with nothing. So, it's very simple. There's suffering cause possible to end it, and there's a path to walk it. When the Buddha taught there, sometimes he would put some, sometimes you find him his discourses that he prepare people for the Four Noble Truths. He would lay out a whole series of presentations that would lead people to a state of mind state of openness or faith or confidence, prepare them so that their mind was primed to somehow understand the Four Noble Truths in a way that was really deeply penetrating. So even though it's easy to understand, it's Another thing to have is really penetrating and really be able to have a transformative value in us. And, in one, one area where he did it was, he would first talk about things that bring joy. He would talk about the joy of generosity, and that would glide in people's hearts. And then you talk about the joy of ethics of integrity, and that would glide and kind of inspire people a little bit. And then he talked a little bit about, indirectly a little bit about the joys and happiness of the rebirth that you'll have. If you live an ethical life and generous life, you get reborn, these beautiful, heavenly realms for some time. And that's a nice thing people be happy, inspired by that. And then he talked about some of the benefits of letting go of renunciation, of living a life of simplicity. And supposedly that would inspire people. And then he will talk about the benefits and the possibilities of getting concentrated and my imagination, imagination still This, he's talking about concentration, people are really getting kind of focused and concentrated and what he's teaching minds are getting still settled, alert, clear, just right there, the mind wandering off into other things, not thinking about the baseball games. They're just they're listening to the Buddha and the mother mind are getting concentrated. And then at some point, then he would, when he felt the mind that the audience was prepared and ready, he would teach them the Four Noble Truths. And, and because mine was so ready, they can maybe understand how it applies to their life in a very deep way. So in that sense, the Four Noble Truths of climax are the kind of what the Buddha had to teach, not to be understood, you know, just as an introduction to Buddhism kind of thing. But it was advanced Buddhism. And you believe we prepare ourselves for that. In this this course, we've been looking at this at this year, the four foundations of mindfulness, you have trouble hearing. You there, there are hearing system devices there that would be helped you There are that there, you plug it into here and makes it easier to hear. And, or you can move closer. Okay with everybody else working for you now. So how's that working better? So in this discourse we'll be looking at the Four Noble Truths his last exercise. And one way of understanding that is that the earlier exercises are preparing us to really be able to address the Four Noble Truths, take them on and really let them penetrate into our life. So in the earlier to be very simplistic about this earlier exercises First, there's exercises that are training a person to be in their body to be embodied. To get calm and settled, use the breath to calm and settle
the body. Do use the breath to be in touch with the body, debate attention to the body in other ways it's kind of be embodied be present for your body not to be in your body. And then there's teachings are exercises are on learning how to pay attention to the simple ways in which our body and mind respond to react to stimulus, whatever is going on. There's something you know there's it causes suffering or causes you to think things are experienced in a pleasant way or unpleasant way. We're going to kind of see kind of how we react respond to whatever's going on in an immediate kind of felt sense level, dropping into the not only the body, but in the felt sense, level of our experience. And that of course, is an antidote or from the usual way of experiencing things through the filter of our interpretations, our stories, our metaphysics, our you know, History can be very complicated the way we interpret and experience often not accurately. So the idea is to come back to what's most primary and immediate what's happening right here. So these are the exercises really training a person to be immediate here. And then learning to pay attention to states of the mind. And the states of the mind can be varied the Learning Quality and the quality of the mind knowing how to track it. And so again, that's also about just being natively present to what's here. And then it goes into talking to looking at some of the patterns of the mind how the mind actually works, how the mind works in reactive way with desire and aversion to see how that works to understand the cause and conditions of aversion and desire and restlessness and anxiety and doubt, and understand what prompts it understand how to, how to let go of it or abandon it and somehow be able to begin working with also with the attachments of the mind the way the mind gets Attach their claims to things. And there's a lot of emphasis in Buddhism and learning how to work with a clean mind, the mind and it's gonna be possible to be present, even though its present is still clinging and reacting and for and against what's going on, often in a very deep affective level, deep emotional level where reactive, clinging or resist. So learn how to be present for that and see that and not turn away from it or ignore it, but being very wise to be able to connect to it and understand the reactive qualities of the mind. So and then, the last month, the second last exercise is dark, paying attention to the beautiful qualities of mind that come into play as a person engaged engages in the Buddhist path. So as you kind of engage in this practice, it's not just about looking at attachment and suffering and all that. But as you might get settled, concentrated, mindful engaged in the present moment. Sooner or later, it'll give birth give rise to some really beautiful states of mind. And there's seven of them. So there's mindfulness, investigation, effort, energy, engagement, joy, tranquility, concentration, and equanimity. And these are called seven factors or seven conditions for awakening to happen. So here you can just get a sense of the kind of the development here. Learn how to be present for your immediate experience and your body, your reactivity, your mental states, emotional reactions and clinging and learning how to engage in VR, be honest about it, work with it, to let go of them, and then cultivating these beautiful qualities of mind. And after all that, then the Buddhist standard instruction says Now, notice the Four Noble Truths with all that as a foundation. Then notice the Four Noble Truths. Notice how you're suffering. Notice if you're suffering Noticing, noticing what the cause of your suffering is noticing how the possibility of ending and suffering and notice what it takes to end the suffering, because it's not always easy to let go of the causes. So what does it take? So now the mind is so prepared, maybe quiet enough, concentrated enough, still enough, engaged enough that when you direct the mind to look at suffering, you don't get depressed. You don't get reactive, because they actually can meet the suffering with very
wise presence. And in many spiritual traditions that I know of, there's I've seen in some corners of the tradition, the teachings, that if you run away from your suffering, it hurts more. And if you turn there's something about turning towards suffering, which is very frankly freeing, very important, and certainly true for the people he turned toward a suffering just be present for them. It's very, it can be very healing and helpful. For them, the same thing for ourselves as a way of turning towards our suffering and really taking it in. And that can be very helpful just the presence of it. And by this time, we're supposed to have a chronic quality presence for that ability to really connect with a very useful way. And then with that calm sets, subtle mind willingness to look, then maybe it's possible to look under the surface of what's going on, and understand something very deep about the causes and conditions that prompt us to be to cling, promptly suffering to arise out of the clinging we have, and some of the deepest held suffer clinging, suffering, suffering born from clinging, comes from cleanings that are very hard to see. And so just to kind of go down to El Camino here and walk up to a stranger and say, Oh, I'm sure you're suffering and all you have to do is let go of your clinging you know, it's not gonna mean anything, right? Because what cleaning I didn't realize I'm clinging and But to really see the cleanings, you know, just like for example cleaning to self cleaning to self identity, it takes a steel quiet mind to really be able to penetrate that and see it. And, and to see the possibility of freedom enough so you can really let go in a deep way, takes again a prepared mind cultivated mind, my making sense to you. So, this is the climax of what the Buddha had to teach is the climax of this particular discourse of practice. It's meant to be something quite profound. So, today, we're going to explore these four noble truths. And we're not going to explore them in the abstract, because that's useful, I imagine, but I think much more useful and to the point for us to explore them or to explore them. in your life, in your music in your, in your own experience is kind of pointed back and can you discover these four noble truths for yourself? And I believe at the beginning of this year long series, I did say something, then I say something about this as a high risk class did not get from me remember that? No, I didn't say that. I'm gonna have a disclaimer at the beginning. And now I tell you, I'm sorry. I guess it hasn't been risky enough yet. And, but the, you know, I take you very seriously if you do a class like this, what the, the engagement of practice in order to really make a difference in your life. It means you kind of be willing to engage yourself and take some risks or some decent expose, they're really kind of engaged in ways that may be a little bit unusual if you kind of, you know, walking down our camino. And so some of the things we might do today, Mike Initial seem uncomfortable to you. And you can always just make it more comfortable as you wish. But there's a little bit of warning if that's the case, and, and maybe won't make you uncomfortable, we'll see. But also, the day is meant something I don't often notice that some people will come for these Friday Dharma practice days, and leave as lunchtime. And some people do it every time. That's the kind of pattern and that's fine, if that's what you want to do. But today be warned that then you might leave incomplete because the day is meant to be to dinner as a whole. So they will go through the Four Noble Truths, of course of the day. And if you leave at lunchtime, then you might just be left suffering. You know, and you have, you know, leave suffering and you won't, you won't have seen the resolution of it. You could just leave now and come back at lunchtime and just get the good news after lunch. So why don't you if you want maybe nice, just take 30 seconds to stand and stretch and then we'll do a meditation so take a comfortable, alert posture, close your eyes and then take a few moments to kind of get into your posture. Be careful with your
posture attentive to it. Maybe sway a little bit or twist a little bit with your body kind of really settled in and find Good way of sitting. Not thinking about your posture from your head, but rather being inside your body in a sense and feeling your whole body settling in the presence as you feel your body, your posture if it's possible to enjoy or appreciate being in your body Because it feels pleasant or maybe because you feel some sense of strength. some sense of aliveness. See if you can kind of appreciate or enjoy something about being present in your body with your posture. And then within your body as part of your body. Become aware of your breathing. Notice how your body experiences breathing, movements in your body changing experiences of pressure, tightness, really so pressure, release of tightness feeling your body breathing and from the inside bit as much from the inside of your body as you can. So it's not watching from your head but sensing feeling within your body. Take a few slow, long slow, deep breaths. The breathing helps you connect more fully to your body. The Deep End breaths stretch your ribcage, your shoulders maybe even your belt Your back rib cage. And then as you exhale, let go relax. Soften your muscles. Breathing in deeply. As you exhale letting the muscles of your body fall away from the bones. And then letting your breath return to normal. Staying with your breathing, breathing in and breathing out See if you can allow the breathing to have an effect on you. Allow see if even breathing can help soften. Calm the body and the mind directing the energy of the mind. To the breathing, the energy of the mind is less and less available for thinking and preoccupations. So the breath is at the center of your experience many things occur on the sides around the peripheries Thoughts body sensations sound. Nothing just be in favor of being settled in the breath at the middle As you stay with your breathing, see if you can cultivate a little bit greater sense of ease easiness being easy with how your body is even if your body feels uneasy at ease with that As you breathe in now do you think you'd be at ease in your mind? be easy with the mind, mind zone easy or restless. Keep breathing mindfully, best you can and be easy and ease with how the mind is Breathing in, breathing out like the breath is the wind moving through or waves washing up and down the shore Breathing in and breathing out, letting yourself be at ease in your heart. Your emotional state. Even if you feel it easy in the heart be easy about that. Each time you exhale using the exhales reminder to let go whatever you're thinking about to let go into greater stillness Peace As you exhale, see if you can let go physically, emotionally, mentally let go into some feeling of well being. Even if you feel uncomfortable in many ways, these are some little hint of well being or sense of well being that you can tap into as you exhale, settling into it. And perhaps that well being its presence maybe can make it a little bit easier to stay with the in breath and the out breath Staying with your breaths in breaths and out breaths can't relax. So that go into some sense of well being. Remember the bottom line here is to try to be at ease with what is if you feel uncomfortable, physically, mentally, emotionally. What can you experiment a little bit and as you keep breathing mindfully, experiment with some not creating some space or calm or acceptance or allowance for ease around what's uncomfortable Letting go of thoughts as you exhale Now from whatever foundation of calm, you might have stability, inner stability might have. Turn your attention mindfully, deliberately, quietly, to some way in which right now you’re suffering. Anyway, now that there's suffering, in your experience, try to bring that attention to the suffering without now thinking about it. Bringing a calm presence might be quite subtle and might be quite large. Doesn't matter how it is. It might be quite far in the background. Or it might be a current of suffering about something that’s not happening here now, but it's part of
your life these days. And then see if you can bring an easy presence. Relax presence, to simply hold or be present for the suffering that you have as if suffering deserves Your respect. You can have respectful presence of it, getting to know it better, sense it better. Not to get rid of it, not to do anything with it, except getting to know it better for Miss or miss calm and presence as you can bring Do you have any habits of reacting to suffering that makes it hard for you to bring a calm, friendly presence to it. And then come back more fully to your breathing again. And for the next two minutes or so, not very long. Immerse yourself in breathing. So that’s all you’re really doing. Your attention is fast you can connect it to breath or two minutes letting go of everything else