So in the discourse in the four foundations of mindfulness, there are the instructions around the first foundation of mindfulness is to know that there is suffering when they're suffering to really know it. And this expression to know is a very special one, because it doesn't mean kind of just kind of know in some general generic kind of way. It means to know some clarity to know some specific sophisticated specificity. So I'm kind of, in the knowing itself, there's a kind of a presence that is maybe free of the experience. It's very clear kind of you bring a kind of conscious deliberate kind of annoying Yeah, this is what's going on. So, the instruction just to know elsewhere, the Buddha says that each of the Four Noble Truths has an activity, an action or sometimes set a duty, that the practitioner has in relationship to that noble truth. And the first the first noble truth, the responsibility or the duty or the activity is to know it to understand it to really know understand suffering. So this is means you know, turn towards it really get to know it, skim off it you don't ignore it, you don't deny it. We really what is this series? So the bumper sticker for Buddhists is I stopped for suffering. What when you go too far You might go farther than most people. That's what the Buddha did. He went pretty far, but he stopped her suffering. And so the so what I tried to convey this morning so far, both mental talk and also in this meditation is that turning towards suffering and being present for and really offering in our presence, ideally is done after certain deliberate preparation. So you're already calm and stable, relax a little bit. And it's a world of difference if you can do that versus if you do it if you're agitated and anxious and everything. So, you know, I don't know if you could follow the guided meditation but to kind of get settled to the body to get calm to find some sense of ease in the practice, and then from that place of calm or settlements or ease to then it's a whole different games a different way. different meanings of turn towards suffering, and be present for it. And hopefully all of you could find some suffering to connect to. The idea is that until you're fully fully enlightened, it's somewhere in your psyche, you'll find something which qualifies the suffering, even though you might not normally be aware of it, it's deep down inside. And so what I hope is that you can sense so there's a turning towards and experiencing suffering maybe in a very different way than you normally would do. It was not the case for some of
you or was it What was it like to do that? Was it different than how you normally experience suffering? Anybody want to say a few things. Sorry, It felt like an imposition in position on my sense of calm.

Very external.

The suffering.

Yeah, that's pulling me away

preferred state okay. So, so, you had a preferred state you want to kind of go and look towards what was your suffering in the system or you had to have kind of manufacturer it

the only in the moment,

suffering, there was there was some physical

bodily suffering. That was the only suffering that was it was right. And then I had to reach out.

Look, and so I understand this, if you like any position, could you feel it also that there's some benefit from that place of calm looking at suffering?

Oh, yeah, it was it was really beneficial. Yeah.

And how was it beneficial How is it different than how we give usually

what was more balanced,

much more balanced,

wonderful sense of calm,

this little suffering.

I don't know if it put it more in perspective.

But it

It felt like it was just this little bit of suffering. There's this greater sense of well being available to me. Great.
Thank you. Now that sense of it, this is an imposition that also imagined as a is a variety of suffering.

The imposition may have not the right word. Okay.

I had more of a sense of you know

that it was minor I mean it was really minor

I could well imagine yeah

it was a really a new feeling for me although I had read it of course in many books and Dharma talks but my habitual reaction is to to run away from because I need to live my life and I can't be you know, I can't be bothered and I don't have time in high in to really bring calmness in really stay with the idea that this is what happened this is what it's like. And surrounded with this kind of equanimity was completely new to me, I mean, on a really miss about grade level. Wonderful. So thank you. For me,

it felt twofold.

One

It was a physical physical, my leg was now

bothering me.

But it put a distance to it.

And then

I'm in the midst of some family crisis.

And it put it felt like a

coolie cooling of the fire

was

great, great.
Right? So bringing that kind of presence to the fire, that's a suffering Cool. Thank you.

At first I thought, Okay, I know my main

source of suffering, that's what I'll be addressing. And and

I went nowhere near that instead, I became very relaxed, but sell this current of physical unease as a result of some emotional unease in like around my upper tummy or heart area. And it was actually I was able to turn towards it, but just a little, and because it was new, sort of new,

but it was

it felt very profound.

And a little scary. And inevitably, I sought to intellectually articulate what, what, what's this. And I made a little headway in that arena and then just pulled back and tried to

just sit and bear with

it and see if it would go away. And it didn't go away.

So it was a, it was a new adventure for me, right? Like you

have to be careful that wanting it to go away is another form of suffering. And it's one thing and the other thing is that it's a fairly common for people to go on retreat or meditate and have some big issue in their life, the feeling you have to resolve some suffering. And, but then they come on retreat, and it's a whole different thing that this technique doesn't come up. And I think it's a useful attitude to have is that the psyche, the inner life, kind of knows what needs to come up. And it might be different than what you think needs to come up. I just trust that inner process. You know, so thank you.

So, I found myself

walking down a corridor outdoors.

Many, many, many, many doors of places that hold different emotional things that are going on with me right now. And every once in a while when you talk about

getting comfort and relaxing, I could close my eyes and the Carter would disappear and they shut the car door would disappear. And
you know, all those, you know, you kind of have all these different spaces in your mind that you can look into and it's awfully nice to just let them become nothing. Yes, and every once in a while when you said something it broke it into nothing

behind you

I was surprised that

Could

from a place of common pleasure in my and meditative place could suddenly drop and discover this place of suffering and I was also I was surprised about is that the suffering was around something that I think about a lot, a lot, but it's never arisen in my meditations. And so all of a sudden from this place of calmness, there is this deep source of suffering that I've never really sat with before. And at this point, I just feel it all over but I you know, I didn't realize that sense of benefit from it more just surprised.

me bring up here up here

Little bit of what this person before me was saying, what was new for me is that I was calm before you, it was pretty still, then you brought the issue of pay attention to your suffering. And then there was I noticed that there was suffering. And so there was a little bit of what a shame now to sit with it was subtle, but but but there was a bit of a disenchantment. However, sitting with it so sized, it was mainly physical. So I started to do this, looking of what other parts of my body didn't have suffering. And so I started to just kind of go back and forth.

And

and then actually, I got even more, because I was able to navigate between those two. Nice, very nice so that was that was quite exciting. waiting for me to discuss.

Thank you. So the

there is something

very mature or maturing about having having the ability to turn towards suffering and be really be present for it without being caught by it or reactive to it or lost it and are disappearing. And I think there's a very, very kind of a strength of character that can be developed over time, that allows the person to new, wise and helpful way to connect to suffering to know what's there. And that's what the
basically how I understood what the Buddha was, was one of the things he was teaching was, it's very important to have that maturity, where we actually be willing to look at it and be present for it. And it's not uncommon for people to come into Buddhist circles and feel such a relief and happiness, that someone's finally talking about suffering. Because in their experience, a lot of people is denying it or sugarcoating it or doing something and someone who just didn't come into a circles where you can just call it for what it is. Don't try to pretend it's not there just Oh, you're suffering. Yes.

Sometimes people will say, Well, is there something I can do for you?

And

what I thought was, well,

the most what somebody could give to me when I'm suffering, or that I could give to somebody else when they're suffering is just
to not run away.

Beautiful. If they could just
be present with me

and reverse, beautiful, thank you for saying that because that wonderful segue into what we're gonna do next.

It was a setup

so

So what I'd like for you to do is to go into dyads go and find another partner. And, and then you're going to take turns, one person's going to be the speaker first. And then one person basically the listener. And but the listener is going to ask two questions. And these are repeating questions you get to ask these over and over again. And, and the advantage of the kind of repeating questions is that the answer person's answering, responds, and sometimes obvious. First things come to mind. Maybe you're not that interesting. But you keep asking sometimes it kind of the obvious or the easy answer is kind of finished in the mind begins to kind of explore deeper and deeper new aspects and allow yourself to be surprised kind of let it be a personal exploration exploration. in answering the question, you're not actually a question for the benefit of the person asking it so don't try to explain something you know the answer you know really well to tell a long story and that you know, it all. You know, the It's really for your own sake, it's kind of it's a it's a personal exploration on your own, that's being
witnessed by someone who's prompting you with a question. So we're really habituated to trying to explain things to someone else, right. And so don't explain something which you already know, all too well. kind of do the shorthand version, because it's so you can help yourself, kind of explore, explore. So the person who's asking the question is asking two questions. First question is, what is your suffering? And the first answer is response. It can be very short, it can be every kind of answer you'd like to respond. Then the person asking the question says, Thank you, sir. Important. Say thank you. pause for a moment. And then ask the second question, which is, what's, what is that? What does it feel like? That's suffering? What's the felt sense? So that's suffering. So, what's it feel like that suffering? How is it experienced suffering really experienced in your real body and your experience immediate experience of yourself? So what is it? What is like experience, suffering, feel like?

The person says something.

And then the very important next step is you say thank you. And then you pause for a moment and you say,

What is your suffering?

Thank you. What does it feel like? Thank you. So, what is your suffering? Thank you. What's it feel like? Thank you

pause.

What is your suffering?

And it goes on like that. And, and I could well imagine that some of you You're now feeling very uncomfortable. You're suffering with this idea of talk to someone and share this. So you can talk about that suffering, run this. And now there might be sufferings that you have that comes to mind that you don't feel comfortable sharing with someone else. And you don't have to say something you're not, you know, willing to feel comfortable to talk about is not enough to confess, you know, your darkest secrets here and the things you really like. So, you know, bring something up, but, but you don't have to cross a line to a place where you don't feel you start feeling comfortable sharing with someone maybe you don't even know here. Sudden understandable. So you're welcome. You're allowed to, you know, to limit what you say you don't have to be spill everything. And, and the person who's listening, your job is really to just listen to be witness be present, and not turn away and not try to escape not try to sticks and then try to say Well, have you thought about this? You know, You know, and, and don't kind of put it off for later. You know, I know I can't say it now but I later I'm going to give the person a list of solutions. Your job is just really to listen and be present for it and to offer your respect and appreciation and the thank you is really important. Thank you for you know, for sharing bathrooms. Thank you. So is that the instructions clear enough? And
so

why don't you find a partner that you would like you this with your stay with a partner for you back and forth between those two people. That's happening.

Being simple

So, we've kind of incense began our journey here today with this. It's the beginning point. And there's a poem I didn't bring with him by Rumi. It goes something like talks about got a paradox of reversal, is it it's an image of people who go towards dive into the cool refreshing pond in their head comes up in the fire. And those people who dive into the fire, their head comes out in the cool, refreshing pond. There's something very can be very wise, if sent in the right way. That's a big, big caveat in the right way about going into, or the suffering the present for it, and then finding the way through it. As we were, as you were sitting me discussion, Kate came in joined our group. And she handed me this article, which seemed very appropriate to say from serendipitous that should come just now. And the title is people who fear pain are more likely to suffer it. And it says that admitted there's a lot of variation in how people experience pain, degree of pain. And their thinking that that fear and anxiety about pain may account for a great deal of the individual variation in how much pain we feel. So they did these MRI studies of the brain and where we experience pain and we're experienced fear and they correlated the degree of pain To the degree of fear that people feel and so how we relate to our suffering has a lot to do with our relationship to suffering has a lot to do with the degree to which we feel it, how we relate to it, the intensity of it. And part of growth or development in Buddhist spiritual life is learning how to have a very wise relationship to our suffering and our pain, so that we don't compound it and add to it by fear or anxiety or other kinds of activity. And one of the ways I like to think about this wiser relationship to suffering or pain is to have very simple relationship to it, to learn how to be present in a very, very simple way of interpreting it and projecting or not imagining what it all means,

but just here it is

very, very simple towards it, and have the ability to be present for it in a very simple way. But one of the things that gives it creates fear anxiety around suffering is not having a sense that it's a path, there's a path through it, having a sense of there's a possibility of relief from it or really release from it. And one of the one of the functions of the Four Noble Truths is to is to not just say they're suffering, but to say that there's other possibilities to the suffering, there's a path through the suffering. And there's a way you can go, you know, you go into the fire, and you'll come out the other end, you'll come out through the cool refreshing water, there's a path through it. And so the first in a sense, the first step of this fourfold path here is to understand the present for suffering. So this is the beginning of our journey today. And so maybe it's a good time to take a short break because the bathroom and

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things before we continue, and I'd like to request that we keep the break in silence. And, and there are no four bathrooms in the building. You can use the upstairs bathroom now. There you go. If there's a line down here, you go through the library. They're up the spiral staircase. There's a bathroom up there as well. And so we'll start again at 1130. Okay.

So

does in this chapter is basically says that in every world system, there are many, many worlds in this huge infinite universe of ours. There are other galaxies are world systems where they're populated by living beings. And we don't know about them yet. You know, there are astronomers in this phantasmagoric text, someone knew about them. And so they send a message basically says in every world system, they have the Four Noble Truths but why They call the Four Noble Truths. So how they define it, the words for it are different than each system. So there's a world system a world called endurance. And they're the first noble truth is called wrongdoing or oppression change clinging to objects accumulation, thorns, stabbing, dependence on the senses, deceit, the place of cancer ignorant action in anyway, the point I want to make is it and there's many different words many different ways of describing these four noble truths. So if you don't happy with the way that the Buddha wear them, you can reward them for yourself. in other ways, the, the cause of suffering. The second noble truth in the World Endurance is called bondage, disintegration attachment to things false consciousness, pursuit and involvement and conviction, the web fancified conceptualization or in this world there are four quadrillion such names to express the Four Noble Truths. Nowadays that computers I guess, are big enough to handle all those names for quadrillion, not sure what that is in accord with mentalities of sentient beings, to cause them all to be harmonized and brought to peace. Nice the function have all these names to help us out so we can connect to it in a way that brings harmony and peace. What in this world is called the whole truth of suffering. In other world is called the sense of striving and seeking or not being emancipated, or the route of bondage, or doing what shouldn't be done or contending and struggling in all manner of situations or total lack of power to analyze or being dependent on or extreme pain or hyperactivity. What is called the holy truth of the origin of suffering is called following birth and death, habitual attachment, or burning, or continuous revolving, or corrupt senses are continuing existence. Evil behavior, emotional attachment, the source of illness or categorization. In other words, the second noble truth is called corruption, ignorance, or sharp blade. Taste of destruction, revenge, not doing one thing. Bad guidance, increased darkness, ruining darkness. what's called in a different world. The second noble truth is called no real thing. Only having words, not pure place of birth, grasping baseness a heavy burden, producer roughness another world. The second noble truth is called names, endless different sets, not to be loved, able to grab and bite, crude things emotional attachment, receptacle or steering. In other world it's called
greedy attachment, wrong accomplishment, evil of access. Nothing that can be explained. Nothing that can be apprehended, continuous revolving in circles. In other world it's called decay, confusion, regression, powerlessness, or lost opposition disharmony, doing grasping, wishing. In other world broad ground tendency distance from wisdom obstruction fear, laxity, attachment ignorance, being master of the house continuous bonds In other world, it's called wrong timing, untruth, bottomless possessiveness, departure from morality, afflictions, narrow views accumulation of Defilement. Somewhere else it's called anxiety, the poison of anger, conglomeration, selfishness mixed poison, empty names, opposition, imitation, astonishment, astonishment and another world is called that which binds arising and every thought extending to the future combination discrimination blown by the wind concealment. So it goes on and on. Now, this is translated into English from Chinese, which is translation with Sanskrit, so, I don't know exactly what the ritual is. So I don't know what impacted We read that but the idea is to suggest that there are many, many, you know, quadrillions of words for these. And so the question is, how can you find your work? How can you find your description? Or what is it that's personal. And one way to take this here is that it works. It's pointing back to the fact that each of us has is our own world and each of us has to personalize this and find Not, not try to impose teachings from outside of onto ourselves and make us fit the teachings, but rather find out how the teachings manifest or appear in our own life, and to find our own language and vocabulary for that. So these four noble truths are kind of, you know, very, you know, very simple expression, but they'd be different in different circumstances, different times and different people. different words, give meet gifts, expression, gifts, truth to this, just to say there's I'm suffering. I'm clinging. That's pretty abstract. It doesn't really have any, you know, do you don't learn much About a person, you know, you just say you know suffering and clinging. But if you you start start putting kind of description What is it meaning like what's what's it What is your suffering really, in the quintillion of words for suffering, which words Apply today was a kajillion of words that apply to the second noble truth, the clinging or the thirsting which is arising to suffering, what is that? So, the second noble truth is the, the, the origination, the cause, the conditions that give rise to suffering. And this is defined as tunda and tonna literally means thirst, and I think of it as driven this kind of like thirst, like compulsivity, there's a compulsion in the mind, where the mind is act acting unwisely in a way that causes suffering, can be driven is of the mind of the heart. And there's a tautology there. This technology is a soft philosophical term. That means that something defines itself. So you kind of ask for definition. And the definition doesn't really tell you much except that so like, I don't know what to start ology, exactly. Maybe some of you philosophers know better but like water is wet. Maybe that's, that's exactly what it is to algae. But anyway, the death ology the kind of loop hears that the suffering that's defined in the Four Noble Truths is only understood if you understand the second noble truth. So it's not all suffering that's being talked about here. It's that suffering, which is born from clinging. That's what Buddhism is addressing. So whatever suffering is born from clinging, that's what's being talked about here. And if you know of suffering which is not born from clinging, then that the foreknowledge is not addressing that Makes sense. And now, to be fair to the Buddha, I think suffering is pretty you know, there's some clinging produce suffering is pretty comprehensive. But so we're talking about so clinging, that suffering with it caused by clinging. Very simple reformulation of the Four Noble Truths which is already pretty simple. even simpler one would be if you claim
you will suffer.

If you stop clinging, that suffering will stop. Pretty simple. If you cling, you're guaranteed to suffer. Money, Money Back Guarantee. Yes.

Well that's it depends you How we wanted to find these words. But so we have a physical pain some people will call suffering. And in Buddhism, we wouldn't call, you know, at least my vocabulary is it's there's more to this than I'm giving you kind of a Gill ism here, if you really get into what the Buddha has to teach you find is a little bit more nuanced than what I'm saying here. But, so you have take that into account. But as I'm saying here, physical pain doesn't have to entail clinging and the suffering that comes from clinging. And in fact, the Buddha reported after he was enlightened, had physical pains, but he seemed to be quite a quantum as at peace with it. And then, and then there. There seems to be certain kinds of emotional pain that can exist as well. That maybe even enlightened people feel maybe your best friend just died and you're walking on the sidewalk, whistling Dixie. Something is wrong. You know, I think it's appropriate to feel certain kind of certain To kind of uncomfortable sensations, you know, something feels heavy or something. And so there's a certain kind of emotional pain can also be free of suffering. We often associate that with kind of pain or suffering within we have to get rid of it. But I think why is living acknowledges that there is certain level of pain that comes with being human being, and maybe the pain is some of these pains is not a problem in and of itself. The problem with certain kinds of pain is how we relate to it. And we might claim or resist in relationship to that. So I might stub my toe, and that's pain. But the real suffering is not the toe hurting. The real suffering is that I berate myself for being so clumsy. So that's where the clinging comes in. So does that answer the question and so, but exactly where the line is between suffering which is, you know, clinging based and not clinging based. I think useful attitude you know, is kind of discussed Probably most of it has some quality of clinging involved. But it doesn't have to any knowing it doesn't have to be very helpful. So clinging, grasping givenness compulsivity holding on resisting, bracing yourself against something are all kind of kind of synonyms in the sensory or various variations of this idea of thirst, in calling a thirst. It's kind of like not a technical word Exactly. The cause of suffering is thirst is thirsty. So, you know, you think of yourself, you know, completely dying of thirst, the kind of feeling of desperation that goes in there. Or the idea the expressions thirsting for power. You know, there's kind of this kind of word thirst is very powerful, true sense of driven is and so the second in the study putana Sutra and the four foundations of mindfulness constructions is know, when there's thirst when there's no this there's when there's driven is no it just no it there's no. Elsewhere the Buddha says that in relationship to the thirsting, the grasping or the clinging or the craving, the holding on the duty, the activity that we can do in relationship to it, is to let go of it. To let go of the clinging like over thirst, that's that's the activity that we do in relationship to it. So when to just know it for what it is. And that's all we should do, and when to let go of it as part of the function of wisdom. Sometimes it's better to actually not let go of
things too quickly. Because if you let go of things too quickly, you don't get to know it well. And there's I think there's something really important in certain kind of complexes of all we have to take our time to let go can be uncomfortable with like one on one get rid of it quickly, might have the ability to let go quickly. But in letting go quickly, we don't really understand is really deeply. So in my own practice, I found it very helpful, very important, just one point. And not to let go of anger. Some point I'd gotten over my years of practice, I've gotten really good at letting go of anger, I could go to times that go very easily. And, and I was given the teaching instructions, don't do that anymore. Right, you know, let it let it hover, don't let it let it hover, let it stay linger. So you can study it and get to know it. And it took a little trick and to learn how when you know not to habitually let go. And then and then but by not letting go of it. I could study it, go deeper into it, and see some of the deeper aspects of my tendency to anger. So

let's sit

grasping it takes is felt many different ways there's clinging, thirsting or driven just sometimes it's pressure. Sometimes it's tension, sometimes as resistance, numbing, closing down, pulling away. Attacking. It can be felt physically, the body tightening up, it can be felt mentally with the mind some way or other under pressure or tightening up or closing down hyper activated can be felt emotionally certain emotions kind of coursing through with great compulsion or subtle.

So

connecting to your posture, your body taking a few long slow deep breaths and as you exhale settling in Letting go as best you can. And you might see if you can remember sometime in meditation or some other time in your life where you felt some some quality sense of well being subtleness become big. Remember what that time was like, what it felt like in your body. deep experience of meditation perhaps. And as you exhale, next two or three exhales let's go into that.

As if it's here

present, kind of, I go into, even if it doesn't rearise like go into the possibility that it might be here. And then feeling your body, sensing your body, from the inside. Bones, the muscles, the skin. And as you feel your body, is there any way in which your body feels like it's bracing itself and if it's a case to notice that bracing, bracing yourself against life for something might happen. Or is there any way in which your body feels like it's pulled in and the shoulders are pulled up or in
tightness

and holding in your body any physical way that you feel held tight, grasping in the hands, arms, chest, shoulders and the jaw, legs, the belly. Just know it now, just feel respect to your presence. As it reveals itself to you, it’s like you say thank you.

I see you

And then see if you can notice so there's any ways in which in your mind and you're thinking since there's any pressure, compulsion, tightness, grasping any particular pattern of thinking which Like Velcro or magnetic pool or driven is to keep going into certain directions of your thoughts from the way of thinking is there a tightness or grasping or holding or resistance in the thinking system, the way you think where the mind is trying to be as still as you can, so you can feel your way into this as they're holding in the mind And then what about your heart and your emotional being any way in which your emotions feel like they're driven held on to pressure compulsion Any way in which your mind or body or heart is saying I want this something I really want it has to happen has to be different. I want something to change. I want something to go away. I really don't like this. This is great can be grasping to nice things, comfortable things and grasping to push away uncomfortable things.

Whereas it in your life,

what's the most common or prevalent sense of driven is to thirst, compulsion grasping in your life Now returning to your breathing establishing a connection to your breath perhaps by taking a few long slow breaths really made me a snake that connection The best of your ability let go of your concerns with any of this. Breathing in and out. Feeling the rhythm established with breathing in and breathing out And then over the next few breaths, tune in more fully to the exhale. Exhale the way whatever way your exhale is fine. Just kind of be more sensitive to the eagle and the quality of it.

taste of it.

What happens to your butt in your body as you exhale? feeling your exhale with kind of a light touch.

Each time you

exhale, Let go. Let go of whatever you can let go. Like tension in the mind. Let go of tension holding in the body, feelings or emotions to be a wave of letting go through your body Your muscles like go from the bone, skin like goes for the muscles. Let’s go. Let’s go from the brain. With a gentle light touch, an echo of your body. Trust, letting go. You can let go of even things you didn't even know you're holding on to. Like go deep, deep in your mind in your psyche. Nothing to be nothing to accomplish, nothing to defend as Exhale, letting go. Letting go of the need to let go. Letting go the need to do it right. I didn't
go have any image you have of yourself idea of who you are what you should be Letting go of resistance judgment to exhale Each time you exhale,

let go and

see if you can let go into the end of the out breath. some sense of stillness or peace or well being that needs nothing And then now bring to mind some area of your life where there is suffering, maybe something that came up in the diets before some area there but it's important for you remember the suffering, bring it to mind think about it. And as you consider it what is the soft what is the grasping or clinging within cravenness thirst you're contributing to that suffering independent of the conditions outside of you gotta contribute to the suffering what is it that you add in terms of grasping, clinging, craving, holding resistance? There sting cravenness. Maybe you could feel it the felt sense of it. Maybe you can see directly what it is. As you exhale Can you relax, soften,

ease off

from your clinging or grasping or thirsting resistance. He's off of it. And then take a few long slow deep breaths using a deep breath to feel your body. Feel the connection of your body to your chair, your cushion for Feel yourself in this room taking a few more deep breaths and when you're ready you can open your eyes.