You don't need these now I shouldn't have put them out at the end of the day or I put them out so people who leave early could pick them up.

Okay. And I'd like us to do a little sitting before we do the sitting as a backdrop or as a sitting. So before lunch, I talked about this issue of unwise attention and why is attention and it's deserves a lot of attention. It's a wise thing to pay attention to. That what we pay attention to has a big impact on doubt, uncertainty, or confidence. And it's possible to pay attention to things that are not very wise to pay attention to. So certain religious goals that some we find in religious circles Maybe are confusing. And to set yourself up in some really high idealistic goal, maybe it's unwise doesn't elicit confidence maybe causes doubt to arise. And Buddhism has its share of lofty goals. And sometimes even if they're true goals, it can be unwise to focus on them, or unwise how we focus on them, to focus on them is so so.

Now, one of the things that the Buddha emphasized a few different places, is that it's unwise to spend a lot of time focusing on oneself. In the sense of, you know, meditation descends is focusing on oneself. You know, paying attention to one's breath, one's body once feeling what's going on here. But that's different than paying attention to one's conceit for self. The one's self image the way we want to represent ourselves to the world. The all these ideas, constellation of ideas we have around who we really are, and who we've really been and who we really will become. And the suggestion for the Buddha is that focusing too much on the true self for the ultimate self, this whole idea of self lends itself to uncertainty lends itself to thinking unwisely. So then the question is, is there something and so you can probably think of your own list of things which are unwise to pay attention to. So is focusing on self conceit or self. It can be unwise spend a lot of time fixating on oneself as a victim. That itself is kind of productive doesn't never be helpful to do it then lends itself to certain kinds of uncertainty or doubt or, or it's unhealthy to focus on oneself as being the great savior of all of humanity. Or at least of mankind. And the because certain kinds of strong, conceited ideas of who I am who I need to be, are actually quite fragile. And so to hold it in place, we have to bump up against life in reality constantly shifting and changing, challenging, a fixed idea of this is who I need to be. So it can be, you know, I need to be smart. I need to be the smartest one I need to be beautiful and you can be the most beautiful one here. I need to be the kind that kind one the kindest one here. I need to be I'm that kind of person to fixate and focus on this is who I am, and need to maintain this and be this creates a very fragile way of Being in the world. And so are there other ways other things to other ways of paying attention to our life that isn't through the filter of some unrealistic goal or ideal, or through some kind of fixated idea of self that we might have. And so, the Buddha suggested, something which I think is quite profound. But this profundity is, is missed in its simplicity. Often they wonder when the Buddha was asked or described what it is to pay wise attention, and so on, and hopefully you'll see when I'd say this, or figure out how this leads to can lead to confidence or overcoming doubt. He said, the way the way the Buddha define
wise attention, is to notice things notice your experience, whatever experience you’re having, notice it from the point of view of this suffering or distress that's there as part of it. If there is suffering as part of it, then become aware of the cause of the, of the suffering or distress. And then notice the possibility of letting go of that. And then if you can't let go of it automatically, which is often hard to do, then there’s a path of practice, a course of practice you can take that supports the possibility of letting go. And so if I'm sitting meditating, and I’m thinking, well, this meditation experience is not going the way it's supposed to go. And then you should feel kind of down, stressed out about my poor meditation practice. So you can continue focusing on that paying attention to it as my poor meditation practice. I am a lousy meditator. What a terrible person I am. They shouldn't allow me into IMC. And in fact, I think next time I'll sit by the back door so no one notices me. And because you know, I'm just really can't do anything, right. So that kind of train of thinking is not very productive. What would be more productive would be to look and say, Oh, he, where's the suffering here? Oh, it actually hurts to see myself as a bad meditator to feel bad about my meditation. Where does it hurt? How does it hurt? And is there a cause for that hurt? And in particular, is there some something I’m holding on to and clinging to? My clinging on to a self image the need to have a self image that is good meditators? successful meditator? Do I have any self image of someone who needs to do things only that are successful? And so if I’m not being successful, then I'm letting myself down. I’m holding on to a should, there should there’s a right way of doing things and not doing the right way. Therefore I am bad or things or you know. So it's possible to see the belief that we're holding on to the ideas we're holding on to the feelings won't be holding onto the clinging to. And if that can be seen clearly enough, then it's possible to see that it's not necessary to cling to those things. Isn't there's no requirement to cling to a self image of yourself as a meditator, a good meditator, bad meditator, the clinging of it is is optional. To see the suffering, you see the claim to the suffering, and you clearly see it's optional. And then you can, let's say, no ideal world, you can let go of it. You let go of that clinging to maybe your self image. And then the suffering around being a bad meditator drops away. You still might be sitting in meditation, very distracted, not getting concentrated. That's true, but you don't adding over that an overlay of suffering that arises because we're holding on to a particular image you were supposed to look like. I don't know if that was a good example, but I'm trying to give you an example of how this Four Noble Truths can operate in principle or in practice. We use it to look look at it as an alternative to many of the ways the usual ways of thinking about things. The encouragement is look at your look at whatever is happening through this framework, or the Four Noble Truths. The advantage of this is it points hopefully points directly back at what's the key operating phenomena with a key activity that's happening. That's the cause of you feeling suffering. The idea that I’ve suffered because of my bad meditator you know, put that looking at that way it looks at the natural look at ideas with meditation is and have to get all the manuals meditation manuals out and measure myself Nate's or other people and, and I have to do you know, to kind of see how I'm going to improve and, and, you know, maybe after 10 years of meditation, I can get up to the right level. And then I don't feel bad about myself anymore. That's one approach. Another approach is to look at the clinging around being a good meditator and let go of the clinging. That's as Justin is, that's an easier route. Look at directly. So where's it clinging? Where's the holding? is meant to be a much more simpler approach. Now, the Buddha said that's why his attention that's not going to lead to a lot of complications of theory of metaphysics of religious idealism. It’s very practical, immediate. Where's that? Where’s that clinging that what am I holding on to here? Some people hold on to religion, to their spirituality and they cling to it, and it causes suffering. Some people resist spiritual practice. And that resistance is a form of clinging. That's the that's the source of the of the suffering and so why is attention being defined by not paying whatever you pay attention to? It isn't like denying anything. But notice that aspect of the present moment that has to do with these suffering, with clinging, with the release of clinging and to a path to the release of clinging.
If you get it, you start getting a sense of that particular exercise that particular orientation to looking at our life, then hopefully, very quickly, you can see how practical it is and have confidence that it's worthwhile to look at your experience that way. And then if someone asks, you know what, you know, what's your spiritual life about? You don't have to take recourse to some very complicated ideas that maybe you don't really understand so well. I'm going to become, the you know, fully enlightened. What's enlightenment. I'm going to become an AR hot, because that's supposed to be a strange idea. I'm going to become one with the universe. I'm going to become, you know, whatever. We had last retreat I taught at spirit rock. There was a person who had grown up in a very strict religious tradition and, and literally kind of his mind swung dramatically with great suffering. He said between being God and being the devil. Because those are the polarities that his mind just was kind of latched on to. And so rather than looking at the you know, the all these ideas of devil and always did God's justifying, looking at the leash to look at the holding on to it, the gripping the holding. And it's impossible let go of that. So the simplicity of just letting go and having confidence that it's worthwhile to let go. That is not necessary to put lightweight knuckles to hold on to things, but have confidence in letting go have no doubt that it's that it's appropriate to let go. It's okay not to hold on to things. And what are the key insights and key forms of confidence that hopefully comes with Buddhist practice is confidence that it's okay not to claim not to hold on. And that that confidence hopefully comes from understanding how these four noble truths actually are so practical immediate in our life.

So, now we can sit and now you can sit with wise attention. So as you sit here, and whatever meditation practice you do, to hold it, you know, in some lightwei in the framework of noticing how you might suffer, or have stress, or have anxiety or something Some unhappiness and at what point Am I holding on to what am i clinging to this? And is it possible to begin the process of letting go? The mind wanders off into thought. After five minutes you notice that and the first reaction is upset. What are you clinging to, to have that upset? Is it possible just to notice the mind wandered off? Notice that and without any upset without any claim anything come back. Visit physical pain, boredom impatience. Many things might happen. is a represent holding a clinging to something? What is that What happens when you let go so we'll sit quietly for a while.

The four noble truths are wonderful protection because if you keep the Four Noble Truths close to the end then As you meditate, you won't suffer because of the meditation. The What I mean is that there are all kinds of things. This challenging experiences can happen in meditation. But you're always ready to look and see where am I clinging to something here? What am I clinging to? Is the discomfort I'm feeling this suffering I'm feeling in this situation. does it represent some kind of clinging and kind of let go of that? What is it What's going on there? It's a great protection no matter what you're doing. It's not necessarily easy to ferret out the, the suffering or the, the actual at what it is, or the cause of it. The clinging or grasping that might be part of it. But if you but it's really what you could do, it's a great protection. No matter what you do, that you're not going to suffer because of it. Now it's possible to suffer And then say, oh boy, I'm suffering. I'm a Buddhist, I'm supposed to do this four noble truths stuff. And if they do it, well, then I wouldn't suffer. Now I'm just doing a terrible, and I'm suffering even more. The idea is to take what is happening, and be very simple with it. So if you are grasping and clinging to something and you can't let go of it, then don't we don't add another layer of clinging on top of that, then we're just, you know, it's just the clinging that's happening. It's unfortunate, perhaps there's some suffering there. But let's not add another layer of suffering. On top of that, let's just be very simple. Here with peers and meditators clinging That's all it is. So we say the things as they are, is a kind of very key concept in Buddhism, things as they are taking refuge and things as they are coming
back to things as they are, and the simplicity of things as they are, as opposed to the complexity of ideals and lofty goals and all kinds of other things.

So

I've done my best in the few minutes I had to kind of try to present this idea of wise and unwise, unwise attention and how wise attention involves the Four Noble Truths, understanding our experience from that point of view. And now what I'd like to do is to turn it over to you to fill in the picture or explore that or, or to grapple with that struggle with that or try to understand better how this might work for you or for you. And so one way to look at it is to look at the things that the doubts that you might have around practice the uncertainties you might have around practice. Their hesitations the decisiveness you might have, and then apply the Four Noble Truths to it. Can you see can you see how the Four Noble Truths this this, this understand this framework can help you find your way through the doubt through the indecision through the uncertainty? Or can you find certainty through the Four Noble Truths. And one of the key places to find certainty is you find certainty that, Oh, I know that if I grasp and suffer, I don't know about you know, all these different states of meditation you can attain and this and that about meditation. I don't know about all the different aspects of meditation, but I do know that if I grasp and so they can be put you can find certainty right there. So this framework of the Four Noble Truths, what light does that cast On the topic of doubt and certainty, indecision that might come up as a hindrance in meditation. So that's a very broad topic. But I was hoping that it bring you that question that maybe maybe in your discussion, you can kind of take it someplace move with it and kind of explore something and see what comes up with you. You guys game for that? Is that is enough to go Go on, to kind of feel your way in the dark with it.

So what I had in mind is that everyone has a chance to kind of explore and discuss but also to have a chance to listen to others and go around is to have groups of four again, and that seem okay. So groups of four and so the topic is interesting, wise and unwise attention. It's very broad thing that comes into play, and more specifically than how The Four Noble Truths how that provides wise attention. How does that provide wise attention in your in your, in your life and your practice your meditation and in relation to doubt. So it's a very broad open question and you can take it where you want to go. Okay? So why don't you form groups of four. And let's see if we are multiples of four here. Now they'll help less people to figure out what to do.

Okay, so we back.

Okay, so we'll take a break in a few minutes and then you can pick up the sheet

See, if you take it early, then you have more time to do the exercises. And you'll have a harder time getting a good grade.

A higher expected

I'll have a higher expectation of you.
And your then then

yeah, because then I must degrade you against.

So

let's see.

So any comments about that you'd like to make, helps to talk to helps to talk to talk.

Thank you, Mr. Microphone. It helps to talk and to listen.

Just to humanity, otherwise, people

Why don't we see you once in a while and you're gone?

And it just helps to know as a friendly face? Yeah.

You were in the group? Yeah, it's great.

I think we found it to be a very difficult topic and our approach to it was

maybe not a lot of clarity,

your discretion you had

okay. I think the Buddha was very, very wise. Those four noble truths apply to so

much.

And it just sort of this umbrella to every aspect of our lives that if you can understand that there is

suffering. And if there is suffering present, that's a wake up to to perhaps seeing if you can do it some

other way. And if there is joy and equanimity in your practice that encourages you to continue to Do it

some more. And for my own self, I'm trying to take in the fact that I can sometimes do that for a stretch

of time. And to really stop and take in the fact that I'm cutting a New Groove here and not immediately

fall back into. It's about time or the old voices that say, Well, how long it's taken or how, just right now

it's over here. And that's, that's, that's good. And to stop and take in that level of confidence about ability

to continue to do it. Continue to practice in full, thank you.

The whole day I've become it seems like a growing realization that I've been clinging to a view of

confidence. That is just mental and lofty goal kind of stuff that you know, I'll start with it. doubt, such as I

can't concentrate well, and then I'll have a period where I'm thinking, Oh, I can concentrate well, and I'll

equate that with confidence. And in it that I'm seeing more and more in the group experience helped me

even more to to see how this is just a

lot of the time just mental spinning
that I can do it isn't for me really. It's just very fragile. It again sets up a lofty goal kind of thing. Where then if I if I experience distraction and thinking again, I think oh, no, I can't do it. And so I'm seeing the suffering that's there in I can do it either. So there's

something profound about about not holding the idea

that I can do it. Yeah, even just do it. Yeah.

Yeah, yeah, thank you. Well, the feeling that the afternoon discussion was much more lively. And I felt reluctant to ring the bell to end because it seemed like you guys seemed like the whole room was on a roll just talking into something.

And so

you're not saying much but sweet that behind you.

When you use the word certainty, I think I got a little that kind of hardens in my mind to use that because I feel like I've been seeing recently how I suffer, because I feel like oh, I already know

So keeping an open mind, and the word

certainty kind of thinks anyway, great. It's great to hear. So beginner's mind, open mind. And then when you contrast that there's a

certain kind of kind

of uncertainty that's healthy. And there's a kind of certainty which makes us waver. And so as a hindrance, it has to do with the wavering and certainty, not the uncertainty that opens possibilities. So I can see how certainty provides closure that is not not helpful.

So

we were talking about, you know, certainty and like that, and I was talking about how, where I am right now, in my life is sometimes a feeling of being lost. And how that I was complaining to somebody and feeling a little depressed and talking about being lost a couple of months ago. And what I came to today, or actually what I'm coming to today is that if you know you're lost, you're not lost. And, and, and the actual being lost, isn't, isn't being lost. It's just not knowing what's going to happen next. And it's nothing to be depressed about. As a matter of fact, whichever way I decide to travel is the way I'll go. So, that's kind of what you know what i what i was getting today, and I'm really so grateful.

Great, thank you. Beautiful.

Well, mine's kind of confusing. And when I was talking, at least to me, when I was talking about it in a group, it made sense and now I'm going to try to articulate it and I'm not feeling clear but
I was reflecting that one of the areas I notice a lot of my suffering is in this kind of victim thinking of nothing ever goes right for Me, this kind of deep, long past origins. So I was saying what am I that's suffering I see that. Well, what am I clinging to there that that I could work on letting go of? And I forgot what we said.

Then let go of needing to know.

One more. Yeah. Okay, well, what I introduced this afternoon was meant to be kind of provocative as the right word but to give you something to think about and then work with and not something to have, you know, finished result but rather something to kind of carry with you now and wonder about. So I've one more thing I'd like to do today after our break. And, and that's to look more specifically at practicing mindfulness in relationship to this hindrance of doubt. So let's take a break and start again at three