Good morning and welcome back to our intro to meditation series, mindfulness meditation. And thank you and you know, I'm looking here at the morning the names of people who are in the chat box and some of the names I recognize and thank you for being here I saw Lisa Louise from Hawaii and Hi, and Wendy from Sacramento and some of the names that are now starting starting to get familiar to me from from, you know, you come in here now for a number of days. So it's very nice and it's heartwarming for me and that we're sharing this together and exploring this together at this time. So we are going to talk about continuing with this topic of mindfulness and begin talking a little bit about mindfulness of emotions. Its emotions are a very important part of human life. And not only are they important, but they certainly warrant a fair amount of respect. And I love the word respect because for a person doing Vipassana doing mindfulness practice, it kind of goes along the word Vipassana means to pass a means to see. And v means to see in a special way. Respect means to see the spectacle part of it, and the re is to, to, to again. So I think of it that respect means to take a second look to look again and That's one way of characterizing mindfulness practice is that we don't just settle for the first glance first impressions of what goes on. But with mindfulness, we take a second look, we give it more attention, we offer ourselves to really see what's happening here, what's going on. Some people like to emphasize that mindfulness, in certain circumstances does involve a kind of a pause, maybe even a sacred pause, where we, we don't, we don't disconnect completely from what's going on. But the pause that allows us to see more clearly what is actually happening, what's happening around us, but also what's happening within us, so that when we respond, respond, we're actually better informed we kind of have a better picture of the full full idea. So to the sacred pause. So for those Have you might be new to this joining us. Now I want to emphasize that in doing mindfulness practice, we're using a very ordinary, everyday human capacity, the capacity to pay attention acity capacity to be aware. And we use awareness all the time in our daily life. And you're using your awareness to listen to me as I speak. Most of the time, you know, there's some degree of awareness
going on. It's when we do something, and we don't stay aware what we're doing. We're losted
daydreams are something that we end up making accidents or tripping or, or something goes awry.
And as people learn mindfulness, they learn that a heightened attention heightened development of
this capacity to be attentive. helps us to live a better life we tend to be a safer life tends to being safe.
Some people call it a refuge, it tends to bring clarity, greater self understanding, they can also help
bring a greater sense of ease in our lives. And so whereas using this kind of ordinary, everyday activity
might seem boring, it might seem like not exciting and interesting. It's actually very, very helpful. And,
you know, in my experiences that life actually gets more and more interesting, and in certain wonderful
way, not exciting. Exactly. But it becomes a greater and greater adventure, to live this life with a much
more full attention to what's going on how its unfolding, and we start being coming aware of the layers
of depth that exists in any given moment, any given exchange involvement activity we're doing. So
developing this capacity, natural capacity of attention, so it becomes strong enough We can remain
attentive, we can be attentive, and a clear way, what's happening moment by moment. And to do that
it's a training. It's like a muscle that you have to work out and to keep doing it and it becomes stronger
and stronger. Keep doing the mindfulness thing, the mindfulness muscle, that muscle not only gets
stronger, but becomes more with time, second nature. And we find ourselves more and more just
naturally present for our experience with a heightened, wonderfully heightened sense of awareness.
Not heightened in terms of being on alert, but heightened in terms of veterans better take in the
fullness of the situation and all the different aspects of it. So, emotions are important part of the
experience and to become aware of our emotions makes us wiser, makes us safer, makes us be able
to navigate to the different ups and downs of the emotional Life and helps our emotional life to kind of
come to fulfillment or come to some kind of, to move through us and to allow them to find their own
way. I like to think of the word emotion coming from the Latin, meaning motion movement, and then E
which means out and as a prefix in Latin, that emotions are moving out there, which they're in
movement. And when they are allowed to move, then most emotions move towards health move
towards homeostasis move towards the growing of the beneficial qualities. It's when we interfere with
them, we block them and we ignore them. When we somehow try to manipulate them or to you know,
we get too involved with them, that it motions gets much more difficult and this process Learning to
free up our emotional life is part of the movement of mindfulness. Now, not everything that we free up
emotionally should be expressed in public and with all kinds of people for sure. But meditation is very
special place where hopefully you sit and meditate, and you're committed to being still and not moving
for a period of time. And maybe you keep your eyes closed. In this context, it's one of the one of the
few places that some people have, where they can allow their emotional life, to manifest to bubble up
to really show itself where it's okay to make space for it. So we're not trying to repress we're not trying
to deny, and there's no emotion in the context of meditation practice, that we have to be concerned
with is a good emotion or a bad emotion or feel shame that it's happening or feel pride that's
happening. The idea is to Just keep opening, keep opening in a way that doesn't fuel it. We don't
identify with it, we don't get caught in it. But in a sense, we make space for it. And that's what I mean
by this respecting. We want to respect all emotions, so that some deeper process can really can
unfold in our emotional life. It takes some skill and some wisdom, to learn how to be with the emotions
in a good way, and a useful way to do it in a mindful way. And so that'll be some of the things we're
going to be talking about today. So I want to first tell you a story. From the time of the Buddha and as little teaching analogy or teaching, a little metaphor the Buddha taught, he was sitting with a group of people and talking and he said to them, if a person comes along with a bone, arrow and art comes along and, and slings the arrow and shoots it at a person and it hits the person. Is that going to hurt the person? And the people in the audience told the Buddha Yes, that'll hurt. And then the Buddha said, if that's Archer then comes along and takes a second arrow. And with a second arrow, that's Wait a minute, there's a noise outside. And there's a street cleaners happening here in Redwood City. So then the Buddha said, if a second if the archer strikes a second arrow and hits the person, then would that hurt the person even more? And the audience said yes, if the person got struck by two arrows, a second arrow that hurts more than just one arrow. So in the Buddha used that analogy to say this, something like this phrasing that the first arrow is what life does to you. And there's no guarantee that life doesn't throw you arrows. The second arrow is the one that you use yourself, the ones you strike yourself with. So what that means is that I could be walking down the sidewalk and tripped on something on the sidewalk. And that's unfortunate but these kinds of things these kinds of things will happen to human beings that they have a little accident they trip and they fall and, and so I could then get up and, and I could now be angry with myself. Because I'm a bad Walker. I'm not a very good Walker, or since I'm a mindfulness teacher, I might say, Oh, you know, this is embarrassing. You're, you're a disgrace to the world of mindful, notice that you're paying enough attention to notice the crack in the sidewalk and you're really not Maybe you're not really up to being a teacher and certainly don't want to admit it to everyone who's sitting around the world seeing this and, and I could bury myself in self reproach and self criticism around the fact that I tripped on the sidewalk. Or I could trip on the sidewalk, and then pick myself up and make sure I wasn't injured and, and remind myself in the future to be careful with that part of the sidewalk, and just keep walking along without shooting second and third and fourth arrows into me. So, life as we live it, all kinds of things happen. Some of them are unfortunate. Some of them are painful and, and cause difficulty and challenges. And then there's the second arrow that we're responsible for. Not all the arrows are we responsible for, but the ones that we can do something about are the ones that we shoot. So the idea is to experience things without the reproach without the criticism without the anger without the clinging down or just to experience the first arrow and let it be. For some people it ain't just one arrow, they shoot something happens they trip on the sidewalk. they criticize themselves for being a, you know, poor Walker. They are, that's a second arrow. Then they think about all the people who might have seen them and now they're embarrassed. That's maybe the third arrow and then they tell themselves that you know, I really need to you know, I really need to go get you know, go get therapy to learn how to be a better Walker, but I can't afford therapy because my parents didn't right raise me properly and then I never get The End kind of advantages have always taken advantage of and my life is so hard. All those things might be true. I don't want to diminish anyone's life, but to keep slinging those arrows at oneself is debilitating. And to have a some clarity or that's not that's a second, third fourth fifth arrow is not to then shoot of six there. Oh, no, look at me I'm doing all this terrible stuff in mindfulness practice this sacred pause, just to be aware functions as a pause as a ceasefire of the these arrows that we can throw at ourselves. And so sooner or later, the ideas just kind of open and let things be not because we're condoning anything, but because we're letting them be so we don't add more arrows. So I give this teaching in particular,
because we're doing Emotions today. And emotions can be quite difficult. And many people will bring to their emotional life, all kinds of judgments, all kinds of reactions to it. All kinds of resistance or ideas or things that are a little bit in a little bit or very much so in the domain of these extra arrows that makes it actually harder than it originally is. Some emotions are hard enough as they are, but to add the arrows makes them more and more difficult. So to learn to be mindful of emotions is to learn how to keep the emotions. Simple, just allow the emotion to be there, and respected. Look at it again, make space for it for something that might unfold. So to start this process of looking at mindfulness of emotions, I'd like to ask you to just as you are No special change of posture, whatever posture you're in, to close your eyes and then if you could just check in with yourself as you are, and notice what emotion is predominant in you. How are you feeling? And anything, any way you're feeling is allowed for this exercise. It might be very subtle. Maybe you're subtly impatient, suddenly content maybe it's quite strong what you're feeling inside which Whatever you're feeling in the mood that you have the emotional state, the mind state that seems to be present. Take a moment to really recognize, oh, this is what's happening. This is what I'm feeling. If it's obvious to use a mental note, sad, happy, irritated, divided. Just to make the mental note, just to acknowledge it to really recognize what is happening. And then having recognized how you're feeling now, do what I taught you. I think the first day, do the three breath journey. Just allow yourself to breathe the way you are, but count your breaths to three Just really kind of in the middle of how you're feeling, just tune in to your breaths and breathe three breaths in a clear, connected way. And then you can open your eyes. So of course, I can't know what everyone's experiences of doing this little exercise. But one of the possibilities that maybe teaches a little bit of something is that some people when they take time to see how they're feeling. For some people, it's the first time they've checked in and they notice what's happening. They didn't really know clearly what what they were feeling until they stopped to look. And that can be useful to know. For some people, they might, you might have already known what you feel, but to clearly acknowledge it to recognize it. Maybe something different happens, there's more space for it or more clarity, sometimes a very acknowledgement of something reduces its hold, it has on us some of the ways in which we're maybe struggling with it or it's struggling with us or something. And then kind of allows it to be there and then allowing it to be there, but not giving it any real attention. But not ignoring it either. By taking three breaths in the middle of it, kind of for some people, then we'll remove some of the ways in which they're entangled with it or fueling it or reacting. Judging are concerned with it, that they makes more space for the emotion to be there. But we're kind of like getting even more out of the way to allow it to settle or to open up or something like that. There's a tendency for afflictive emotions, those emotions, which are painful, to begin to unwind themselves and settle, if we're not feeding them. If we're not holding them or involved with them. There's a tendency for the beneficial emotions, the ones that can really come from a deeper place inside and then afflictive emotions, that as we hold them and see them and awareness, they tend to be onward leading to a little bit better states. They can get stronger, there's more space for them. And this principle, that bringing open awareness Clear mindfulness, recognizing what's there does have an effect on our emotional life. Not because we're doing it and wanting it and expecting it, but because we're shifting where the fuel of our mind is going. And the fuel of mind if it's going towards afflictive emotions, it's so easy to reinforce them and strengthen it then then those get stronger. But if the fuel of attention goes to noticing what's beneficial,
then those tend to grow and develop. So let's do a now maybe 1520 minutes in my meditation, and I'll
do some guidance for you and at some point We'll do a little exploration, exploration of mindfulness of
emotions, but further. So if you could take a posture that brings you makes you somewhat comfortable
for meditation, but also gives you some sense of alertness. So that combination, that balance between
being comfortable, relaxed and alert, is what we're looking for in the meditation posture. And for some
people, that's to sit a little bit straighter than they normally would, to show the spine maybe almost is
looking more energized or alert in itself. And then to softly Close your eyes and to have Little process
or ritual to help you arrive help you really connect to yourself here and now it can be helpful to take a
few long slow deep breaths in a relaxed way, but to really take a deeper breath so that you feel that
connection to your ribcage or torso as you breathe in to feel the stretching and expanding. And then as
you exhale, feel the settling the coming back the contracting and settle down. And especially as you
exhale, if you can do it in a relaxed way, maybe linger a little bit longer with the exhale than you
normally would kind of ride it out. So you're kind of settling, relaxing with the end of the out breath. And
then letting them breathing returned to normal. And also to help us kind of arrive and be here in a little
bit fuller away can be helpful to roam around your body to notice. Where in your body you can relax
muscles might be possible to soften the muscles of the face to relax their eyes. Maybe the eyes can
rest in their sockets. Some people do mindfulness by trying to see with Even with our eyes closed,
they're actively engaging their eyes. Eyes be soft. Resting. It might be possible to relax and soften the
shoulders and from the shoulders to relax all the way down the arms until you even soften the hands.
might be possible to soften the chest maybe as you exhale softening around the heart and softening
the belly. Perhaps you can allow your belly to hang forward and hang down a bit. Releasing the sense
of pulling the belly in And then becoming aware of your breathing. Breathing in a normal way and allow
yourself for a few minutes to notice the bodies experience of breathing. So in a sense you are may be
experiencing breathing from the inside of the body. Sometimes when we are watching or knowing
something from the mind the head we might even almost be outside of the experience to lead Go into
the experience of breathing in. Let go into the experience of breathing out if your mind wanders off in
thought And you'll notice that make a small mental note to gentle quiet note inking. Take your time
sacred pause to recognize that you're thinking No need to see it as a problem. No need to jerk your
mind away. Jerk back to the breathing. If you notice your thinking and acknowledge that that's
happening and once it's acknowledged you're in a calm way. peek in again with your breathing And
wherever part of the body you're experiencing breathing let yourself feel the sensations of that part.
more fully. See if you can gently sense or feel the various sensations that come into play. Wherever
you're experiencing breathing, maybe in the belly, maybe in the chest, maybe in the nostrils and air
going in and out. As you exhale gently See if you can relax with the exhale let go with a letting go.
Breathing out letting go into the experience of body breathing And then look around inside and notice
how you're feeling right now. Even if it's subtle, what is the basic mood, emotional state, mind state
that you have and is that mind state or mood or feeling you have? Is it more on the pleasant side of
things? Or is it more on the unpleasant regardless if it's pleasant or unpleasant, allow it to be that way.
See if you can experiment with an awareness that perceives but doesn't add second arrows doesn't
get involved or entangled, too. Judge just to be aware of what's there. It's possible your mood or
emotional state is quite subtle. Or maybe it's something you don't normally think of as an emotion. It
might be that you're a little bit more calm than usual or settled. Or it might be that you're a little anxious about what's happening. But anxieties, just part of the furniture, it's part of the wallpaper. It's just doesn't occur to you to notice it because it's just part and parcel of your experience all the time. Or maybe even there's a feeling of clarity or a feeling of dullness there might be tiredness or feelings of being energized. So as you're noticing how you're feeling emotionally, mind states mood. If you have an obvious word to describe it, single word and sad happy, tired, energized, agitated, calm, confident, anxious, see if you could name it noted quietly a few times. And as you do the mental note, see if you can allow that noting as a way of stepping back. Taking a sacred pause, to respect it, to see it more clearly. To make space for it, to allow it to be while you recognize that it's there If your mood or emotional state shifts, notice well how it shifts. Maybe it gets stronger, maybe gets weaker. Maybe it transforms into something else. Maybe it disappears. If it disappears, see what's replaced it And then if you're able to see if you can notice where your emotional state your mood, how you're feeling, where is it? Does it most manifest in the body? Where do you feel it the most physically what a part of your body is energized by the mood, the emotional state you have. Might be anywhere could be in the belly in the chest In the face, the shoulders could be in the arms and the legs, the feet. If you're able to feel the physical side of the emotions that you're having, bring your attention to that part of your body and do mindfulness of the body there. Like we talked about yesterday, bring your attention to the part of your body and just feel the sensations there, allowing them to be there. Giving complete permission to the body to have those sensations that are associated with the emotion. make room for them. Allow them to do what they want to do. Your job is just to know them, to be aware of them and to notice what happens to your emotion if you allow yourself to focus on how it feels physically with a relaxed awareness, just to make space a way to respect the emotion And then for the last few minutes of this sitting, returned to your breathing Perhaps imagining that the breathing is a gentle wind or a gentle wave that comes and goes, it washes through your whole body to change gently massages whenever you're feeling right now. The whole experience of breathing is like a little tender wave of caring for you and caring for what you have. whatever is going on, breathing through and with what's happening as the breath travels through the body And then to end this hitting, you can take some deeper breaths to feel yourself here to connect here so perhaps feeling your cushion your chair And as I ring this bell three times, before you open your eyes, let yourself do listening meditation. Just hear the sound with your whole body. So perhaps some of you got some sense of a different way of being present for your emotions than you normally do. And, certainly to be aware of it maybe with a sense more permission for the emotions to be there. But without being involved with them without being for and against them, just being aware of them. It can help to recognize them clearly. Sometimes emotions need to be acknowledged. And something different happens if we fully acknowledge and emotion, maybe by naming it. And, and also, it's possible then to also feel the emotions in the body. And this is why I like to teach mindfulness to the body before doing emotions. Because part of what an emotion is, is something that's energized or engaged, that sensations that come alive in some part of the body associated with that emotion. So with that, saying that I want to say that emotions, this category, this thing we call the emotions. In English, we have a singular noun for emotions that covers a lot of different feelings that people have. And it might give the impression that emotion is a singular thing. But the emotions that we have are composites, they're actually coming together of different parts of
our psychophysical being, to operate together. So and it's possible to if we treat emotions as one big thing, then it's hard to kind of really respected fully to really see what it really is and, and to allow it to kind of its its time and place to unfold. And so, as a composite, emotions involved body sensations if your attempt to know attentive enough, you'll discover that pretty much every emotion that we have, has some kind of corollary sensations in the body, where it gets expressed. Sometimes fear is felt in the belly or in the chest anger can be a flame in the belly, there might be contraction and tension around some emotions that we have. There might be strong desire, and we can feel the leaning forward and, you know, ready to grab something. There might be sadness and feeling a heavy weight and sinking feeling and that might come along with a sadness. There might be grief in a sense of, of tremendous sense of vulnerability, perhaps tenderness, vulnerability, in some part of the of the body, it could be in the chin. Or it could be you know, about to cry and you feel the chin vibrating or so all kinds of places these things live in the body. And so that's one thing Part of an emotion, it's physical, the physical side of it. There's also the story part of it, the story, the ideas, what we tell ourselves what we're telling ourselves around it. And sometimes a stories retelling and repeating, are the very things that are fueling the emotion. If someone has hurt us, and we have resentment, and we keep repeating the story of how we've been mistreated and how terrible that person is, and, and, you know, we're kind of like retelling ourselves a picture, a story, which is we're going to react to again and again, we're going to get re anchored, regurgitated over and over again. And, you know, it's maybe appropriate enough sometimes to review and think about what happened. But to do it, ruminate around it and do it over and over again. Do we really want to have to experience the impact the second third arrow the how We kind of debilitating it is to to keep telling us and repeating and reviewing a story that keeps us kind of caught in a certain kind of emotional state. The so like grief is one grief many you know, grief is part of human life and it's can be quite sad the stories, the events that bring on grief. But there's, you know, there's one way of grieving that we keep living in the stories and the ideas and the predictions of the future and, and reviewing everything and that really feeling maybe self pity or feeling sorry for ourselves. There's all this ways in which we kind of are weighed down by it. There's a way of respecting grief, allowing grief to be there realizing it's a human phenomena, but not to add second arrows and not to have Had the stories and beliefs. So part of the ideas and thoughts and beliefs also have to do. Our own emotions also have to do with beliefs we have about them that, you know, make it more complicated to have the emotion some of them actually some of the beliefs actually are the trigger for the emotion. There's also what we want. That's part of the emotional life. Good part of emotions. They're, they have an motivational side, something that we're trying to do or something we want. So fear, we want to be safe, anger, we want maybe want to strike out grief, we want to something wants to move through us and express the sadness we have the tears that want to come. What is it that wants to be expressed what wants to be motivated, what's the desire, that's part of the emotion and, and then there's something that is more the emotional mood, the mental mood that's associated with the emotion so these are all component parts that we can kind of, if we're not just looking at emotion as a singular thing, we can start feeling these different parts. And the emphasis for today is to, when you have an emotion is to start becoming familiar with what it feels like from the point of view of the body. What happens in your body as you feel the emotion? Where does the emotion most live in your body? What are the what's in vitalize? What's energized in your body with the
sensations and that must what happens to the muscles in the body as this emotion appears. And there's two primary reasons that aren't used very useful to check in with the body field and the body. One is that the body sensations around emotions are not part of the story. They're always in the present moment. Their present moment phenomena and by grounding ourselves and connecting to the physical Part of the emotion, we're respecting the emotion we are attending to it. But we're not reinforcing the rumination. We're not going on and on and thinking and thinking and thinking over and over again, getting swept up in the story. And this idea of learning how to step away from the story that we if we're repeating way too often, and grounding ourselves in the body starts giving space room for the emotion to unfold the way it needs to unfold. If we can get out of the way of emotional life and let allow ourselves to feel it and make room for it, our emotional life generally neat knows what needs to unfold, sometimes much better than we know ourselves. And so then that opens the second advantages of mindfulness of the body, when we have emotions, is that there's something about feeling the emotion physically and embodied way that allows the unfolding the move Have the emotion to move more freely, so much like by feeling it in the body and the chest, the belly, in the face, wherever it might be, that we're making room for those sensations to move into change. And so as those have a chance to unfold, to move to change, that is synonymous with allowing the emotion, to resolve to unfold, to dissolve, to do all kinds of things. And I'll talk more about emotions tomorrow, and how to practice with them there and include them as part of meditation. But for now, I want to emphasize just that for the next you know, 24 hours. As you have emotions going through your day that you might want to drop back in, make it really simple. drop back into your body and see what's happening. Your body is you're having those emotions. What you learned By studying the physical and bodied side of the emotion, what happens if you give yourself a sacred pause, the respect to really feel Make room to feel it in your body, and not just erase along to the next thought or next story or the next activity, but really to feel it there, but differences and make to feel in your body. And then if you have some extra time in your daily life, is after you felt the experience in your body, you might do the three breaths journey and see if it just kind of once you have acknowledged how it is, if you just give yourself over to three breaths, and after those three breaths, then do that mindfulness exercise again, of noticing how you're feeling, what's shifted and changed and what's happening in the body what shifted and change with the emotions you have. And then hopefully you will continue to sit, do 120 minute meditation between now and the next time we meet, and, and perhaps the center of gravity for your meditation can be breathing. And, but if some strong emotion arises, that's more compelling than the breathing, then you can let go of the breathing, and then do mindfulness of the emotion. Maybe do it the way we've done it today so far. Notice what it is, name it, acknowledge it, and maybe feel it in your body. And if it's no longer compelling, or you feel ready to go back to your breathing, thing, go back to your breathing. If it's body sensation that becomes compelling, like we talked about yesterday. Then you can again, leave your breathing, and do a mindfulness of the body sensations until it's no longer compelling or you feel ready to go back to your breathing, and then go back to your breathing. So we're slowly expanding the range of things that are included in this sacred pause of mindfulness. And, and today we are kind of venturing into the area of emotions. And I'll talk more about it tomorrow. And so then we'll end with another very short meditation. So if you again once again if you'd be willing to close your eyes. Part of the reason for closing the eyes is so that you can feel your insides a little bit
better rather than concerned with what you're looking at. And there is a particular way that in Buddhist meditation we work with emotions, kind of a meditation with emotions, that has to do with emotions related to Goodwill to being friendlier kind. And you might sit here for just a minute or so. And, and have us some thoughts now you can use thoughts to tell yourself wishes of goodwill towards yourself. Think about how you would like to care for yourself and care for yourself what you wish for yourself and offer you some offer yourself some positive wishes. Something like May I be happy? May I be calm and peaceful? May I be safe May I be happy If you can offer those good wishes to yourself from someplace inside that, you know you're really mean it, you're really this would be nice if this could happen, then perhaps you can also receive it well, that it's nice that you care for yourself, especially if life is difficult. Some people will begin every session of mindfulness meditation, with 30 seconds, one minute of offering themselves these kind of good feelings, good intentions, good wishes. Some people will end their sittings for 30 seconds or a minute with that. So thank you for participating in this. And thank you for your interest and your engagement. And I hope that you'll put this mindfulness to practice for the next few days next day and hopefully, whatever. If you practice a little bit what I've taught today, then that'll be a foundation for the further discussion about mindfulness of emotions tomorrow. So thank you very much.