Greetings everyone and welcome back to our, kind of our informal beginning of the Intro to Meditation class. And we'll start formally in five minutes, but if you'd like to ask any questions, I'm just here to. I came a little early to see if there was anything on your mind, concerns around the topic, what we're doing the hindrances and basic meditation. And I can take some questions also at the end. So. Nice to be here with you.

I found myself kind of happy to be able to sit down here and talk about restlessness today. So we'll see how it goes.

"Would there be anything wrong with meditating in bowed position with forehead on the floor? I find it puts me in a humble ..." And, let's see that doesn't come through. You're welcome to meditate in any posture that seems to work for you. And that's supportive for you. And that is generally the guideline. And as we practice and meditation deepens, we get a clearer and clear sense of what's really supportive and helpful. And what's supportive initially in one circumstance, might not be later. And it could be that the need to be humble and certainly bowing all the way to the floor creates certain kind of calmness and subtleness that allows mindfulness to get stronger and deeper. And at some point, you might see that what's needed is something different. And at some point, you might see that what's needed is to sit up straight and actually sit with some kind of strength, but without conceit. And in meditation, the deeper in meditation goes, even being humble is a little bit of extra activity that adds something to our experience. And the idea is to at some point not add anything, just be able to sit upright and still in a very deep, quiet place. And so, but you know, certainly what you're doing, if it seems to be helpful, by all means.

"Would you have any thoughts on comparing oneself with others, what kind of hindrance is that?" Oh, maybe that could be all of the, any of the five hindrances can be comparing yourself with other. I make a distinction between comparing and contrasting. I don't know if it's a fair difference, but the difference is contrasting is a normal part of life. That seeing things as being distinct, one from different from the
other. And it's actually a wise part of life to be able to make a contrast. Comparing I see as an evaluation. It's measuring one thing against something else. And that's where it can get dangerous very quickly, where we start putting certain kind of worth and value on certain things, on certain ideals, certain people, ourselves, in ways that are very painful. In fact, a high percentage of human suffering has to come with comparative thinking. So certainly it warrants a lot of care with this. And this idea of thoughts of comparing oneself and others, certainly can be a kind of restlessness, the topic for today. And they could come from ill will. They can come from desire, could come from doubt. But in the theme for today, restlessness, there is an agitation of the mind, an activity of the mind involved, in making comparisons. As when meditation settles and the mind gets quieter, a wonderful thing to experience and know that we can be alive in a very vital and free and wonderful way without making comparisons, without holding oneself in comparison to others. And there's three kinds of comparisons that Buddhism points to that we can kind of leave behind. Certainly one is that we're better than others. And other is that we're worse than others. And the third is that we're equal to others. And the third one is surprise for some people, because isn't that part of the fundamental principles of the culture of United States is that we're all equal or should be at least. The Buddha's issue is not so much that about whether or not we're socially politically, economically equal. But certainly we should be I think. But the question is, are we involved in comparisons? Are we doing the activity of always comparing ourselves? Sitting and meditating, we're still comparing ourselves. And to be able to sit in meditation and quiet, all three forms of comparative thinking, including that we're equal. And find the fourth option. The fourth option is just to be alive in a full, free, vibrant way without making comparisons.

So maybe one more. "Worry is a big problem for me. I'm finding NO helping, the three breath journey. What else can I use to derail those thoughts?" This is great, Sue, that you asked that because that's kind of the topic for today. The topic for today is restlessness and worry. So hopefully, some of what I say will be in response to your question.

So, welcome back to the Intro to Meditation, Mindfulness Meditation Part Two, where we're looking at the obstacles, the challenges to meditation. In particular through the perspective of the five hindrances, sensual desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubt. And today we're doing restlessness and worry.

And I was kind of happy sitting down here to talk about this topic because somehow I have a inner compass or a felt sense, that the path through restless and worry to the calmness the other side. That somehow engaging in the practice, practicing with restless and worry is itself a bringing in a delightful feeling of calm, of steadiness, of continuity, being. So anyway, so that's from sitting down, I'm happy to be here to talk about this.

Certainly restlessness and worry can be very, very challenging and difficult and painful. It can also be very damaging for human lives. If people stay restless all the time, are constantly worrying and ruminating, it can really be a limitation that keeps people from engaging in the world in a useful and wise way. And people can procrastinate, can wait, can not act for a long time in ways that causes a lot of problems. So to be able to kind of really address worry and restlessness is one of the important tasks of a human life. All these five hindrances are an ordinary part of human life. We all have them to some degree. And restlessness and worry in particular, all of them are good to recognize when they're happening. But today it's particularly powerful to really clearly recognize, oh, this is a restlessness. This
is worry, that's what's happening. And part of the power of that is to begin settling the agitation. Just simply to see. This is what's happening.

So I said yesterday, the Buddha used the metaphor for a lake, surface of the lake, that's churned up out of a strong wind and all these waves. And in which case, you cannot see your own reflections. You can't see into the lake bottom because of all the agitation that the water has. Same thing with us. We can see ourselves well. We can't see into the depths of our mind when the mind is agitated, full of waves. But it is a more powerful metaphor that the Buddha uses for this, is he says that restlessness and worry can be a form of enslavement. And because when restlessness and worry takeover, we lose our ability for agency to act in any kind of wise way. We are just cut up into the swirl and circle and cycles and spirals of agitation and worry. And we can't seem to get out.

I think of the first, restlessness, as primarily externally focused, like the mind is going out. Maybe not out necessarily outside of oneself, but the mind is kind of the centrifugal force outwards or scatteredness outward. So the mind is scattered, restless, activated and wanting to go out to everything. Moving and getting and going from one thing to another. So there's no stability, there's no focus, there's nothing that stays as a focus of the mind. And one of the little representations for me and for this kind of activity is the times in my home. When I go from one side of our small little house to the other side, maybe for a particular task to do, and I'm heading to the other side of the house and on the way I stopped to pick up this and that and look at that and take care of this. And it takes me a while to get through the house to do the tasks I'm supposed to do. I've gotten restless, I've gotten kind of jumping around, I kind of get distracted by things. As opposed to just walking through the house and not getting distracted, not getting picked up by other things. Keeping the mind steady, focused on the purpose of getting to the other task, which which is what I was trying to do. And so this idea of kind of jumping around.

Worry has a lot to do, maybe not jumping around, there might be a particular theme that we're worried about or that we have regrets about, but that we're just ruminating around it. We're churning it, we're chewing the bone of it, kind of over and over again, chewing and ruminating, stirring up the pond. It's all the same pond, all the same kind of activity, but it's just constant rumination. And psychologists have said that one of the leading forces of mental distress, things like depression, it can be for people, rumination. Constantly thinking the same thoughts over and over and over again. And if those thoughts are undermining, then it becomes a drain for us. It actually becomes harmful for us and it's discouraging, depressing. It's disempowering to have the same negative thoughts over and over again. So restlessness, kind of a force of scatteredness. Worry and regret is a sinking into, and drowning in, and swirling in whirlpools of particular concerns and activities that have really grabbed us.

I think that when it's useful to address real challenge of restlessness and worry, that's a big, big part of some people's lives, is to not first and foremost address it through meditation. But first and foremost to think about how are we living our lives? Does anything need to change in our lives so that we get more settled? Do we need to maybe eat better? Maybe we're eating agitating foods, maybe a lot of sugar and caffeine. And you know, there's a lot of agitation Do we need more exercise? Sometimes lack of exercise creates a kind of strange dynamic, inside restlessness. Do we need to live a calmer life? Are we in fact jumping around doing many different things, changing directions, you know, every 30 seconds or every few minutes or something. And it would it be useful to just hold the course and do one
thing. If we're in the kitchen washing the pots and pans and dishes, to give ourselves over to just doing that. So not allowing the mind to jump around, to this and that concern, and that activity. But just kind of this is what we're doing. Just doing this. To go for a walk around the neighborhood and watching the mind how it jumps around a lot, how there's a restlessness. And see if we can settle into just walking, just being here. Sometimes watching a lot of TV causes restlessness, agitation. Sometimes certain kind of conversations, certain themes and topics, that maybe aren't necessary to talk about, but they produce agitation and restlessness. Being around some people is a restless phenomena. We feel uncomfortable. We get all stirred up by being there. Maybe reading too much news or the wrong kind of news. The news that's more sensationalistic, the news that's more written to be more emotionally evocative under the auspices of being kind of objective,. And maybe finding other sources of news that don't agitate us, don't reinforce the kind of fear or anger or distress that we have, but seem to provide us with more settledness.

With worry, sometimes there are real things in the world to worry about. With regret, there are real things to have regrets over. Rather than just kind of ruminating and spinning around in them, sometimes it takes some careful reflection. Given what I'm worrying about, what is the reasonable thing I should be doing? Maybe I actually should do something about this. Address it in some way or other. Or come to a better understanding of it. If there are regrets, maybe come to a better understanding of it. Maybe something should be done. Some things should be regretted, have remorse over. But to be caught in it, to be enslaved by it and ruminating and spinning, is not necessary. What can we learn from it? One of the great lessons that I think we can do from things which we regret is to look at it honestly, to understand what we can learn from it, so that we can live better in the future. We can do better in the future. And Buddhism tends to be forward looking to see how we can do better in the future, rather than being weighed down by the past, stuck in the past. But we don't ignore the past. It's actually important to learn from it. But with idea we learn just enough so we can be onward leading, be forward looking. How can I do better? Yes. I regret that I said that yesterday. What were the conditions? What were the situations that prompted me to say that? And now knowing that, now let's look into the future. Let's look more optimistically, hopefully, dedicatedly. Yes, I'm going to focus on doing better, rather than focusing on how bad I was, what I said yesterday. So this turning the direction, forward leaning, onward leading. How do we use this for the best?

So restlessness and worry. So maybe, before I go on, we can do a very short little mindfulness without changing your posture. But maybe close your eyes and with your eyes closed, take the three breath journey.

Count your breaths, three breaths and really be there for each breath. Whatever way it's nice for you to be with a breath. Feel it, be with it.

And after you've done three breaths, do three more counting 1 to 3. But this time as you exhale, see if you can relax your body, just for three breaths.

And then have done that, three more breaths. This will be the last round. Do three breaths. Counting, but each time you exhale, let your mind become quieter or steadier. A steadiness on those three breaths.
And then can open your eyes.

And perhaps to feel if anything has changed for you. And the first time we did three breaths, did just that simplicity of three breaths, did that settle you, calm you, steady you in any way? Was it useful? Was it useful to do it again with relaxing the body? What changed for you? And was it useful to do the third time where you kind of relaxed, quieted the thinking mind? What changed for you as you did that? What I was hoping, that for enough of you, that you could see how quickly it's possible to change oneself and become a little more settled, a little bit more calm.

And this idea of being settled and calm and focused. Just to be really involved with one thing. Just with the breath, just with washing the pots, just with walking the neighborhood just in the walking, is how to begin cultivating one of the great pleasures of life. Something that actually feels physically nourishing and supportive for us. Which is really to give ourselves over to one thing. Just to be with one thing for a while, allows a settling, allows a gathering in, allows a harmonizing of our system. That can't happen if the mind is scattered. The mind is jumping around, doing many, many things. Going here and there. That can't happen if we're ruminating and caught up and collapsing into some concern we have, worry, regret. When we get to harmonize. When we get calm and settled. Then we can think much better. Then we can relate, understand what's happening much better. And so it's very important to value a calm mind. Because some people, and it's certainly been true for me, there's an unconscious, there has been an unconscious, prioritizing or valuing the importance of being restless, or not necessarily restlessness itself. But the importance of jumping around. Going here and going there. Thinking about that. I have so many concerns. I have to do them all. And just kind of like, it seems everything seems so important. Or everything seems so like, you know, I'm afraid of everything. So I have to kind of jump around and take care of everything. Or the authority of regret, the authority of remorse, the authority of worry. Like this is how I'm going to be safe. This is how I'm going to make amends. This is how I'm going to fix it. But generally, we don't really fix much by being restless and worrying. If anything, we make things worse. And so to have a calm mind, not to avoid what's happening. But to be able to better take care of it. Better see it and understand what can be done.

So one of the great things to do with restlessness, and sometimes it can even be fun to do this, is to really feel it physically in the body. Feel where it is in the body, explore it physically. With the idea that the body can handle it all. Relax into the body, open the body, and let the restlessness have its life within you. I've sat in meditation sometimes, and imagined that my restlessness was ping pong balls bouncing around inside. And I just kind of like started to delight and just feeling all this movement and energy and momentum in the body. And not identifying with it, not allowing it to take over, push me around. But allowing it to just bounce around was kind of uncomfortable, but kind of fascinating to just feel it and be there.

Generally, when we're restless, if we can feel the restlessness in the body.

Excuse me.

If we can feel the restless in the body, things start to settle a little bit more. Things kind of relax. The movement the body has, left alone with awareness, is to relax, to soften. It's the agitation, the clinging and the attachments of the mind that get translated into somehow the body being restless, the body
being tense, the body being kind of energized. But if we can kind of separate out the mind from the body, by just feeling the body itself. Then the body itself just wants to relax. It's kind of like the body itself wants to go home to a state of well being. The natural state of ease that's not there when the mind is activating it. Or the mind is tensing it up.

So feeling in the body. Sometimes doing this in meditation is not enough. And sometimes because it's so strong with the restlessness that we really need to do something different. We need to do some exercise, go for a run, do some yoga, go for a walk around the block. There are times I've taken a long hot shower when I felt really agitated in order to calm me down and settle me. And sometimes food is helpful for that. To eat something nourishing, something settling, food that's grounding, can kind of settle us down. Sometimes naps can be helpful or to simply laying down and resting for a while. Laying down and listening to music for five minutes can create, maybe the right music can be settling and calming. Closing down and turning off all screens for a little while, so we're not seeing the energizing, agitating. Energy, light from the screen can be helpful.

So sometimes we have to do something. If there's a lot of inner agitation that we don't understand, sometimes it might be useful to journal, to write down what you think is going on to really see if you can get under the surface and see what's going on. With worry the same thing, it might be useful to journal about it to really understand what's happening. Sometimes if you see your what you're worried about on paper, we get some new perspective on it. It can seem Oh, it can seem a little bit like a little bit more detached, not so imminent. It doesn't come with the kind of authority that can come up when the mind is just spinning and lost in the thoughts. It's a way of getting some healthy distance sometimes. Writing it down and seeing it with clarity. And with remorse or regret the same thing. Really writing it down. With regrets and remorse, sometimes to really clearly acknowledge what's going on. Oh this is what happened. This is what I'm feeling. Is settling, is coming. The admitting of what happened to oneself rather than not quite admitting it, trying to defend it, trying to explain it away, trying to do something.

So sometimes we need to do other things besides meditate when the restlessness and worry is really strong. If it's a regular part of our life, an ongoing part, then you want to try to think about, plan ahead, to figure out how you could live in a calmer way. If you drive to work on a regular basis and you find that you get to work agitated, maybe you should give yourself 5 minutes, 10 minutes more time to get to work. And so that you can drive in a calm way, in a settled way, maybe. I've driven with the radio off, just driving in a calm way and arrived where I'm getting in a calmer state than when I left. Just because the driving was done in a calm, relaxed, settled way. It might be that cleaning your living space crates calm. Recently, because of this COVID-19 I spent time cleaning out my office. And over the years I've accumulated books and lots of papers. And I found that when I cleaned it all out, that I actually would feel calmer and lighter going into my office. So if restlessness and agitation, worry, rumination, is a regular part of life, you might sometimes look and see how do you want to change your lifestyle? How do you want to change how you live and what you do? Can you do more things that are settling, calming. Some people have a lot of restlessness if they want to meditate, but seated meditation doesn't work. Then it's useful to do walking meditation. Somehow the walking kind of holds the agitation, kind of lets it flow more. It's kind of has less of a grip on us. And just walking back and forth. I's easier to let the agitation kind of flow and also get settled by just walking. We're not troubled by it. So walking meditation can be helpful.
And so BELLA. The five practices with the hindrances. It's helpful to let restlessness and worry be. Be still with it, let it be, so you can see it well enough so you know what to do. So you can recognize it just enough, you know then what to do next.

Explore it, get to know it better. Maybe there's ways in which you haven't really understood your restlessness and worry. And feel it in your body. Explore it in your body. It's always so useful to feel these things in the body. Get grounded in the body. If it's just too difficult with restlessness to feel it in your body, explore around where in your body do you feel some stability, some calm and some steadiness. It might just be a little square centimeter somewhere. Where do you find that calmness and subtleness? Then maybe from that place, look at the restlessness. Because if you look at it directly, maybe that is just more agitating. So to explore it. And look at the beliefs that are operating. Look at the emotions that are operating. Sometimes certain emotions which are the fuel for the agitation. Look at your relationship to it. Maybe what makes you extra agitated, is the fact that you are agitated about being agitated. Restless about being restless. Because maybe you're ashamed of it, you're embarrassed of it, you're angry at it, you're self critical because of it, and so just stirs up the pot even more.

And then there's lessening the agitation. So rather than thinking you can get rid of it right away, maybe you can do something to lessen it. And some of the things I've talked about, just lessening enough so you don't get caught in it. The harm reduction process. Try to reduce how much harm these things do for us. And it's better to reduce than not to be able to let go at all. And then over time with reduction, you see it more clearly, you have more avenues of how to practice with it. Eventually you can let go of it. Eventually, you might even realize that when you see it coming, I don't have to bother. I don't have to have to go down that road. I don't have to jump from one thing to the other. I can just settle. And then when the restlessness and worry is not there, then I think it's particularly important to really appreciate that. Just feel what that's like, that absence. Sometimes that absence, if you feel the goodness of being calm, the goodness of being settled, the goodness of having a vitality and aliveness which is stable or steady or feels good to be.

And so, those are some of my thoughts about this very important hindrance. And so I thought we would do a meditation now.

And as an introduction to the meditation, it might be useful to say that in the Buddhist psychology, human beings have some degree of agitation all the way up to becoming fully enlightened. That even partial enlightenment, partial certain degrees of spiritual maturity in Buddhism, there's always going to be a little bit of agitation going on. It might be subtle, but it's always going to be there. So to some degree, knowing that this is the territory, we're working with it. That some of it we have to accept. That takes its time. It's not going to go away completely once and for all until we've really discovered some very deep, letting go.

So, taking a meditation posture. And the way it looks on my screen here right now, the only part of the video that I see, the chat, is I see the Buddho over my left shoulder. And I love seeing that, without the head, just the torso. It's very nice to see. To me it looks like a calm torso is settled, both upright, alert and settled and steady. So maybe for you, you can take a posture that you think represents the steadiness. A stability.
And then with whatever ability you have, see if you can notice in your body any place that feels stable, grounded. Perhaps a contact of your body against your seat, your chair your cushion.

Perhaps somewhere inside your torso. Apart from any agitation you feel there. Maybe there’s a place that feels a little bit still. Calm. Steady. Stable. Feel that inner stability.

And as if you can breathe from that place. See if you can take some calm breaths, maybe a little bit deeper than usual. But the breaths themselves are calm, easy.

Breathing in being calm. Breathing out being calm.

And letting your breathing returned to normal.

And part of this lessening of agitation can include relaxing some of the muscles of your body. Relaxing in your face.

Perhaps as you exhale, relaxing your shoulders.

As you relax as you exhale, relaxing the chest and relaxing the belly.

And then within your body as part of your bodily experience, becoming aware of how the body experiences breathing. Perhaps there’s a particular area of your body where it feels most easy to experience breathing. The movements of breathing, the sensations.

As you exhale to relax into that area where you feel your breathing. Settle into it.

And if you feel any agitation in the mind, maybe as you exhale you can relax. Soften the mind. Allowing the mind to be a little bit quieter. Steady. Calm.

That beyond the edges of your thoughts, you might feel calmness, peacefulness. That you won’t feel if you’ve identified strongly with your thinking.

And as you’re sitting here, do you feel any agitation? Any restlessness? Any kind, any degree? Strong or quite subtle. Whatever degree you feel it.

Let your mindfulness be attentive to it. Feel where it is in your body. And let it be.

Explore the restlessness. Get to know it better. Not by analyzing it or figuring it out. But by calmly feeling it better. Sensing it. Experiencing the many dimensions of how it manifests.

Regardless of how well you can do it, see if you can lessen some of the intensity of your restlessness and agitation. Allow it to become calmer, more settled.
Not to be in a hurry. Just feel.

And what is it that you can let go of? So you can be more settled and at ease with being agitated. Are there any judgments? Reactivity?

Is there something you’re troubled by that you can let go of?

And then to whatever degree that you feel calmer now. Less agitated. Appreciate that's the case. Appreciate it also physically. Physically feel whatever pleasant good feelings, sensations that are. That are possible because you’re not so because you’re calmer, more settled.

Sitting now meditating. Assuming that there’s nothing you have to do or fix or protect.

Assuming that for right now it's okay to let go and just be. To relax into a calm place. A settle place.

To atune yourself to whatever it is that's calm inside of you.

Notice if your mind does any agitation or restlessness. Rumination.

And rather than doing anything about it. To fix it or make it go away. Perhaps you can bring a sense of reassurance to the mind. It's okay. Right now for these minutes you're safe. It's okay. Things are okay. They are mind.

As you exhale, letting go of your thoughts or quieting your thinking.

As your thinking becomes quieter, slower There's a tendency of becoming calmer and more settled.

And then as we come to the end of this sitting, I'd like to make a short statement. A contemplative statement, which means a statement that maybe you can take in, in a receptive way. And just see what changes, or opens, or responds to the statement.

Please don't give any authority to restlessness and worry.

Please don't grant it importance.

So inherent, I believe in the tendency to be restless and to ruminate. A lot of rumination, thinking and worry and regrets, is the maybe unconscious assumption that it's important to do it. That it's valuable to do it. And generally, it's not that important. But there is one way that these things, restless and worry, are important. They're important as doorways to go in to discover what's really going on. What's really making us tick? What's really motivating it? What's really, what are the emotions that are fueling it? What are the beliefs that are fueling it? And so this ability to be. To allow the restlessness and agitation to be there. In deep meditation, you really want to take time to let it be there. To really get it to be known. Sometimes it just settles if you just let it be there in clear awareness. Oh, this is what's happening. And then as it settles or as it opens up, and you allow it to be there, then perhaps you can
start seeing more clearly in the exploration phase. See more clearly what's really going on. Restlessness and worry is always important in the sense there's something deeper that we really need to see. And sometimes I think of restlessness and worry as being symptoms. They're not the real issue. So if you're too quick to dismiss, to run away from, to try to settle, to fix restlessness and worry, you might not be settling deep in. To see what's really happening in deep way. Don't be in a hurry to overcome restlessness. Don't use some kind of prop or some kind of external thing to make you calm all the time. Sooner or later spend some time bringing careful attention into it and work through it. Discover what's really going on. What do you attach to? What are you believing? Who do you think you are? That's really kind of the seedbed for this kind of way of being. And this kind of careful looking and being present for all the hindrances is a very maturing thing to do. We want to learn how the obstacles are obstacles. We want to learn how we're distracted. How we're caught in these things. We don't just want to have a magic wand that makes it go away quickly. It's kind of the difference between learning to farm versus waiting for someone to give you food. If you're always waiting for someone to bring in your food, you're dependent on people who are going to bring it. But if you're going to learn to farm, then you can grow your own. So to learn how to practice with and farm and cultivate and look deep into the hindrances is a way that become wise about them. So no matter where you go, you're ready to bring that wisdom to bear on the hindrances. But if you're always using something to distract you from the hindrances, get away from them. Then you're not going to develop. They might go away, they might not be present. But we haven't developed the wisdom. That's really one of the really important things we're trying to develop here. So to develop in Buddhism, to spiritual maturation in Buddhism, is to be able to stop and take a really honestly serious look at what is the challenges. What's really going on here for us. And that takes time. And sometimes it's uncomfortable time, but it's really worthwhile.

So those are my thoughts for today. And so we have some time now if you have some questions or concerns about these things. I'll try my best to respond.

"I can be compulsive with to do lists. So I've tried not to make lists lately." That could be helpful. Or an interesting way to do get the best of both worlds is make your list but don't put more than three things on it.

And I love it that you say at times the present moment feels like it's more than enough. One of the powerful statements that my Zen teacher said to me was at some point he said, kind of casually, he said just to be alive is enough. And so many scales fell from my eyes. So much restlessness I had kind of softened when I just heard that. Just to be alive is enough. I didn't have to prove myself. I didn't have to defend myself as much as I was. I didn't have to build myself up. It was okay. I was allowed just to be alive. It's like a birthright. It's okay just to be alive. We don't have to become anything special.

"Do you believe the strongest root cause of restlessness is anxiety? It is difficult to determine which is the cause of the other." Oh, I agree with that. I'll try to I don't know, which is the cause. Sometimes if you're restless, ask yourself where the anxiety is. Sometimes if you're anxious, ask yourself where the restlessness is. Sometimes going back and forth, free something up and kind of loosens up where we're stuck.

"What if anxiety physically prevails?" So I think it's important to not think of mindfulness always as a way to cure whatever ails us, whatever difficulty we have. But rather, mindfulness is not so much about.

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It's a lot to do with learning to have a new relationship with what is there. So anxiety, physical anxiety, persists maybe what needs to change is not the anxiety, but how we're relating to it. How we see it, how we believe it. Maybe it's possible to allow the physical anxiety, restlessness to be there. But to be mentally equanimous about it. To somehow find some ease, some acceptance of it. And that might be the most powerful thing to experience. Because I do know there are times when there's physical anxiety, restlessness, that who knows why it's there. There might be some physical reason why it's there. Maybe it's an illness or something. And so it's just going to keep churning away. And it's just a matter of accepting it and learning how to be at ease with it being there. And this ability to see at the core of mindfulness is not to get rid of something, but rather to see it in a new way. That's portable. We learn that skill and then we bring it to all kinds of circumstances. And we learn how to be free in circumstances without always need to change the circumstances.

So, again, I don't think I can follow all of them in order but thank you. "When I'm restless and I meditating, it helps when I exhale through the mouth. Is that okay?" Absolutely. Whatever helps. Sooner or later, exhaling through the mouth will stop helping. But if you feel a need to get support, a long exhale through breathing in, Maybe through the nose. And a long exhale through the mouth can be very settling, very focusing.

"Sometimes the feelings are shy and seem not to want to be felt in the body or seem to disappear. Just when I pay attention." Yes, sometimes that can be that way. Do not worry about it. You're not responsible as a mindfulness practitioner to go digging and looking and requiring things to stay where they are. Mindfulness is just to be content, to be mindful of what's obvious, what's really happening. And if things are shy, maybe it's not time to see them. If they disappear quickly, count is as a good thing. And just be mindful of what is there. The only reason to change that is that over an extended period of time, if you feel like there's something really important that you're overlooking. That really important that somehow is being pushed aside. Then maybe there's, you want to figure out a way to hang out there with those emotions, those feelings. And one way to do it is to figure out, maybe journal about them, write about them. Or maybe not meditation, but go for a walk and try to think the thoughts that feed those feelings. Just enough so you can see them more fully.

"I find my body swaying side to side upon your prompt to release the control of worry. I didn't realize that I was moored to worry. " Great. I'm happy that you swaying sometimes can be a setting free and maybe that's what needed to happen. Finally it can move and not be so tight and constricted. Probably what will happen over a little bit of time, if the swaying continues for a long time, then you'll probably, if you pay careful attention, you probably see that you're at some point you're giving into it or you're actually feeding it. You're actually involved in making it happen. Not initially, but over time. Because generally the more we sit with swaying and little movement generally settles and quiets into a kind of stillness.

"Just to be alive is enough. How did you experience what is good enough?" Just breathing. Just sitting and being alive and breathing, it can be good enough. Just that's good enough. I mean, of course there are times we have to do something else. It's not good enough to feed ourselves just sit and do nothing. But there's plenty of times, we're just realizing that just to be alive is enough. Just to breathe and sit there and go for a walk. It doesn't have to be some great attainment. We don't have to accomplish something wonderful. We don't have to get everyone's approval or anybody's approval. That there's a
profound way with just being a breathing person with a heart that's beating. That can feel like okay, this is enough.

"To have faith that what we are doing is good enough." Well to faith that what we're doing is good enough. That's, you know, a little bit hard to answer. But if you can learn in meditation, that during the time you're meditating, it's just to be alive is good enough. You don't have to accomplish anything or do anything or prove yourself in meditation, then you can get a feeling of experience or really visceral, immediate experience. what that's like, the goodness of just existing, just breathing, just being and that can be a reference point for the things you have to do. That helps you decide, you can still have to do things and you still have to decide, you know, what is the right thing to do and how much should I do? But you can do do it, not from a place of needing to do it, in order to prove yourself, you do it because it just needs to be done. And you need to do the best you can. And maybe for the purposes of the job you can't do it good enough. But that's unfortunate, but that's how it is. Or maybe you don't have to do it more than good enough.

"Underneath all my restlessness and worry is wanting." Very good to see that. So that's part of the advantage of stopping and looking and really seeing that sometimes worry and restless comes from wanting, wanting, wanting. That was my case. For other people, it's ill will, that's the seed and the cause for for restlessness and worry.

"How do I work with perpetual wanting?" Well, that was the topic for the first hindrance, the sensual desire, you might go back and listen to that. But one of the primary ways we want to work with any of this is stop and take a good look at it. And see what happens if you stop and really look at it. Look it the eye and see what you see.

"Many times during meditation I feel very calm, and it is exciting. I lose the calmness. What can I do?" Exactly. This is one of the ways that excitement, restlessness can be a hindrance in meditation is that as we get calmer and calmer, to have a thought, Wow, this is great. It's actually exciting the mind. And we get pulled out of the great calm state we're in. It's really normal to do that. It's common. Don't be worried. Don't be excited about getting excited. Just take it as normal. Of course the mind is going to be excited the first few times. As you kind of relax with it and become familiar with a calmer mind, you'll start getting excited. I'll just become more ordinary and normal. And then as it becomes ordinary normal, you'll be able to go into deeper states of mind as well.

"I was wondering what we can do as a group to thank you for the generosity of these teachings. I'd like to see comments of my classmates." Well, maybe that you guys can do that I'll stop. But what I would like to offer as or, you know, and wonderful, I really appreciate that statement. I see it as a generous statement in itself. And what would it be really satisfying for me is that you took these teachings and practice with them. Explore how to make them work. And make them come alive in your life and make them personal, make them your own. It's a little bit hard to be a teacher. Because you have to say something. And you have to be a little bit specific. You have to kind of say something more general. And you can't touch, say all the nuances, all the different shades of what how these things are useful. And so my hope is to be just good enough in these teachings so that you get enough that you can work with and make them personal. Discover how to make them come alive for yourself. That'll be very rewarding
for me to know that you guys are really making this your own. And making it come alive in your own life. And find value from it.

So thank you so much for this. And I appreciate it very much, all the questions, and that you're so engaged. And we'll continue tomorrow. And tomorrow we'll do what's considered to be one of the most dangerous of the hindrances, doubt. And some of you think, well, doubt is not one of my issues. Come anyway, because it is, sooner or later, it's going to be important issue in practice.

So, thank you. And I wish you all well.