Good morning, everyone. And Excuse me. So, good morning again. And good morning, Rahul and Monica, Lisa, Louise and Pamela, Connie, and all of you who are here. Very happy to be back for this last day of the, Intro the Meditation Part Two. And we’re starting a little bit informally like we have the last few days and if any of you have any questions you’d like to ask. And before 9:30 I’ll do my best to respond. From Belgium, I Belgium. Serge. It's very nice. Chicago and Wisconsin, Hawaii. Very nice.

"Any thoughts on cultivating trust and patience?" Very nice. I think that kind of the central mindfulness way of cultivating trust and patience is to turn your attention, to study, to understand, to really see clearly, the ways that you are not trusting. And the ways that you are not patient. And that will make the trust and patience trustable. That will make you, if you really understand what the obstacles are, then sometimes either the trust has a chance to come up on its own. Or if you understand the obstacles and can overcome them, then the natural thing that should be next, from our goodness can come. And maybe that is trust. Maybe that is patience. Or it could be that something else comes up that we were surprised. It could be that we thought we needed trust and patience. And when we somehow freed ourselves from the obstacles to trust and patience, lo and behold, what was needed or what comes up is courage instead.

In Switzerland and France Oh, nice. "Thank you for your advice and physical anxiety and the way to accept it equanimously. If this is the right word?" Absolutely.

"When I try to feel my body sensations, I tend to analyze them pretty quickly. Instead of feeling my body I end up thinking about what I should feel. Seems like I try too hard to feel my body." Absolutely that can happen. I think sometimes it's difficult or easy with these kinds of mindful instructions, to hear them as instructions of what to do and then really try a lot. So a few things you can do. One is to hear the so called instructions, not so much as a prescriptions of what to do, but rather descriptions of what you'll be aware of. And so, if when we talk about mindfulness to the body, that's more descriptions of what
you can be aware of and notice. As opposed to you have to do something. And so the spirit is more of, the attitude is more of receptivity or curiosity or allowing the body to show itself to us. Whereas analysis maybe is more of a going into and focusing and the center of locus is then the mind. And the self who's doing the analyzing. Whereas when it's descriptive, the center of locus is what's revealing itself. What's showing itself. The other possibilities I said with trust and patience, is if there's a lot of analysis, that's what's the natural tendency of your mind or the habit of the mind to do that. Rather than trying to overcome it, you might turn the attention around 180 degrees to really start feeling, sensing, experiencing, noticing, observing the analytical mind. What's happening physically in the mind, and the brain, in the body when we're analyzing. Maybe the eyes get sense, or held tight, or there's tension in the forehead. Maybe there's a pressure, physical pressure in the brain itself that we feel. What's happening emotionally? Sometimes, maybe subtly, but importantly, underlying or part and parcel of analysis. might be something, not saying it's for your situation, but might be something like fear. We're analyzing so we can be safe. Over analyzing because we've learned from an elementary school teacher, that this is how we're successful is to analyze and present our brilliance and intelligence. And that's the way to solutions. And so there's a kind of a momentum of should and this is what has to happen. That with authority of a school teacher who was maybe strict, maybe. So understand what's going on emotionally. And then to understand what's what's going on intellectually, conceptually, cognitively. What beliefs are we operating under? What values are we operating under? What are we trying to do? What purpose do we have in what we're trying to do? So there's stepping back and taking a good look at that mind that's analyzing, so you can question it and maybe not be enchanted by it or so kind of automatically, habitually kind of committed to it. Maybe begin just step back and find another way by knowing it well.

And so these are probably not in order anymore. "How do we explore thoughts?" For that, I would, it's very important. I'm glad you're asking the question. And to answer this as briefly as attached and with the time we have. In the Intro to Mindfulness Meditation Part One, it's not called Part One, but the one that I just finished a few weeks ago, on these YouTube channels and also on IMC's Audio Dharma audio recording place. There is mindfulness of thinking, a whole day, a whole whole session on it. And you might go back and listen to that. I've done many of them over the years. So if on the audio site, audiodharma.org, if you just search for thinking, you probably get lots and lots of examples of me giving instructions on thinking.

So, "do you recommend a specific time, a specific hour of the day to meditate?" I don't recommend is a strong word. If all things are equal, I would suggest when you first get up. As soon as you feel fresh enough or awake enough in the morning to do it. And it might be after you just directly. Might be that you have to have some food or some drink that you'd normally have or maybe going outside to get some fresh air and then it's coming to sit down. But relatively early in the morning is often nice. It sets a tone for the rest of the day. And also for some people, the early morning they haven't gotten involved with the business of the day. And so it's maybe easier to settle and get focused. If all things are equal, I would suggest that you meditate twice a day. A very nice pattern that was nice for me for many years, was to meditate first thing in the morning, and then around five or six o'clock in the afternoon, evening. And having that balance of those two on either side of the daytime hours was very helpful for me and very supportive over the years of practice. And the afternoon sitting had a different function than the morning sitting. The afternoon often was processing and settling out from the activities of the day. And I
found that if I meditated at five, six o'clock in the afternoon, when I first came home, that the evening was better. It was clear, I was more alert, felt good. And also I slept better.

So okay. So thank you for the questions and thank you for all being here. Slovenia. Hi, nice to have you.

So we're beginning again for the last of these eight sessions on Introduction to Mindfulness Meditation Part Two, where we looked at the hindrances. What's called the hindrances. The literal meaning of the Buddhist word Nibbarana(???????) is obstructions. Not obstructions. A covering, that which covers over something. And it's a beautiful, profound thing to take the covers off the depths of our hearts, the depths of our mind, and discover that it's quite beautiful there. It's a treasure. The Buddha likened the process of becoming free of the hindrances to a goldsmith who purifies gold. Apparently gold when it's full of dross, full of impurities, can be quite rigid and hard and brittle even. But heating the gold, hammering the gold, a variety of things, I guess eventually frees it from a lot of the impurities and gets it soft and malleable. And when it gets pure enough and soft and malleable enough, then it can be shaped into something beautiful. And so the same thing with a mind. We're working the mind, we're freeing the mind from the hindrances. And it's a slow process. It's like slowly step by step, over and over and over again, emptying it, refining it. And then eventually it becomes beautiful, the mind. It becomes clear, it becomes clean, it becomes a wonderful companion to have with you. That you are just happy to have this mind. And it accompanies you wherever you go in just this wonderful way. And how nice. How nice to have this as something inside. So, this idea of the hindrances being something that we are purifying ourselves of. But I think it's important to be very careful about this word of purifying ourselves or overcoming the hindrances. We clearly want to overcome the hindrances. But it might be best to think of it as that we're freeing ourselves first and foremost from the way desires, ill will, sloth torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubt, hinder us. Get in the way. They cover over. And one of the primary ways in mindfulness is to really see it for what it is. Make this 180 degree turn and really look back at the hindrances. See them for what they are. And once we see clearly, we have real clarity in the seeing of this is what's happening. There's a kind of freedom in that seeing. And the hindrances, those things desire and ill will and so forth are still there. But they're no longer hindering the clarity of the mind, the wisdom of the mind. As this process continues, we become more familiar with desire, ill will and these things. At some point they do fade away or they do drop away or we are able to let go of them. And this is a very important reference point. This is kind of like a turning point in an meditator's life. It can be like coming to a fork in one's life. And one sees it clearly, that one has a choice. A choice in a fork of a road to take one direction and one goes towards greater hindrances, greater attachment, or clinging. If you go the other direction, one goes to freedom, freedom from clinging. And one leads to more clinging, one leads to more freedom. And if we just allow the hindrances to operate unabatedly, freely, it's really the direction of more clinging. But if we bring mindfulness and wake up to them and see them clearly and learn to lessen them and let go of them. It's a slow process, but that's a process towards the freedom, the freedom from clinging. But to have a clear enough experience of the absence of the hindrances is important because then we don't get confused about what real freedom is, real inner freedom might be. And it's very easy, I think, for people to confuse inner freedom with the unhindered pursuit of desire. The unrestrained expression of ill will. The un-challenged disinterest of sloth and torpor. The uninhibited movements of restlessness and worry. And the unquestioned doubt-like skepticism or even cynicism.
So when we allow the hindrances to operate freely, there is a kind of freedom there. And people can actually appreciate and value it and feel like there's no barriers. Some people feel like there's a lot of conceit around it, I should be free to do whatever. I'm allowed to do whatever; nothing's a problem. Whatever is in me needs to be expressed. But if what needs to be expressed is harmful, like ill will, even though the person who has it might feel a certain kind of freedom. This is not the freedom of the Buddha. The freedom of the Buddha is not the freedom to do something. Some kinds of freedom like that are important, but if the freedom to do is to act on clinging, hindrances, and harmfulness. This is not real inner freedom. The freedom of the Buddha is a freedom from. A real freedom from the hindrances. A real freedom from being restricted by clinging, grasping. And to really sense and know that non clinging is what the freedom is about. People might experience inner freedom very different from from each other. People might experience the absence of the hindrances in different ways. So we don't want to just say this is how it is. But in Buddhism, people on the Buddhist path, all people who become spiritually mature, experience freedom, liberation, awakening, might describe it differently. But they all value non clinging. To not cling to anything, contract around something, grip on tight to something. They value that it is not necessary to cling. That it's unnecessary. That's possible to take care of life and oneself from places of non clinging. From an open handed, open minded, open hearted, nothing closes down.

Now, this absence of hindrances, the last step of BELLA – to go through them, BELLA is the acronym for Be, Explore, Lesson, Let go, and then Appreciate. And the other A word is appreciate the Absence, the absence of the hindrances. And take time to take it in. And because the hindrances sometimes can be quite powerful, or it can limit a life quite dramatically, much more than people realize. Sometimes in retrospect we realize oh my, I lived a truncated life or a limited life by always pursuing even when they were very mild, my desires, my complaints, my ill wills, my irritations.

To really feel the absence of it, the Buddha gave a few similes. And I want to offer these similes because the Buddha wanted to emphasize that in appreciating the absence of the hindrances, we can allow ourselves to be glad and full of joy. To experience gladness, joyfulness, and happiness. So, the Buddha said that someone who is free of the hindrances are glad and full of joy as if or like a person who is no longer in debt, who is no longer seriously sick, who's recovered, who has become who is no longer imprisoned, someone who is no longer enslaved. And someone who has made it through a dangerous desert, long journey in the desert, maybe days or weeks back in the Buddha's time, and has come to safety on the other side. So in extreme situations, going through these things, being in debt can be very debilitating. Being free of it is joy producing, happiness producing. And being sick and then being healthy and recover from sickness can be delight. So, it's that dramatic. Their recovery, their freedom from, the overcoming, the getting through the desert of the hindrances, and to really feel that purity, the clarity that exists, can be a source of gladness. To take time to feel that gladness, allow ourselves be glad. To recognize this is really good, I'm so happy this is the case. That gladness can also come with joy, an inner delight, the inner kind of upwelling of satisfaction of happiness. The Buddha likened that as concentration practice, as meditation practice, deepens that with that concentration, if the hindrances fall away, are no longer there, that gives rise to gladness. Sequentially, it's kind of momentum, they unfolding. It's like the flow of a river that just kind of keeps building as more side rivers come into it. As the concentration and meditation deepens, there comes gladness when the hindrances are not there. There arises joy. There arises at tranquility of the body, the body becomes
very relaxed. There is happiness that flows from that. And from that, there flows a deeper and deeper states of concentration.

So to practice the hindrances. Today I wanted to emphasize the absence of the hindrances, the appreciation of what that's like. And in doing so, to then to reinforce a way of being in the world that is not business as usual. Not succumbing or reinforcing or even prioritizing the hindrances. Some people somehow or other what they've learned growing up or from society or from somewhere, it's almost like we're justified to be hindered. So we're supposed to have these things operating. We're supposed to be complaining, we're supposed to be worrying. Some places, some families, it's only by worrying that you show love. And if you don't worry, you're not really showing that you care. You're supposed to doubt everything and be skeptical, and not really go along or something. You're allowed to have desire. Desires are important part of life. Only by having your desires fulfilled, are you a successful person. And the more desires you have and fulfill and attain. To the attainment of desires and wishes that we become good people or successful people or praiseworthy people. Or the more critical opinions you have, the more you can prove to the world that you're right, you're always right. And you're always going to criticize and show what's wrong out there. It is a kind of ill will, is kind of an aversion.

So these kind of very powerful almost dispositions that people end up having. They feel justified. To practice meditation and discover it's possible to let it all that stuff go quiet, become calm, and discover the goodness of that absence. How deeply satisfying. How it feels like it's a coming home. It's a more profound, deeper connection to oneself and to life. It's an intimacy that can't happen when we're swimming or caught up in the turmoil, that churning of the hindrances. It's a life changer. It's realizing there's a whole other way of being. And then rather than prioritizing, going along with hindrances business as usual, we now begin, we kind of begin then to kind of know what the practice is really about. The practice is moving towards freedom, towards non clinging. Moving towards this goodness, this joy, this gladness, this well being that can be here.

So I hope that what I've been teaching over these days about the hindrances supports you in this way. I built the idea of this, these sessions on hindrances, as being part two of the mindfulness class. To really build on the basic mindfulness practice that we did for those nine days before, the basic instructions. Those are really the important instructions. And that's kind of like the foundation. And as you do the mindfulness practice of paying attention, at some point what becomes compelling, what becomes predominant, and the appropriate place in which we bring our mindfulness to, is to the very things that make basic mindfulness instruction difficult for us. The things they interfere with it, to hinder it. And there can be other things besides the hindrances. But hindrances are given particularly important focus in Buddhism, is important for our attention. But learning how to work with the hindrances is one way to learn how to work with all the different obstructions that can come up as we meditate. Or as we practice, or as we live our life.

So I thought that now we would meditate. So if you want to stand a little bit and stretch and refresh yourself, maybe for a little bit so you feel more ready to meditate. More good energy for it. Yeah, please sit up you'd like.

Then when you're ready, take a meditation posture that might support the inner freedom. A meditation posture that has room in it for something to be freed from the inside out. If you're sitting in a couch in a
way that you’re slumped, then maybe there's not much room in the chest for something to become free. One of the reasons to sit upright or to stand up right. Or if you need to lay down in meditation, to lay down in such a way that your chest is kind of open, expanded, is to allow a feeling of some room, space, for something to become free. Something to be free. So taking a posture that allows for some inner freedom. A posture that allows also for relaxation and for physical alertness.

And then closing your eyes. And take a few moments first to look back over your life for a particular time, occasion, when you might have been the most free of the hindrances. Most free of clinging. A time that you felt deeply at peace, at ease. When you felt safe enough to just kind of release your fear. Where you were contented, had no desires that had to be fulfilled. Content so that there was nothing that you were adverse to. Maybe it was as simple as waking up from a nice nap, just laying there in bed. Being content and peaceful. Maybe was after doing something, accomplishing something difficult and just releasing everything. Just sitting quietly. Or time in nature at some point.

And allow yourself to feel or remember what it felt like for you to be that way. Whatever sensations. By kind of visualizing the situation at the time, maybe you can also touch into what it felt like in your body, energetically, in your heart, in your mind.

Then maybe you can let go of the image, your ideas of what that time. But to whatever degree it's available, maybe it is very small. Let the feelings of that time, the way it feels in your body and your mind, linger. And let yourself feel that. Noticing where in your body this exists. How it is in the mind. Perhaps trusting this, or ever so slightly, opening further to those feelings.

And with that as a reference point from that feeling, become aware of your breathing. Almost as if the breathing is a gentle wind that blows on top of a very quiet lake So, your breathing is gentle. Allowing the breathing to come and go, over or through whatever feelings you have of being at peace, content, quiet, safe. It might be very mild what you're feeling. But even if it's very small feelings of well being, peace, being free of the hindrances. In that part of you where you're free of the hindrances, let you're breathing breathe with that.

Perhaps learning to let go of your thoughts so you can allow yourself to better feel a peacefulness, a calmness, some well being, somewhere in your being.

And so part of the connection to the present moment is also a connection to this well being. You might have many other feelings, some very difficult. You're not denying those difficult feelings. But you're recognizing there's also at the same time, some place within that's free of difficulty, free of safe content, some sense of well being that can exist side by side with the difficulties. So that you don't have to be preoccupied with the difficulties. You can just allow them to be known as well.

Allowing yourself to feel your breathing. And not so much that you're doing mindfulness of breathing as a technique or trying to lot. Rather you're allowing the breathing to appear in awareness. You're allowing the breathing to be felt by the body. You're allowing breathing to be known by a quiet mind.

Relaxing the thinking muscle. If you find yourself thinking, relax the thinking muscle. Then allow breathing to come back into awareness. Welcome breathing. And if possible welcome the experience of
breathing back into an awareness which is free of desire. Free of any ill will. Free of sloth. Free of restlessness and free of all the thinking of doubt. Welcome the breathing into that part of awareness. Knowing that is free.

And then as we continue a little bit longer with this meditation, is there anything within you that corresponds to a quality of non clinging, non grasping, non resistance? Even if there's clinging, grasping, resistance happening, next to it or somewhere else within, is there something that feels like a place or quality, non clinging? And what's it like to know that that's there? What's it like to be aware of it?

And finally, do you have any understanding, or any sense, intuition, intuition, or vision of a choice between moving away from the hindrances and towards a more and more non clinging? Or moving towards more hindrances, more clinging? Any sense of that divide?

And is there any way that knowing that divide, that fork in the road, might be useful for you? Might be something that you could use as a support for you.

So my friends, we're coming to the end of the things that I have to say as part of the hindrances and practicing with them and freedom from them. I do want to end on a particular note about freedom. There's some similes, lots of similes in Buddhism, some metaphors. There's something about similes and metaphors for some people that gives a more embodied, maybe emotional, more holistic, kind of feel, sense of a teaching than if it is just told in plain simple concepts. So, maybe like poetry. So, freedom is likened to turbulent water that has become clear and still. Like a dirty mirror that has become clear when cleaned. As a bird glidding in open air. So, freedom is accompanied by peace, with clarity. With a resting, gliding in openness, open freedom.

So, I want to end this way to just say that this whole practice of mindfulness, practice of working with hindrances, from a Buddhist point of view is part and parcel of a movement, a path, to our potential for a deep, embodied, enheartened, embodied enheartened, liberation and freedom. That is considered one of the great purposes of human life, and noble and dignified endeavor that we do not just for ourselves, but we do it for others. Because someone, the more free someone is, the more inner freedom they have, the greater is our capacity to care for others. The greater is their capacity to live in ways which do not perpetuate harm in this world. To live a harmless life. A life of care and caring is one of the great purposes of the Buddhist path.

So, now we have some time and for the final words, if you have any questions you'd like to, concerns you have that you want to raise and I'll try to respond. And I'm very fond of having this chance to see your questions and comments. And welcome them again and to have this final connection with you this way. And while we're waiting for that I can add to say that ... oops I better ...

"I notice that the beauty of nature calls me into the present moment in a gleeful, peaceful way. Does noticing when present happens naturally help increase the habit of being more present?" Oh, absolutely. And there's something very powerful that lesson about when we find ourselves naturally present. And do notice the naturalness of it without the sense of lack of work, and lack of forcing ourselves, or lack of obligation, and even lack of self self conceit in it. It's a wonderful lesson to learn a
possibility of what's possible. And this is possible. You're right about feeling that in nature. It's also possible to feel that in meditation in a simple way, it's kind of tricky. And you know, kind of maybe it's after meditation has gotten more stable and centered. And that is when the mind wanders away in thought, very common people when they notice that to be upset, discouraged, to jerk their mind back, to pounce back on the breath or something. And then just kind of whiplash sometimes in the mind. Just like oh, no, I shouldn't do that come back. If instead of doing that, you recognize that when you wonder off in thought, if you're really lost in thought there's no problem because you're so lost. To know there's a problem. But at some point, you'll notice that you're involved in thought. The very first moment you notice that, that noticing probably has some of those qualities used to find yourself being present in nature. The beauty of nature and just gleefully peaceful way just being aware. There's a simplicity there, there's ease, there's lack of judgment, there's lack of commentary, in that first moment of waking up from being lost in thought or first recognition. Oh, I'm thinking. It might be just very quickly. But if you can learn to recognize that, and then stay there. Stay in that ease in which you noticed you were thinking, and then welcome the breath back. Might be nice.

"Sometimes when I am present, I realize there are so many hindrances that are so subtle. This has given me some freedom. Thoughts on this." Oh, this is very good. I've done many years of meditation practice, zen meditation, and had a benefit from it. But it was only when I started doing mindfulness and paying careful, real careful attention to the subtleties of the mind, that I saw that there were a lot of hindrances operating really subtle. And it's really useful. And there's a kind of a point when we practice, maybe not early in meditation practice. But as the practice continues, that at some point, I hope you have the experience of recognizing you have hindrances and feel a certain delight, amusement, joy, happiness, in not having the hindrance, but in recognizing your habit. Wow. Because in that recognition, there's some freedom and so I don't know that was...

Let's see. Yeah, it jumps around a little bit here. It's hard to when they keep coming. Anyway hope that Susan, I hope that answer responded to you in what you were you were asking it. This has given me some freedom. You're right, Susan, when you recognize a subtle, subtle hindrances, maybe that's what you recognizing. The freedom to joy, the goodness of recognizing the subtle hindrances. And then you practice with the subtle ones. All the things I've been teaching about the hindrances operate when they're subtle too. And to allow the attention to get more and more subtle. Doesn't mean more busy, and actually becomes more still, more quiet.

"Do you have any suggestions of dealing with skepticism as sarcasm?" Yes, same thing I've been saying before. Get to know skepticism sarcasm better. And really feel the impact it has. So I suggest you're asking for yourself and not dealing with other people's. But if it's yourself, really feel the impact, the cost, skepticism and sarcasm has on you, very personally. In what way does it create distance between you and other people? To what this degree does it shut something down in you? To which degree is it a kind of sandpaper on the mind or the heart? Really turn around and look at it and feel it. And get to know what motivates it. Because it's possible that the skepticism and sarcasm should be respected. Because even though it's unfortunate to have it. It is arising out of something deeper and something may be good. So if you just want to bat it away and do away with it, you might not notice that deep inside of it, maybe is a desire to be safe or to be liked or some kind of love, that maybe needs a very different attention than trying to get rid of it. So to turn towards the very difficulty you have, one of
the benefits is that it might be covering over something precious deeper down. So, if you try to get rid of it too quickly, you might not notice what's deeper.

"Self doubt is one of the kilesas, one of the defilements, that has plagued me for a long time. You're enheartened me to have faith in my practice, and feel some inner freedom." Fantastic. Thank you. I love reading that.

"So what exactly is enlightenment? Is it the complete absence of clinging and desire?" Yes, the absence of clinging is awakening, liberation in Buddhism. And that can happen to various degrees or various strengths of impact. And so it can happen in mild ways, can happen in moderate ways. And in very strong ways. And so even in very mild ways, we can get a taste of what full awakening is, full liberation is, when we can recognize more and more the absence of clinging. And the absence of clinging becomes stronger and stronger, then we start recognizing that, we start using that as a teacher for us. And we start realizing that we want to try to practice in a way that contains liberation in it. Some qualities of it, the non clinging. And you, Michael, you also say absence of clinging and desire. We have to be very careful about talking about the absence of desire. Full blown awakening, there's no desires. Everything drops away in the experience of full release. An enlightened person will no longer have clinging, but will still have desire after that experience of deep release, deep, deep letting go. Enlightened people have desires to, they don't have compulsive desires. They don't have neurotic desires. There's no clinging as part of the desires. Their desires are basically either neutral or wholesome, helpful.

"Where does fear of being taken advantage of fit into the hindrances?" The issue of fear, we have to be very careful with it. Fear is sometimes healthy to have and appropriate to have. If that question had been, where does caution of being taken advantage of fit into the hindrances? I think that caution and care, not being adventure, is a part of a wise life, a good life. And sometimes very important. Sometimes in the forefront of life because we will be taken advantage of. And where does it fit into the hindrances, even healthy desire and healthy fear can be accompanied by the hindrances. And when they are, then it's hard to take care of the fear or to operate from the caution in healthy ways. So there can be healthy fear, but it comes along with the ill will, or comes along with doubt, or other things. And then it all gets kind of more complicated than it needs to be.

"So the translation of called idle speech is confusing?" Yes, it is confusing. And the fact is, that the ancient word Pali word that sometimes translated as idle speech, no one really knows how to translate this word. And it's common though, people are trying their best to translate a word they don't know. That's my impression. And some people will translate it as gossip instead of idle speech. And that makes a little bit clear, but idle speech is sometimes a beautiful way of, wonderful way, of connecting to people and having a nice relationship with people, and so idle speech by itself sometimes is useful. But maybe what if we translated as pointless speech or vacuous speech?

"How to differentiate between letting go and giving up?"So, as we learn to really let go in healthy ways, letting go always brings some form of joy or delight, of well being. There's something goodness in it. And I've done a lot of letting go. And I learned that if I let go and felt neutral, I hadn't really let go. And it would usually come back and bite me. I had to really let go and really feel the goodness of it, the openness of it, the happiness of it, the enlivening of it. It might be very, very subtle, the goodness of it,
but you really know you're let go when, Ahh, this is good. This is right. If we let go and aghh, you know, well I let go, but that was a drag. That's not really letting go. Giving up, there can be healthy giving up. If were forced to give up. I've sometimes been forced to give up in ways in my practice, like on retreat, because all my efforts to do something just didn't work out. Just kind of all the trying, everything I did, every time I tried to address some issue that I was working with, I just made it worse. And finally in frustration I just gave up, a surrender to it. It wasn't like a conscious letting go, but it's kind of like I'd reach rock bottom and I just gave up. And then a path opened up of how to practice. But to give up consciously out of despair, out of discouragement, out of something else. Then I think when we give up that way, there's no joy. There's no openness, no delight that comes from it. So hopefully you can feel for yourself the different effect that letting go, healthy letting go, has versus unhealthy giving up. This Why mindfulness is so important. We're supposed to have the evidence in ourselves so we can become our own teacher. And learn how to recognize in ourselves, which is the path. How we find our way.

"Variations of the same type of hindrance seem to repeat, I feel I'm causing my own suffering and trying struggling to understand. Guidance." Oh yes, this is probably common for everyone. The repetition of the hindrances and I feel I'm causing my own suffering. In a Buddhist analysis, the suffering we're trying to address, the suffering we're trying to address, is that suffering that we're causing to ourselves. So if that's what you're tuning into, Buddhism is good for you because hopefully you'll learn how to address it well. And as some of you know I do this 7am morning sitting and with different themes. And the plan right now starting Monday for the next four weeks is I'm going to talk about the Four Noble Truths. And that's one of the core teachings in Buddhism around suffering itself. And next week, I'm going to do the whole week on suffering, which is the first noble truth. So I hope to present the teachings on suffering in a way that you don't suffer more. And actually the opposite. But I'm trying, struggling to understand. Keep struggling, it's a worthwhile struggle. But maybe you can understand what is it you're attached to? What are you trying to do? What's the nature of the struggle itself? Remember, part of mindfulness is always a turn that tension around 180 degrees to look at the challenges. And the challenge is in the struggle itself, study it. If the challenge is in the suffering you keep having, study it and look at it honestly. And I really appreciate your question and it's very important. And I feel a little bit remiss that I'll just end there, say so little about it.

"I like humor, most of which is sarcastic. Advice?" Yeah, I mean, if you're with people who understand you, well and understand that you're a good natured kind person and generous person and maybe, maybe it's okay to be sarcastic. Maybe it's Okay, I don't know. It depends what kind of sarcasm it is. I don't really know fully well the definition of sarcasm. To really answer your question well, I just know that many times I hear sarcasm and something inside of me closes up and gets tight. And I kind of get discouraged more than encouraged. But if you're concerned and I like humor too. Maybe learn a different kind of humor. Use your intelligence to learn about humor, different kinds of humor, maybe tune into people who are funny and read about it. Or joke books even. Or comedians and find those who are not sarcastic. And see if there's something you can learn about how to be funny, how to be amused and be delighted by things that is not sarcastic. One thing that I learned to do, I don't know how well I've learned it but I certainly have tried, is I might find something humorous, some statement about what's going on. And it used to be that I would make that statement about the person I was talking with. So it's a little bit you know, statement about them. And mostly it was something funny and everyone laughed, I think, including the person. But I've learned to kind of try to stop doing that. And
instead, if I can, I'll turn around and make the same funny statement, where I'm the subject of it for myself. And that way I'm not making any statement about other people.

So great. So I think it's time to stop. And I appreciate so much the questions and your comments and the good mornings and the thank yous and the warmth between you that I saw as we did it. And this is really nice to have this connection and come here in the mornings meet with you this way. And have a chance to share these teachings. And as I said yesterday, I will consider doing a part three. Maybe I don't call it a part three, maybe we call it intermediate mindfulness meditation, just so that some of you might be encouraged by calling it that. But I need to, I need to take a break for a while. And I feel like I've been teaching a lot these months, last last month since this. So I want to take a break from this intro kind of classes. But I thought maybe near the end of May or maybe in June, I can start again. And so you have to look at IMC's website and the calendar or in the What's New section. It'll be listed somewhere there when I'm ready to do it. And hopefully I'll give you plenty of warning for it.

And so again, thank you very much and I look forward to more opportunities to practice with you.